THE SLOVAK HUMANIST MARTIN MONKOVICENUS AND HIS DIARY PRESERVED IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN CLUJ-NAPOCA*

ANGELA ŠKOVIEROVÁ
Institute of Medical Terminology and Foreign Languages
Faculty of Medicine, Comenius University Bratislava

The Slovak Humanist Martin Monkovicenus and his Diary Preserved in the University Library in Cluj-Napoca
ABSTRACT

Martin Monkovicenus (1593-1624?) is one of many Evangelical scholars coming from the territory of today's Slovakia, who at the turn of the 17th century studied in Prague at Charles University. As one of the few such students, M. Monkovicenus returned to his homeland and worked here at the school in Trenčín. However, his activity as a school administrator in Trenčín was not very successful, and he had to leave the school after a year. He is the author of a bachelor's and master's thesis and a farewell speech in which he defended his teaching activities in Trenčín. In our article, we will present M. Monkovicen's handwritten diary from 1623, a copy of which has been preserved in the University Library in Cluj-Napoca, and brings new information about the humanist scholar M. Monkovicen, not yet published in biographical handbooks.

Cuvinte-cheie: Monkovicenus (1593-1624?), Biblioteca Universitară Cluj-Napoca, jurnal manuscris, biografie, Slovacia de astăzi
Key words: Monkovicenus (1593-1624?), Cluj-Napoca University Library, manuscript diary, biography, today's Slovakia

During several years of research, we registered a relatively large number of (mostly) Protestant authors originating from Slovakia or those who worked in Slovakia for a long time and published at least one work in one of the Czech or Moravian cities in the period before the Battle of Biela Hora − White Mountain (1620). The year 1621 is considered a turning point in the sense that on 23 June this year, as a result of the defeat of the Czech estates in the Battle of White Mountain (November 8, 1620), 27 rebellious estate leaders were executed on the Old Town Square in Prague. In retrospect, the Battle of Biela Hora near Prague tends to coincide with the beginning of the Thirty Years War. There was a very diverse group of humanists[1], among whom we find clergymen, professors of

* The article was written within the project APVV-22-0130 Šľachtické knižnice 18. a 19. storočia na západnom a strednom Slovensku. [Noble Libraries of the 18th and 19th centuries in western and central Slovakia].
[1] Škovierová 2024, p. 46-54.

Charles University, teachers, scribes, etc. Among them, Martin Monkovicenus stands out. Martin Monkovicenus (1593-1624?) was one of many Evangelical scholars coming from the territory of today's Slovakia, who at the turn of the 17th century studied in Prague at Charles University. Most students studying in the Czech lands, or returning home from studies at a foreign university through the Czech provinces, would stay there, find a workplace, or accept a work offer from a Czech school or rectory. Martin Monkovicenus (Moncovicenus, Muncovicenus, Moncovici) was a contemporary of a group of Slovak humanists whose work is associated with the Czech lands, or rather with Prague. But unlike others, Martin Monkovicenus returned to Slovakia after completing his studies. As one of the few such students studying abroad, M. Monkovicenus returned to his homeland and worked here at the school in Trenčín. However, his performance as a school administrator in Trenčín was not very successful, and he had to leave the school after a year. He is the author of a bachelor's and master's thesis and a farewell speech in which he defended his teaching activities in Trenčín.

Martin Monkovicenus originated from the town of Liptovský Bobrovec and after attending local primary and secondary schools (in Ružomberok, Nemecká Ľupča, Žarnovica, Prievidza, Liptovský Mikuláš and Trenčín) studied at the town school of Jihlava and Třebíč. As far as attendance by students coming from the territory of today's Slovakia, Jihlava was probably one of the most popular Czech town schools[2]. M. Monkovicenus gained a bachelor's degree at Charles University with his bachelor dispute *An omnia quae conspici et concipi possunt, nos ad egendos Deo gratias invitent?* in August 1615. On the occasion of his bachelor graduation, he delivered a speech, which was later issued in print alongside his bachelor dispute: *Oratio habita publice in vetustissima academia Pragensi pro primo in philosophia gradu acquisito* (Prague, 1615). In September of the same year, M. Monkovicenus became Master of Philosophy based on his dissertation *An optime imperat litteratus?*

Martin Monkovicenus was an interesting character. He wrote a new school handbook for the school in Trenčín, where he has worked for less than a year. However, this has not been preserved. Already in 1616 in Prague, he issued a speech *Ultimum vale, sive oratio habita Trinchini*, where he described the problems of the contemporary Slovak education system and also mentioned the cause of his sudden departure from the position of the administrator of the school in Trenčín. Then he paused publishing and in the years 1616-1618, worked as the rector of a school in Ružomberok and subsequently between 1618 and 1619 was the head administrator in a school in Bánovce nad Bebravou. His time in education was probably not very successful, as he worked only one year for each school and finally in 1619 M. Monkovicenus ended up in Liptovský Trnovec as a Lutheran

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 47.

pastor. On the other hand, it was quite common for teachers to change several schools, where they worked for a shorter time, until they found "the right school", where they then spent a greater or a substantial part of their teaching career. The last mention of him comes from 1624, when he worked at the rectory in Liptovský Mikuláš.

In our article, we present M. Monkovicen's handwritten diary from 1623, a copy of which has been preserved in the University Library in Cluj-Napoca[3], and brings new information about the humanist scholar M. Monkovicenus, not yet published in biographical handbooks. This diary is mentioned in the Slovak biographical dictionary[4] as well as the Biographical Lexicon of Slovakia[5]. According to these documents, the manuscript diary of Martin Monkovicenus should have been in the manuscript collection (Collectanea) of Samuel Ivanka in Cluj. We know that Samuel Ivanka (* 22. November 1761, Necpaly – † 1842, most likely Belá today part of the Belá-Dulice municipality, Slovakia) was a rector in Slovak village Necpaly and during his life, he collected a lot of manuscripts and documents. At the end of his life, he sold some of these manuscripts to an antiquarian. The others were later bought from his widow by František Kubovič – a preacher from the village Mošovce. 14 extensive volumes of the manuscripts later appeared in the Transylvanian Museum in Cluj (Romania). This manuscript was found in Cluj. That is why we have to thank our colleague Dr. Andrea Marza at this point.

The manuscript in a relatively small space (less than 10 pages, format approximately A5) provides a lot of interesting and hitherto unknown information about Martin Monkovicenus. Already his title or incipit in the wording: *Diarium Rev. Martini Monkovizeny Pastoris Oppidi Tarnocz apud Liptovienses desumtum ex Libro cujus titulus Hominis Spiritualis Anatomia et Meditatio per me Samuelem Ivanka Anno Dni 1800*, speaks of the fact that M. Monkovicenus wrote down important data of his personal life in a book. It was a book of the German theologian, philosopher, and anthropologist Otto Casmann (1562-1607) *Hominis spiritualis anatomia et meditatio: ex sacrae scripturae fontibus et piorum tam recentium, quam veterum obseruatione deducta et methodice practiceque delineata. Collegio Paltheniano, Prostat in nobilis Francofurti 1605.*

It was nothing special to enter personal records into the book. Similarly, e.g. his peer Juraj Tesák Mošovský recorded data about his personal life into his own copy of the Historical Calendar (Kalendář Historický), which is one of the most fundamental works of Daniel Adam of Veleslavín (1546-1699), an important Czech writer and especially publisher. On the basis of the diary, we know that M.

[3] University Library in Cluj-Napoca, Signature Ms 334/VI, f. 77v-82r or pages 154-163; Incipit: *Diarium Martini Monkovicyeni Past. Ev. Tarnocensis...*

[4] Slovenský biografický slovník 1990, p. 218.

[5] Biografický lexikón Slovenska 2017, p. 557.

Monkovicenus was the owner of the book in question, and we assume that it was not the only one. Although we searched in the available bibliographies for an owner's record with the name Martin Monkovicenus, we did not find any. But we think that as an educated teacher and clergyman, he had to have more books.

A diary, even one that is not a separate publication, but is entered in another book, can be considered a so-called Ego-document, i.e. a source of personal, private nature. Similar to correspondence, handwritten notes in one's own books and various autobiographical genres (memoirs etc.), it appears when a person feels the need to capture events that directly concern him or to share them with others. The growth of correspondence, autobiographies and diaries falls in the Renaissance era, which began to emphasize the individuality of the individual and his personal experience. As a rule, ego-documents were not addressed to the (wider) public, but they have significant scientific value because provide wide opportunities for interdisciplinary research, e.g. in the field of biographical studies, diachronic linguistics, sociolinguistics, history of everyday life, etc.[6].

The *Diarium* of M. Monkovicenus can be considered a personal diary in which its author captured the period of his children's early childhood. In its final lines, it is written: *In hoc Monkovicziano Diario plura et copiosa repriebant quae pientissimus Vir de suis prolibus notavit* (In this diary of M. Monkovicenus, you will find many things that this very pious man recorded about his descendants). The term personal diary refers to chronologically ordered, usually dated personal records, made at short intervals and without a (long) time gap. A diary is any text written primarily for one's own use, or for one's own pleasure, characterized by the authenticity of self-expression and substantive informativeness. For its author, it is a means of mental hygiene, a ”confessor and a mirror” capable of wishing and recording good and bad, experienced and imagined. It consists of individual, as a rule, chronologically determinable dated (although often incomplete) fragments, which are often enriched with various subjective notes of the author, prayers and small literary units[7].

In the beginning of the diary, two parts are separated. In the first with the name *Memoriale I. Peregrinationum* M. Mokovicenus lists the cities in which he studied, in some cases also indicating the year in contrast to biographical handbooks, it states, e.g. Banská Bystrica (Neosolium) with the year 1610 or Třebíč without specifying the year.

The next part is titled *2. Functionum publicum* states that M. Monkovicenus was called from Prague to Trenčín by a baron (he does not name him, but we assume that it was Gašpar Ilešházy, whom he mentions in other diary entries) and was subsequently sent to the position of rector to Ružomberok. Then he got

[6] Mocná, Peterka et al. 2004, p. 98.
[7] *Ibidem*, p. 98.

married. There is still an entry about Bánovce (Nad Bebravou) in the diary, but without any further details. However, Monkovicenus returns to this city later when he says, that he was called there by his patron after his marriage and ceremonially introduced him on September 13 to Ioannes Hrabeczius.

The part devoted to public functions is smoothly followed by records from the author's personal life, respectively here, the writer of the diary interweaves information related to his personal life with information related to his profession. We read here that in 1614 he married the venerable virgin Barbara Baška, the daughter of Michal Baška, a person with a service commitment to the castle of Trenčín. Among others present, the esteemed Mr. Gašpar Suňog from Budatín took part in the wedding. From the diary, we do not know exactly who he is, but the members of the landowner branch of the Suňog family belonged to moderately wealthy nobles and often held various positions in Trenčín County. On October 26, 1618, the first-born son Martin was born. It was in the absence of father Martin Monkovicenus, because he was at that time in Liptov with his patron Gašpar Ilešházy (Casparus Illésházy 1593-1648), a member of the wealthiest family in Upper Hungary, hereditary prefect of the Trenčín and Liptov County, a graduate of the University of Leipzig, protector of Protestant clergy. The boy was baptized on October 30 by a deacon from Trenčín. M. Monkovicenus does not mention his name. However, he added a short satirical poem (six verses) about him. The names of the godfathers are also given in abbreviated and illegible form.

From August 12, 1619, M. Monkovicenus worked in Liptovský Trnovec. His daughter Anna was born here on November 17 of the same year. The baptism of the child is described in considerable detail, her seven godparents are named. They were mostly clergymen and their wives from the neighbouring villages of Liptov.

In the following lines, Martin Monkovicenus describes in relative detail the illnesses and injuries of his two children, Martin and Anna. But he also adds positive information, such as that Martin started clapping his hands or that Anna started crawling on all fours. We also learn that Martin Monkovicenus made a walker for his children. It is interesting to note that some Polish bandits were on the loose in Liptov County (June 26, 1619).

In the forenoon of May 13, 1621, Monkovicen's daughter Anna died, and on May 14 she had a funeral. She was buried by three priests, one of them (Gregorius Yaroskovinus) was also her godparent. M. Monkovicenus also recorded the topics of two sermons; *Moeror vester vertetur in gaudium* (an allusion to John XVI, 20) and *Ne malitia corrumperet intellectum* – (Wisdom 4,11).

On September 28, 1621, M. Monkovicen's third daughter, Magdaléna, was born. She was baptized two days later, on September 30. The godparents were again clergymen from nearby villages with their wives. The information about her

birth is followed by a quatrain, the author of which was Ján Lochman (1597-1645). It was probably a well-known Evangelical church dignitary and religious writer.

The fourth child was daughter Helena, who was born on January 1623 and after the return of M. Monkovicenus from Trenčín (we don't know how long M. Monkovicenus was there or why he went there) was baptized on February 16. Several outstanding personalities and their wives were invited to the baptism. Apparently, these personalities later became patrons of the girl. After her birth, M. Monkovicenus did not continue writing the diary. The diary ends with the date of Monkovicen's death. He died on May 22, 1624 (the exact date of death was not yet known) in Liptovský Trnovec.

Martin Monkovicen's diary is interesting not only because it contains a lot of information from the author's personal life but also because we learn who his friends and patrons were. Some of them were also significant personalities in the local cultural-historical context. The relations between important Protestants can therefore be traced in addition to blood relatives, the so-called consanguinitas, and marriage unions also in the functions of godparent, wedding witness and tutor. It was family events such as marriage and baptism that were opportunities to create strong social bonds between related and influential members of the community[8]. Among the information about the children, we find notes about where M. Monkovicenus was working at the time of their birth. The diary contains the birth dates of M. Monkovicen's children as well as other important dates related to his personal life. The author of the diary devotes the most space to his son, Martin and daughter Anna. In addition to biographical data, the diary also contains short prayers and poetic compositions (e.g. genethliacon, whose author is Ján Lochman, a pastor from St. Michael). The language of the diary is also interesting, although it is Latin, but the author also borrowed a few words (e.g. kmotrové) and short statements from Slovak. When the author describes his children's illnesses and injuries, he also uses a relatively large number of words related to medicine (convalescere, lacerare, asthma, tumor, raucedo, morbilli, sanguinea tussis…).

The data that M. Monkovicenus recorded in one of his books gives us a glimpse into the daily life of an educated humanist and thus they are a stone in the mosaic of the history of everyday life of the period of humanism. We can only conclude that thanks to the finding of this diary, we can reconstruct the life of one of the humanist authors in more detail and confirm many contemporary trends that were also reflected in printed literature.

[8] Kollárová 2008, p. 468; Hamar 2020, p. 112.

Bibliographical abbreviations

Biografický lexikón Slovenska 2017 – *Biografický lexikón Slovenska,* Zv. VI. M-N, Martin, 2017

Hamar 2020 – Tomáš Hamar, ”Svedectvá o existencii mecénov lekára Justusa Jána Torkoša v jeho tlačených dielach a v archívnych materiáloch”, in *Studia Bibliographica Posoniensia*, I, 2020, edited by Miriam Ambrúžová Poriezová, Bratislava, 2020, p. 108-119

Kollárová 2008 – Ivona Kollárová, ”Predhovor ako prameň pre odkrývanie dejín knižnej kultúry?”, in *Slovenská literatúra*, vol. 55, no. 6, 2008, p. 468-469

Mocná, Peterka et al. 2004 – Dagmar Mocná, Josef Peterka et al, *Encyklopedie literárních žánrů*, Praha, 2004

Slovenský biografický slovník 1990 – *Slovenský biografický slovník*, Zv. IV. M-Q, *Martin,1990*

Škovierová 2024 – Angela Škovierová, ”Slovak Scholars in Bohemia and Moravia and Czech Scholars in Slovakia Before and After the Battle of Biela Hora (1620)”, in *SVETOVI / WORLDS*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2024, p. 45-54