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The healthy child: photography and the promotion of health awareness in schools in Barcelona (1909-1933)*

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ABSTRACT: During the first few decades of the 20th century, the Barcelona City Council implemented a widespread educational and childcare reform program. One of the basic premises for these initiatives was interest in improving children's health and hygiene. With this goal in mind schools were created in forests and near the sea, summer camps were organized, the physical conditions of schools were improved, and science was used to try to find a better way to reach children and young people with disabilities. The Barcelona City Council popularized the actions taken under this program by publishing various books that had highly interesting photographic content. In this article, we research the characteristics of this reform program as they pertain to childhood healthcare by analysing the discourse presented in these books via their combination of text and photographs.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: History of education; School health services; Educational reform; Childhood; Health; Hygiene; Photography; Spain; XXth Century.

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Introduction

During the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, beliefs that would become the foundation for the contemporary concept of childhood gained momentum. Infant mortality started to be seen as something that was avoidable, and reducing the high death rate during the first years of life became a focus of public policy. In Spain, toward the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, hygienism (a publically-sponsored movement promoting hygiene) turned into one of the main social regeneration programmes of the period, and its influence awakened an interest in issues directly related to demography¹. Among these issues were reducing infant mortality and improving children's health, and thus they became the objectives of a programme that aimed to modernize society using rational science-based principles². Medical advances and the progressive socialization of healthcare, and especially paediatrics, also helped to promote measures that would improve children's health³.

The discourse on hygiene under the wider framework of a modernization programme based on the consolidation of a new conception of childhood, fit well with the intention to put children through mass schooling. Families, and especially mothers and schools, became tools for making the population more hygienic and certainly for improving the health of the youngest members of society. With this idea in mind, the education that mothers received was to be improved and school buildings and programmes that would improve sanitary conditions were to be designed and implemented⁴. Making it known that there were concerns about health and preoccupations over biomedical factors affecting students with a science-based education was one of the main teaching

¹ J. Bernabeu Mestre, *El pensament demogràfic dels higienistes espanyols en els anys de la transició, 1898-1947*, in M. Gutiérrez (ed.), *La industrialització i el desenvolupament econòmic d'Espanya*, Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 361-371.

² R. Ballester Añón, E. Balaguer Perigüell, *La infancia como valor y como problema en las luchas sanitarias de principios de siglo en España*, «Dynamis: Acta Hispanica ad Medicinae Scientiarumque. Historiam Illustrandam», vol. 15, 1995, pp. 177-192.

³ Textual examples include the following: V. Miró Laporta, *Higiene y educación del niño*, Madrid, Alcoy, Librería de Victoriano Suarez/Imprenta El Serpis, 1899; R. Ulecia y Cardona, *Arte de criar a los niños. Nociones de higiene infantil*, «Admón. Revista de Medicina y Cirugía Práctica», 1904; A. Martínez Vargas, *Nuestras madres y el engrandecimiento patrio*, «La Medicina de los Niños», n. 7, 1906, pp. 291-362. About this topic see also: E. Rodríguez Ocaña, *Una medicina para niños*, in J.M. Borrás Llop (ed.), *Historia de la infancia en España contemporánea (1834-1936)*, Madrid, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 1998, pp. 149-170; E. Rodríguez-Ocaña, *La construcción de la salud infantil. Ciencia, medicina y educación en la transición sanitaria en España*, «Historia contemporánea», n. 18, 1999, pp. 19-52; E. Rodríguez-Ocaña, E. Perdiguero, *Ciencia y persuasión social en la medicalización de la infancia en España, siglos XIX-XX*, «História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos», vol. 13, n. 2, 2006, pp. 303-324.

⁴ X. Motilla, B. Sureda, *La gota de Llet. Protecció a la Infancia i Educació social a la Menorca contemporània*, Menorca, Institut Menorquí d'Estudis, 2008.

lines that was developed starting at the beginning of the 20th century. It is not a coincidence that some of its most notable representatives were doctors, including Maria Montessori, Ovide Decroly, and Januz Korczak. Furthermore, as established by Jordi Planella, the combination of education and healthcare policies became an important system for social control, emanating from a control over citizens' bodies⁵.

The push towards an educational regeneration programme based on naturalist- and hygiene-related principles and on new active teaching methods was especially intense in Barcelona at the turn of the 20th century. Under the framework of a regeneration project, which in those days in Catalonia was fuelled by various ideological positions with common objectives regarding social and educational modernization, the City Council of the Catalan capital undertook a far-reaching education action plan focused on introducing new educational ideas and improving the health of young boys and girls.

For all of these initiatives the City Council of Barcelona provided detailed accounts via the publishing of a number of books that are of the utmost interest from an educational history perspective. This article is centred around the study and analysis of some 70 books and pamphlets that the aforementioned city council published on the efforts it made in education between 1909 and 1933. In these publications, photography plays a critical role, and not just because of the numbers – a total of 618 photographs have been catalogued and are discussed based on subject area below (see Table 1) – but because in a large number of cases, images take up more space than text. In this way they synergize with the text to serve as the main element for transmitting information, and thus, the photographs themselves become a significant part of the narrative.

Consequently, our main goal is to explore the characteristics of this reform programme in the field of childhood hygiene, analysing the discourse that is transmitted in the aforementioned works via the combination of textual content and iconography in order to publicize the set of actions taken regarding children's health.

The present article is structured around three parts: the first section provides brief details on the reform work that was carried out by the City Council of Barcelona in the area of education, especially after the creation of the Culture Commission in 1916; the second section describes the documents that were dealt with (the main publications and general characteristics of the photography present); and the third section delves into the hygiene-based, pro-health discourse promoted by the City Council that is reflected in this set of publications using both textual content and iconography (photographs, plans, graphics, children's drawings, prints, etc.). This last section is structured around what are considered to be the main lines of action carried out by the City

⁵ J. Planella Ribera, *Cos i discursivitat pedagògica: bases per a la ideació corporal*, Doctoral thesis, Universitat de Barcelona, 2004, <<http://hdl.handle.net/2445/43037>> (last access: 12.08.2017).

Council in this area: 1) improving sanitary conditions at schools, 2) creating a network of complementary hygienic, naturalist initiatives in public schools, and 3) instilling healthy educational practices.

1. The educational work done by Barcelona's City Council during the first third of the 20th century

During the first decade of the 19th century Barcelona saw significant population growth due to the influx of Spanish immigrants who were drawn to Catalonia's industry. The City Council was then forced to deal with the social and educational demands of a large group of children who, in many cases, lived in unsanitary conditions and were in a poor state of health. In order to meet these demands, the City Council of Barcelona, which at that time had little jurisdiction over educational matters, employed theories of active schooling that were spreading across Europe and the United States to push an ambitious educational action plan that would see the construction of new schools that provided improved sanitary conditions and which were innovative in terms of their architecture and the methods employed therein. The focus on hygiene was an important part of the Council's reformist programme as in theory, they could not change the curriculum itself, which for all public schools was dependent on the federal government of Spain. Thus, the municipality had to focus on other areas, and they created some special open-air schools.

Student health was further promoted with the organization of school camps; the creation of school canteens; and the construction of green, protected, open areas for children to play within the city. The attention given to disabled persons and the search for new scientific principles for attending to their educational needs is also worth noting. Special education was restructured, mainly through the creation of the *Escola de Cecs, Sordmuts i Anormals* (School for Blind, Deaf, Mute, and Handicapped) located on the forested Vilajoana property at the foot of Tibidabo mountain.

Information regarding the specific work carried out by the City Council of Barcelona from the end of the 19th century up to the Spanish Civil War can be found in the ground-breaking work carried out in the thesis written by Jaume Matas⁶, in the books on the Barcelona City Council's educational policies between 1916 and 1936 by Cañellas and Toran⁷, and the book by

⁶ J. Matas i Tort, *El Presupuesto Extraordinario de Cultura de 1908 del Ayuntamiento de Barcelona en el marco de la renovación escolar de Catalunya*, Doctoral thesis (director: Emilio Giralt Raventós), Facultad de Geografía e Historia, Universidad de Barcelona, 3 vols., 1977.

⁷ C. Cañellas, R. Toran, *Política escolar de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona 1916-1936*, Barcelona, Baranova, 1982.

Salvador Domènech⁸ on the schools created by the *Patronato Escolar* (School Board) during the Second Spanish Republic. Some monographs consider more specific aspects, such as those written by Alfred Pérez-Bastardas⁹ and Raquel de la Arada¹⁰ which focus on the 1908 special budget for culture. The work by Domènech¹¹ covers Manuel Ainaud. And, for an overview of the actions carried out by the City Council of Barcelona under the framework of the educational reform in Catalonia, there is the book by Gonzalez-Agàpito, Marquès, Mayordomo, and Sureda¹².

These actions carried out by the City Council, to which we have made much reference, were pushed forward with even more vigour after 1916 with the creation of the *Comisión de Cultura* (Culture Commission), which performed its duties until the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. Two other groups, although they had some disagreements and differing opinions, agreed on the impetus to improve schooling and pay better attention to children according to the principles of progressive education: the Catalanist right – representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie – and the centre-left groups supporting republicanism. The reformist actions taken by the nationalist right with regards to pedagogy, as with other areas, stemmed mainly from the provincial Catalan governments grouped into the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* (Commonwealth of Catalonia), from 1914. At the same time, the City Council of Barcelona managed to lead fruitful collaborative efforts in the field of education between republicans and regionalists, albeit not without tension and confrontations. This collaboration eventually led to a far-reaching plan for modernizing childhood care, which is the focus of this article.

The City Council had already expressed interest in modernizing schools in the proposed 1908 Budget for Culture. This project was based on the reformist principles of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE; Free Educational Institution) and was, at least in the beginning, supported by representatives with varying ideological perspectives in the City Council: from radical republicans and Catalanists to the regionalist right. One of the things that moved the project forward was the radical republican councilman Hermenegildo Giner de los Ríos (Cádiz, 1847 - Granada, 1923), brother of the founder of the ILE and fervent supporter of the principles of Krausism. For 20 years he was a Full

⁸ S. Domènech, *Els alumnes de la República: els grups escolars del Patronat Escolar de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona*, Barcelona, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2008.

⁹ A. Pérez-Bastardas, *El Pressupost extraordinari de Cultura de 1908: entre solidaritat municipal i Solidaritat Catalana*, «Butlletí de la Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics», n. XIX, 2008, pp. 71-84.

¹⁰ R. de la Arada, *El pressupost de cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona de 1908: un referent pedagògic*, «Temps d'Educació», n. 34, 2008, pp. 241-250.

¹¹ S. Domènech, *Manuel Ainaud i la tasca pedagògica a l'Ajuntament de Barcelona*, Barcelona, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, Biblioteca Abat Oliba, 1995.

¹² J. Gonzalez-Agàpito, S. Marquès, A. Mayordomo, B. Sureda, *Tradició i renovació pedagògica. 1898-1939*, Barcelona, Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2002.

Professor of Psychology, Logic, and Moral Philosophy at Barcelona's *Instituto de Segunda Enseñanza* (Institute for Secondary Teaching; 1909-1918). In the end, the project received so much criticism that it failed: from the public teaching system, for not attending to all schools; from the church officials, for its secularist focus and defence of mixed-sex education; and even from some republicans, for promoting teaching in Catalan. Along with being secularist, utilizing Catalan for teaching, supporting mixed-sex education, and reforming education, the 1908 project aimed to combat the dismal sanitary conditions in existing schools. It is worth noting that in 1912, when Rousseau turned 20 years old, in Barcelona, the First Congress for School Hygiene was held. In this congress, healthcare and education associations demanded more hygienic schools¹³.

As previously mentioned, with the City Council's founding of the Culture Commission in 1916, a fresh boost was given to the creation of schools and actions that focused on childhood care. Despite political changes, the ideas coming from the ILE, complemented by those from the progressive education movement and defended by both conservatives and republicans, continued to influence the city government's educational policy. To support the actions carried out by the Culture Commission, a Technical Commission (*Comisión Técnica*) was created in which various professionals contributed. The pedagogue Manuel Ainaud i Sánchez was named the leader of this body. He was well versed in the principles of progressive education thanks to his many trips abroad. Aside from the pedagogical section that would be led by Ainaud, there were two others, that of school architecture, to be led by architect Josep Goday, and that of school hygiene, led by paediatrician Enrique Mias. The professional prestige of the members of the commission contributed to its ability to work autonomously and through political changes. This, in turn, allowed for continuous educational action to be taken on behalf of the municipality. Furthermore, Ainaud surrounded himself with renowned collaborators, such as, poet Ventura Gassol with whom he worked until the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, and Artur Martorell, who helped him during the republican era and took charge of protecting the evidence of the educational work that the City Council had achieved once the Francisco Franco dictatorship began.

The Culture Commission, in support of the proposals made by the Technical Commission, managed *l'Escola del Bosc de Montjuïc* (the School in Montjuïc Forrest), which was founded in 1914 with the same focus on hygiene that it had when it opened the *Escola del Mar* (Sea School) in 1922 in the sailor's neighbourhood of Barceloneta. In the following year, the *Escola del Parc del*

¹³ A. Terrón Bañuelos, *La higiene escolar: un campo de conocimiento disputado*, «Áreas. Revista Internacional de Ciencias Sociales», n. 20, 2012, pp. 73-94; A. Esteruelas Teixidó, J. Garcia Farrero, I. Vilafranca Manguán, *L'Escola del Bosc cent anys després. Allà on Rosa Sensat va sistematitzar la seva pedagogia*, «Temps d'Educació», n. 49, 2015, pp. 111-133; *Primer Congreso de Higiene Escolar*, Barcelona, Imp. de la viuda de Francisco Badía Catenys, 1913.

Guinardó (School in Guinardó Park) was inaugurated. All of these were open-air schools that were inspired by similar institutions from around Europe¹⁴. They were originally conceived in order to improve children's health. In fact, we can identify the care they gave to the health and education of weak and sick children from working class families as the main line that guided their actions. This, however, went progressively changing, and more focus was put on developing a markedly reformist education system. In these schools, various progressive educational methods were utilized, especially those discussed by O. Decroly.

The Culture Commission also encouraged building in the city's neighbourhoods by collaborating financially with citizens to construct buildings with great aesthetic value and quality that would house their model educational centres. Architect Josep Goday, influenced by the intellectual, aesthetic, and educational ideas of the Catalan bourgeoisie, designed a number of these schools. The first one was the Baixeras school building, inaugurated in 1922. After this, he worked on the small La Farigola school in the same year. Soon afterwards, other school buildings were being designed and built: Milà i Fontanals, Lluïsa Cura, Ramón Llull, Lluís Vives and Pere Vila. Other school buildings remodelled by Goday include the following: Dolors Monserdà, Baldiri Reixach, Jacint Verdaguer, Carles Aribau, Francesc Pi Margall, and San Raimon de Penyaforç, which were opened in 1931, just before the declaration of the Second Spanish Republic.

As previously indicated, the City Council only had the ability to create these special schools (i.e. the school in Montjuïc Forrest, the Sea School in Barceloneta, and the Vilajoana school for persons with disabilities) but not to interfere with the management of regular schools. To increase their ability to affect these other centres, and to be able to have a greater impact on reforming teaching methods, Manuel Ainaud worked with the central government in Madrid to create a School Board on which both the federal government and the City Council of Barcelona would participate. The actual creation of this board took place in 1922, and it saw over the Baixeras and La Farigola schools. With the permission of the board, these two schools served as a training ground for student teachers from the *Normal de Maestros* (Teachers' College). Additionally, teachers at these schools were paid by the federal government but could be chosen by the School Board. It was a small step towards Catalan institutions being able to control their education system. With the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic, the School Board gained control over the new schools that were opened in 1931.

¹⁴ In general, Germany is recognized as the first country to teach in open-air schools in 1905. Shortly thereafter open-air schools could be found in London and the United States. The expansion of this kind of school progressively spread to other countries, including Spain (see: J.M. Bernal Martínez, *De las escuelas al aire libre a las aulas de la naturaleza*, «Áreas: Revista internacional de ciencias sociales», n. 20, 2000, pp. 171-182).

While building these new schools, the Culture Commission also worked to defend the use of the M. Montessori method, which at that time received the complete support of regionalist groups and the community-level institutions that they controlled¹⁵. This led to some reservations among Republicans, who nevertheless did not prevent the City Council from giving a scholarship to four teachers in 1914 so that they could attend a course on the Montessori method in Rome. The Council also provided resources for organizing another course in Barcelona in 1916. In 1914 the method developed by the Italian pedagogue began to be used in one official school with the support of the City Council under the direction of Celestina Vigneaux. In 1916, two more municipal Montessori kindergartens were opened.

School camps had an especially important role in the hygiene-related, educational actions taken by the Council. With the clear objective of improving sanitary conditions and children's health across the city, these camps were set up from 1906 until the establishment of the Second Republic. They were first suggested by councilman E. Giner de los Ríos, and this suggestion provides evidence of the inspiration that the camps drew from the pioneering experiences of the ILE. As previously mentioned, these camps involved the organization of semi-camps during the day and taking field trips to swim in the sea.

2. *The City Council of Barcelona's publications on their educational efforts*

Between 1912 and 1931, the City Council of Barcelona produced a total of 68 publications, combining text and a multitude of photographs in which they disclose the activities they carried out related to children's health. The majority of these publications can be found in the Artur Martorell Library (Barcelona, Spain), which also offers digitalized materials on their web page¹⁶. Some other works – books and pamphlets – can be found in various libraries (the National Library of Spain, as well as the libraries of Catalonia, Rosa Sensat, of Montserrat, etc.)¹⁷.

A large part of these works were published in Catalan (50 publications), 13 were published in Spanish (this was more common in the early years, until the creation of the Culture Commission in 1916 which took on the task of

¹⁵ F. Comas, B. Sureda, *The photography and propaganda of the Maria Montessori method in Spain (1911-1931)*, «Paedagogica Historica», vol. 48, n. 4, 2012, pp. 571-587.

¹⁶ See *Tasca pedagògica – Ajuntament Barcelona (1900-1933)*. Biblioteca Artur Martorell: <<http://mdc.cbuc.cat/cdm/search/collection/tasca>> (last access: 12.08.2017).

¹⁷ A detailed list of titles, years of publication, language, and locations has been previously published in: S. González, B. Sureda, F. Comas, *La renovación escolar del Ayuntamiento de Barcelona y su difusión fotográfica (1908-1936)*, «Revista Española de Pedagogía», vol. 75, n. 268, pp. 519-539.

publishing the works), 1 was published in both Spanish and Catalan (*Escola de Labors i Oficis de la Dona*), 3 in French, and 1 in Italian. The use of various non-Spanish, non-Catalan languages shows their willingness to disseminate the work that they carried out to educational reform groups beyond the borders of Catalonia and Spain. For example, in 1922, *Rapports de l'Institut d'anormaux de Vilajoana: présenté au Congrès d'Hygiène mentale de Paris*, was published with text, photographs, plans, and drawings that showed the care that handicapped persons received at the institute in Vilajoana. In 1931, *Institutions scolaires en plein air* was published; it provides accounts of the application of new methods in open-air schools. Similarly, in 1932, another book was published in French, titled *L'oeuvre d'enseignement de la Municipalité de Barcelone*, which was presented to those attending that year's progressive education congress in Nice: the *Sixième congrès mondial de la Ligue internationale pour l'éducation nouvelle*. The 1922 work that was published in Italian is little more than a catalogue of the publications that the Culture Commission had available that year.

There were two periods in which the City Council turned out a large number of publications. The first was between 1920 and 1922, when the Council published a total of 20 documents, representing nearly 30% of such output. Among these were documents that focused on new schools, such as *Escola Pere Vila i Codina*, *Escola Ramon Llull*, and *Escoles Milà i Fontanals* and *Lluïsa Cura*. They focused on the details surrounding the creation of these schools, and especially those related to the budget; municipal land use agreements; and plans and photographs of the construction of the buildings. Other publications from this period include the following: *Banyes de mar per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona* (Swims in the sea for Barcelona's school children), a compendium of textual and visual content focusing on the utility, benefits, and results of physical education, the seaside climate, and exposure to the sun, sea, and outdoors; *Escola Graduada Lluís Vives (Collocació de la primera pedra)* (Lluís Vives Grade School [Placing the first stone]), a succinct 20-page document that discusses the initiative, petition, organization, municipal agreements, and characteristics of the new building so that the grade school could be built; *El jardins dels infants* (Kindergartens), an interesting study consisting of essays and memoirs on the best schoolyards and play areas from around the world that aimed to serve as a reference for the future creation of kindergarten schoolyards in Barcelona; *Escola de Cecs* (School for the Blind), a publication rich in graphical information on the organization and inner workings of the centre on the Vilajoana property; and *Escola de Labors i Oficis de la Dona* (Women's Trade and Occupational School) and *Escoles a l'aire lliure del parc de Montjuïc* (The open-air schools in Montjuïc Park), which carry out an exhaustive review of the models, premises, installations, buildings, regulatory provisions, and daily life behind these schools. Another publication, from 1922, is the book titled, *Construccions escolars de Barcelona* (School buildings of

Barcelona), an extensive volume of more than 400 pages that gathers studies, projects, floor plans, and drawings related to the far-reaching educational work that was being carried out by the City Council.

The second period of intense publication was from 1930 to 1932, when 30 works were published, representing 44% of such literary output. Upon inaugurating various schools and camps, the City Council published a number of works that included a plethora of photographs. Among these publications are the following: *Inauguració de les obres de les «Escoles Casas»* (Inauguration of the «School Houses» project; 1930); *Inauguració de les obres de la colònia escolar permanent de Berga* (Inauguration of the permanent school camp in Berga; 1932); *Inauguració de les obres del grup escolar «Collaso i Gil»* (Inauguration of the «Collaso i Gil» school; 1932); and *Inauguració del Parvulari Forestier* (Inauguration of the Forestier Early Childhood Centre; 1932).

Another significant set of publications is related to the dissemination of information on the activities that were carried out such as open-air schools, swimming in the sea, both permanent and medical school camps, and kindergartens. Thus, in 1930, *L'Obra de les colònies escolars i banys de mar* (The work of school camps and sea swims), was published. In 1932, other similar publications appeared:

- *L'Obra de colònies escolars, banys de mar i semicolònies per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona 1906-1931* (The work of school camps, sea swims, and semi-camps on Barcelona's school students 1906-1931), an extensive book that begins with the history of the camps in Barcelona and covers statistical aspects of their 26-year process of development and includes a detailed explanation of how the camps were run on a day-to-day basis along with multiple photographs that reflect what life was like in the camps at Vilamar, Berga, Turissa, Tibidabo, Martorelles, and Bagur, among others;
- *Resum de l'organització de les Colònies Escolars de Vacances, de les Semi-colònies i dels Banys de l'any 1932* (Summary of the organization of Summer Camps, Semi-camps, and Swims in 1932), which has similar contents and structure to the previously mentioned book but does not include photographs; and
- *Visita a les noves colònies escolars* (A visit to the new school camps), a journey through the new school camps located in the mountainous areas surrounding Barcelona, including those at Martorelles, Les Franqueses, and Flor de Maig.

Regarding what specific institutions did, there are publications from 1932 on the camps at Turissa and Vilamar that are rich in both textual and graphical information.

The set of photographs that appear in these works creates an iconic discourse corresponding to the beginnings of the progressive education movement that was totally embraced at that time by those seeking to inspire the educational

policies of City Council of Barcelona¹⁸. The visual elements that are combined with the text in these works show children doing gymnastic exercises, playing sports, performing physical activities at the beach and in the mountains, swimming, doing breathing exercises, exercising with both Swedish and rhythmic gymnastics, and in the case of children with disabilities, doing sensory education exercises, etc.

Table 1 presents a well detailed count of the number of photographs that were published and into which main categories they fall:

<i>Subject area of the photographs</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>School or camp activities in nature and outdoor areas</i>	127
<i>Buildings and installations</i>	110
<i>Open-air gymnastic or rhythmic (Jaques-Dalcroze) exercises</i>	23
<i>Groups of children posing</i>	64
<i>Leaving the city and going to the camps/Reception or farewell parties at the camps</i>	18
<i>Medical examinations</i>	7
<i>Exercising on the beach/Swimming (in lakes, rivers, or the sea)</i>	29
<i>Indoor school activities</i>	44
<i>Field trips and outings</i>	16
<i>Children swimming at the beach/playing/resting/sunbathing</i>	50
<i>Sanitary activities (showers)</i>	3
<i>Dormitories</i>	10
<i>Canteens/children eating</i>	17
<i>Classrooms without children</i>	7
<i>Libraries/children reading</i>	1
<i>Attending concerts, puppet shows, theatre performances, local festivities</i>	6
<i>Camping</i>	7
<i>Portraits</i>	12
<i>Children playing in schoolyards/playgrounds/play areas</i>	24
<i>Construction</i>	37
<i>Furniture, objects, bookshelves</i>	6
TOTAL	618

Table 1. Number of photographs, classified by subject area, published by the City Council of Barcelona (1909-1933). Own creation.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The largest percentage of photographs in this collection are related to ordinary camps and open-air schools, swimming, and kindergarten activities that take place outdoors and in nature. As with other cases where photographs regarding educational activities have been analysed, these reflect the aspects that were considered to be the most innovative, the most worthy of being shared, and the most representative of the programme that was trying to be implemented¹⁹.

One aspect that received special graphical attention, because it was one that the City Council could influence, was the reference to the improved school spaces. Along with textual information on the processes of acquiring and preparing land, the design of spaces, and construction itself, a great number of floor plans and photographs were published that clearly aim to highlight the sanitary aspects and improved conditions of the buildings: large majestic buildings; wide open, ventilated areas that are well lit by large windows; clean, tidy, and well equipped canteens and dormitories; good libraries; etc.

3. *The discourse on hygiene and the image of the healthy child in the City Council's publications*

The widespread conviction of the era regarding the dire consequences that a decreasing population of children would entail, led to concerns about safeguarding children's health – both physically- and morally-speaking – and to great efforts being made by the City Council and society in general. The benefits stemming from action programmes, especially preventative ones, focused on the physical conditions surrounding childhood were soon seen to be more effective and economical than fighting against disease and death²⁰.

In order to delve further into the educational work carried out by Barcelona's City Council – especially its discourse on hygiene, naturalism, and focus on improving children's health – we have analysed the content from all of the publications that they put out between 1909 and 1933. Given the nature of this task, and obvious spatial limits, we have opted to highlight three aspects that we believe clearly reflect this discourse:

1. The work on improving sanitary conditions in schools;

¹⁹ F. Comas, X. Motilla, B. Sureda, *Escuela y fotografía, entre el testimonio y la construcción del discurso narrativo*, in III Foro Ibérico de Museismo Pedagógico-V Jornadas Científicas SEPHE, Murcia, 2012.

²⁰ M. Tolosa Latour, *Concepto y fines de la higiene popular*, Madrid, Viuda e Hijos de Tello, 1900. In Spain, the fight against infant mortality was principally based on three arguments, apart from those philanthropic ones: economic, nationalist, and rational (E. Rodríguez Ocaña, *La salud infantil, asunto ejemplar en la historiografía contemporánea*, «Dynamis», vol. 23, 2003, pp. 27-36).

2. The implementation of a real network of hygienic, naturalist initiatives; and
3. The healthy educational activities and practices associated with these initiatives.

3.1. *Improved sanitary conditions at schools*

Since the beginning of the 20th century, and especially since the creation of the Culture Commission in 1916 and the School Board of Barcelona in 1922, the City Council, clearly aware of the sanitary conditions affecting children's education, had promoted the creation of school camps and semi-camp, founded open-air schools, established so-called *banys de mar* or sea swims, and begun to create kindergartens in a number of the city's neighbourhoods. They slowly began to set up a network of parallel complementary institutions to public schools that were designed to combat a «state of regrettable hygiene in schools; so regrettable that they would not endure a medical inspection»²¹. And this was at a time when the majority of Barcelona's school children came from working class families, «and we already know about working class housing and the unfortunate state that it [was] in»²². This work was done because «in Barcelona, aside from the dangers that had to be confronted due to overcrowding – a misfortune common to all large cities – citizens also had to confront the lack of gardens, outdoor spaces, and other school-related institutions»²³.

It is no surprise to see such a statement in this publication: at that time, a large portion of the populations of both Barcelona and Madrid had to deal with overcrowded spaces with a serious lack of hygienic conditions compounded by the difficulty that was had in finding habitable spaces. Those in real danger in such a situation were children, especially poor ones. It was for this reason that the municipal government decided to build schools in healthy, sound places: it would contribute to improving the quality of life of the working class and strengthen the health of younger generations. In addition to their education, it was important that poor children spent the maximum number of hours that they could at these new institutions so that they could be fed, dressed, and bathed; spend time in the sun; do exercise; and get stronger and healthier. In the end, all of this would restore the race which would serve as a starting point for restoring Spain²⁴.

²¹ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Banys de mar per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona*, 1920, p. 4 (Original text in Catalan).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ M^a del Mar del Pozo Andrés, *La utilización de parques y jardines como espacios educativos alternativos en Madrid (1900-1931)*, «Historia de la Educación», vol. 12-13, 1993/1994, pp. 149-184.

For this reason, the City Council, with occasional help from individual donors, promoted the construction of high quality buildings with aesthetic value to house the pedagogically ideal schools that had proper sanitary and health conditions, among them were the Baixeras, Vallcarca (La Farigola), Ramon Llull, Milà i Fontanals, Lluïsa Cura, Pere Vila, and Collaso i Gil centres. All of these buildings share some common denominators:

- a. The project planner was Josep Goday (Mataró, 1882 - Barcelona, 1936), the architect behind monumental Noucentisme²⁵ school buildings, and who was in charge of the study on schools' needs and subsequently designed much of their amenities²⁶.
- b. They became benchmarks for school architecture.
- c. They represent a clear example of the enormous effort put forth by City Council of Barcelona in the interest of protecting children and improving public schools.

The Noucentisme planning of public life that was undertaken in as many spheres as possible in Catalonia, included the field of public health. It is worth mentioning that in 1907 the Jaussely Plan was approved which included a plan for a new urban image that would include among its main lines of action, a policy of creating green spaces – with regard to urban decentralization and the hygienic purpose that they serve – and a new level of municipal services that would affect education, social services, transport, and sanitation²⁷.

After this, a process of reforming school areas that were described in some books as being overcrowded, unhealthy, and lacking of adequate spaces began – and some new ones were built – in order to improve sanitary, safety, and teaching conditions [see Pic. 1, which shows an old school that was demolished to make way for a new building]. Some City Council publications focus on Barcelona's most important school projects and buildings, and they include a number of floor plans, drawings, and photographs of the construction or renovations that were carried out: a clear bid to make their significant efforts known [See Pic. 3]. Projects are explained, architectural decisions are detailed, and reasons are even given for how space is distributed. All of this is accompanied by the publication of a multitude of photographs that allow for the magnitude of the new buildings (paradoxically, one of Goday's preconditions was avoiding gigantism or anything monumental), the openness of the spaces, the brightness and illumination of the classrooms, the modernity of the new amenities etc.,

²⁵ Noucentisme was a movement that took place principally in Catalonia during the first third of the 20th century. It was a far-reaching movement that affected politics, social life, culture, and national identity. It was framed around a project of renovation and modernity that aimed to build a new reality (F. Sabaté i Casellas, *Noucentisme: ciutat i salubritat (Barcelona, 1900-1929)*, «Gimbernat», n. 48, 2007, pp. 39-47).

²⁶ J. dos Santos Sá, *Josep Goday e o mobiliário escolar espanhol na primeira metade do século 20*, «Historia da educação», vol. 19, n. 46, 2015, pp. 187-199.

²⁷ Sabaté i Casellas, *Noucentisme: ciutat i salubritat (Barcelona, 1900-1929)*, cit., p. 41.



Pic. 1. *Old façade of the school for children from Vallcarca.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Escola graduada de nenes de Vallcarca* (Collocació de la primera pedra), 1918. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).



Pic. 2. *Lluís Vives school building. Large space for manual tasks.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Oeuvre d'enseignement de la Municipalité de Barcelone*, 1932, p. 24. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).



Pic. 3. *The schools Milà i Fontanals and Lluïsa Cura. Perspective of the schools.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Escoles Milà i Fontanals i Lluïsa Cura*, 1922. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).



Pic. 4. *Baixeres school building. Main façade.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Oeuvre d'enseignement de la Municipalité de Barcelone*, 1932, p. 13. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).

to be appreciated [see, for example, Pic. 2]. In fact, the Culture Commission requested that the architect design buildings with the following characteristics: «to be big, healthy, and happy; enabled by [their] distribution, light, and dimensions to produce the greatest results from [their] use; but free from all that would give [them] the character of being monumental or a pretentious look»²⁸.

²⁸ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Les construccions escolars de Barcelona*, 2^a edició, 1922.

The architectural wealth in Barcelona's schools²⁹ from that era [Pic. 4] and the commitment of the City Council to improve sanitary and safety conditions in schools is impossible to deny when one looks at the photographs of the buildings that were erected, in most part by Josep Goday. The outbreak of grade schools represented a change in the design of spaces, and this fact is also reflected in these images. The stage became articulated in inter-related yet independent micro-spaces for children meeting certain criteria: chronological, mental, or educational³⁰. The legitimization of this trend was supported by a range of pervasive movements from the beginning of the 20th century, including architectural functionalism, Taylorism, ergonomics, hygienism, and panopticism³¹.

3.2. *A network of hygienic, naturalist initiatives that complemented public schools*

As we have seen, the City Council of Barcelona launched a series of initiatives in the first third of the 20th century that were focused on compensating for public schools and were aimed at improving the physical, sanitary, nutritive, and health-related conditions for a significant part of the children in the city at that time. Prevention became a fundamental part of all of this along with recovering or re-establishing children's physical conditions so as to allow them to live in a dignified, healthy way. Thus, health was the focal point for the Culture Commission from the moment that it was created. Even the songs that have been written down in the publications about the school camps in Barcelona mention this focus: «The city of Barcelona sends us off to be healthy. We want to live, we want to live»³² and «Glory, glory to the city. Glory, glory to Barcelona, which makes us strong and teaches us in love and kindness! Small heart, thankful»³³.

The Escola de Bosc, the Escola del Mar, and the Guinardó school were open-air schools that prioritized physical exercise and activities in nature in order to improve the health of students, although they also quickly incorporated a distinctly

²⁹ A. Cubeles, M. Cuixart, *Josep Goday Casals. Arquitectura Escolar a Barcelona de la Mancomunitat a la República*, Barcelona, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2008.

³⁰ A. Viñao, *Innovación pedagógica y racionalidad científica. La escuela graduada pública en España (1898-1936)*, Madrid, Akal, 1990.

³¹ A. Escolano Benito, *El espacio escolar como escenario y como representación*, «Revista Teias», vol. 1, n. 2, 2000, p. 4.

³² In original Catalan: «La ciutat de Barcelona ens envia a fer salut. Volem viure, volem viure». Ayuntamiento constitucional de Barcelona-Comisión de colonias escolares y escuelas de bosque, *Las Colonias escolares del año 1915*, 1915, p. 10.

³³ In original Catalan: «¡Glòria, glòria a la ciutat! Glòria, glòria a Barcelona que ens fa forts i ens allibera en l'amor i la bondat! Cor petit, agrait», Ajuntament de Barcelona-Comissió de colònies escolars i escoles de bosc, *Les Colònies escolars dels anys 1916 i 1917*, 1917, p. 14 (Original text in Catalan).

revolutionary educational focus. The City Council understood that many of Barcelona's children were weak, and they began giving yearly medical examinations to choose which children would be sent to the school camps. For this reason, it was «absolutely necessary to create a health centre where extended periods outdoors, comforting rations, and an environment of serenity and happiness could return to the weakest and those who need[ed] it the most the strength necessary to continue fighting for life, and thus in 1910, the creation of the 'Forrest Schools' in Montjuich Park was suggested»³⁴.

This very preoccupation over the «poor conditions of childhood health» came out before the creation of the Sea School, about which the City Council considered that «the large majority of boys in Barcelona find themselves in a state of such organic poverty that they are predisposed to the most serious illnesses, many of which are today in a dormant state and which await favourable factors and determinants that will help them and bring them forth»³⁵. Some years before, the city had begun the so-called sea swims, a «trial of semi-camps by the Culture Commission» to attend to «students in schools in Barcelona that could not take advantage of the Forrest Camps»³⁶.

Historians can corroborate, using the publications analysed in this study, the inspiration behind these initiatives. For example, in the publication of 1921 *Escoles a l'aire lliure del parc de Montjuic* (The open-air schools in Montjuic Park), the Waldschule in Charlottenburg and the Open Air Schools in England are recognized as benchmarks, as they had impressed Culture Commission representatives who attended the Franco-British Exposition of 1908 in London. In this same work, the City Council also recognizes the influence of the *Ecoles Nouvelles* (New Schools) of the progressive education movement that similar associates from various institutions had visited in France, Belgium, and Switzerland. The publication notes that they carry out daily school activities in the middle of the countryside and that they meet all of the demands for providing not only physical education, but a strong, meticulous moral and intellectual education³⁷.

To build these new spaces, the City Council utilized buildings that, because of their characteristics and location, could «offer a type of school very similar to that of the New Schools in Switzerland», as they were located in vast flat areas with trees and bushes which would allow for separate pavilions to be built for classes, canteens, the kitchen, showers, a covered patio, and other school spaces.

³⁴ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Escoles a l'aire lliure del parc de Montjuic*, 1921, p. 5 (Original text in Catalan).

³⁵ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Escola del mar*, 1921. (Original text in Catalan).

³⁶ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Banyes de mar per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona*, 1920, p. 5 (Original text in Catalan).

³⁷ Comissió de Cultura, *Escoles a l'aire lliure del parc de Montjuic*, cit., pp. 7-8.

An exemplary case of this was the Forrest School located up in the mountains. This and other open-air schools served as an example of other initiatives in Spain³⁸.

The educational experiment undertaken by the Culture Commission was also reflected in the scientific reasoning that was given for the special schools for persons with disabilities and their reorganization and integration into just one institute that was called the *Escola de Cecs, Sordmuts i Anormals* (School for Blind, Deaf, Mute, and Handicapped), and was located on the Vilajoana property on Tibidabo mountain³⁹.

This willingness to improve childhood care was carried over into the creation of school canteens in many of Barcelona's neighbourhoods and could be seen in the creation of school camps, semi-camps, and sea swims. For the City Council of Barcelona, these institutions complemented schools, especially in matters related to hygiene, and would always be necessary even if some centres met appropriate standards. They were totally justified because the living and sanitary conditions that a large part of the population was facing at that time were substandard. The Council affirms that the objective was for «children in the schools in Barcelona, especially children of working class families who required it, to be able to enjoy every summer with enough time to feel the effects of a proper natural healing, which they tend to lack»⁴⁰.

With a comprehensive vision of childhood needs, and in order to make the city a more pleasant place for the younger members of society, the Culture Commission also contributed to designing parks for children and play areas.

3.3. *Healthy educational practices*

Care, protection, and involvement was the triad that underlay the pro-health fight for improved sanitary conditions and children's wellbeing in Spain at the beginning of the 20th century. High rates of infant mortality, which had already been recognized as a social and political issue, began to be included in a much broader discussion in which promoting the health and wellbeing of children was related to concerns over national deterioration, depopulation, and the race⁴¹. That

³⁸ P.L. Moreno, *Renovación pedagógica y compromiso social en la edad de plata de la Pedagogía española: Félix Martí Alpera (1898-1920)*, «Revista Española de Pedagogía», n. 231, 2005, pp. 203-222, in partic. p. 214.

³⁹ I. Puigdemívol, *Escola de Cecs, Sordmuts i Anormals de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona (1911-1939): Una experiència truncada*, «Historia de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria», n. 26, 2015, pp. 161-183.

⁴⁰ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Banyes de mar per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona*, 1920, pp. 5-6 (Original text in Catalan).

⁴¹ E. Rodríguez Ocaña, *La constitución de la Medicina social como disciplina en España, 1884-1923*, Madrid, Ministerio de Sanidad y Consumo, 1983.



Pic. 5. *Some children swimming.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Banyes de mar per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona*, 1920, p. 16. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).



Pic. 6. *Banyes de Mar (Sea Swims). Gymnastics exercises before swimming.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Obra de colònies escolars i banyes de mar*, 1930. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).



Pic. 7. *Banyes de Mar (Sea Swims). Escola del mar (Sea school). Showers after swimming.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *L'Obra de colònies escolars, banyes de mar i semicolònies per als alumnes de les escoles de Barcelona 1906-1931*, 1932, p. 130. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).



Pic. 8. *Abrera school camp.* Ayuntamiento constitucional de Barcelona, *Actuación de la comisión de colonias escolares y escuelas de bosque*, 1914, p. 49. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).

is to say, it was intimately related to social medicine and eugenics movements as well as independent political and social contexts and regenerationist concepts⁴².

⁴² R. Ballaster, L. Balaguer, *La infancia como valor y como problema en las luchas sanitarias de principios de siglo en España*, «Dynamis», vol. 15, 1995, pp. 177-192.



Pic. 9. *Break/Rest*. Ajuntament de Barcelona-Conselleria-Regidoria de Cultura, *Escola del mar*, 1938. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).

medium for having experiences became the preferred symbolic stage for progressive education⁴⁴. We have already mentioned that the largest percentage of photographs in the collection are related to daily activities being carried out outdoors in natural areas. The seaside climate, fresh clean mountain air, and exercise in this environment was understood to produce prompt, positive benefits that the Council explained in the following way:

Children quickly feel the influence of the environment that they are breathing, and this influence is translated into increased activities in all facets of physical, physiological, intellectual, and moral life; appetites increase, intelligence awakens, and love of playing and doing exercise increases proportionately; in a word, the whole being feels the stimulating effects of the sea breeze⁴⁵.

In the photographs that are published in these volumes, we see children smiling, moving, making natural gestures, playing, swimming, and enjoying activities, elements that as a whole project an image of healthy childhood [Pic. 5]. As for physical exercise, an image of solid organization is presented, with measured exercises, movements being made in unison, and all children wearing the same outfit. We also always see the face of the professor guiding their movements [Pic. 6]. After physical activity came the showers, lunch, and rest. These elements are also present in the photos, but they are not as prevalent [Pics. 7, 8, and 9].

Images depicting medical care are scarce in these publications – one is even used in various instances – however, written content on this issue takes up pages and pages. There are also numerous graphics that show the benefits that were achieved

⁴³ Gonzalez-Agàpito *et al.*, *Tradició i renovació pedagògica. 1898-1939*, cit., pp. 326-327.

⁴⁴ F. Comas, X. Motilla, B. Sureda, *Iconografía y representación gráfica de las colonias escolares de la Diputación de Baleares. Una aproximación a través del análisis de las fotografías de las memorias*, «Revista Española de Pedagogía», n. 250, 2011, p. 449.

⁴⁵ Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Banyes de mar*, cit., p. 18 (Original text in Catalan).

School camps, open-air schools, sea swims, etc. had a markedly hygiene-related objective, and similarly, aimed to develop healthy habits. They employed a set of activities especially focused on doing physical exercise, swimming in the sea, playing, and resting, while on the other hand provided nutritious meals and introduced personal grooming habits without forgetting socialization and intellectual growth⁴³.

Within all of the publications that we analysed, one factor stands out above all others: contact with nature as the main healthy habit. Fresh open air as a

in terms of size, weight, chest girth, etc. We cannot help but think that for those in charge, a fundamental part of the results of the camps were measured in grams and centimetres. That is to say, when entering the camps, height, weight, chest girth, etc. measurements were taken, and these same measurements were taken when children completed their time at the camp or semi-camp in order to see the progress that was made [Pic. 10]. So, the doctor in the Culture Commission's hygiene department played an important role when it came to choosing which children would participate in the various initiatives set up by the City Council. In the publications considered herein, it is common to find varying classifications and data on the children that participated. Such variations are often related to children's medical conditions, especially those affecting the lungs or respiratory system.

Trends that began at the end of the 19th century continued through the turn of the century, including the application in Spain of initiatives that aimed to apply the new study and classification techniques suggested by anthropometry to children and in schools. As part of the pedagogical and educational reforms, which in Spain had the ILE at the highest level, many pedagogy museums and anthropometric laboratories were created specifically to gather data on children's physical conditions and the affect that they could have on their learning. This was done in order to provide the best possible all-around ambience that would contribute to improving the social, physical, and mental potential of future generations⁴⁶. Nevertheless, the City Council of Barcelona used the following definition:

Not all gains can be measured in weights and sizes; there is something more to them, and this something is energy, vigour, vitality, however you will, it is not easy to describe nor is it totally ponderable. It is something, I repeat, it was proclaimed, as the advantage of the Camp will always be proclaimed over the Semi-camp, as the fresh air and plentiful sun in the countryside will always be with their abundance and splendour, more persistent than the effects of the city⁴⁷.



Pic. 10. *Anthropometry office.* Comissió de Cultura de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona, *Escoles a l'aire lliure del parc de Montjuic*, 1921. (Fondo: Artur Martorell).

⁴⁶ C. Ortiz, *La antropología pedagógica en España durante el primer tercio del siglo XX*, «Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares», vol. 58, n. 2, 2003, p. 76.

⁴⁷ Ayuntamiento constitucional de Barcelona-Comisión de colonias escolares y escuelas de bosque,

Conclusions

With the publication of the set of works analysed in this study, the City Council of Barcelona publicized their work in the field of education during the first third of the 20th century. In reading these works as a whole, we were able to discover, on the one hand, a clear discourse that denounced the living and school conditions children faced in Barcelona at that time, and on the other hand, the theories and principles that formed the base for the set of educational reform actions that were taken to confront this situation. Their hygienic, naturalist focus and the influence of the progressive education movement is present throughout the publications. New pedagogical ideas based on scientific principles that were developed towards the end of the 19th century fit well with the need of industrialized societies to impose elements of social discipline. In the case studied, hygiene and looking after one's health were habits that had to be ingrained in order to increase productivity indices as well as social balance and cohesion.

The publications that we analysed show that there was a clear belief in the power that photography offered to spread the new pedagogical discourse. Photographs included, as a whole, present us with an image of childhood that is much less rigid than in photos of traditional schools. There are children seated on the floor, laying on the beach, going into and coming out of the water, smiling, having fun, and spontaneously playing, always without any apparent order. This contrasts with the photographs of schools that we typically find, which are much more organized, ordered, and static. This sought after image of spontaneity serves to reinforce the discourse that challenges traditional educational practices, and it creates a framework from which to build the iconography of the new conception of childhood and of the health and educational care that children should receive. Natural settings provide the backdrop for assessing these spontaneous activities that serve to enhance children's abilities and improve their health. Teachers, monitors, and adults in general become secondary; they become guides and counsellors, not authorities. Nature, forests, and beaches become spaces for stimulating learning that is motivated by curiosity and childhood needs. The images successfully reinforce the sought after relationship between hygienism and progressive education. The importance of doing activities outside, in contact with nature, and especially in areas far from cities; sleeping and resting enough; eating properly; and undergoing medical examinations and following related recommendations are ideas that are clearly intended to be transmitted via textual and iconographic elements.