

Enlightenment and Freemasonry in the Life and Work of the Physician Joannis Baptistae Lalangue

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Abstract

Data on the educational and Freemasonry activities of Doctor Joannis Baptistae Lalangue have been relatively modestly represented in the scientific literature until now. Based on recent research, we have come to the realizations that give us a new context for the life and work of Lalangue, especially from the aspect of his social activity. All of the above had very significant repercussions on his entire public health work and especially on his journalistic and publishing work. John the Baptist Lalangue was a successful physician. During his medical studies in Vienna, he was recognized by Baron van Swieten, the first name in medicine of the Habsburg Monarchy. Recent knowledge speaks of his very notable Enlightenment and Freemasonry work, which largely determined his life and work. Lalangue has created a truly impressive literary work, which is closely related to his active Enlightenment and public Masonry engagement. The mentioned progressive Enlightenment engagement is also responsible for the fact that thanks to Lalangue, we already had printed medical original professional literature in the Croatian language in the second half of the 18th century. This directly changed the conditions in society, primarily in the field of public health, for the better, not only in Croatia but also throughout the Habsburg Monarchy.

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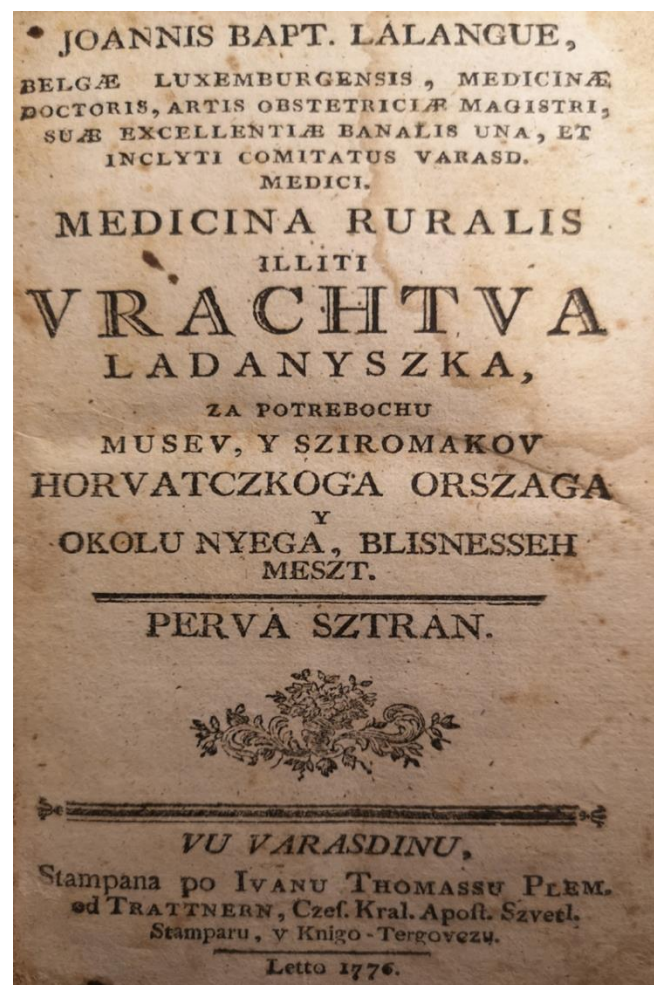
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Introduction

New information about John the Baptist Lalangue provides a very valuable insight into the social, economic, socio-economic and public health life of the 18th century in the Habsburg Monarchy. There is no doubt that the information about the overall Enlightenment and Freemasonry life and work of the distinguished and famous Doctor Joannis Baptistae Lalangue has so far been very poorly processed and represented in the scientific literature. On the trail of recent research, we acquired significant knowledge from which we obtained a lot of new data that complement previous research and represent the basis for further progress. It is precisely on the aforementioned foundations that we arrive at very reliable information, based on which a new account of the life and work of Doctor Lalangue is presented. The aforementioned recent knowledge certainly complements and rounds off numerous aspects of his social, public health and especially publishing and journalistic activities. Based on the aforementioned recent research, we have come to very significant discoveries that expand our knowledge about the truly peculiar and exceptional life of Doctor Lalangue. Doctor Lalangue himself undoubtedly left a very significant mark in the field of medicine, medical publishing, public health, Enlightenment and Freemasonry in the second half of the 18th century in the territory of Croatia and the entire Habsburg Monarchy. Although he has been unfairly neglected for many years, Lalangue has been getting his well-deserved valorization lately. Nowadays, John the Baptist Lalangue – Joannis Baptiste Lalangue (Matton, Luxembourg, 27 April 1743 – Varaždin, Croatia, 20 May 1799) is considered the founder of the original professional medical literature in the Croatian language. Lalangue published his first medical professional printed original book in the Croatian language in 1776, titled *Medicina ruralis iliti Vrachtva ladanyszka, za potrebochu musev, y szromakov Horvatzkoga orszaga y okolu nyega, blisnesseh meszt*, Trattner, Varaždin (Picture 1). His debut contains the most common diseases of that time, following the medical

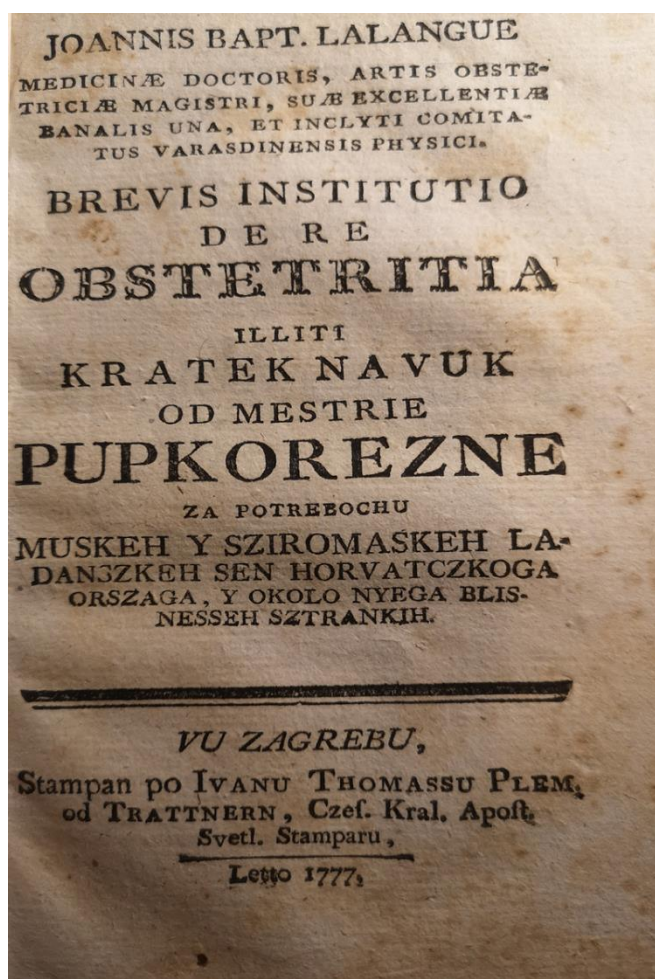
knowledge of the second half of the XVIII century (1-8).



Picture 1 Cover of Lalangue's first book from 1776.

As early as 1777, Lalangue published his first Croatian midwifery book *Brevis institutio de re obstetricia iliti Kratek navuk od mestrie pupkorezne za potrebuchu muskeh y szromaskeh ladanskeh sen horvatzkoga orszaga y okolo nyega blisnesseh sztrankih*, Trattner, Zagreb (Picture 2).

In 1779, Lalangue published his Croatian balneological debut, a book *Tractatus de aquis medicati regnorum Croatiae et Slavoniae etc. iliti Izpiszavanye vrachtvenih vod Horvatzkoga y Slavonskoga orszaga y od nachina nye vsivati za potrebochu lyudih*, Trattner, Zagreb (Picture 3) (1-8).

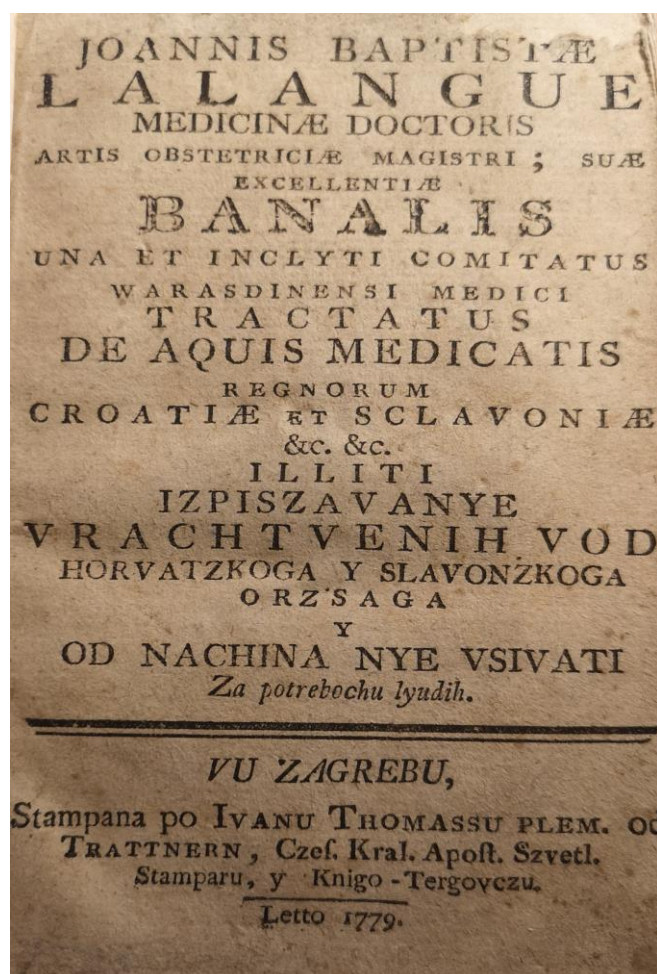


Picture 2 Cover of Lalangue's second book from 1777.

The Enlightenment spirit of John the Baptist Lalangue

Due to his qualities, he was noticed during his medical studies in Vienna by the baron and the first name of imperial medicine – Gerard van Swieten, who then became his mentor (9–14).

To understand the Enlightenment aspirations in the second half of the 18th century and the role outside the influence of Swieten, it is important to mention the famous physician Anton de Haen (The Hague, The Netherlands, 8 December 1704 – Vienna, Austria, 5 September 1776) (14). De Haen studied medicine in Leiden under the auspice of Herman Boerhaave and at the invitation of his mentor van Swieten, he came to the University of Vienna in 1754.



Picture 3 Cover of Lalangue's third book from 1779

Following the example of Leiden he established a large clinical center that was leading at that time in Europe (9, 10). Lalangue was fortunate to be in close contact with van Swieten and De Haen as leaders of these positive Enlightenment efforts of the second half of the 18th century and also to be a student and collaborator of many great medical thoughts of his time laying the solid foundations of the new systems and contributing to the improvement of public health conditions of the population throughout the Monarchy (1, 2, 5). Another professor of Lalangue at the Medical School in Vienna, Baron Heinrich Johann Nepomuk von Crantz (2, 3, 15) (Roodt, Luxembourg, 25 November 1722 – 18 January 1799, Judenburg, Styria, Austria) should be mentioned, as well as his magnificent work for the Habsburg Monarchy (Gesundbrunnen der Österreichischen Monarchie, Wien, 1777) (6, 15). It is their native country Luxembourg that is the link between the greatest minds of the second

half of the 18th century. Therefore, the reputation as well as the influence that Lalangue himself enjoyed as a medical student and as a young doctor is completely understandable. It is worth mentioning the important publishing work of Prof. Crantz, which highlights the pioneering grandiose publishing endeavor in the field of balneology, healing springs and mineral waters of the Habsburg Monarchy from 1775 (6). Lalangue also played a very important role in the work of Crantz by collecting samples of healing springs and mineral waters, which was of great use to him in publishing his book on Croatian and Hungarian spa and healing waters (this is the Croatian and Hungarian balneological debut, the author of which is Lalangue), which is very important for the study of balneology in this Croatian area (1, 2, 5, 16).

In 1782 Slovenians in Ljubljana received the first midwifery textbook in the Slovenian language by Dr Anton Makovic (Kostanjevica na Krki, 1750 – Idrija, Slovenia, 1803): Prashania, inu odgovori zhes vshegarstv, five years after Lalangue published the first midwifery textbook in Croatian (2). Makovic wrote his first Slovenian midwifery textbook (1782), modeled on the 1774 obstetric work and the 1775 midwifery textbook written by Viennese medical professor Raphael Johann Steidele (Innsbruck, Austria, 20 February 1737 – Vienna, Austria, 10 September 1823) (2). Like Lalangue's, Steidele's textbook of midwifery was printed at Trattner's printing house in Vienna (2, 17–21).

Lalangue and Croatian Freemasonry activities

Lalangue's Freemasonry activity most likely began already during his studies at the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna. His mentor, van Swieten, was a very influential Freemason and Lalangue himself very early came under the aforementioned influence of Freemasonry and Enlightenment. We do not yet have enough information about the involvement of Lalangue as a Freemason and further research is certainly ahead of us, which will help shed light on that period of his life and work. The best evidence that supports these facts comes from research,

which shows that Lalangue joined the work of the Freemason's Lodge in Glina very soon after arriving in Croatia. John the Baptist Lalangue was an active participant in the European Enlightenment in the second half of the 18th century in the context of Freemasonry. For the sake of quality analysis, we must also be acquainted with several historical facts about Freemasonry or Masonry. Freemasonry appeared on the world stage at the beginning of the 18th century. The first Croatian Masonic Lodge was founded in 1754 in Glina (2, 22). Lalangue was already engaged in Masonic circles during his medical studies in Vienna. Lalangue's Luxembourg descent certainly helped him rise to the very top of the medical profession in the second half of the 18th century. This is evidenced by historical sources which confirm that many great men of medical thought of Lalangue's time, at the same time leaders of Enlightenment aspirations, were also of Luxembourgish descent. Most of them, like Lalangue, were Freemasons. Freemasonry in Lalangue's time had a very positive impact on all segments of society, including public health (2, 22). Numerous greats, the most important intellectuals of the Lalangue era from the ranks of Freemasons, should be commended for all the far-reaching strides they have made in almost all areas of social action. The positive effects of this free-thinking work, which began in the second half of the 18th century, are felt to this day (2, 13, 22, 23). With Lalangue's arrival, Croatia and the Croats got the most prominent educator in the field of public health. Lalangue left an indelible mark in all areas in which he was engaged and which were of interest to him, with the primary goal of improving the living conditions of Croatian people (2, 13, 22, 23). John the Baptist Lalangue joined the Croatian Freemasons and their lodge in Glina (L'Amitié de Guerre – War Friendship) where he was admitted on 18 November 1771. This information is the oldest record confirming that Lalangue was certainly in Croatia in early November 1771 (22, 23). According to historical sources, the first Croatian Masonic Lodge was founded on the territory of the Military Border (according to the Turkish Empire) in Glina in 1759, under the name "War Friendship". The founding of the Varaždin

Masonic Lodge in 1772, a year after Lalangue arrived from Vienna, is associated with his arrival in Croatia's then-capital Varaždin. The Zagreb Lodge was founded a year later in 1773 (2, 13, 22, 23). According to historical sources from the second half of the 18th century, Lalangue was one of the most agile Freemasons in Croatia and he is considered an ardent supporter of Drašković's faction (2, 13, 23).

Lalangue's Freemasonry activity in Varaždin and Croatia

Given that Lalangue settled permanently in Varaždin, recent research also confirms his accession to the Varaždin Masonic Lodge, which is understandable. Certainly, his educational and Freemason involvement is inextricably linked to his public health, social and publishing work. Based on the aforementioned recent knowledge, we can form a much better understanding of Lalangue's work, his life and especially his publishing work, through which he greatly indebted Croatian medicine and public health, as well as numerous other segments of social activity. In his further Masonic engagement in 1784, John the Baptist Lalangue became the elder of the Varaždin Masonic Lodge Vorsicht (Vigilance), under the secret name Hippocrates (22). The first Varaždin Masonic Lodge was founded in 1772 and was called the "Perfect Alliance" (L' Union Parfaite). After two years the Lodge changed its name to "Sloboda" (Libertas, Freiheit). In 1784 the Lodge changed its name again to the "Good Council" (Zum Guten Rat) and moved from Varaždin to the Hungarian Zalaegerszeg based on the decision of Emperor Joseph II on placing Freemasonry lodges under direct state-police administration (22). The first Varaždin Freemasonry Lodge was founded in January 1772 at the instigation of Count Ivan Drašković, along with Lalangue and Captain Breščić (Bresci) of Russian origin, Count Stjepan Niczky and Varaždin lawyer noble Pavel Kugler. Count Stjepan Niczky (1747 – 1777) was the first elder of the Varaždin Masonic Lodge "Perfect Alliance", while Lalangue was the first supervisor (Niczky was later recorded as the great prefect of Križevci). Antun noble Holzman (1744 –)

succeeded Lalangue as the supervisor of the Varaždin Lodge. Holzman was a secretary in the state administration, while Aleksander von Pashory (1749 – 1798) was the secretary of the Lodge. Antun noble Holzman worked as a registrar for the Trade and Economic Commission in Varaždin at the Croatian Royal Council (from its founding in 1769 until his transfer to Zagreb in 1776). The Croatian Royal Council operated in Zagreb, as the capital, from 1776 to 1779 when it was abolished and annexed to the Hungarian Royal Council (23–26). Alexander von Pashory served as an adviser to Field Marshal, Governor and Ban Francis Count Nadaždi, after whose death he led the Lodge until 1779. Based on the mentioned historical sources and facts, the reasons why Lalangue dedicated his debut to the Ban and Masonic brother Franjo Nadaždi, thanks to whom he came to Croatia and to whom he became a personal physician and a very close associate, become clear. We can also gain a better understanding of why his midwifery debut is dedicated to Stephen's wife, Countess Eleonora Niczky. Niczky himself, as a Masonic brother and close associate, and his wife, wholeheartedly assisted Lalangue in his public health work, especially in the field of midwifery and publishing. Therefore, it is clearer why all of Lalangue's books were printed by Johann noble Trattner, his Masonic brother, who contributed significantly to the great popularization of Lalangue's works and ideas, and not only by the fact that he had the imperial privilege of printing and selling books throughout the Monarchy (23–26). This explains why Lalangue dedicated his literary debut to his Masonic brother Ban Nadaždi and his midwifery debut to Countess Niczky, whose husband, like Lalangue, was a very respectable and influential Freemason. It is also clear that Trattner was a very influential Freemason (also Lalangue's friend) with whom Lalangue published all his medical professional original works in Croatian during his lifetime. Historical sources best explain the lucky circumstances that favored the remarkable achievement of John the Baptist Lalangue. Croatia and Croats were lucky that a man like John the Baptist Lalangue lived and worked in their area. Through his Freemasonry activities,

he made many positive changes important for the life of the Croatian people, especially in the field of public health. We have not yet realized the true greatness of John the Baptist Lalangue and his true valorization is something we have yet to do and which Lalangue undoubtedly deserves (23–26). These documents prove that Lalangue was a very prominent and engaged Freemason of his time and that he was also associated with the most prominent minds of the second half of the 18th century, who also largely belonged to the Freemasons. The social environment that was changed under the influence of the Freemasons of Lalangue's time is largely responsible for the development of science, economy, culture, medicine and all areas of social activity. It is certain that without engagement, unquestionable sensitivity for the loved ones and the desire to change the difficult feudal framework, to which the Freemasons of Lalangue's era truly contributed, there would be no progress in the modern world for a long time. It is also interesting to note that van Swieten's son Gottfried Freiherr van Swieten (Leiden, Luxembourg, 29 October 1733 – Vienna, Austria, 29 March 1803), was a distinguished Mason and also a diplomat, a famous librarian and a government officer who served the Habsburg Monarchy during the 18th century. He was a great lover of music and a patron. He supported and was a patron of three great musical geniuses (also Freemasons): Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Salzburg, Austria, 27 January 1756 – Vienna, Austria, 5 December 1791), Ludwig van Beethoven (Bonn, Germany, 16/17 December 1770 – Vienna, Austria, 26 March 1827) and Joseph Haydn (Rohrau, 31 March 1732 – Vienna, Austria, 31 May 1809). A large number of the greatest minds of the 18th century belonged to the Freemasons. The aforementioned Enlightenment ideals, embraced by a great number of people with open hearts and minds, including Freemasons like John the Baptist Lalangue, had changed and improved living conditions, including advancements in the field of public health in Europe, the Habsburg Monarchy and in Croatia. Lalangue dedicated his life to these ideals, particularly in his beloved Varaždin (1, 2, 23–26).

This work builds on the work of the great Croatian medical historian Lujó Thaller, who stated that Lalangue was a Freemason (27). Encouraged by this, in our research we have confirmed the research of Branko Šömen that Lalangue was a high-ranking member of the Freemasons in Croatia (28). All of the above fits into the context of the time and the educational activities carried out by the Freemasons of that time. This emphasizes the weight and significance of Ivan the Baptist Lalangue's contributions to public health, education, humanism and Freemasonry. It is indisputable that all of this is connected to the implementation of the imperial law on public health and improving the health of the population, which Skenderović and colleagues write about in their research (29).

Conclusion

From the aforementioned new insights, we received additional confirmation that John the Baptist Lalangue was not only a successful and famous physician but also a very prominent educator and Freemason. New insights have been of great help for a better understanding of the greatness of his work, helping us to valorize a truly impressive literary work in the field of medicine in the Croatian language. Both the circumstances that prevailed in Croatia and in the Habsburg Monarchy in the second half of the XVIII century are not comparable to today, especially in terms of socio-economic conditions but also the technological achievements that we enjoy today. With all of the technological possibilities of today, it would be almost impossible for us to publish in such a short time a truly impressive literary work as Lalangue's. Based on the above, Lalangue's greatness is even more brilliant. Certainly, Lalangue's progressive Enlightenment engagement is also creditable for the fact that we had original printed medical debuts in the Croatian language in the second half of the 18th century, which only a few nations in the world can be proud of. Based on the above, we must believe that his Enlightenment and Masonry activity and affiliation were of great help to him, which was extremely progressive and

commendable in his time. Lalangue's heritage is truly exceptional and the data of the latest research are especially important to us, which complete the data on his exceptional educational and Freemasonry activities. In addition to the fact that he was a truly exceptional doctor, the aforementioned knowledge about Dr Lalangue was not sufficiently known and researched until now and it was also not valued and represented enough in the scientific literature. The aforementioned recent research certainly completes and complements the data on the work and Lalangue's life. Therefore, the scientific and professional public receives invaluable data, very significant for the further valorization of Lalangue's public health, social, educational, Freemasonry, publishing, journalistic and medical activities. It is indisputable that Lalangue's exceptional involvement, as an

inimitable individual and through the significant work we inherit today, brought a touch of the most modern European aspirations to Croatia in the second half of the 18th century, marking the entire Habsburg Monarchy. These activities changed the difficult feudal conditions, which prevailed until the middle of the 19th century and improved public health conditions in Croatia and the Habsburg Monarchy.

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Prosvjetiteljstvo i slobodno zidarstvo u životu i djelu liječnika Ivana Krstitelja Lalanguea

Podaci o obrazovnim i slobodnozidarskim aktivnostima doktora Joannisa Baptistae Lalanguea do sada su relativno skromno predstavljeni u znanstvenoj literaturi. Na temelju nedavnih istraživanja, došli smo do spoznaja koje stvaraju novi kontekst za Lalangueov život i rad, posebno s aspekta njegove društvene aktivnosti. Sve navedeno imalo je vrlo značajne reperkusije na cijeli njegov rad u javnom zdravstvu, a posebno na njegovo spisalačko i izdavačko djelovanje. Ivan Krstitelj Lalangue bio je uspješan liječnik, tijekom studija medicine u Beču prepoznao ga je barun van Swieten, prvo ime u medicini Habsburške Monarhije. Nedavna saznanja govore o njegovom vrlo zapaženom prosvjetiteljskom i slobodnozidarskom radu, što je uvelike odredilo njegov život i rad. Lalangue je stvorio doista impresivno književno djelo, koje je usko povezano s njegovim aktivnim prosvjetiteljskim i javnim slobodnozidarskim angažmanom. Navedeni progresivni prosvjetiteljski angažman također je zaslužan za činjenicu da smo zahvaljujući Lalangueu već u drugoj polovici 18. stoljeća imali tiskanu medicinsku originalnu stručnu literaturu na hrvatskom jeziku. To je izravno promijenilo uvjete u društvu, prvenstveno na području javnog zdravstva, na bolje, ne samo u Hrvatskoj, već i u cijeloj Habsburškoj Monarhiji..