



MATEVŽ GRADIŠEK AND BLAŽ POTOÈNIK – 19th CENTURY HOMEOPATHS IN SLOVENIA

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Homeopathy began to spread in Slovenia in the first half of 19th century and soon became one of the most popular forms of complementary medicine. Despite the ban that was imposed on its practice, it gained widespread support especially among clergy and aristocracy. In this period lived two most important homeopathic healers in Slovenia. Matevž Gradišek (also known as dr. Faustus) (1776-1837) was a prior of the Order of the Brothers of Mercy, who learned the basics of homeopathy during his study of medicine in Prague. He was mentioned in the book *Briefe über Homöopathie* in 1833, written by the physician Joseph Attomyr, as the man who did most for the popularization of the new method in Carniola.

On July 13th 1824 he buys a property outside Ljubljana and builds a house and the chapel. On October 24th of the same year he receives permission for practicing medicine. His results with homeopathic method are such that Bishop Wolf summoned him to Ljubljana, when he got ill. Due to his way of healing, he got into conflict with physicians, most notably with Dr. Viljem Lipich, author of the *Topography of Ljubljana* and work on dipsobiostatics (toxic effects of the ingested alcohol).

Blaž Potoènik was a parish priest in Šentvid near Ljubljana between 1833 and 1872 and also the author of many poems with prevalently religious thematic. The greatest Slovene poet, France Prešeren (1800–1849), mentions him in his poem: A poet you were, now a homeopath you are / The chalice of life you were, now the cup of poison you are.