Background

(Mathias) Gregor Kraškovič (Kraschovic, Kraskowitz, * March 2, 1767 Studenec in Bloke in today Slovenia; † January 5, 1823 Pile in periphery of Dubrovnik) was one of the best physicians of his era. He pioneered the manned balloon flights and focused his research on the medical circumstances of aeronaut in higher regions of the atmosphere.

Kraškovič’s achievements are well known and several web pages are devoted to his work. His activity was recently described in leading Hungarian medical journal. Still there was no concise information on Kraškovič’s Slovenian origin before our study. Several printed sources put Kraškovič’s birthplace to Carniola, although some other do not share that opinion. Our study tried to confirm the Carniolan hypothesis.

Gregor Kraškovič’s family name was spelled in different ways (Kraschovic, Kraskowitz) and sometimes his other personal name Mathias was added. That kind of information confuses modern reader. There were some doubts if the Ljubljana student, Viennese student of medicine (1792-1796), Viennese physician, Kingdom of Hungary Varaždin district physician (1799-1804), scientific writer, translator, Dalmatian district physician, and Dubrovnik district physician describing the detonation under the Island Mljet (1822) was one and the same person bearing the family name Kraškovič. Our study tried to confirm the hypothesis of singular person behind all those deeds.

Results

There are only two exact proofs for Carniola origin of the physician Gregor Kraškovič. The first is note on his matriculation in Viennese university (Medical faculty) in 1792 which also indicate the parish of Kraskovič’s birth which was Bloke in inner Carniola. The other is newspaper report on his Viennese balloon flight accomplished on November 20, 1814. There were many journal reports on that flight of the physician Kraškovič. The reports were published in Habsburg Monarchy and Germany, but only the December 14, 1814 report in Laibacher Wochenblatt with a reprint in Laibacher Tagblatt on August 30, 1879 put forward Kraškovič’s Carniolan origin.

The note of Kraškovič’s promotion with Viennese professor George Prochaska (Jiří, *1749 Blížkovice; † 1820 Vienna) in Viennese Medical Faculty in 1796 does not indicate Kraškovič’s birthplace. The written recommendation of Kraškovič’s protector Louis-Toussaints marquise La Moussaye sent to Raphael Zelli of Ljubljana on December 26, 1810 noted just Kraškovič’s birth in Illyria, but Illyria included several other lands besides Carniola. None of those notes indicated the precise place or village of Kraškovič’s birth.

The decisive archival evidence seems to be the one which looks like the less promising for a careless reader. That is the note on Kraškovič’s Viennese medical rigorous examinations on April 25, 1794 which moves Kraškovič’s birthplace to Styria. In spite of that evident error that note is decisive for determination of Kraškovič’s birthplace because it contains the right date of birth (in fact of Baptism) and the right place of birth (Brunndorf). The Viennese April 25, 1794 data was successfully verified in baptismal book of the parish Bloke of Inner Carniola for the village Studenec (Studennz). The Bloke Parish priest of early 19th century used to write the name of the Bloke Parish village Studenec in German translation in the form of Brunndorf and even just Brun.

Since Kraškovič was a peasant’s son from Bloke Parish of Inner Carniola he probably attended the lower and eventually also the higher Philosophical studies with some medicine included in Ljubljana before matriculating in Viennese Medical faculty in 1792. Indeed Gregor Kraškovič was noted several times in printed and manuscript sources which noted his schooling. Several sources report on the scholarships he received in Ljubljana. Most of those sources indicates Gregor Kraskovič’s home parish Bloke in its German form Oblack which was usual in his times. Just one note states Lasserbac., which could mean Loški Potok Parish near Bloke or the name of the donator Kraškovič’s scholarship. Only two of all those notes, those written on October 20, 1786 and November 28, 1786, contain the data about Gregor Kraškovič’s oldness which was slightly less compared with his real day of birth which was March 2, 1767.

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7 ARS, AS 14, Gubernij v Ljubljani, Registratura III, fascicule 46 1801-1806, technical unit 364.


Gregor Kraškovič’s Christian name(s) was misspelled to Georg in Viennese Town register of 1804\textsuperscript{10} and on May 29, 1816 on his appointment to the post of Dalmatian district physician.\textsuperscript{11} In later case and in all Kraškovič’s important publications including the articles published in 1805 in London, and those published in 1808, 1810, and 1817 in Vienna Kraškovič had two Christian names which was not usual for a peasant’s son of his era. In all those cases before Kraškovič’s Christian name Gregor his other name Mathia, Mathew, M. or Matt. was added. We meet him as Mathias Gregor Kraškovič for the first time in a note on his matriculation in Vienna in 1792.

The beginning of Kraškovič’s heritage inventory made in Pile by Dubrovnik a week after his death on January 12, 1823 with the list of money found (HR DADU 156 Zborni prvostupanjski građanski i kazneni sud u Dubrovniku (1819-1852), Heritages, Sez. E, Fasc. VI, No. 45).


\textsuperscript{11} Sach- und Namen-Register über ersten Sechs Banden der Medicinische Jahrbücher der kaiserlichen königlichen Österreichischen Staates, Wien, Carl Gerold, 1822, 72; Medicinische Jahrbücher der kaiserlichen königlichen Österreichischen Staates, Wien, Carl Gerold, 1817, 4/1: 48 and 4/2: 82.
After his Viennese promotion Kraškovič practiced for a while in Vienna until he replaced the deceased Kingdom of Hungary Varaždin district physician Joannis Baptist Lalangue (* 1743 Luxemburg; † 20/ 5/ 1799 Varaždin). In Varaždin, Kraškovič pioneered E. Jenner’s smallpox vaccination on more than 1500 persons including 110 children and propagated vaccination in nearby Hungarian and Slovenian Styria regions. Kraškovič got his serum from Vienna with the help of Swiss Dr. Jean De Carro (* 1770 Geneva; † 1857 Carlsbad) and not from Ljubljana Professor Vincenc Kern (* 1760; † 1829) who supplied many other nearby physicians. Kraškovič collaborated with the leading member of Royal Jenner Society Dr. John Walker (* 1759; † 1830) before Walker founded his own London Vaccination Society on 25/ 8/ 1806. Hungarian authorities praised two years of Kraškovič’s expert treatment of the contagious animal diseases. Kraškovič began the operative research of medical protection of workers, and tried to include handicapped persons to useful work in Varaždin area of the Kingdom of Hungary of those days. He noticed the unhealthy circumstances of his contemporary obstetrics and therefore organized the education of midwives of Varaždin area.

In 1804 Kraškovič returned to Vienna and gave medical examinations. His first office was in Wieden No. 77 in 4th Bezirk Wieden southwest of Down-Town area. Before 1897 he moved to the more prestigious office in Graben No. 1188 of 1st Viennese Bezirk southwest of Stephansplatz. In late 1810 he was recommended for the Ljubljana chair of medicine, but after the war he moved to Dalmatia in 1816.

The present research gives as an opportunity to write the important data of Georg Kraškovič’s life and work. The data moved slightly to the right are as yet not supported with documents:

March 2, 1767 Gregor Krashovich born in village Brunndorf of Carniola, that is Studenec in Bloke
Learns to write and calculate with Bloke Parish curate-administrator Jernej Kraševec
1782/83 attends the first class (parvae) of lower studies in Ljubljana
1783/84 the first grammatical class of the lower studies in Ljubljana
January 30, 1785 Kraschavitz Gregor receives the scholarship of the Town Ljubljana as the student of grammatical class
May 12, 1785 Kraschovitz Gregor. Carn. Oblac. finishes his middle class of grammatic
15/ 9/ 1786 Gregorius Kraschovitz, Carn Oblac. in the highest grammatical class
according to printed yearly report of »Archducal Gymnasium of Ljubljana«
20/ 10/ 1786 seventeen years old (sic!) Gregor Krashouitz Rhetor in last semester of
1785/86 achieved the eminent success in Latin and Greek languages. He was a soon of poor
farmer of Inner Carniola Parish Bloke and in 1787 he will receive the scholarship of 3rd class
from school fees for the year 1786
28/ 11/ 1786 confirmation that Gregor Krashouitz in Innerkrain aus der Phare Obleak... alt
16. Jahre (of Parish Bloke 16th year of age) with a summer course ended his 3rd class of grammar
24/ 1/ 1787 studies rhetoric in Ljubljana with the scholarship of 25 fl per year Summer 1788
finishes his last class of lower studies (poetics) in Ljubljana with the Imperial scholarship
1788/1789 the 1st class of higher philosophical studies in Ljubljana
28/ 12/ 1789 receives the Carniola scholarship for his studies of physics, that is, the second
class of Ljubljana higher philosophical studies
1790/91 or 1791/92 third class of higher philosophical studies in Vienna
1792-25/ 4/ 1794 studies medicine in Viennese University as »Kraskovitz, Mathias
Gregorius, Carniol: Oblacens« and as »Kraskovitz /: Gregorius/ natus 3. Martii 1767 zu
Brunndorf in Styria«.
1796 Gregorius Kraskovitz promoted to Ph.D. of medicine in Viennese University
1797 practical physicist in Vienna as the member of Medical Faculty
1798 not listed among the Viennese physicians
1799-1804 the district physician in Varaždin of the Kingdom of Hungary of those days
1804-1/ 2/ 1805-1816 the Viennese district (practical) physician
1804 Georg (sic!) Kraskovitz, the extraordinary member of Medical Faculty, gives
medical examination in Vienna
1/ 2/ 1805 Matthew (sic!) Gregorius Kraskovitz publishes a report on his Varaždin District
smallpox vaccination in London
1807 Viennese physician not attached to University gives medical examination in Graben
1188 of 1st Viennese Bezirk southwest of Stephansplatz
1808 not listed among the Viennese physicians
1808 M.G. Kraskowitz in Vienna publishes his translation of American pamphlet against
alcohol and tobacco abuse
1808 with colleague physician Dr. Johann G. Menner (Männer) in Hungarian Vepp,
Kraškovič tests a big circular balloon filled with gas to the height of half kilometer
13/ 8/ 1810 with Dr. Menner launches a balloon above the Viennese Prater
1810 M.G. Kraskovitz publishes a monograph on history of aeronautics
26/12/ 1810 recommended for the medical chair of Ljubljana
3/ 6/ 1811 Dr. Menner and Kraškovič accomplishe their first public aeronautic passenger
flight in a balloon filled with hydrogen over Város Erdeje (Városliget) in Budapest
6/ 8/ 1811 public aeronautic flight with Dr. Menner over Bratislava celebrating the opening
of the Diet

19 Hof- und Staats-Schematismus des österreichischen Kaiserthums, 2. pont, Wien, k. k. Hof- und Staats-Aerarial-
Druckerey, 1807. 2: 53.
20 Journal de Paris 20/ 8/ 1811, no. 230, 1662.
15/ 9/ 1811 flight over Bratislava
4/ 11/ 1811 flight over Viennese Prater with Dr. Menner
20/ 2/ 1812 flight above Budapest
6/ 10/ 1814 flight celebrating the opening of the Viennese Peace Congress
20/11/1814 Kraškovič’s flies solo in balloon filled with hydrogen celebrating the Viennese Peace Congress
14/ 12/ 1814 Laibacher Wochenblatt reports on Kraskovitz’ birt in Carniola
Early October 1815 flight celebrating the Viennese Peace Congress
18/17-1818 M.G. Kraskowitz reprints his translation of pamphlet against alcohol and tobacco abuse
18/17-1818 Physician in Vienna
7/ 7/ 1822-23/ 7/ 1822 as Dubrovnik district physician researches the detonations on the Island Mljet
23/ 7/ 1822 Dubrovnik district physician Kraskovich reports to Dubrovnik District Office and Governor General

Kraškovič in Hungary

Besides Kraškovič’s work in Varaždin, many of his flights were also performed in Kingdom of Hungary. Kraškovič began his aeronautic career in Hungary in 1808 with a colleague physician Dr. Johann G. Menner (Männer). With the financial help of Hungarian well-to-do nobles in Hungarian Vepp Kraškovič tested a big circular balloon filled with gas to the height of half kilometer. The count Sigismund Erdődy (Zsigmond, * 9/ 2/ 1775; † 27/ 10/ 1813 Vép) supported the event. He was one of the younger sons of János Nepomuk II. Erdődy de Monyorókerék and Moslavina (Monoszló, * 1733 Vép; † 1806 Zagreb), the owner if the Old Castle in Varaždin and the Ban of Croatia. On June 3, 1811 Dr. Menner and Kraškovič accomplished their first public aeronautic passenger flight in a balloon filled with hydrogen over the Város Erdeje (Városliget) in Budapest. On August 6, 1811 there was a successful public aeronautic flight of Kraškovič and Menner over Bratislava celebrating the opening of the Diet. On September 15, 1811 Kraškovič again successfully flew over Bratislava. On February 20, 1812 he made a flight above Budapest.

Conclusion

Gregor Kraškovič was one of the best Mid-European physicists of his era, especially famous for his medical measurements during his aeronautic flight. He supposedly flew 65

22 Partsch, Paul Maria: Bericht über das Detonations-Phänomen auf der Insel Meleda bey Ragusa. Wien, Heubner, 1826, 103.
times which was certainly a record for a physician of his times and one of the best results of all aeronauts. His smallpox vaccination in Varaždin was a great example of pioneering work. There is no doubt about his Slovenian origin after this publication. During his work in Hungary, Gregor Kraškovič began the operative research of medical protection of workers and tried to include handicapped persons to useful work in Varaždin area and also it was Hungary where he accomplished his most extraordinary flights. The list of his published works and reports on his deeds speak for themselves about his eminence:


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