

Johann Heinrich (John Henry) Jung, called Jung-Stilling (1740–1817)
A concise biographical and bibliographical survey

1740, September 12:

Johann Heinrich Jung, (he later called himself "Stilling" which means: a humble, modest, unpretentious person), was born in the small village Grund in the former principality of Nassau-Siegen, situated roughly in the middle of Germany. He is the son of John Helmann Jung (1716–1802) and Joan Dorothea, née Fischer (1717–1742). His father is a tailor and occasionally works as a schoolmaster. He also helps now and then his brother John Henry Jung (1711–1786) who is a land surveyor and in later years becomes honorary chief mines inspector in the principality of Nassau-Oranien. The young couple lives in their parents' home, which was usual in that time. The family Jung, belonging to the lower middle class of their days, is deeply religious. Morning prayer, grace at meals and evening prayer are a matter of course, as well as the attendance of service on Sunday at Hilchenbach. Here was the church for the surrounding rural communities and farmsteads.

1742:

Stilling's mother died. His father fell due to that in a period of depressiveness. So the little Stilling largely is brought up by his grandfather Ebert Jung (1680–1751), owner of a small farm and a charcoal burner, and his wife Margarethe, née Helmes (1681–1765). Moreover, there are four younger aunts who helped to provide for the little boy. After about a year of melancholy the father dedicates himself with care to the education of his son.

1747–1750:

Stilling attends the elementary school of his native village Grund, and in the last year the school of the nearby Allenbach where his father found employment as a teacher.

1750–1754:

Stilling is a scholar at the secondary school of Hilchenbach, a small town with at that time roughly 780 inhabitants and the centre for all adjacent villages. Here he learned to express himself fluently in Latin which was the language of the educated people at that time.

1755:

Confirmation: a rite by which the recipient is admitted to full communion with the reformed church. Since 1559 Nassau-Siegen was a Calvinistic heartland in Germany.

1755–1762:

Stilling becomes a teacher at diverse villages in his local environment. Besides, Stilling works as a tailor and button maker with his father. – School attendance was compulsory for all Children between 6 und 14 years. Intelligent young males and literate craftsmen then regularly acted as teachers in the rural areas. A teacher was elected and paid by the village

community. The parish priest carried out school supervision.

1762 April:

Since he does not see any professional advancement at home, Stilling decides to leave his fatherland. As a tailor-journeyman he travels to the neighbouring duchy of Berg, an early industrial region. Soon he gets a contract as a tutor in the family of the manufacturer (iron products, chiefly for marine applications in the shipyards on the Dutch North Sea), wholesale trade business man and landowner Peter John Flender (1727–1807), acting also as the chief's right-hand man. It is here that he had the opportunity to study both the practice and the fundamental principles of production, business administration, agriculture and commerce. He considers those years as university-like studies in technics as well as in business management. – During the seven years with Flender, Stilling learned mostly autodidactically French, Greek and Hebrew.

1768:

John Baptist Molitor (1713–1768), a Catholic priest and lay ophthalmologist at Attendorn, (a town in the surrounding area of Nassau-Siegen) hands Stilling over a manuscript with detailed advices for the diagnosis and therapy of eye diseases. This is the beginning of Stilling's career as an ophthalmologist. Since 1773 he performs eye surgery, and for the most part as a specialist who removes a patient's cataract. Throughout his life Stilling may have operated approximately 3'000 patients. About 25'000 people suffering eye diseases he gave ophthalmological advice. Stilling demanded no honorarium for his medical support.

1770:

In February, engagement to Christine Heyder (1749–17781), the sickly daughter of a small-sized textile manufacturer at Wuppertal-Ronsdorf. – In the autumn of that year, after a longer period of intensive self-study, he signs on as a medical student at the University of Strassburg. Here he came into contact amongst many others with John Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) and John Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).

1771, June 17:

Marriage to Christine Heyder; the couple had three children of whom two survived.

1772:

Final degree in medicine at Strassburg. Opening of a doctor's practice at Wuppertal-Elberfeld: at that time an industrial and commercial city with roughly 7'500 inhabitants. Here Stilling acted as a general practitioner and eye doctor for seven years. – Stilling set up and deepened during these years friendly relationships with many writers and academics, above all with the Zurich poet, writer, philosopher, physiognomist and theologian Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801).

1773, April 22:

On presenting a doctoral thesis to the University of Strassburg, Johann Heinrich Jung is conferred the degree of a Doctor of Medicine. Stilling's thesis deals with the metal mining in his home country. Sciences at that time were attached commonly to the Faculty of Medicine, and the medical professors regularly were competent in at least one natural science. – Dedicatee of Stilling's thesis is Carl Theodor, elector of the Palatine at Mannheim, his sovereign, whose realm then also included the duchy of Berg with the capital city Dusseldorf on the Rhine river.

1774, July 22:

John Wolfgang Goethe visits Stilling at Elberfeld and takes the manuscript of "Henrich Stillings Jugend" (Henrich Stilling's Childhood) with him. – Colleagues envy, mistrust and his wife's sickliness are making life increasingly difficult for Stilling at Wuppertal-Elberfeld. In addition, Stilling became more and more indebted. His doctor's surgery was not economically profitable. The father-in-law, therefore, had to help out and to act as a guarantor.

1775:

Composition of "Die Schleuder eines Hirtenknaben gegen den hohnsprechenden Philister, den Verfasser des Sebaldu Nothanker" (The Sling of a Herdboy against the Philistine, the mocking author of Sebaldu Nothanker). Writer of "Sebaldu Nothanker" was the radical enlightenment philosopher and bookseller Christoph Friedrich Nicolai (1733–1811) at Berlin.

1776:

Publication of "Die große Panacee wider die Krankheit des Religionszweifels" (The Great Panacea against the Malady of Religious Scepticism). "Panacea" means a remedy for each ill or difficulty: something that would make all of one's troubles and problems disappear. – The treatise is followed by the "Theodicee des Hirtenknaben als Berichtigung und Vertheidigung der Schleuder desselben" (Theodicy of the Herdboy as a Correction and Defence of his Sling). The term "theodicy" refers to the defense of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil in the world.

1777:

"Henrich Stillings Jugend. Eine wahrhafte Geschichte" (Henrich Stilling's Childhood. A true History) is issued in one of the most famous publishing houses of those days. It quickly grows into a bestseller. Since then Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling has his place amongst the classical authors of German-language literature. – This first narrative description as well as the following autobiographical reports of Stilling are translated into many languages and made him famous in the global literary world.

1778:

Stilling has published some well-founded articles in a scientific journal about technical and business-related questions. Hence he becomes highly esteemed at the Palatine

administration at Mannheim. As a result, Stilling was appointed Professor of Applied Economics (Agriculture, Forestry, Technology, Commerce and Veterinary Medicine) at the Kameral Hohen Schule (Academy of Economic and Administrative Sciences) at Kaiserslautern in Palatine. Thanks to his broad experience in all the subjects he had to teach, Stilling without doubt was the ideal person for this professorship. Accordingly, Stilling was able to realise the strive for know-how transfer from theory into practice and vice versa, and this is reflected in all of his related textbooks. – Publication of "Henrich Stillings Jünglings=Jahre. Eine wahrhafte Geschichte" (Henrich Stilling's Youthful Years. A true Story) and "Henrich Stillings Wanderschaft. Eine wahrhafte Geschichte" (Henrich Stilling's Wanderings. A true History). – The repeatedly used subtitle "a true history" should demonstrate that the text contains experienced reality, and is not existing only in the imagination or fancy. – Mainly the growing financial burden obliges Stilling to write not only course books for his students but also novels.

1779:

"Die Geschichte des Herrn von Morgenthau" (The History of Herr von Morgenthau) is published as a novel and was translated in Dutch some years later. At the same time he begins to write tales for a Palatine almanac.

1781:

Decease of his wife Christine at Kaiserslautern on October, 18. – The novel "Die Geschichte Florentins von Fahlendorf" (The History of Florentin von Fahlendorf) is published and soon translated into Dutch and French. – Stilling gets initiated as a member of the masonic lodge "Karl August zu den drei flammenden Herzen" (Charles August to the three flaming Hearts) at Kaiserslautern, a deputy lodge of the "Karl zur Eintracht" (Charles for Harmony) at the residence city Mannheim. All secret societies were prohibited 1784 in the realm of elector Charles Theodor, and the lodge at Kaiserslautern had to be closed. In later residential locations Stilling was not again active as a freemason. Nevertheless he held close contact to leading freemasons. So through the decades John Frederick Mieg (1744–1819), member of the Reformed ecclesiastical council at Heidelberg, was his friend and even the foster father of his daughter Elisabeth (1786–1802) who grew up in the Mieg family. John Frederick Mieg was a leading freemason and secretly chief of the Illuminati Order in Palatine.

1781-84:

Stilling publishes the monthly magazine "Der Volkslehrer" (The People's Teacher). All the articles and stories are written by him alone. The periodical is provided as an support in the struggle for life of the ordinary people. To this target group Stilling presents educative stories and practical counsels for home, leisure and garden: from animal husbandry to childbed care up to healthy eating. Stilling adapts himself in the presentation of specific topics to the way of thinking and speaking in the envisioned readership.

1782, Aug. 14:

Stilling marries Maria Salome (Selma) von St. George (1760–1790). Six children issued to this marriage, but only two survived.

1783:

"Leben der Theodore von der Linden" (Life of Theodore von der Linden) appears as a novel.

1784, November 13:

Stilling becomes an ordinary member of the "Kurpfälzische Deutsche Gesellschaft in Mannheim" (Mannheim German Society of the Electoral Palatinate), which had been founded in 1775, not least with the aim of promoting German-language writings as a counterweight to the leading French-written literature in this century. The membership Stilling brought in contact with important personalities of the Palatinate and beyond.

1784, autumn:

The Academy of Economic and Administrative Sciences is transferred to Heidelberg. Here it was organised as a semi-autonomous department of the university under the name "Staatswirtschafts Hohe Schule" (National Economy Academy) and assigned to the faculty of philosophy. Stilling and his family had to move from Kaiserslautern to Heidelberg.

1784-85:

The novel "Theobald oder die Schwärmer. Eine wahre Geschichte" (Theobald, or the Fanatics. A True History) appears in print. The descriptions in it are in no small extent autobiographical. However, as in similar novels by other authors, as well here it has proven difficult to separate real experiences of Stilling in his life and imaginary. Nevertheless the precise descriptions of the activity within enthusiastic Christian groups is surely based on Stilling's empirical knowledge in his home country and in the duchy of Berg. This is confirmed by other reliable historical sources.

1785 March 31:

Stilling is appointed "Kurpfälzischer Hofrat" (Palatine Councillor) by his sovereign, the elector Charles Theodor. At this time the title of "Councillor" was associated with considerable increase in social esteem. That in turn was of strong advantage for Stilling as a traveller ophthalmologist. An eye surgeon in those days came to the domicile of the blind. On the other hand, German small states and cities sealed oneself off by entry and transit barriers. So Stilling often had to pass five and even more turnpikes on the way to his patient. As a Palatine Councillor in most cases he got a preferred clearance and prompter passage on the borders. – Stilling published "Gemeinnütziges Lehrbuch der Handlungswissenschaft für alle Klassen von Kaufleuten und Handlungstudirenden (Textbook of Commerce useful for Everyone and especially for all Traders and Students of Commerce). The book is written with a practical orientation and reveals the extensive

knowledge Stilling has acquired during his time in the enterprise of Flender. A second edition appeared in 1799 and a Danish translation even in 1825.

1786, Nov. 8:

The honorary doctorate "Der Weltweisheit Doktor" (doctor in philosophy) is awarded Stilling by the prestigious University of Heidelberg. – The textbook "Anleitung zur Cameral=Rechnungs=Wissenschaft nach einer neuen Methode des doppelten Buchhaltens" (A Guide to Accounting following a new Approach of double Bookkeeping) is published. It demonstrates that Stilling has detailed knowledge in all cases of bookkeeping.

1787:

Appointment to the University of Marburg on the chair for Economic Sciences. By and by Stilling grow into an important personality in scholarly, literary and public life not only at Marburg but also beyond. – He edits the short-lived "Intelligenzblatt für Hessen" (Information Leaflet for Hesse) and also contributes articles to that weekly. – Publication of the "Blicke in die Geheimnisse der Natur=Weisheit; denen Herren von Dalberg Herdern und Kant gewidmet" (Glances into the Secrets of Natural Wisdom, dedicated to Messrs. Dalberg, Herder and Kant). The book appeared without any indication of Stilling as the author. It reveals that Stilling has rooted himself deeply in secret teachings: a fact he conceals in all parts of his life story. – Next came out "Virgils Georgicon in deutsche Hexameter übersetzt" (Vergil's Georgica translated into German Hexameters). The hexameters now and then show up bumpy. But all agricultural technical terms are translated from Latin full and accurately, unless as is the case in highly acclaimed versions of other translators. It clearly shows that Stilling has knowledge and detailed practical experience in all the thematic areas pointed out by Vergil. – Also came in print 1787 the "Jubelrede über den Geist der Staatswirthschaft gehalten den 7ten November 1786, als die Universität Heidelberg ihr viertes Jubiläum feierte" (Celebratory Speech on the Spirit of National Economy, delivered on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the foundation of Heidelberg University). This academic speech found thunderous applause amongst all members of the festival gathering at Heidelberg. Both, in form and content, it is without doubt the best speech held at that event and surely the best speech delivered by Stilling at all. – In the same year was published the "Lehrbuch der Staats=Polizey=Wissenschaft" (Textbook of Political and Administrative Science) with the biographical sketch (instead of a preface) "Meine Geschichte als Lehrer der staatswirthschaftlichen Wissenschaft" (My History as a Teacher of Public Economy).

1789:

Stilling gives in print the "Lehrbuch der Finanz=Wissenschaft" (Textbook of Public Finance) in which he submits some unusual ideas relating the tax receipts. – Publication of "Henrich Stillings häusliches Leben. Eine wahrhafte Geschichte" (Stilling's Domestic Life. A true History).

1790:

On May 23 death of his second wife Selma. – Publication of the "Lehrbuch der Cameral=Wissenschaft oder Cameral=Praxis" (Textbook of State Economic Affairs oder Cameralistic Practice). – On November 19 third marriage to Elisabeth Coing (1760–1817). There were four children arising from this wedlock, three of them survived.

1791: Publication of his book "Die Methode den grauen Star auszuziehen und zu heilen, nebst einem Anhang von verschiedenen andern Augenkrankheiten und der Cur=Art derselben" (Method of Removing and Healing a Cataract, together with an appendix on various other eye diseases and the ways to cure them). Stilling hold courses in techniques of surgical ophthalmology at the medical faculty of the University of Marburg, and the textbook was a guideline for his students.

1792, April 13:

Hanna, daughter of his first marriage, tie the knot with Frederick Henry Christian Schwarz, at this time country parson. In 1805 he was appointed Professor of Theology at the University of Heidelberg. The couple had ten children. The descendants are flourishing until these days.

1792:

Stilling published "Die Grundlehre der Staatswirthaft ein Elementarbuch für Regentensöhne und alle, die sich dem Dienst des Staates und der Gelehrsamkeit widmen wollen" (Basic teachings of Economic and Administrative Science for Sons of Regents and all those who intend to serve the State and the Eruditeness). Stilling dedicated this textbook to the Prince Regent of Hesse-Kassel, whom he had to give lessons in these disciplines.

1793

Stilling put out "Über den Revolutions=Geist unserer Zeit zur Belehrung der bürgerlichen Stände" (About the Revolutionary Spirit of the Time as an Instruction to the Middle Classes) in which he warns against a development in Germany similar to the events in the course of the French Revolution.

1794:

The first volume of the novel "Heimweh" (Homesickness) appears in print.

1795–1816:

"Der graue Mann, eine Volksschrift" (The Grey Man, a popular Magazine) appears in 30 issues. The magazine mostly is directed to the lower social classes which have become uncertain of their Christian belief in the course of the confusion of the time between 1789 (French Revolution) and 1815 (Congress of Vienna and the restructuring of Europe).

1795-1801:

The "Scenen aus dem Geisterreiche" (Scenes in the World of Spirits) are published. Here Stilling describes mystic experiences: elations into the world beyond. His angel guardian Siona at times accompanied Stilling, and the angel even dictated him scenes. Until now the "Scenes" remains in the book trade in many reprints. The "Scenes" moreover were translated in English, Dutch and Russian.

1796:

The fourth (and last) volume of the novel "Das Heimweh" (Homesickness), whose first part came out in 1794, appears in print. It is supplemented by the "Schlüssel zum Heimweh" (Key to Homesickness). "Homesickness" soon has proved to be a best-seller. For Stilling meets exactly the pulse of the time, characterised by a deep-seated uncertainty across all segments of society caused by the various changes in the course of the French Revolution. – The "Homesickness" triggered a voluminous correspondence with people of all classes, inter alia with Charles Frederick of Baden and with Charles of Hesse, the brother of his sovereign landgrave William of Hesse-Cassel.

1799:

"Die Siegesgeschichte der christlichen Religion in einer gemeinnützigen Erklärung der Offenbarung Johannis" (The History of the Victories of the Christian Religion. A Popular Explanation of the Revelation of St. John) is published anonymously. Stilling estimates his book as great success, while critics stated the opposite.

1801, March to May:

First patient travel to eye diseased in Switzerland. A wealthy woman at Winterthur, freed from blindness by Stilling, made him a generous donation by which he was at long last debt-free. On April 20, the famous painter and engraver Professor John Hery Lips portrayed Jung. Due to that we have a very reliable picture of the 60 year old Stilling.

1801, September 28:

Stilling suffered an accident with his coach near Rotenburg on the Fulda river. He incurred serious injuries and had almost died. Throughout his life Stilling had to suffer as a consequence of this traffic accident.

1802, September to November:

Second patient travel to eye diseased in Switzerland. On the outward journey and on the return journey meeting and intensive talks with Charles Frederick of Baden in the Karlsruhe Palast.

1803 to 1807:

"Der christliche Menschenfreund in Erzählungen für Bürger und Bauern" (The Christian Philanthropist. Stories for Townsmen and Country People) is published in a series of four brochures.

1803:

Stilling gives up his position as professor at the University of Marburg. The immediate reason were reprimands against him from the government at Kassel. But what is more: Stilling has undergone a deep inner change. He now felt called himself for the rest of his life to strengthen the Christian faith. – Stilling is appointed counsellor to the monarch Charles Frederick of Baden. Since years Stilling was connected with Charles Frederick in a kind of elective affinity. The family moved to Heidelberg. Stilling leads the life of a freelance religious writer, ophthalmologist and counsellor to his fatherly friend Charles Frederick.

1803–1804:

Re-erection and reorganisation of the University of Heidelberg. Charles Frederick requested Stilling's opinion on the candidates, first of all on the aspirants for a chair in theology.

1804:

Publication of "Heinrich Stillings Lehr=Jahre. Eine wahrhafte Geschichte" (Heinrich Stilling's Years of Apprenticeship. A true Story) appears in print. Unlike as before, the first name here is written "Heinrich" which Stilling uses in his civic life and in his various publishments.

1806:

Removal to Karlsruhe, the residence of Charles Frederick of Baden. The ageing monarch demanded the daily personal contact with his trusted friend and counsellor. Stilling himself found accommodation in the Karlsruhe Palace, and he was together with the personal physician at table with the monarch. Stilling's family moved into a flat in the city.

1808:

Stilling is appointed Grossherzoglich Badischer Geheimer Hofrat (Grand-Ducal Baden Privy Councillor).

Publication of "Theorie der Geister-Kunde in einer Natur= Vernunft= und Bibelmässigen Beantwortung der Frage: Was von Ahnungen, Gesichtern und Geistererscheinungen geglaubt und nicht geglaubt werden müsse" (Theory of Pneumatology. In Reply to the Question, what ought to be believed or disbelieved concerning Presentiments, Visions, and Apparitions, according to Nature, Reason, and Scripture). Until now this book has been repeatedly reprinted and also in one or another form reissued. Translations are put out in Swedish, Dutch, French and English. This book has established in some circles his fame as a ghost seer, though Stilling takes in this treatise a determined stance against any form of superstition.

1811, June 10:

Death of Charles Frederick of Baden. Stilling has to move out of his room in the Karlsruhe Palace, and he moved to his family in the city. For the rest of his life, however, his remuneration remains undiminished.

1814 to 1815:

Jung-Stilling's "Erzählungen" (Stories) appear in three volumes with a preface by John Ludwig Ewald (1747–1822).

1817 April 2:

Stilling passes away at Karlsruhe, where he is also buried. He dies eleven days after his third wife. Three wives and seven children deceased before him.