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LOŠINJ: FROM A SAILOR'S ISLAND TO A FASHIONABLE HOTSPOT FOR HEALTH TOURISM IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

Abstract

This article discusses the historical development of tourism on the Croatian island of Lošinj, which underwent a transformation from a hub for goods to a popular destination for health tourism during the winter. The paper explores the factors that contributed to the development of tourism on Lošinj and places its history in a broader context, shedding light on new medical aspirations, the Austrian authorities' will to vitalize the Austrian Littoral, and the emergence of a new era of tourism to the sea. With over 8000 visitors arriving at the island in the Kvarner during the peak years of 1912/13, Lošinj was the first island of the Austrian Riviera where tourism had been able to develop.

Keywords: Lošinj, Lussingrande, Lussino, Lussinpiccolo, Rovenska, Croatia, Medical history, Balneology, Habsburg, Health tourism, Kurort, Spa, Opatjia, Südbahn

Streszczenie

Artykuł *Lošinj – od wyspy żeglarskiej po modny ośrodek turystyki zdrowotnej w Austro-Węgrzech* omawia historyczny rozwój turystyki na chorwackiej wyspie Lošinj, która przeszła transformację z centrum towarowego w popularny cel turystyki zdrowotnej. Artykuł analizuje czynniki, które przyczyniły się do rozwoju turystyki na wyspie i umieszcza jego historię w szerszym kontekście, rzucając światło na nowe aspiracje medyczne, wolę władz austriackich ożywienia austriackiego wybrzeża i pojawienie się nowej ery w turystyce do morza. Z ponad 8000 gości przybywających na wyspę na Kvarnerze w szczytowych latach 1912/13, Lošinj był pierwszą wyspą Riwieri Austriackiej, na której mogła rozwinąć się turystyka.

Słowa kluczowe: Lošinj, Lussingrande, Lussino, Lussinpiccolo, Rovenska, Chorwacja, historia medycyny, Balneologia, Habsburg, turystyka zdrowotna, Kurort, Spa, Opatjia, Südbahn

The Croatian island of Lošinj is located embedded in the Kvarner Gulf and is today a popular vacation destination for many tourists during summer. However, about 150 years ago, the island was visited for other reasons: for health tourism especially in winter due to Lošinj's mild climate. Today, only the old walls of the

many remaining spa buildings suggest that the “who’s who” of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy once frequented the island.

In the second half of the 19th century, Austria-Hungary was one of the maritime powers in Europe and dominated a huge coastline along the Adriatic Sea. With the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 Dalmatia, Istria and the military frontier remained under Vienna while Croatia-Slavonia became part of the Hungarian side of the Dual Monarchy.¹ In contrary to Austria-Hungary, spa tourism had been long established in the coasts of the western latitudes of Europe at that time such as in France or Italy at the French/Italian Riviera. The Habsburg high society but also sick people went especially to France or England for spa activities. In the middle of the 19th century, Lošinj (Italian Lussino, German Lötzing) was still an island that served mainly as a hub for goods and had a large shipyard for sailing boats. However, the island’s destiny was soon to change, when Lošinj transformed into a modern and significant spa town. The explorer spirit of a doctor from Graz, the metrological studies of a Croatian meteorologist as well as the emergence of the steamboat were to bring lasting changes to the island: through the discovery of the healing climate based on the research of the local meteorologist, as well as the physicians Dr. Conrad Clar and Dr. Leopold Schrötter, health tourism was promoted to the island. The designation of the towns of Mali and Veli Lošinj as health resorts had a lasting impact on Lošinj. The development of tourism influenced the landscape and townscape on its economic and social environment. Lošinj was the first island of the Austrian Riviera where tourism had been able to develop. In 1912/13, visitors peaked, with over 8000 tourists arriving at the island in the Kvarner.²

Exploring how the development of tourism occurred in Lošinj is the subject of this work. It will turn out that telling the story of Lošinj also tells the story of times of new medical aspirations, the story of a strong will of Austrian authorities to vitalize the Littoral, and the story of opening an era of tourism to the sea.

A few other researchers, such as Rita Cramer Giovannini and Franko Neretich, have looked upon the topic, focusing specifically on Lošinj. My work, too, has its main focus on the development of tourism, addressing the island primarily, yet it also intends to place Lošinj’s history of tourism in a broader context. Since one of the main reasons that sparked interest in the island was the therapeutic climate, this work is characterized by its inclusion of medical history and understanding the phenomenon why climate was a trigger for tourism to evolve. It covers various topics, however, it focuses on providing a broad overview rather than delving deeply into each one.

¹ Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Croatia - National Revival, Culture, Language | Britannica,” <https://www.britannica.com/place/Croatia/Croatian-national-revival> [accessed May 18, 2023].

² Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta: 1887.-2012./Hotels, pensions and health resorts on the island of Lošinj: 1887.-2012*, Mali Lošinj : Lošinjski muzej, 2012, 13.

The sources were chosen based on geographical availability and my language proficiency (German, English, Italian). The Medical University of Vienna provided primary sources on climate and medical topics, including tour guides. For more extensive research, I recommend exploring the libraries of Mali and Veli Lošinj, which offer additional primary sources that, unfortunately, I couldn't access while working on this paper. Other primary sources such as newspapers were found in the National Library in Vienna which has a digitalized newspaper collection.

Exploring the Austrian Coast

The flourishing era of health resorts in the Austrian Littoral of the Austro-Hungarian Empire began in the 1880s and came to a sudden end with the First World War. Within a short period of about 30 years, a fashionable travel lifestyle centered around health and tourism to the Adriatic Sea emerged. New train lines, exclusive hotels, and the euphonious terminology "Austrian Riviera" contributed to the rapid rise in popularity of the Austrian coast.

The medical field, particularly representatives of the Second Vienna Medical School, had a keen interest in finding a way to create spas closer to Central Europe, as many people who could afford to travel to the seaside visited destinations such as the French Riviera. From the 1870s, special teams of the Austrian Health Authority, as well as physicians, systematically searched for ideal areas along the seaside for building health resorts, since the beneficial effects of sea air on children who were at high risk of tuberculosis were evident. Seawater was considered a therapeutic agent, and the healing effects of climates were taken as seriously as the efficacy of antibiotics today.³

One of the prerequisites for the establishment of spas and seaside resorts was a reinterpretation in the medical field in the 18th century, particularly in rethinking how diseases worked and what role water played. Since ancient times, physicians believed that the human body works as a balance of fluids, and that other fluids like water would cause an imbalance. This theory of humoral interpretation of the body is called the "four-juice doctrine". The Second Vienna Medical School played a central role in refuting it. The systematic comparison of necropsy findings proved to be decisive, as well as the diagnostic methods auscultation and percussion. From this, a fundamentally new medical theory could be developed, in which the diagnosis was no longer determined by the "four-juice doctrine", but by local clinical findings.⁴

However, the medical field was only at the stage of describing the existence of cells. Medical researchers were focused on how they would react to heat, air, or

³ Rapp, Göttche, and Rapp-Wimberger Nadja, *Österreichische Riviera: Wien Entdeckt Das Meer*, 14–15.

⁴ Maisel, "Die Zweite Wiener Medizinische Schule 19.Jhdt–1938."

electric energy. As a result, studying the effects of salinity, humidity, or temperature on the mortality rate of a particular location was seen as a logical approach. In addition to the climate, the journey to the island across the open sea was also believed to be a crucial part of the healing process due to the fresh air.⁵

Tourism to the sea looked different than it does today. People went on holiday to recover from or prevent weaknesses and illnesses. In spa towns, an audience of doctors, aristocrats, and people who could afford it arose. Traveling to a spa served primarily for recreation but also for amusement.⁶

The South Railway Line and Steamships

The southern railway line played a vital role in the development of the Upper Adriatic spas. Travel from Vienna to Trieste on the south Railway Line had been possible since 1857. A new concept was developed to boost the south line economically, inspired by English seaside tourism where huge hotels were especially planned along train line. Elegant seaside resorts emerged from small fishing villages in the mid-19th century, with the healing air attracting the railway business and making seaside resorts boom. The concept of tourism changed fundamentally; it was no longer solely for the wealthy but designed for the masses. General Friedrich Julius Schüller (1832-1894) the Managing Director of the Austrian Southern Railway Company was encouraged to establish a winter station closer to central Europe. During the winter months, those who could afford to take a health vacation traveled mostly to the French Côte d'Azur to enjoy the mild climate. Schüller searched for a place for his vision of a South Railway Hotel and soon settled on Opatija (Abbazia), a climatically favored place. Viennese doctors, such as Theodor Billroth and Leopold Schrötter, found the coast and Kvarner islands ideal from a medical perspective. The first South Railway Hotel was built in 1883, and it quickly turned Opatija, the tiny fishing village, into a developing spa town, the second most visited after Karlsbad in the Dual monarchy, with 34,000 guests in 1908.⁷

The southern railway line's expansion was a revolutionary change for transport options, mobilizing tourists and facilitating travel to Lošinj and other spa destination, one of the cornerstones for the Austrian Riviera's tourism development. The newly established steamship connections from the 1880s, directly connected to Vienna and Budapest by the South Railway Line, were also essential in paving the way for Lošinj to become a spa destination. The island was connected to the

⁵ Rapp, Göttche, and Rapp-Wimberger Nadja, *Österreichische Riviera...*, 15.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 14.

⁷ Désirée Vasko-Juhász, *Die Südbahn: Ihre Kurorte Und Hotels*, 133–140. See also: Karolczak, "W oczach polskich arystokratów... Opatija w końcu XIX wieku." In *Europa Środkowa, Balkany i Polacy. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Antoniemu Cetnarowiczowi*, eds Janusz Pezda, Stanisław Pijaj, Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze Historia Jagellonica, 2017, 441–456.

ports Trieste, Rijeka (Fiume), and Pula (Pola). The ports were directly connected to Vienna and Budapest by the South Railway Line.⁸

Steamship connections included the Austrian Lloyd, the Ungaro-Croata, Istria, Dalmatia, Ragusa, and Austro-Croata company. The Lloyd steamship company played an important role in tourism development, as it was the publisher of travel guides in the Adria Region and coined the term "Austrian Riviera." Finally, the Austrian Riviera was geographically defined, which was then an over 2000 km long touristic area.⁹

Upon examining a 1912 tourist guide's transportation map to Lošinj, it becomes evident that the island was accessible from Pula via Austrian Lloyd Steamships and from Rijeka (Fiume) through the Ungaro-Croata passenger steamship. This transport arrangement can be traced back to the "Croatian-Hungarian Settlement" ("kroatisch-ungarischer Ausgleich") in 1868 when Rijeka was assigned to the Hungarian half of the Empire. The establishment of the Ungaro-Croata steamship company aimed to secure Hungary's independence from the Austrian Steamship companies. To this end, Hungary made substantial investments in its own port and encouraged Hungarians to relocate to Rijeka with the slogan "Tengerre Magyar" ("Hungarians to the sea").¹⁰

Lošinj's Transformation from a Seafarer Island to a Tourist Destination

People's kindness, openness, and knowledge of foreign languages, so much praised by the then foreign guidebooks, were shaped on the world's seas, long before the advent of tourism.¹¹

Lošinj held a unique position in the Kvarner Gulf until the 1870s due to shipbuilding and seafaring, which were the island's primary economic activities. This was unlike the rest of the region where agriculture was the dominant industry. Lošinj thrived as a hub for trade routes between the Black Sea, Mediterranean, and North Sea by the mid-19th century. Shipbuilding on the island reached its peak, with six shipyards and 650 employees producing nearly ten ships per year, making the island almost self-sufficient. The marine industry was a significant source of employment for over 800 families on the island. However, with the rise of steamships, pressure on shipbuilding and seafaring increased, and the Suez Canal opening in 1869 only accessible to steamships caused the declining importance of sailing boats.¹² However, the decline of the shipping industry opened up a new opportunity for

⁸ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 20.

⁹ Rapp, Göttche, and Rapp-Wimberger Nadja, *Österreichische Riviera : Wien Entdeckt Das Meer*, 15.

¹⁰ Niel, *Die k.u.k. Riviera: Von Abbazia Bis Grado*, 20.

¹¹ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 11.

¹² Jordan, "Der Kvarner Und Seine Inseln. Die Vorgeschichte Des Riviera Tourismus. Der Sonderfall: Seefahrt Und Schiffbau Auf Lussin/Losinj," 60–62.

the island in the form of tourism, which began in the 1880s. Empty captain's houses were converted into luxurious guest houses, catering to city dwellers seeking a health resort getaway.¹³

The discovery of Lošinj and its salubrious climate

At the beginning of the past year, my boy had survived severe scarlet diphtheria in Graz, and I decided to bring the convalescent not only by the shortest route to the coast but as quickly as possible to a small island far out to sea and completely exposed to its influence.¹⁴

This was written by the Graz doctor Dr. Conrad Clar (1844-1904) in the feuilleton of the *Österreichische Badezeitschrift* (Austrian Bathing Magazine) in June 1886. Clar visiting Lošinj with his convalescent son can be seen as a key event. Dr. Clar was a doctor of balneology and therefore a specialist in the therapeutic use of natural springs, baths, and climate. In summer, he worked at Bad Gleichenberg in Styria, where he practiced in a resort with thermal baths. During the winter he taught Balneology and Climate Therapy.¹⁵ But why did Dr. Clar choose Lošinj for his son?

For answering this question we will first have a closer look at the work of a devoted researcher: The island's tourism was also able to develop thanks to the pioneering work of Ambrogio Haračić (1855-1916), who devoted himself to his passion, researching the local climate by taking precise measurements. Initially, the researcher was not particularly interested in the mild climate as a therapeutic agent but rather dedicated his research to his fascination with botany. It is, therefore, a coincidence that his carefully kept lists of climate measurements caught the attention of Vienna Medical Circles. After studying mathematics and natural sciences in Vienna, where he also attended lectures by the well-known scientists Josef Stefan and Ludwig Boltzmann, from 1879 onwards, Haračić taught at the maritime school in his birthplace of Mali Lošinj.¹⁶

As Haračić was not satisfied with his measurements in 1880, he demanded new instruments at "Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Erdmagnetismus" (Central Institute for Meteorology and Terrestrial Magnetism) from Vienna. The institute was able to donate to the researcher new tools, and that is when Haračić, on 1 August 1880, began his measures in the "Viennese way." Initially, he would send his lists, which was a private initiative only every month, to the institute, but soon the project took another, bigger path. When Eugen Jelčić (1854-1915), who was a dedicated scientist himself as well, became head of the maritime school in Mali Lošinj in 1881, he supported Haračić and ordered further instruments from Vienna. Haračić

¹³ Ibidem, 62.

¹⁴ Dr. Clar, "Feuilleton. Drei Winterwochen Auf Der Insel Lussin," 1.

¹⁵ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 15.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 21-22.

extended his measures and sent his results via telegram to the capital every day from that point on. From 1887 the public in Vienna got to know the local scientist and his research since his works were published in various newspapers.¹⁷

Dr. Conrad Clar was enthusiastic about the research of Professor Haračić when reading the meteorologist's first work in 1884. The balneologist was in the process of preparing weather maps for the northern Adriatic and was in search of an island in the Kvarner region that, like Corsica in the Tyrrhenian Sea, would be suitable as a climatic spa and winter resort suitable as a climatic health and winter resort.¹⁸ Hence, Dr. Clar's choice fell on the island of Lošinj where he decided to bring his son, who had fallen ill with scarlet fever and diphtheria in the same year. As Dr. Clar wrote in the feuilleton of the *Österreichische Badezeitung* in 1886, he was determined to bring his son "by the shortest route to an island far out to sea and completely under the influence of the sea".¹⁹

In January of 1885, the doctor and his son left Graz, took the express train to St. Peter, arrived in Fiume (Rijeka) after staying a night over in St. Peter, and finally reached Lošinj after a journey of two days.²⁰ The balneologist reports enthusiastically about his trip to the island in public. In 1885 he published in the *Wiener Zeitung* (Vienna Newspaper) in the feuilleton an article titled "Lussinpiccolo" (Mali Lošinj).²¹ Clar's son was completely cured after a stay of 3 weeks on the island. Clar was extremely enthusiastic about the island and shared his experiences with his colleagues back in Graz. In 1888 he evaluated Lošinj as an ideal climatic air location and announced that it was suitable for convalescents.²²

The dedicated Mission of Dr. Schrötter

Dr. Clar's enthusiasm for the island of Lošinj sparked a chain reaction of interest, spreading to other notable individuals like Dr. Leopold Schrötter von Kristelli (1837-1908). Dr. Schrötter was involved in conducting climatic studies on the Kvarner islands and visited Lošinj firstly in 1886 with a committee of doctors from the Medical University of Vienna, including Dr. Max Gruber, hygienist, Dr. Weinlechner, surgeon, and a member of the government council Dr. Eduard Lang, a dermatologist. Dr. Schrötter himself was an internist, the founder of modern laryngology, a professor at the medical faculty, and, most importantly, a dedicated scientist.²³ His mission was to find a venue that would match to build up a winter health resort. Similar to Schüler's and Dr. Clar's thought, he wanted

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 16 as cited in Grmek, 1981.

¹⁹ Dr. Clar, "Feuilleton. Drei Winterwochen Auf Der Insel Lussin," 1.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 23.

²² Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 16.

²³ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 24.

to establish a place that would not be as far away as other spas in Europe like Côte d'Azur, the Gulf of Naples, Madeira, or the Balearic Islands but easier to get to from Central and Eastern Europe.²⁴ Dr. Schrötter's interest in the benefits of a healing climate was sparked early on during his medical career. As an assistant at the first medical clinic under Professor Joseph Skoda²⁵, he came into contact with lung diseases early on, especially tuberculosis. It awakened Schrötter's early urge to dedicate himself to the fight against and therapy of this bacterial disease. Schrötter habilitated in 1867 with a thesis on pneumonia. In 1870 he founded the first modern laryngology department in the Vienna General Hospital, thus becoming an important representative of the "Wiener Medizinische Schule" (Viennese Medical School).²⁶ Dr. Schrötter's personality was determined and enterprising, which is why it is not surprising that when he discovered the island of Lošinj, he would not wait long to take action.

Dr. Schrötter initiated in the same year as he visited the island for the first time the foundation of a tourist association in Mali Lošinj, founded in 1886 as a branch of the Austrian Tourist Club.²⁷ In the first tourist guide of Lošinj from 1888, he writes in the foreword: "It was with great pleasure that I welcomed the publication of this small work, which is intended to draw the attention of wider circles to the Island, which is so rich in natural beauty and so excellently suited for winter stays."²⁸

The tourist guide that came out only two years after the medical team of Dr. Schrötter visited Lošinj shows the dedication to the island. During Easter time in 1886, Dr. Schrötter had the opportunity to meet Archduke Karl Stephan (1860-1933) and his wife Maria Theresa Habsburg-Lorraine (1862-1933). They were currently on the island for their honeymoon. The freshly married couple stayed at the residence that the archduke bought the year before in Veli Lošinj. In the meeting between the doctor and the couple they shared their enthusiasm about Lošinj. The Viennese doctor also used the opportunity and talked to the royal family members that, in his eyes, Lošinj, due to its favorable climate, should become a *Kurort* (spa town).²⁹

The Habsburgs and Lošinj

In 1885, the passionate boatman and heir to the throne Archduke Karl Stephan was sailing along the Adriatic coast and happened to come across the island of

²⁴ Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 7.

²⁵ Josef Skoda is an important representant of the Viennese Medical School. He developed percussion and auscultation which are important diagnostic methods up to this day. (Csizmadia, 59)

²⁶ Csizmadia, "Leopold Anton Dimas Schrötter, Ritter von Kristelli (1837-1908): Ein Biographisch-Kulturhistorischer Beitrag Zur Franzisko-Josephinischen Epoche," 65.

²⁷ Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 17.

²⁸ Dr. Schrötter, "Vorwort," Foreword.

²⁹ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 24–25.

Lošinj. He was stationed in Pula at the base of the Austrian Royal Austrian Navy and took a three-month leave to look for a place to build a winter residence. The archduke was immediately captivated by the island and did not hesitate for long to buy Captain Sopranich's residence, renaming it Villa Wartsee. In 1893, however, he had his own villa built. The place was called Podjavori (under the laurel leaves) and offered protection from the Bora³⁰, a strong wind that can cause damage. However, Karl Stephan was not the first Habsburg to take an interest in the island. As early as 1856, Archduke Maximilian von Habsburg, the brother of Emperor Franz Josef, later also the Emperor of Mexico, visited the small fishing port of Rovenska (the next port south to Veli Lošinj). He laid the foundation for the breakwater in Rovenska that protects the small harbor from the Bora to this day. Emperor Franz Josef visited the island in 1875 when he was traveling around in the Adriatic Sea.³¹

Archduke Karl Stephan and his family on the island soon attracted many other members of the Habsburgs. In 1887, Crown Prince Rudolf (1858-1889) was on holiday in Opatija and decided to come to Lošinj for a short visit. He climbed Monte Ossero and visited a museum on Lošinj. In 1891, Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837-1898) ("Sissi") visited Veli Lošinj. She was received with welcome wishes from the authorities of Veli and Mali Lošinj, the clergy, and cheering people.³² In 1895, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria (who became heir to the throne after the death of Crown Prince Rudolf in 1889) spent six weeks on the island recovering from tuberculosis.³³

Lošinj locals held the Habsburg family in high regard, welcoming them with great enthusiasm. Following Archduke Karl Stephan's lead, other nobles purchased the homes of well-known Lošinj captains and ship owners who had relocated to Trieste, Rijeka, and the USA. These nobles also built villas for holiday purposes, which were subsequently converted into tourist facilities. As with other spas in Austro-Hungary, the royal family's presence had a positive impact on tourism.³⁴

The Habsburgs contributed to the island's tourism development in two ways: the conversation between Dr. Schrötter and Archduke Karl Stephan during Easter time 1886 helped promote the idea of designating Lošinj as a health resort, and wealthy aristocrats were drawn to the island, building residences that could later be converted into hotels and guesthouses.

³⁰ Bora is a strong wind, that comes suddenly with great force in gusts in the North Adriatic.

³¹ Vidotto, "Il Balcone Sul Mare Della Vienna Imperiale," 18.

³² Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 35–36.

³³ *Ibidem*, 37.

³⁴ Dłaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 18; Karolczak, "W oczach polskich arystokratów...", 441–456.

Society for Reforestation and Embellishment

Professor Schrötter and Professor Haračić both recognized Čikat Bay's potential on the west side of Lošinj. However, they also saw the need for forestation to protect the island from the damaging effects of the Bora. In 1886, Professor Haračić published a study warning of the devastating effects of the cold and gusty wind on the island's coasts, and he advocated for a densely planted forest to shelter the landscape, lands, and houses, especially in Čikat Bay. To achieve this goal, the Society for Reforestation and Embellishment was founded, consisting of 170 members, including many locals. The committee's remarkable effort resulted in the planting of half a million pine trees over six years, financed partly by private and public means. Such reforestation projects were common in health resorts throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire.³⁵

The pine planting project had an impressive impact on the island, and the pines have become an integral part of its landscape, even being considered the symbol of Čikat Bay up to this day. The committee worked closely with the Tourist Club and completed various projects, including the construction of the island's first promenades and gardens. Matija Vidulić, the mayor who chaired the association, organized the regular watering of the plants, which inspired local landowners to follow suit and afforest their properties. This led to the creation of a network of promenades and the installation of benches. Archduke Karl Stephan's villa in Veli Lošinj even received a park designed by Viennese garden architects under the committee's guidance.³⁶

Medical historical perspective on Lošinj

To the non-professional, who has never studied climatology in detail, it seems incomprehensible at first why an island, in particular, should be visited as a winter station, while the mainland offers the advantage of more convenient connections and means of travel.³⁷

Professor Haračić's 1886 publication "On the Climate of Mali Lošinj" sheds light on why Vienna's medical community was so enamored with the island's climate. The data presented in the paper reveals that Lošinj boasts mild winter temperatures that do not drop below freezing, making it a popular destination for those seeking relief from harsh winter conditions. This is due to Lošinj's favorable location, surrounded by the sea and far enough from the mainland to offer a mix of sea climate and mild winters. The result is cool summers, making it an ideal

³⁵ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino: = The Fifty Years of Tourism at Lussino*, 42.

³⁶ Kos, "Seefahrerstadt Wird Kurzentrum, Geschichte Des Tourismus Auf Lussin/Losinj," 90.

³⁷ Gelcich, *Die Insel Lussin Mit Den Beiden Städten Lussingrande Und Lussinpiccolo: Klimatischer Winteraufenthalt, Sommerseebad*, 7.

summer seaside resort. Dr. Ghersa, a spa doctor on the island, also extolled Lošinj's climate in his 1888 travel guide. In the "Medicinisches" subchapter, Ghersa notes that Lošinj's climate is milder than other places at the same latitudes, with high evaporation providing humid, saline-rich air. In winter, guests can enjoy a moderately warm, moderately humid atmosphere with rare temperature fluctuations resulting from a balance between heat emission and absorption between the sea and the air. Additionally, the winter precipitation chemically purifies the air by removing carbonic acid and enriching it with oxygen. Dr. Ghersa's medical guide also highlights the healing properties of Lošinj's climate for tuberculosis patients. The doctor notes that the destruction process of tuberculous laryngeal ulcers³⁸ can be slowed down, and two consecutive winter stays on the island have been shown to prevent recurrence of hemoptysis (expectoration of blood-containing secretions) in tuberculosis patients.³⁹

However, it is worth noting that only later on were patients with contagious diseases no longer admitted to the island, likely due in part to the efforts of Dr. Leopold von Schrötter and his colleagues. They campaigned to create a legal basis to combat tuberculosis after Robert Koch discovered that it was a bacterial disease. In 1894, compulsory notification of tuberculosis cases was introduced, which applied in particular to health resorts.⁴⁰

In the 1912 tourist guide published by the spa committee, further insights into the historical medical benefits of Lošinj as a spa destination are discussed. The duration of sunshine is mentioned as a crucial factor for the climatic value, with places located near or surrounded by large reflecting surfaces receiving an even higher value. As the sea surrounds Lošinj, the sun can provide ample warmth to the island even during winter, thanks to the strong reflection in the water. The guide reports that the island receives 2407 hours of sunshine or 57% insolation (= the amount of solar radiation reaching a surface or a body) duration, while Vienna only achieves 20% with 1781 hours. The guide concludes by highlighting why Lošinj's climate is preferable to the coastal climate: "Finally, it would be unnecessary to mention the advantages of the island climate compared to the climatic conditions of the coastal resorts, if there were not only one opinion in this regard, namely that the island air, which is renewed from all sides by the constant breeze, meets the requirements of a health resort because the air is free of dust and germs."⁴¹

Today, various studies have been conducted on Lošinj's climate, which prove that the doctors in the 19th century had their reason to recommend a spa stay on

³⁸ A tuberculous laryngeal ulcer is a tumour in the larynx triggered by a special type of Tuberculosis

³⁹ Dr. Ghersa, "Medicinisches," 21.

⁴⁰ Csizmadia, "Leopold Anton Dimas Schrötter, Ritter von Kristelli (1837-1908) : Ein Biographisch-Kulturhistorischer Beitrag Zur Franzisko-Josephinischen Epoche," 96.

⁴¹ Kurkommission in Lussinpiccolo, *Insel Lussin-Istrien Österr. Prospekt Lussinpiccolo Cigale Kurort Und Seebad*, 24.

Lošinj. In 2010-2012, for example, a study was conducted on campsite guests in Čikat Bay who stayed on the island for an average of 11 days and based on a measurement of lung function using a spirometer⁴², the following results were obtained: in people with respiratory problems, there was a statistically significant difference in parameters of lung function. This result indicates that a stay on the island of Lošinj has a beneficial effect on the lung function of tourists with pulmonary problems.⁴³

Tourism until 1914. Establishment of the royal *Kurorte* (Health Resorts) Veli Lošinj and Mali Lošinj

After climatological studies conducted by Professor Haračić and with input from Dr. Clar and Dr. Schrötter, Mali Lošinj applied for and obtained the official declaration of Kurort in 1892, despite initial difficulties caused by Veli Lošinj's application to become an independent health resort. The Kurkommission, an essential body for the structure and organization of the health resort, was established to administer the funds, promote the resort, and build new promenades. The commission was made up of village heads, local authorities' representatives, district physicians, community physicians, and spa guests' members. The health resort tax, paid by guests staying for more than three days, was used to maintain the spa house, build promenades, and benches. Royal family members, doctors, and their families were exempt from the fee. The spa commission also enforced the ban on admitting tuberculosis-infected persons to hotels and pensions to protect the local population. The establishment of the health resort was essential in the development of tourism and an economic advance.⁴⁴

Local entrepreneur Maria Rodinis opened the first hotel in Mali Lošinj, called Hotel Vindobona, in 1887. The hotel was situated on the sea promenade and had its own bath. Concurrently, the Pension zur Erzherzogin Renata (also known as Hotel Rudy), was established in Veli Lošinj by Josef Rudy, a Viennese pharmacist.⁴⁵

The early tourism entrepreneurs in Lošinj were not local, but from other regions of the Empire, such as Austria, Hungary, or Bohemia. They often ran hotels in their hometowns in the summer and came to the island in the winter, bringing their service staff. The first hotels were converted from luxurious captain's houses, designed by renowned architects from Graz and Vienna, such

⁴² Spirometry is a diagnostic procedure to measure lung function, i.e. how well the patient is able to breathe.

⁴³ Margan-Šulc, "Einfluss Des Klimas Und Der Natürlichen Aerosole Der Insel Lošinj Auf Die Lungenfunktion 2010-2012."

⁴⁴ Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 19.

⁴⁵ Kos, "Seefahrerstadt Wird Kurzentrum, Geschichte Des Tourismus Auf Lussin/Losinj," 93.

as Alfred Keller, Friedrich Sigmund, Rudolf Göbel, Hugo von Wiedenfeld, and Alexander Krasz.⁴⁶

Locals also contributed to offering accommodations by subletting rooms in their homes or transforming their houses into pensions. Only later did people from Lošinj become professional hoteliers, many of whom had to reorient themselves from seafaring to the development of tourism.⁴⁷

Some health resorts on Lošinj were opened by the state, such as the Maria-Amalia Asyl and the Wiener Heim, both established by the city of Vienna. The Maria-Amalia Asyl was opened in 1892 by Baroness Adolfina Hasslinger and cared for Viennese girls aged 5-14 suffering from tuberculosis and scrophulosis. It was administered by the Sisters of Mercy of the Seven Sorrows.⁴⁸ In 1907, the Austrian Parliament renamed it Seaside Hospice of Lower Austria after its repurchase. From 1904-1912, a study was conducted on the healing rates of the children who stayed there, with 73% of the sick children being fully cured, 17% recovering well, 3% beginning to recover, and only 2% having no improvement. Today, the building is a children's resort owned by Zagreb Holding Ltd. and hosts children from Zagreb in the summer.⁴⁹

The Wiener Heim, which was state-run too, originally was called *Kaiser Franz Josef's Kurhaus* and was built for Viennese students by the Verein zur Pflege kranker Studierender (Association for the care of sick students from Vienna). Unfortunately, the building was destroyed from bombings during the Second World War.⁵⁰ During the early days of tourism on Lošinj, the majority of visitors were patients and convalescents seeking medical treatment. To maintain separation between healthy and sick patients, health resorts like the Sanatorium Dr. Simonitsch were established, with a focus on treating those with minor lung issues. Additionally, some visitors came to the island to enjoy its mild winter climate and escape the cold.⁵¹

In 1903, Dr. Simonitsch and his wife, who previously worked in Rogaska Slatina, opened the first health institution in Veli Lošinj. Thalassotherapy⁵² was the central treatment method, utilizing natural agents. However, it did not admit patients with tuberculosis or serious illnesses. The focus was on hosting patients with anemia, diabetes, or sleeping issues under constant medical supervision.⁵³

⁴⁶ Ibidem, 92.

⁴⁷ Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 23.

⁴⁸ Kos, "Seefahrerstadt Wird Kurzentrum, Geschichte Des Tourismus Auf Lussin/Losinj," 93.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 93; Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 39.

⁵⁰ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 123–24.

⁵¹ Ibidem, 20–22.

⁵² Thalassotherapy is a treatment combining balneotherapy (baths, packs, etc.) and climatotherapy. Diseases are treated with cold or heated seawater, sea air, sun, algae, mud and sand. Classically, thalassotherapy takes place directly by the sea as part of a cure.

⁵³ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 40–41.

Tourist Life on Lošinj

The spa towns quickly developed to provide a wide range of entertainment for health resort guests. They could enjoy the healing winter sun on balconies, loggias, winter gardens, or open terraces, and were also offered various indoor entertainment options such as music rooms, home libraries, or billiard rooms.⁵⁴ A tourist guide from 1912 reports that tourists were offered sailing tours, motorboat trips, and the option to rent rowing boats. The guide also recommends a 25 km cycling tour from Mali Lošinj to Osor. The cultural program included a wide range of entertainment, such as cinema, theatre, opera performances, and Strandfeste (beach feasts) organized by the spa committee.⁵⁵ In addition, excursions to nearby islands were established for tourists, and regattas and other sporting events were held to entertain the guests. Around 1900, a casino was built, and the unique Manora Astronomical Observatory existed until 1908, which also published magazines.⁵⁶

With the construction of the Kurhaus (spa house) in 1905 in Mali Lošinj, spa activities saw an increase. It was located directly at the pier where steamships arrived, allowing for systematic administration of the health resort guests and providing further information for the tourists. Behind the Kurhaus was the Inhalatorium Dr. Bulletin, a historically interesting place for spas. It was the first Inhalatorium on the eastern Adriatic coast and was equipped with the most modern inhalation tools of that time. The Inhalatorium offered a 30-minute individual inhalation therapy for people who were consulted by a physician to do it, using the Dr. Bulletin's-Guttafer apparatus that contained seawater and medical drugs, converting them into a spray. The slightly more expensive version offered individual cabins, as well as a hall with five Guttafer apparatuses. After each session, powerful electric fans refreshed the air.⁵⁷

In Veli and Mali Lošinj, numerous hotels, guesthouses, and accommodation facilities were established. In 1903, Mali Lošinj had 93 boarding houses, and Veli Lošinj had over 28. Until the First World War, Hotel Miramar, Hotel Dreher, and Hotel Marienbad were opened in Mali Lošinj. In Veli Lošinj, Villa Mathilde, Pension Villa Mignon, Pension Margarita, and many other boarding houses were established. Villa Mignon, the most elegant accommodation in Veli Lošinj, was newly built for tourist purposes only. It was owned by the imperial counselor and friend of Archduke Karl Stephan Floris Wüste, who was also a cousin of the Rudy family, and his wife, Anne Wüste. The hotel was built in 1905 and opened in 1906 as a luxurious hotel.⁵⁸

A stay at Villa Mignon must have been impressive and idyllic, as described here: "The guests, mostly of Austrian provenance, walked in the garden planted with

⁵⁴ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 20–22.

⁵⁵ Kurkommission in Lussinpiccolo, *Insel Lussin-Istrien Österr. Prospekt Lussinpiccolo Cigale Kurort Und Seebad*, 24.

⁵⁶ Kos, "Seefahrerstadt Wird Kurzentrum, Geschichte Des Tourismus Auf Lussin/Losinj," 92.

⁵⁷ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 107.

⁵⁸ Dlaka, "Historische Übersicht Des Beginns Des Gesundheitstourismus Auf Lošinj," 50.

pine trees, dates, oranges, and lemons, sitting in wicker armchairs and wrapped in blankets or sheep fleece to protect themselves from the winter cold, enjoying the unusual sight – a cage (voliera) with parrots and rare birds.”⁵⁹

Čikat Bay had also been gradually incorporated into tourism. After 1900, the boarding houses Mirasole, Fritzi, St. Josef, Paola, Malepartus, and Helios and the villas Hygiea, Favorita, Cyclamina and many others were established in a very short time. The impressive Bellevue and Alhambra hotels were also built. The villa of the seafaring family, Premuda, constructed in the second half of the 19th century, was converted into the sanatorium of Dr. Rudolf Hajos in 1906. In a huge park (30,000 m² which equals around four football fields), guests could marvel at subtropical plants, use gymnastics equipment, and relax in wooden pavilions for air therapy.⁶⁰ The large terrace (40x4m) at the front façade was surrounded by roses and used for “air-baths”. The sanatorium offered various treatments like baths in acid, medical drugs or seawater, electrotherapy, massage, and vibration massage. A seaside resort was finally built in Čikat Bay due to the growing interest in summer stays on the island. In 1902, the bathing establishment, consisting of twenty changing cabins, opened. The seabed was also filled with fine sand. Only four years later, there were already 210 modern cabins. A Secession-style coffee house, a hairdresser’s salon, and several kiosks followed.⁶¹

The implementation of the seaside resort and the expansion of summer tourism meant that Lošinj was in season all year round. Traveling to Lošinj became a lot easier as the frequency of trains and steamships increased with the popularity of the island. Lošinj had become a popular destination for the higher and middle classes of Austro-Hungary. In 1913, 19 steamship connections operated every week from Pula and Rijeka to Lošinj. In the same year, the number of visitors peaked at 8,427, and approximately 250,000 overnight stays were counted.⁶²

Lošinj had changed visibly from the 1880s to 1914: From a stone island, it had become a popular green resort. From a socio-economic perspective, Lošinj benefited from tourism. After the decline of the island’s main income, seafaring, the inhabitants of Lošinj had fallen into a financial crisis. With tourism, wealth returned. Culturally, too, the island was shaped by the developments of tourism. Many foreign entrepreneurs settled in Lošinj at that time and started families with locals. Many of their descendants still live there today. According to Cramer Giovannini, the locals came into contact with new realities through tourists from the larger cities of the Empire. Coffee shops, restaurants, photo studios, dressmaking studios were established on the island “which the people of Lussino had not felt the need until then”.⁶³ Cramer Giovannini sees these developments as an improvement in the standard of living for the population on Lošinj, which were approaching those of the big cities

⁵⁹ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 51.

⁶⁰ Kos, “Seefahrerstadt Wird Kurzentrum, Geschichte Des Tourismus Auf Lussin/Losinj,” 94.

⁶¹ Dlaka and Gović, *Lošinjski hoteli, pansioni i lječilišta...*, 131.

⁶² Ibidem, 13.

⁶³ Cramer Giovannini and Neretich, *I Primi Cinquant'anni Di Turismo a Lussino*, 64.

in the Empire.⁶⁴ The First World War hit tourism very heavily, and the number of visitors went down to almost zero. The golden era of health tourism came to an end. Unfortunately, many of the big hotels were built only a few years before the disastrous war started.⁶⁵

Conclusion

The introduction of the history of spas shows that a fundamental change in the perception of the human body and the role of water was a precondition for resorts and spa towns to develop. With the rethinking in medicine, natural healing methods gained medical importance, moving away from the ancient four-juice doctrine towards evidence-based research. Disciplines such as balneology experienced a boom and made trips to spa resorts an integral part of circles of city dwellers who could afford it. In the 19th century, now rare diseases of the air and respiratory tract, such as tuberculosis, were common. This brought about the need to cure these diseases as best as possible. Researchers scrutinized natural healing factors such as climate, seawater, and sunlight to find a viable way to cure such conditions. The insight into the history of spas has shown how significant the interest was from a medical point of view to find a venue with a salubrious climate to treat patients. When Professor Haračić, the local meteorologist from Lošinj, published his revolutionary data on the island's climate, it was a logical consequence that the representatives of the Second Vienna Medical school showed interest. At the same time, Dr. Conrad Clar was convinced of the climate himself, as his son was cured after a three-week stay. A chain reaction of enthusiasm followed in Viennese medical circles, so Dr. Leopold Schrötter, a specialist in lung issues and familiar with various healing disciplines, also came into contact with the island. What becomes evident in the first half of the work is that individual personalities dedicated themselves to initiating tourism on Lošinj. Although the idea of Opatija and Lošinj was similar, namely the establishment of a climatic spa, the development of the former was carried out with the help of significant and planned investments by the wealthy Southern Railway Company and its director Friedrich Julius Schöler. In the development of tourism in the case of Lošinj, it was mainly foreign investors who came to the fore. The local population quickly joined in and made the resort's development possible by participating in associations that paved the way for tourism. It was also shown that the extension of the southern railway line to the Adriatic coast was vital. The development of the Adriatic coast through the upgrading of the southern railway line, as well as the extension to Rijeka in 1873, played a central role. On the one hand, tourists from Central Europe could be mobilized, and on the other hand, it made the island of Lošinj more accessible. Steamships ended seafaring on Lošinj, but they opened the door to tourism and are one of the prerequisites for Lošinj to emerge as a health resort.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, 64.unveränderte Nachdrucke (2016)

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 65.

The work has also looked at the personal career path of Dr. Schrötter to better understand his motivation and his vast interest in transforming Lošinj into a health resort. Schrötter devoted himself above all to organizing tourist activities and founding a tourism association as a branch of the Austrian Tourist Club. It was shown that the foundation of the beautification association made the island more attractive to visitors. The large-scale reforestation campaign and the planting of half a million pine trees had a lasting impact on the landscape image of various places on the island, such as Čikat Bay.

Also the Habsburg family played a significant role in the development of tourism on Lošinj. The island's popularity increased after Crown Prince Rudolf, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and Empress Elisabeth of Bavaria stayed there, attracting aristocrats, as well as the upper and middle classes from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following Archduke Karl Stephan's example of building his winter residence in Veli Lošinj, other nobles bought captain houses and converted them into residences, or built new villas, which were later transformed into pensions and hotels for tourists. This fruitful development changed the landscape of Lošinj, turning it into a fashionable spa. Today, the island is emphasizing health tourism again and is promoting itself as "the island of vitality." With Covid-19, which can cause lung issues, Lošinj may soon become an ideal destination for convalescents. Many empty pensions, hotels, and guest houses are waiting to be revitalized.

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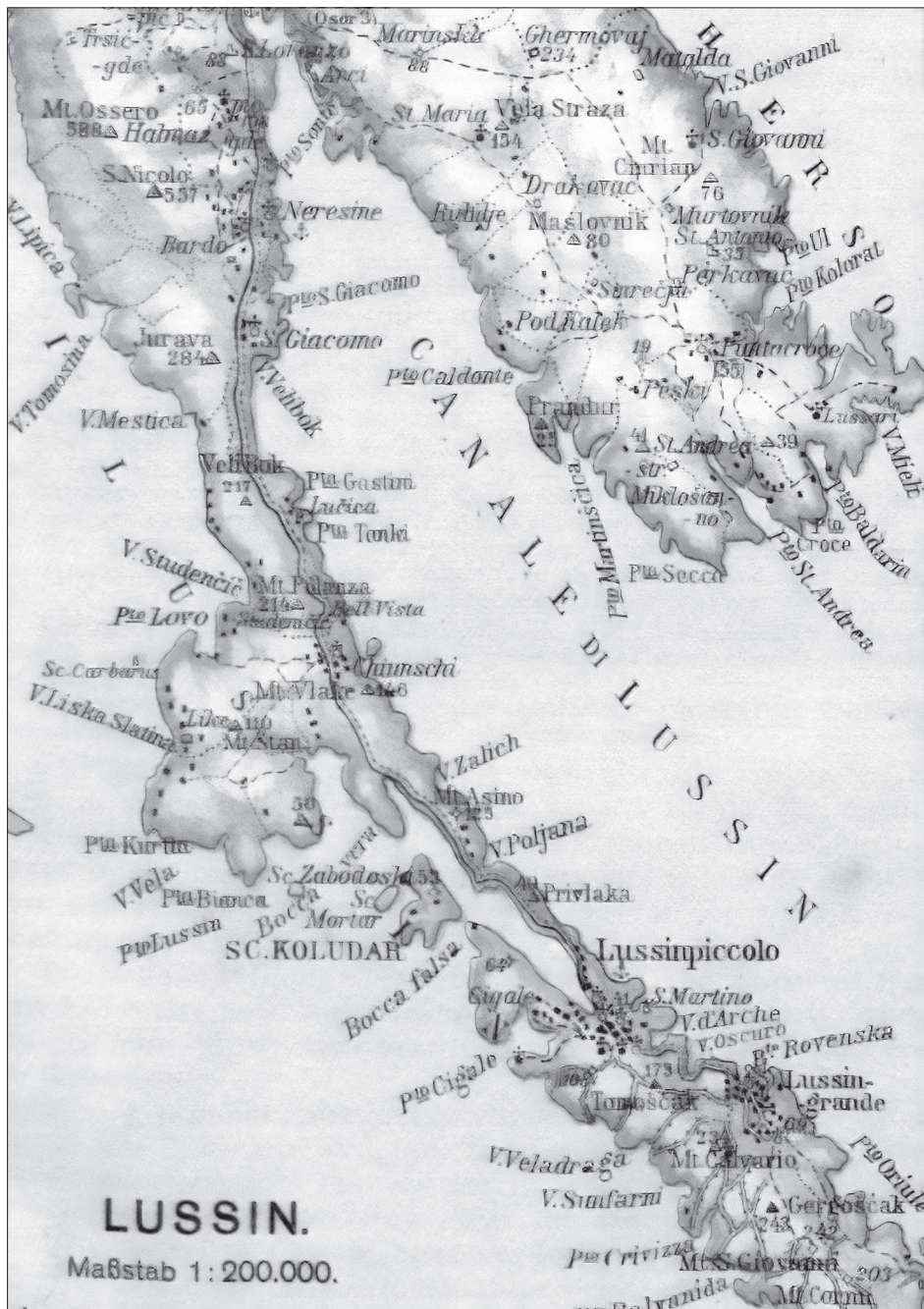
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Annex



Attachment 1 Map of Lošinj (1913)



Attachment 2 Drawing of Pension Alhambra by Alfred Keller (1912)



Attachment 3 Pension Alhambra (1913)



Attachment 4 Villa Mignon in Veli Losinj (Lussingrande) (around 1900)



Attachment 5 Guest Room at Sanatorium Dr. Hajós in Čikat (1908)

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