



Oberseminar

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Florian Steger
Wintersemester 2023/24

Mittwoch von 16:00 – 18:00 Uhr

**Institut für Geschichte, Theorie und Ethik der Medizin | Seminarraum
3. OG | Barbara Mez-Starck-Haus, Oberberghof 7, 89081 Ulm**

Mittwoch, 31.01.2024
Dr. Oľga Vaneková
Dr. Angela Škovierová
(Bratislava)

Juraj Bahil and his anti-smoking campaign in the didactic-reflective poem *Elegia de piapa* (1735)

The second half of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century is characterized by the development of natural sciences and a new outlook on the world, caused by Enlightenment thought currents penetrating Hungary as well. Reading circles, temperance associations, and learnt societies were founded, the educated people of the time focused on various forms of public education. One of the associations of rationalist-enlightenment-oriented scholars was the Learnt society of Malohont, which in the years 1809 – 1842 published the collection *Solennia Bibliothecae Kishontanae*, where the results of the research of its members were published. Matej Holko the Younger (1757 – 1832), was one of the founding members of this society and also the editor of the collection, who in 1830 published a poem from the pen of the religious writer, teacher and evangelical clergyman Juraj Bahil (1689 – 1760) *Elegia jocoseria de pipa*.

Juraj Bahil, who was born in 1689 in Čerenčany, in the district of Rimavská Sobota (today's Slovakia), was also one of the educated personalities of the Malohont region. He came from an evangelical family, several members of which were engaged in spiritual service. He worked as a teacher in the noble Andráši family in Krásná Hôrka. He was the rector of the school in Rohovce and Prietrž, an evangelical pastor in Čerenčany, and he also worked in the evangelical church in Hrachov. Finally, he lived in Klenovec and Rimavská Píla and briefly worked as a proofreader at a printing house in Levoča, where he published several books. He is the author of baroque poetry, congratulatory poems, and a religious work, which for the most part remained in manuscript form.

**Gäste sind
herzlich willkommen!**

The didactic-reflective poem directed against smoking, which was published almost a hundred years after its creation in the yearbook of the Learnt society of Malohont – *Solennia Bibliothecae Kishontanae* thanks to Matej Holko the Younger, has a scope of 131 couplets and from the point of view of the history of medicine is considered the first health-educational publication directed against smoking. In it, the author speaks in a joking tone, but very strongly against smoking and smokers. He talks about smoking addiction and draws attention to the health consequences of smoking, which can be unquenchable thirst, irritation of the cough or vomiting, loss of appetite, and even tuberculosis. Smoking is said to strain the heart and damage the lungs. Finally, he says that the pipe brings death to its master.

The author uses characteristic stylistic means and figures from the period. He begins his elegy, e.g. chronostic, asks the Muse to "refresh the memory", uses allusions to antiquity (*Pandorae pyxis*), and so on. On the other hand, in addition to stylistically unmarked words such as *gingiva*, *lingua*, *stomachus*, the poem also enriches with contemporary professional expressions such as *succo stomachi*, *siphonus labiis*, and others. He also uses the dialect word *Dohanus* / *Dohán*, which is frequent in several areas, including Gemer and Hont.

Juraj Bahil's poem is an interesting and very progressive work of its time, which accurately names the harmful consequences of smoking. It has not lost its relevance even in the period when it was published and even today.