

# The apothecaries in the archives of Stična monastery

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# Cistercian order

- founded by Robert of Molesme in 1098, at Citeaux Abbey
- Fast spread through Europe in 12th and 13th Century
- More than 330 abbeys during the lifetime of st. Bernard of Clairvaux
- Decline during reformation, dissolution of several monasteries
- Rules of St. Benedict of Nurcia



# Cistercians and healing

- Healing of patients recommended by the rules of St. Benedict (chapter 36):
  - Before all things and above all things, care must be taken of the sick, so that they will be served as if they were Christ in person; for He Himself said, "I was sick, and you visited Me" (Matt 25:36), and, "What you did for one of these least ones, you did for Me" (Matt. 25:40).
  - But let the sick on their part consider that they are being served for the honor of God, and let them not annoy their sisters who are serving them by their unnecessary demands. Yet they should be patiently borne with, because from such as these is gained a more abundant reward.
  - Therefore the Abbess shall take the greatest care that they suffer no neglect.
    - For these sick let there be assigned a special room and an attendant who is God-fearing, diligent and solicitous.
    - Let the use of baths be afforded the sick as often as may be expedient; but to the healthy, and especially to the young, let them be granted more rarely.
    - Moreover, let the use of meat be granted to the sick who are very weak, for the restoration of their strength; but when they are convalescent, let all abstain from meat as usual.
  - The Abbess shall take the greatest care that the sick be not neglected by the cellarers or the attendants; for she also is responsible for what is done wrongly by her disciples.

# Cistercians and healing

- More rigorous approach
- General Chapter forbade the dispensing of drugs outside the monastery (1157)
  - De medicis monachis vel conversis ab olim statutum est, ut extra domos suas pro medicinae opere non pernoctent neque saecularibus dent.
- Only the use of simplest medicines was allowed
- Several religious punishments, even excommunication
- Later the rules generally relaxed

# Stična (Sittich) monastery

- The oldest and the only operating Cistercian monastery in Slovenia
- Established by patriarch Peregrinus from Aquileia in 1135/36
- Builder brother Michael
- First monks from Rein (Austria) and Morimond (France)
- Dissolved in 1784, reestablished in 1898





# Archives of Stična monastery

- Dispersed after 1784
- The majority of documents in Vienna, Graz, Rein and Ljubljana
- Library contained 1827 titles, 263 from greco-roman classics, from the fields of phylosophy and medicine

# Pharmacy

- Mentioned in several documents from 1515 onwards
- Located on ground floor, near the church, on the other side of capitolium
- After the abolition it was taken over by surgeon Ebert, the inventory was dispersed in subsequent years
- Some bills from the Stična apothecary from the first half of 18. century are kept in the National archives of republic Slovenia (17.

# Early years, until 1500

- Sanctus Petrus dum sederet supra petram marmoream, misit manum ad caput et dolore dentium contristabatur etram. Venit Jesus et ait:
  - "Quare contristaris, Petre?"
  - Ait Petrus: "Venit vermis migranaeus et devoravit dentes meos."
  - Et ait Jesus: "Adiuro te, vermis migraneus, ut exeas et resedas et ultra famulum Dei enim non ledas, Amen."
- Bernard from Stična around 1200

# Early years, until 1500

- Names of several monks who practised medicine and pharmacy
- 1230 Heidenricus infirmarius
  - signed on certain documents of abbot Conrad
- Infirmarii John (1277) and another Henry (1317)
- Brother John mentioned as infirmarius and celerarius on July 6th 1405 (among 15 other monks)



# Brother Lenardus

- Monk from Rein mentioned in Stična in 1502 and 1503
- Correspondence between abbots of Stična (John) and Rein (Wolfgang)
- It was forbidden for him to visit castles, estates, towns, especially taverns
- Threats with excommunication
- Use of herbal drugs mentioned in documents

## 16. – 18. century

- Monastery plundered and burned at least four times from the middle of 15th century
- Low number of monks
- 1538 abbot John visits a physician and apothecary in Ljubljana
- 1550 abbot of Rein ordered Stična monks to attend to the ill with greater care
- Dissolution of the monastery





# Brother Simon Ašič (1906-1992)

- Self-educated person in the medicinal action of herbs
- Wrote several books
- In contact with prof. Bohinc at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Ljubljana
- Some drugs are still prepared in monastery according to his recipes



**Thank you for your  
attention**

Welcome to Stična monastery and  
the Religious museum of Slovenia