

**Development of Healthcare Tourism Destinations  
on the Adriatic Coast: Cultural Sentiment and  
Urban Space in *fin de siècle* Opatija**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to present the process of urban development of Opatija as the nineteenth century Adriatic seaside health resort. The seaside resorts emerged from the changing attitudes towards the health and nature in the society, and thus they were attracting visitors who sought to be cured and leisured. The main purpose of such places was to provide pleasure and entertainment and to preserve the image of their natural environment at the same time.

In this research the movements that encouraged the development of seaside resorts on the Adriatic coast are presented, as well as the circumstances that inspired Opatija's transformation into a seaside tourist centre of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, with the aim to define environmental and social predispositions for its urban development and to give a historical and architectural overview of the urban context that influenced its everyday life.

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## INTRODUCTION

Towns are usually marked by the centuries long development and urban configuration. They have their own physiognomies and their development is influenced by many factors different in nature and time periods. However, there are planned towns, places created in a short period for the purpose to provide leisure and pleasure for the 'modern' society. These are seaside resorts -- the 'new towns' of an industrializing continent.<sup>1</sup> Since they were among the fastest growing towns in late nineteenth century, their task was to remain attractive and modern and the necessary cultural and urban establishments of the *fin the siècle* period are comprised in them. Therefore, a seaside resort offers a good ground for research of the *fin the siècle* culture, and in this thesis I will describe the culture and urban space of Opatija, such a town planned for tourism at the end of the nineteenth century.

At the turn of the century Opatija (Abbazia) was transformed in a short period from a small fishing village into an elite resort, and was classified among the top healthcare destinations of that time. It became a famous destination for high society, aristocracy, bourgeoisie and artists. Opatija's urban advantage is that the town was planned for tourism and its urban structure was defined in less than thirty years. A large investment wave from the centre of the monarchy and favorable business conditions made Opatija a profitable place for further investment and a permanent construction site. Primarily the mild climate, native vegetation (laurel) and carefully groomed rich greenery encouraged the development of Opatija's region as a winter resort. The turning point in Opatija's development is considered to have been the construction of the villa Angiolina in 1844, but the actual basis for future development was the improvement of traffic connections with the hinterland as a result of construction of the railway from Pivka to Rijeka (Fiume) and investments from the

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Meller, *European Cities 1890-1930s: history, culture, and the built environment* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2001), 10.

Viennese *Southern Railway Company*. Accordingly, joint stock companies and wealthy individuals bought land and built numerous summer houses, hotels, sanatorias and pensions for rent on the stretched coastal line. The influx of 'tourists' from all over the Monarchy brought the style and spirit of the time, which resulted in Opatija becoming the meeting point of Central European and Mediterranean culture – which has permanently marked that coastal region. According to its urban context and planned development, Opatija differs from all other tourist places on the Adriatic coast. While other cities are marked by centuries long development and shaped in accordance with Mediterranean lifestyle and urban configuration,<sup>2</sup> Opatija was created under a direct impact of the nineteenth century Central European architectural style for the purpose of leisure tourism. Throughout this research, I will analyze to what extent Opatija, as a representative and newly formed tourist town, was influenced by the architectural style of the time and what was its urban identity. There are two main frameworks which provided me with approach through different theories. First one is that of social and cultural studies, such as leisure class and tourism theories whose main concepts will be explained. Another group of definitions comes from urban and architectural studies and these will be analyzed through defining works of the existing literature in the field.

The first chapter will give a historical background of the processes which were crucial for the formation of Opatija as a resort town. The history of Opatija as a town, which is not going far in the past centuries and which is not dynamic until the mid-nineteenth century will be briefly presented. However, the position of the town in the context of Croatian history and especially its meaning within the Austro Hungarian monarchy have to be explained. Croatia was at the time defined as a region of South-Eastern Europe and was

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<sup>2</sup> All tourist resorts on the east Adriatic coast were planed on the area of already developed Mediterranean towns and villages with existing urban core and history, while Opatija was urbanistically an undeveloped and young village.

influenced from many sides like, for instance, from Italy and Hungary. However, it was primarily shaped under the influence of Austria and the Austrian capital. The Austrian *Southern Railways Company* together with the Viennese managing director Julius Schuler began the development of Opatija as a health resort by setting up a company to build hotels, villas, health and recreational facilities in 1880s. In the following period many other individuals invested as well, and until the First World War Opatija was quite developed town. The reasons for the choice of this particular location in the north Adriatic, in the so called “Quarner Bay,” are numerous -- the natural and climate benefits, short distance from the Central European urban centers, railway and many other facilities.

In order to define the social predispositions for Opatija’s development, I need to present the social changes and movements that created a need for the places of leisure and healing. For that reason, the first chapter will present the main social movements and affiliations from romanticism sentiments toward the turn of the century industrialism and modernism. In this way I will try to reveal their roles in the emergence of the new society affiliated with leisure and bodily health movements. Tourism and traveling are two phenomena as old as the civilized world, and tourism evolved into regular organized industry during the nineteenth century, driven by various factors. In this chapter I will introduce all these factors, although the emphasis will be on the health driven forms of tourism, i.e. medical tourism. From 1880s this form of tourism began to develop rapidly in the towns on the Adriatic coast where new villas sprang up to accommodate the wealthy and leisured middle classes. Those places marked themselves as various health resorts by emphasizing the quality of their seaside air, and targeting urban dwellers eager to cultivate their bodies and to release themselves from negative effects of the urban life.

In the second chapter I write about the urban culture and everyday life that was created by the influence of this specific health resort townscape. In all stages of Opatija’s

development, social, economic and political circumstances were combined with natural conditions as key elements of its development. Town development was a result of decisions made by a certain social class after recognition and validation of the natural and climatic characteristics of the location. Since it was a high-class society of European aristocrats, capitalists and artistic elites, the basic structures of the resort (villas, hotels, therapy institutes, bathing buildings and facilities, promenades, parks and gardens, all conformed with the adequate high level infrastructure) and the way they were constructed, reflect their wishes and their taste.

Since the establishment of Opatija as a health resort, open spaces such as parks, promenades, beaches etc. were vitally important as places for social events and meetings, strolling, recreation and therapy. I explore whether the need for leisure in a sea resort derived only from fashion, in other words from ‘the need to see, and to be seen’, or the culture of spending holidays at the seaside resorts derived from the real need for being ‘cured’ by nature. Was Opatija’s particular urban shape made for the elites’ representation, or were these gardens and green spaces a logical response to the need for a healing nature and ‘romanticism enjoyment?’ In other words, was Opatija an interesting city for its urban and natural qualities, or it was its lifestyle or the ‘state of mind’ that made it so attractive?

The third chapter will be concentrated on the research question. Since my goal is to describe the urban and accordingly cultural space of Opatija as a place planned for tourism at the end of the nineteenth century, the main research question is connected to the principles of Opatija’s tourist architecture. Therefore I will search for the main style influences to find an answer if all of it was only an imitation of the fashion of the time, or if it had some of its own spirit and identity. The Austrian influence in Opatija is obvious; it can be seen from the very idea of its foundation as a therapeutic health resort. The architects most “responsible” for the recognizable urban style of Opatija were Austrians.

Architecture of its villas, hotels pensions and public buildings, is realized in the historicist (eclectic) style, with its recognizable architectural characteristics spread all over the Austro Hungarian Monarchy. Still Opatija has its distinctive urban identity. When compared with other seaside resorts formed before the end of the nineteenth century in Europe, Opatija stands among the rare examples of resorts without a defined urban structure. Here, planers did not have any urban limitations or already existing structures as patterns which they could follow in the town planning. They thus took the existing natural environment as a base for their planning. For that reason, Opatija's originality and its distinctive identity lies in its natural environment. This chapter will present the characteristics of this environment as well as the unique urban concept based on the unity of town planning, architecture and park architecture.

### ***Literature Review and Theoretical Approaches***

Placing my research in the field of existing literature and making comparison with the defining works of the field is a tricky task when working with a subject which can not be placed within the strict categories. Since my research question is concerned with a comparative study of some socio-cultural, urban, and architectural aspects of a particular town in time, it is necessary to establish a theoretical basis on different levels. When it comes to the urban structure of the town, my focus is not to analyze its style and form (as in art history research); I would rather analyze the forms and ways in which people created those spaces for themselves in order to define fashion and the culture of the time. Urban history is looking at the cities as documents which can tell a lot about the values and aspirations of the people. In that sense I will use architecture as a medium for revealing wider socio-political relations. The main aspect of interdisciplinarity in my research is that I

will be searching for an interaction between everyday social life, the leisure of the period and its influence on the urban space. To accomplish my research, I will have to connect the facts about the general nineteenth century leisure trends (which are the result of political, social and economical circumstances) with the knowledge of architecture and art history, primarily with urban history.

In the first part of the same chapter, I will look at leisure class and tourism theory, which are necessary to define the social predispositions for Opatija's development. Opatija was created in less than thirty years in the second half of the nineteenth century for the purpose of health tourism and leisure. In order to present the origins and influences of Opatija's development, I need to understand the social changes, movements and ideas about the origin of the nineteenth-century tourism as well as the social and economic life of the upper classes of the period. There is a plenty of written material on tourism history in the field of contextual studies of leisure and tourism produced within different frameworks. Tourism studies, as it has emerged as an academic discipline, has been dominated by economics, business, and management studies, while the history of travel and leisure in general have tended to remain within the humanities and social science disciplines such as anthropology, geography, sociology and literary, cultural and media studies, as well as planning, architecture and the visual arts.<sup>3</sup>

Tourism, recreation and leisure are generally seen as a set of interrelated and overlapping concepts. Leisure is defined as "All the time that remains after deducting time required for labor and educational commitments, and the time required for personal care and care for the family members".<sup>4</sup> The importance of urban environments, urban fringes and rural areas for leisure is related to this wide definition of leisure. "Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for

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<sup>3</sup> Hartmut Berghoff, *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (Palgrave: 2002), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Jafar Jafari, *Encyclopedia of Tourism* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.”<sup>5</sup> The sociologists John Urry in *The Tourist Gaze*, often cited book on the significance of tourism industry defines tourism and argues that it is “about places and spaces that are embedded in cultures, economies, and social lives of communities, [...] in tourism, production, consumption, and experiential characteristics become interconnected in a given location”.<sup>6</sup> The health tourism is a form of tourism that appeared in its beginnings and is defined as “physical and mental personal care, such as visits to spas and thermal pools [...] the provision of health facilities utilizing the natural resources of the country, in particular mineral water and climate.”<sup>7</sup> Seaside resorts are defined as “small geographic units or areas that offer an array of tourist attractions and services; their population at least during the tourism season is mostly made by visitors.”<sup>8</sup>

The seaside resort and beach holiday, in their various forms, played a central role in the development of tourism as a great international industry, and their origins can be traced to eighteenth century Britain. The major literature on tourism history, especially about seaside resorts comes from British historians and sociologists. One of them is John Walton, a social historian whose main research interests involve seaside tourism and urban regional identities. He offers an interpretation of modern tourism as a “result of the democratization of elitist practices.” According to him, social emulation was at work in the spas and the British dominated Grand Tour.<sup>9</sup> In his works *The English Seaside Resort: a Social History* and *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, Walton analyses the history and growth of spas and seaside resorts in Britain employing comparison with

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<sup>5</sup> Definition by World Tourism Organization UNWTO, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Jafar Jafari, *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. (New York: Rutledge, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, *Encyclopedia of Tourism*

<sup>9</sup> The sons of the upper classes were sent abroad on a Grand Tour in order to complete their education in Europe since the early modern period. Over the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thousands of Britons, Germans, French and Russians traveled around the Continent, principally to France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany in search of culture and the arts, inspired by the aesthetic principles of the picturesque and Edmund Burke’s concept of the sublime. (Encyclopedia of Tourism).

those in Europe. Between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, a multitude of coastal resorts were established, first in England, then across Europe and the Atlantic world, before the beach holiday became a global phenomenon in the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup>

Sea bathing emerged as part of the growing fashionable concern for the pursuit of health and attractiveness among the broadening and highly competitive upper strata of eighteenth-century English society. The seaside resort became the fastest-growing kind of British town in the first half of the nineteenth century, a peak period for urban development generally, especially among industrial towns. Developments in the Mediterranean, the early growth of which was based on the restoration of health through climate rather than sea bathing, came later. By the mid-nineteenth century, an increasing German and Austrian presence was notable on the Adriatic culminating by the end of that century. Some seaside resorts became summer capitals, such as Opatija.<sup>11</sup>

Another book named *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict*, with Walton as the editor, is useful for understanding historical processes in tourism such as the “resort product cycle”, its development, cultural conditions and impacts. It contains case studies, which explore the relationships between tourism promotion, tourist practices and the construction and representation of imperial and national identities. John Towner who wrote *A Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World, 1540-1940* criticizes the conventional view of tourism’s past dominated by the history of western cultural experience (such as Walton’s), which starts with the wealthy classes and images of prestigious visits to spas and seaside, Thomas Cook’s excursions<sup>12</sup> and Grand Tours. He is

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<sup>10</sup> John Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: a Social History, 1750-1914* (Leicester University Press: 1983), 4-11.

<sup>11</sup> John Walton, “Seaside Resorts and International Tourism” in *Touring Beyond the Nation: A Transnational Approach to European Tourism History*, ed. Eric G.E. Zuelow (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 19-37

<sup>12</sup> In 1841 Thomas Cook arranged an excursion from Leicester to Loughborough (UK) on the first advertised privately chartered trip. In the mid-1850s he started to take groups abroad, first to Europe and then further a field in the 1860s. Thomas Cook and Son was set up as a travel agency, set up branches across the world and produced guidebooks. (*Encyclopedia of Tourism*).

tracing the origins of tourism in a wider urban and rural leisure system, from Roman and Renaissance Villas to Chinese pleasure houses. Further, he argues that tourism should not be seen through the varieties of isolated events; the research should rather embrace wider tourist lifestyles and life cycle frameworks. Novels and visual arts can provide valuable insights into the relationship between leisure and tourism, the mentality of particular cultures and deeper insight into themes such as sense of place and general understanding of contemporary culture.<sup>13</sup>

Each European country and coastline developed its own form of architecture and beach management. Accordingly, Fred Gray in his work *Designing the Seaside, Architecture, Society and Nature* presents a historical, architectural and cultural overview of seaside architecture from the eighteenth century to the present day, while using a comparative framework of resorts in Europe, the United States, and further. For him “seaside architecture is a product of complex and layered design process, [...] it influences on how people use the seaside and how they understand and envisage it.”<sup>14</sup> He analyses both the physical structures, but also the cultural mores of seaside holidaymaking and provides an insight into aspects of the relationship between the resorts architecture and social realities. In this manner I will also explore the ways in which seaside buildings formed an important part of leisure and popular culture.

Besides Towner’s arguments, there is not much literature which connects tourism history with the historical ‘country Villas’, which had existed long before the emergence of nineteenth century modern tourism. In my research, I will trace this connection between nineteenth century Opatija’s villas and roman “*villa rusticae*” on the Adriatic coast. Both of them were associated with their carefully chosen environment, making an inseparable unity

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<sup>13</sup> John Towner, *An Historical Geography of Recreation and Tourism in the Western World, 1540-1940*. (Chichester: Wiley 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Fred Gray, *Designing the Seaside, Architecture, Society and Nature*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 9.

between building and its surrounding natural landscape. The phenomenon of villa culture needs to be examined not only from its artistic aspect, which has usually been the case so far; it should rather be seen in political, social and cultural context since their development was conditioned by various circumstances. The Croatian art historian Cvito Fisković focused his work on researching Dalmatian renaissance villas. He presented the ideological and political aspects of this architectural form as well as its aesthetic components and its horticulture. In the framework of his research study there is a volume written by various scholars which deals with subjects connected with the notion of Villa culture. This volume named *Villa culture* through various case studies from Adriatic coast determinates architecture of Villas, their spatial dispositions, stylistic characteristics, investors' profiles, as well as the context of their planning and functions, which is important for reaching an understanding of the origins of Opatija's villas and it is providing a basis for comparative analyses of Villa heritage between Western European and Mediterranean culture.

Next, I will use some theoretical literature relevant for nineteenth century social and cultural history ("fin de siecle society"). The Carl E. Schorske research on *Fin-de-siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* is an obvious starting point from which one can start a research into the field of cultural studies that takes architecture to be a medium for revealing a wider socio-political undercurrents. It does not provide only the basis for the study of Vienna's urban culture and architecture in the turn of the century; it can also serve as a model example for framing a comparative cultural study. The author used the Ringstrasse to represent an emergence of the new liberal middle class in 'fin de siecle' Vienna, in a way like I will use Opatija as a representative example of the newly ascending nineteenth century 'leisure class.' Further, in the work of Akos Moravanszky, *Competing visions*, the wide examination of the built environment of European cities within their culture can be found. His aim was to set architectural development against its cultural background, and to trace

architectural ideologies in the Central European production. He discusses how the public structures and urban design in Habsburg Monarchy reflected political and economic aspects and enhanced the interaction of diverse social classes, which is certainly something that can be identified also in the nineteenth century seaside resorts.

Existing scientific literature on Opatija's history is oriented separately toward economical, urban and tourist development of Opatija. Some historians explore individually Opatija's legal history, ethnographic history, tourism history, schooling history, etc. Nevertheless, some studies are valuable for this study such as *How Opatija Was Created* where Amir Muzur gives basic conclusions on how Opatija is an example of a town without a long history and thus represents a typical example of urban environment created under the influence of socio-political and economical processes. The subjects of urban and horticultural heritage development are surveyed in the work of Koraljka Vlahtar-Jurković *Opatija -- Urban Development and Park Heritage* and *Opatija's Parks*, where she displays Opatija's urban conditions in different periods of its development through numerous graphic visualizations, while basing her research on the old cadastral maps.

The catalog book *Opatija's Album* is my main source for the chapter on social identities. The archivist Boris Zakošek who works in the State Archive of Rijeka has systematically cataloged all the buildings constructed from 1806 to 1944. Thousands of names with their birth dates, marriages, deaths, nicknames and connections with other houses and families, form a kind of extensive urban encyclopedia. Further more, he translated from German or transcribed from Croatian numerous source documents from the turn of the century which were preserved in the archive, and collected them in this book. This information is a useful source for tracing the roots and the phenomena of the urban and social development of this specific community, and reveals the connections of urban

structures and architecture with the reasons of their owners and investors. The main source for the urban analysis is the urban space itself. Through field research, I identify some specificities of Opatija's urban and natural space and architecture since it has mainly preserved the same physiognomy from the turn of the century.

## **Need for Health and Leisure** (Historical Background)

### *Invention of Leisure*

In earlier historical periods leisure time was relatively strictly tied to the dominant social hierarchies just as some certain fashion or other objects were. The industrial revolution changed the way people lived and it affected popular patterns of recreation and leisure.<sup>15</sup> Great numbers of people moved from rural areas to the cities to work. People from rural towns and foreign immigrants moved into the tenement areas of growing cities, where they lived in barely adequate life conditions.<sup>16</sup> Therefore throughout this period, there was a pressure to reduce the workweek. In 1868 in United States Congress established the eight-hour day by law for laborers employed under contracts with federal government, in Europe it happened during 1880s firstly in Britain. The average workweek declined from 69.7 hours per week for all industries in 1860 to 61 hour in 1890, to 54.9 hours in 1910 and as a consequence, during the last half of the nineteenth century, concerns about increase of free time began to appear.<sup>17</sup>

In the previous periods, “work was considered as the source of social and moral values, and therefore the proper concern of churches, which renewed their attack upon most forms of play, and condemned many commercial amusements.”<sup>18</sup> Despite these anti-amusement efforts, the first half of the nineteenth century was a period of expansion of popular amusements such as music, theatre, dance. Leisure and recreation significance had changed dramatically in that period of ‘public recreation movement’ and was characterized

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<sup>15</sup> Daniel McLean., *Kraus' Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Jones and Barlett Publishers, 2008), 52.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

by the widespread development of organized recreation activities.<sup>19</sup> Popular hobbies such as photography emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century and were frequently linked to new outdoor recreation pursuits. Number of sports increased during the early nineteenth century. As a part of the recreation movement and as a response to the appalling problems of the urban environment brought on by industrialization and rapid population growth, by the end of the nineteenth century public parks had become an essential part of the urban space.

### *Invention of Modern Tourism*

The beginning of modern tourism in Central Europe can be dated to the second half of the nineteenth century. In tourism industry, the relationship between health tourism and the expansion of recreational tourism was in balance. Medically licensed spas and small watering places developed various kinds of leisure facilities, developing rapidly into holiday resorts as they attracted a wide section of the tourist market. Ordinary leisure resorts marked themselves as forms of health resorts by emphasizing the quality of their air and targeting urban dwellers wishing to cultivate their bodies and resolve the ‘degenerative effects’ of urban life. “This general preoccupation with health was evident as more and more people made ‘day trips’, bicycling out into the fresh air of surrounding countryside at weekends and visiting bathing places”.<sup>20</sup>

“By the turn of the century the proliferating ‘body and life reform movements’ in Central Europe were attracting growing numbers of adherents who, convinced that modern urban life contributed to the ‘degeneracy’ of the body”, sought recuperative and alternative treatments in picturesque rural surroundings in which they could “temporarily entertain

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<sup>19</sup> McLean, *Kraus' Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*, 58.

<sup>20</sup> Jill Steward, “Tourism in Late Imperial Austria” in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture, and Identity in modern Europe and North America*, Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough ed., (The University of Michigan press, 2001) 113.

‘Rousseauesque fantasies’ of returning to nature”.<sup>21</sup> The economic and social changes of the nineteenth century encouraged the growth and expansion of many Hapsburg Monarchy's cities and towns including spa towns. The railway networks were themselves a crucial influence on the topography of the spa system.

No longer exclusive, travel became more widespread when railways and steamboats greatly reduced the problems of travel with lower price and length, and greater comfort. Large-scale travel was firstly a British phenomenon, participated in all sectors of urban society.<sup>22</sup> The building of the railways from the 1830s, the increase in leisure time and disposable income for middle-class people together with the development of new organizational forms influenced on the birth of popular tourism. First important modern tourist achievement was an invention of the package tour which made recreational travel, previously preserved for the elites, quick, cheap, safe and accessible to masses. Thomas Cook, the British excursion promoter, travel agent and contributor to the rise of popular international tourism, was a creator of the first organized travels in England in 1840s and a founder of the first travel agency. As the nineteenth century drew closer, travel became cheaper, in relative and absolute terms.<sup>23</sup>

The travel guidebooks, another important invention, professionalized travel for the middle classes.<sup>24</sup> Through the promotion of foreign and the facilitation of domestic travel, a guidebook assisted in creating a national traveling culture which in turn contributed to the greater sense of national identity and appreciation and understanding of distinctive cultures.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jill Steward, “The Spa Towns of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Growth of Tourist Culture: 1860-1914.” in *New directions in urban history: aspects of European art, health, tourism and leisure since the Enlightenment*, (Waxmann Verlag, 2000), 97.

<sup>22</sup> Rudy Koshar Ed., *Histories of Leisure* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 107.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-25.

<sup>24</sup> Jan Palmowski, “Travels with Baedeker – The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar, (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 105-123.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 105-123.

Another important and even revolutionary aspect of travel in the railway age was that in theory it leveled class distinctions, and one reason is that all classes used the same trains when going to the same destinations (although different class wagons). By the end of the Victorian era, foreign travel had stopped being the exclusive preserve of the middle classes. However, as more people traveled, the travel industry was quick to develop sophisticated ways of differentiation among its clientele. Especially foreign travel emphasized class differences, “luxury holidays in Egypt, Mediterranean cruises, the Orient Express, luxury hotels such as the Ritz, and educational trips”, “all provided means of maintaining and even extending class barriers”.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the custom of spending weeks or days each spring by the coast was well established: resorts were growing rapidly, and with the coming of the railways, middle-class prosperity and more free time, the experience of the sea was being extended down the social scale.<sup>27</sup> Sea bathing which was in the mid eighteenth century initiated as a cure for invalids was at the beginning of the twentieth century enjoyed for its own sake, and the beach was increasingly becoming a playground for children. The Central European railway system in the 1840s accelerated social changes and supported newly developing patterns of culture and leisure among middle classes, by facilitating the development of economic infrastructure.<sup>28</sup>

Although daily rituals of status display had been part of the aristocratic life in the Hapsburg Monarchy since the end of seventeenth century, two centuries later these continued to play a role in the social lives of the upper classes who visited the growing health and spa resorts catering for the new leisure tourism. Nobility started “adopting a more urbanized, cosmopolitan lifestyle, spending part of the year in Vienna, by now firmly

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<sup>26</sup> Koshar., *Histories of Leisure*, 118.

<sup>27</sup> Mirjana Kos, and Julija Lozzi Barkovic, *Kvarnerska kupališna baština*, (Rijeka: Croatian Museum of Tourism, 2009), 15-24.

<sup>28</sup> Steward, “Tourism in Late Imperial Austria”, 109.

established as the principal social and cultural centre of Central Europe”.<sup>29</sup> “They began to follow the life-style of the royal court and its highest officials who spent the summer months in residences outside the city or visiting spas like Karlsbad or Baden.”<sup>30</sup> Along with urban-style *flânerie* and the importance of exercise in many cure regimes this required the provision and beautification of the appropriate forms of public space such as shady gardens and promenades.<sup>31</sup>

It is plausible to assume that the first really international tourist phenomena after The Grand Tour was a spa resort.<sup>32</sup> Spa resorts were “microcosms of high society”, were a “big league” of international politicians, industrialists and financiers were staying.<sup>33</sup> Elite seaside resorts were sometimes also in a way “summer capitals” -- centers for political intrigue, cabals, and unofficial diplomacy.<sup>34</sup> In other words, their Grand Hotels and casinos had a role as focal points of international economic activity. The desire to attract visitors made different regions more aware of their own distinctive features as they tried to attract the attention of tourists by emphasizing the unique aspects of their culture and environment. By the outbreak of the First World War, the tourist cultures of the “principal spa towns of Austria and Hungary had developed many common features and possessed many of the amenities which accommodated modern life-styles and forms of leisure activities based increasingly on consumption”.<sup>35</sup> In the more fashionable spas, elegant shops selling smart clothes and souvenirs encouraged visitors to engage with a consumption-orientated culture. Trade exhibitions were one of the main vehicles for promoting tourism and exports.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Steward, “The Spa Towns of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Growth of Tourist Culture: 1860-1914”, 89.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 89.

<sup>31</sup> Steward, “Tourism in late imperial Austria”, 108-135.

<sup>32</sup> John K Walton, “ Seaside resorts and international tourism” in *Touring Beyond the Nation*, Ed. Eric Zuelow, (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011) 19-36.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 19-36.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 19-36.

<sup>35</sup> Koshar Ed., *Histories of Leisure*, 120.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 108-135.

The spread of commercialized and modernizing forms of urban culture also contributed to the growing awareness of ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences as interaction between the inhabitants of the resort towns and their visitors made them increasingly conscious of their own unique cultural identity.<sup>37</sup> Throughout the Monarchy, the development of the spas and their associated tourist cultures reinforced the growing self-consciousness of the regions in which they were located.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, postcards were invented in Austria in 1869 and were produced and retailed by many of the publishing houses.<sup>39</sup> “Postcards were sold everywhere: a tiny shop in alpine village could sell up to five thousands cards in summer”.<sup>40</sup> All the qualities which tourists publicly associate with Austria and its capital Vienna, such as picturesqueness, joy, nostalgia, charm and scenery were already apparent in the tourist publicity of Imperial Austria in the early twentieth century. Before the First World War, tourism became economically significant in Europe; Italy, France, Austria and Switzerland emerged as great tourist destinations.

On the other hand, although elite spas emphasized their distinctiveness, they were selling the same products and ideas remarkable for their basic similarity: “the same grand hotels with the same names (Park, Excelsior, Imperial, Palace,...), the same “Escoffier” cuisine; the same sports, as tennis and golf facilities; the same eclectic, historicist architecture with a bit of Renaissance, a touch of First Empire, a dash of the exotic (palms and pagodas); the same eclectic musical programs.”<sup>41</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century we find an obvious homogenization of what spas offered to their visitors.

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<sup>37</sup> Koshar, *Histories of leisure*, 120.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

<sup>39</sup> Steward, “Tourism in Late Imperial Austria”, 124.

<sup>40</sup> Steward, “Tourism in Late Imperial Austria”, 124.

<sup>41</sup> David Blackbourn, “Fashionable Spa Towns in Nineteenth-century Europe”, in *Water, Leisure and Culture*, edit. Susan C. Anderson, and Bruce H. Tabb, (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 9-21.

## *Rediscovering of the Seaside*

Even though the curative properties of the influence of seawater on the human body had been known a long time ago, a custom of bathing in the sea is recent. At the end of the eighteenth century, the English aristocracy started bathing on the shores of South England, where, precisely in Brighton, the first bathing establishment in Europe was constructed.<sup>42</sup> The process of “rediscovering the seaside” was not simple, since until the eighteenth century the sea was perceived as mysterious and dangerous, hiding monsters in the deep, causing ship accidents, and being surrounded with wild unusable shoreline (cliffs, sand).<sup>43</sup> Therefore the notion that it represented – fear, would change during the Age of the Enlightenment into the notions of admiration. The pleasure of standing on a cliff, strolling around the strands, and gazing at the ever-changing sea became a desirable experience in the poetry and arts.<sup>44</sup> The great shift in taste with the Romantic Movement and discovering a new worship of the wilderness revitalized the attitudes to wild nature and sea, when the most beautiful nature was the one without obvious evidence of human activity.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the new ways in which people understood and appreciated nature reflecting their own bodily consciousness was revolutionary. In contrast to the perceived malevolence of the cities and overcrowded inland spas, the sea shore resorts offered a new closeness to nature.<sup>46</sup> Alan Corbin explains:

The ocean represented indisputable nature which was more than just scenery, and which remained unaffected by falsehood [...] the sea became a refuge and a source of hope because it inspired fear. The new strategy for seaside holidays was to enjoy the sea and experience the terror it inspired, while overcoming one’s personal perils. [...] The sea was expected to cure the evil of urban civilization and correct the ill effects of easy living, while respecting the demands of privacy.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Kos and Baraković, *Kvarnerska kupališna baština*, 210.

<sup>43</sup> Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 1-10.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>45</sup> John Lyall and Caludia Bell, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 7.

<sup>46</sup> Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 20.

<sup>47</sup> Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, 62.

Nevertheless, eighteenth-century rediscovery of the seaside as a site of pleasure and healing has soon prompted the consumption of therapeutic and health enhancing qualities of the seawater. Following the mid eighteenth century the works of numerous physicians were proclaiming the extraordinary virtues of seawater, such as cold-water medicinal bathing and drinking. A popular dissertation from 1752 by Dr Richard Russell *Dissertation on the Uses of Sea Water in the Diseases of the Glans* became a standard reference. His therapeutic strategy was that “the patients were to bath once a day and drink half pint of seawater in the morning and a glass upon coming out of the water; if necessary they were to be massaged with freshly collected seaweed from the rocks and to shower with cold sea water that had been heated”.<sup>48</sup>

Consequently, by the end of the eighteenth century the sea bathing fashion developed out of the therapeutic objective and doctors prescribed veritable cures modeled on those offered by spas. Sea bathing quickly emerged as a regulated experience, while in every resort municipal establishments were constructed so that the water temperature could be adjusted along with all the necessary services needed to carry out the medical prescriptions.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, the beaches became covered with scrofula-suffers and the sensibility to marine aesthetics was increased. A whole lifestyle was taking shape on the sea shores and detailed behavioral patterns were codified as part of the quest for well being.<sup>50</sup> To accommodate those bathing in the sea and following Victorian morality codes, the bathing machine driven by horses in order to provide complete intimacy was invented. In the following period, taking the British model, seaside resorts emerged in the Mediterranean coasts driven by the developing railway and steamship connections in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>48</sup> Russell (1752), in Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, 67.

<sup>49</sup> Corbin, 69.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 87.

At the time the North Adriatic became one of the main seaside vacation and therapeutic destinations of Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The natural benefits and terms were evaluated and some places were declared ideal for climate treatments. The culture of bathing in the sea becomes an integral element of everyday life of a modern person. The development of the sea bathing resorts in cities of Croatian coast and on the islands starts when medical scientists started to discuss the benefits of these natural factors for human body. Coastal places were the vacation destination when the central part of the monarchy had the colder period of the year. For a place to become a bathing and therapeutic resort it was necessary to prove that it had organized bathing areas, sufficient number of housing for guest acceptance, that drink and food were assured, and that there was a doctor and the pharmacy in the city.<sup>51</sup>

The emergence of the seaside resorts formed an integral part of the industrialization process, since industrialization and urbanization brought greater specializations in urban function. Seaside resorts grew responding to the various urbanization processes: consumption as well as production, the spread of rising living standards and aspirations, fashion cycles, globalization and increasing mobility.<sup>52</sup> Their purpose was to provide leisure facilities and entertainment, not to their resident population, but to the seasonal visitors, and as they grew they had to remain attractive. And to remain attractive they had to find ways to preserve nature, due to which their location was chosen at first place. Further, they had to be in the forefront of cultural change, thus the latest technology is applied to leisure and up to date manifestations of popular culture were components of their attractiveness.<sup>53</sup> Resorts depended hugely upon their image and one of them was their role as an antidote to work and

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<sup>51</sup> Mirjana Kos, and Julija Lozzi Barkovic, *Kvarnerska kupališna baština*, 15-24.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Borsay and John K. Walton, *Resorts and Port: European Seaside towns since 1700*, (Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2011), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Meller, *European Cities 1890-1930s : history, culture, and the built environment*, 187.

to the unhealthiness of the industrial city and to the boredom and banalities of everyday routine.<sup>54</sup>

In the next chapters the case study of such places invented and developed for the purpose of tourism will be presented. Through the case study of Opatija's social and cultural image at the turn of the century it will be explored in what scale social and cultural life of its residences was different from life in other places and what kind of urban image they were representing.

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<sup>54</sup> Borsay and Walton, *Resorts and Port: European Seaside towns since 1700*, 9.

## Cultural and Urban Identity

### *Social and Ethnic Structure Before and During Tourist Development*

This chapter provides an overview of the social and ethnical structure in Opatija at the time of its urban development as a tourist resort and will present the processes that contributed to the major changes in the structure before and after that development. At the beginning of nineteenth century, a 'modern' administration and judiciary was formed in the north Adriatic region as a consequence of prior dissolution of feudal relations. Before the beginning of the tourism era, Opatija was a small settlement and did not have its own autonomy; it was under the jurisdiction of Kastav<sup>55</sup> municipality until 1850 when it was shifted under the Volosko municipality and was like that until 1890. It is visible in the Franciscan cadastral elaboration from 1820 that the deconstruction of feudal relations was at the time completed, and residents' economical basis was different than that in the eighteenth century. All families -- 94 of them -- were at the time complete owners of their land, but not living from the land, rather earning their money on the sea.<sup>56</sup>

Agricultural products, surpluses of which were sold in Rijeka, were laurel leaves<sup>57</sup> and chestnuts. However, sailing commerce was at the time more profitable. Only ten persons owned their own ships and in each family at least one woman earned money from the weaving work.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it can be concluded that Opatija's residents were generally poor. Except from local clergies, only Golob von Taubenberg family and two captains possessed higher ranks. As the nineteenth century moved on, Opatija's society was becoming more

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<sup>55</sup> Kastav- small inland town (5 km northeast of Opatija).

<sup>56</sup> Boris Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, (Rijeka: Državni arhiv Rijeka: 2005), 56

<sup>57</sup> Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) is a Mediterranean plant well-known for its healing effects, and at that time it was the most used plant in aromatherapy. Before the tourism it was used in economical purposes, people from the region where producing its oil for sale.

<sup>58</sup> Archivio di Stato Trieste, Catasto Franceschino, Elaborati Abbazia No 2., Notizie Statistiche della Comune di Abbazia. in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 62.

complex and diverse. Number of sailors became larger landowners, mostly captains who were slowly appearing in bigger numbers as well as the ship owners. As oral tradition claims, one long voyage could bring enough money for raising a family house. However, this does not mean that it was easy to earn money since one voyage could last for eight years and the percentage of calamities was high. According to statistics from 1856, Opatija had 106 houses and 396 residents.

During 1860s new economic activity emerged which will slowly prepare Opatija for tourism -- and which would remain its main source of revenues until present times. From the income gained mainly from shipping, and less from trade and catering, until 1870 there were six pensions opened by local families.<sup>59</sup> Finally in 1880s the social structure changed with the arrival of capital from the *Southern Railways* company and plenty of incomers with different mentalities, worldviews and tastes settled in Opatija. There were people of wide social range -- from peasants and craftsmen coming from surrounding villages, middle class members with various professions and nationalities to artists and aristocrats from all regions of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

By the end of the nineteenth century 40 noble families had a house (villa, pension, hotel, or some kind of building) in Opatija, while the number of regular visitors increased.<sup>60</sup> The analyses of new house owners and visitors have shown that they originated from both parts of the Monarchy (Austrian and Hungarian part) equally. Aristocracy mostly lived isolated when it was feasible, rarely getting involved in the public life and communicating with local authorities through their lawyers and agents. However, exceptions occurred if they had social engagements, such as giving donations for public and educational purposes, as well as charitable contributions. For example Baron Franz Rayer and his wife, who settled in Opatija in 1883 and possessed three villas, donated money for building a private

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<sup>59</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 67.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

school for girls.<sup>61</sup> There were other donors among the aristocracy as well, and the memory of them is still preserved in local history, mainly through the buildings which were built by them and which still carry their names.

The name of the Scarpa family holds a distinguished place among well-known Opatija *fin de siècle* residents. In present times, Iginio Scarpa and his son Paolo are represented as main contributors and first promoters of Opatija's tourist development. Iginio Scarpa (1794-1866), who came from an Italian patrician family, was a trader, vice-consul of Denmark, a manager of Hungarian insurance company in Rijeka, town councilor in Rijeka and Bakar and director of Rijeka's Chamber of trade. When his wife Angiolina (Trieste origins) died, their son Paolo Scarpa raised a villa in her memory in 1845, on a land which he bought from a local wealthy sailor.<sup>62</sup> The building of the villa was inspired by truly romantic reasons -- the death of the loving wife which encouraged deep emotions and brought together the father and son to live in a picturesque isolated country villa as a place of grief and memory.

Scarpa can be observed as representatives of the nineteenth century prosperous upper classes, who yearned for repose in the countryside, since the nineteenth century was a century in which middle and upper-class lifestyles were captivated by desire for countryside experiences.<sup>63</sup> If a family was wealthy, normally, it owned a country house for spending summers there.

The holiday brought a breath of fresh air from beyond the shifting norms and etiquette since the new environment offered the opportunity of encountering new people and unfamiliar situations.<sup>64</sup>

Since Paolo Scarpa was rich and influential, Villa Angiolina quickly became the centre for gatherings of the exclusive elite, and consequently "the idea concerning commercialization

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<sup>61</sup> HR-DARi-019, file H/8 – 1883; (baron Reyer is asking for permit to build the school for girls), in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 104.

<sup>62</sup> Majnarič, *Opatija –Croatia Divina*, 20-30.

<sup>63</sup> Salmi, *Nineteenth Century Europe*, 79.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

of Opatija was born.”<sup>65</sup> This is how the writer Giacomo Scotti described the ambient of Villa Angiolina:

Hospitality of the kind noble couple has come to such extent that they established for their friends a regular connection by the two horses' carriage between Rijeka and Opatija. Villa Angiolina then became the focus of social life, and thus the frequent receptions which Scarpa and his wife organized were enhanced by the great celebrations with dance and fireworks. These ceremonies and this wish to see all high society people on one place attracted ordinary Rijeka's citizens to come to Opatija as well. They started visiting on Sundays the small fishermen's town to stroll along the spacious laurel groves, have a pleasant rest under a shady chestnut tree and to spend the end of the day in one of the local restaurants.<sup>66</sup>

Due to the hospitability of its owners, Villa Angiolina became the meeting point for the elites, hosting Ban Josip Jelačić in 1854 and Empress Marija Ana in 1860 among many other notables, traders, artists and physicians. Therefore, Scarpe family is quite justifiably credited in present times as the first promoters of Opatija's tourism. The Empress stayed in Opatija by recommendations from her doctors and this 'royal confirmation' was followed by a general interest in visiting the place.<sup>67</sup>

This leads to another group of people who were the most creditable promoters of Opatija's advantages for tourist development. As nineteenth century tourism emerged from the general preoccupation for health, it is obvious that physicians had an important influence on seaside health tourism promotion. Precedence in this case is attributed to Anton Felix Jačić, a physician from Lovran who, as author of a nautical medicine textbook, already in 1847 had a vision of Opatija as a medical tourist destination.<sup>68</sup> In the beginning of 1870s two initiatives were launched by locals to plan the development of Opatija as a health resort and the forthcoming completion of the railway from Pivka to Rijeka (opened in 1873) gave chance for success in the realization of these ideas.

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<sup>65</sup> Ataljevic, Corak "Colonisation and taking the waters in the Nineteenth century" in *Royal Tourism: Excursions around Monarchy*, 137.

<sup>66</sup> Scotti, Giacomo, *Opatija-oaza ljubavi*, (Rijeka: Glossa d.o.o., 1994), 16.

<sup>67</sup> Ataljevic, Corak "Colonisation and taking the waters in the Nineteenth century", 137.

<sup>68</sup> Muzur, *Kako se stvarala Opatija*, 140-141.

The owner of Villa Angiolina, Paolo Scarpa, and his partners from Rijeka, in 1869 established a company for developing sea-bathing institutes in Opatija.<sup>69</sup> However, even though Scarpa was willing to use his own villa and properties for this purpose, he did not manage to collect enough money to start the business, and since 1874 the initiative is not mentioned anymore. Disappointed with the outcome, in 1875 he sold his properties to the Moravian count Viktor Chorinski.<sup>70</sup> Another initiative is connected to Doctor Matija Juraj Šporer who in 1872 founded *The Committee for the establishment of a therapeutic institute in Opatija* with a group of wealthy and prominent citizens of Rijeka.<sup>71</sup> This is how he described Opatija's advantages in the official initiative:

It is well known in the entire world how much pleasure and recreation a well-equipped therapeutic bathing institute can provide even to a healthy person and nobody can deny that in these areas exist all the necessary preconditions for achieving the highest standards, even more, for surpassing everything that already exist in the field. (...) Widespread sneaky scrofula and fatal suppuration of respiratory tract caused by them require special and recognized treatment that can be provided neither by private nor by public institutions. Detailed studies and correctly interpreted experience undoubtedly showed that only long exposure (both inner and outer) to the sea and, if required, usage of heated and aromatic baths, can effectively lead to desired results in suppressing scrofula. Furthermore, only recognized and for a long time applied inhalation processes -- along with controlled diet -- can successively prevent emergence of pulmonary illnesses and these methods should thus be put before any other kind of treatment with medicaments. (...) But, if more than ten thousand visitors per year come from adjacent German regions to beaches polluted with city-canal and ship-waists in Venice and Trieste, if more than a thousand tourists only in a summer season visit many other poorer bathing institutes, than Opatija's solicitously arranged bathing institute, with its perfect climate, winter visiting rate, and surprisingly low prices, will surely acquire wide popularity.<sup>72</sup>

However Šporer's initiative lasted until 1877, when – due to not so clear reasons, together with the one of above mentioned Scarpas, it ended up in a drawer of some bureaucratic office.<sup>73</sup> Zakošek discusses the failure of these two projects and provides the explanation that for “Hungarian” entrepreneurs such as Scarapa and Šporer (they were from Fiume, which was on the Hungarian side) it was much harder to develop business on “Austrian

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<sup>69</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijas album*, 27.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Initiative by Juraja Matija Šporer for the establishment of the health resort Opatija in 1872. (translate from Croatian transcript).

<sup>73</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 28.

ground” than it was for the “pure” Austrians, especially after the constitution of the dual Monarchy in 1867 when the border between Austrian and Hungarian parts gained bigger importance.<sup>74</sup> In the municipal archives of Opatija there is evidence showing Croatians with Hungarian citizenship seeking Austrian citizenship in Opatija in order to achieve their business goals in Austrian lands.<sup>75</sup>

Even though they remained uncompleted, these local attempts certainly contributed in spreading the word of the therapeutic characteristics of Opatija’s climate toward the centers of the Monarchy with enough money and political power to invest. Matija Šporer in 1876 wrote about his plans for Opatija to Viennese laryngologist nobleman Leopold Schrötter Kristelli who than promised to send patients. Although Schrötter was skeptical about the possibility for organizing therapeutic beaches since the shore in Opatija “does not have wave undulations”, he afterwards pointed out the valuable therapeutic values of its mild humid climate and extremely high concentration of aerosol in the air.<sup>76</sup>

Accordingly, in the following years there were more news about Opatija’s medical possibilities appearing in relevant Viennese medical circles. Finally, when this information came to Julius Schüller, a general director of *Southern Railways* the idea was mature enough for realization. His commercial mind recognized that the railway tracks of his company lead through the Austrian littoral areas in which tourism is potentially the most profitable economic branch and tourist development can contribute to the profits of railways. Therefore, Schüller decided to invest in high-class hotel accommodation, and with the opening of Opatija’s first hotel *Quarnero* the rapid investments followed.<sup>77</sup> His company had operated since 1882 and realized the idea of establishing a fashionable health resort with all necessary amenities – hotels and guest houses, sanatoriums, villas and summer

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<sup>74</sup> Border was in Kantrida –on the west side of Rijeka (Fiume).

<sup>75</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijskis album*, 28.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>77</sup> Vasko-Juhász, Désirée, *Die Südbahn: Ihre Kurorte und Hotels*, (Östereich: Bohleau, 2006),133-140.

residences with showpiece gardens and parks, including the most modern infrastructure and supporting facilities of the time.<sup>78</sup>

In 1883 a Viennese professor, Julius Glax, visited Opatija for the first time, and after spending two seasons there he moved to Opatija in 1887 to become its permanent citizen. Moreover, he had rich experience and knowledge necessary to become the leading figure who would transform Opatija into a renowned seaside *kurort* (health resort) of the time.<sup>79</sup> Firstly, he defined health standards needed for development and organization of a health resort which were later published as general health resort regulations in the book *Hygiene der Kurorte* (Health resort Hygiene) in 1914. The basic health standards for every health resort according to Professor Julius Glax are:

Clean air; clean drinking water; clean, environmentally friendly, and professional waste incineration; isolation for infectious diseases; modern cemetery; suitable arrangements for nursing; speedy and safe transport of patients; effective rescue services and fire department; control over and professional incineration of drugs; healthy food in restaurants; peace in spa resort; organized health care and pharmacies; chemical-bacteriological institute and metrological observatories; literature which would faithfully present the spa and its offer.<sup>80</sup>

Professor Glax was the main physician in Opatija and director of physicians' club at the turn of the century. The idea of Schüler and previously Šporer therefore became realized with the efforts of Glax when Opatija was officially proclaimed *kurort* (a climate health resort and a marine bath) on March 4 in 1889 and became the second largest health resort in Europe.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, one of the peak achievements of Glax was the organization of the Fourth Congress of Austrian Balneologists in 1904 and the Fourth International Congress on Thalassotherapy in 1908.

<sup>78</sup> Majnarić, *Croatia divina – Opatija*, 50.

<sup>79</sup> Fischinger, Aleš. "Health Resort Opatija and its Headmaster Professor Julius Glax (1846-1922)", review *Acta med-hist Adriat* 2007;5(1);43-54.

<sup>80</sup> Glax J. *Hygiene der Kurorte*. Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1914, 12-13, in *Acta med-hist Adriat* 2007;5(1);43-54.

<sup>81</sup> Fischinger, "Health Resort Opatija and its Headmaster Professor Julius Glax (1846-1922)", 43-54.

At the beginning of twentieth century, eight buildings had the function of medical sanatoriums, and by the 1910 thirty-two physicians and dentists had their private clinics.<sup>82</sup> However, around 1909, the dominance of the medical purpose declined and Opatija was slowly transforming into a summer bathing destination. In the same year the number of summer bathing visitors for the first time exceeded the number of spring and winter visitors.<sup>83</sup>

### *The beautification Movement and Care for the Environment*

An attractive and 'healthy' environment was one of the most important aspects of a seaside resort and the protagonists of Opatija's development were aware of that. The members of the *Physicians' Committee* knew that it is important to retain the reputation of Opatija as a healthy town, which was important for its prosperity, and they were thus the loudest in criticizing bad sanitary conditions and primitive hygiene habits in the town. In fact, waste disposal and cleaning of streets and sidewalks were directly under their jurisdiction. Upon request of the *Physicians' Committee* it was forbidden for musicians to play funeral marches on the main streets "for the reason that medical purpose visitors, especially sick ones, are complaining, while considering funerals as creators of disturbing atmosphere."<sup>84</sup> It is thus obvious that physicians were identifying different kinds of sanitary and social problems in the town.

However, the sanitary situation in the town was not always satisfactory. The sudden dense construction of villas and hotels by the sea was not followed with proper waste and canalization disposal. The sewage from hotel *Quarnero* went directly into the *Angiolina*

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<sup>82</sup> *Kur und Bade-Zeitung der Österreichischen Riviera*, n.17, 1909.

<sup>83</sup> Data was mentioned in the 1909 initiative for the extension of the bathing building on Slatina. (Zakošek, *Opatijski album*) 30.

<sup>84</sup> HR-DARi-029, file 2415/904 in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 29.

beach,<sup>85</sup> and drainage channels were not arranged properly which resulted in mudflows during rain. In 1903 discharging of septic tanks was organized for the first time,<sup>86</sup> and the decision for tender on concession of public canalization construction was announced and first houses were connected to it in 1906. Interestingly, in the beginning of the twentieth century an emphasized communal issue was the problem with dust on the streets, which is visible from the amount of sources in Opatija's municipal archive concerned with the theme of dust pollution. On the municipal meeting in 1903, these complaints were outlined as follows:

The guests are running away from stinking and polluted air and go to various other health resorts to enjoy the fresh air. It is known that many other health resorts smaller than Opatija since long time ago had possessed good and established methods for suppressing the dust so harmful to the guests. This danger, after nineteenth years of the resort's existence, should finally be neutralized.<sup>87</sup>

Even the Austrian Association for Dust and Smoke Control (*Österreichische Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung der Rauch und Staubplage*) existed in these years, and only after 1913 the problems were diminished when hotel *Stephanie* and other 'big pollutants' obtained strong "Santo vacuum cleaners from an American producer."<sup>88</sup>

Care for the environment and general beautification of cities were common in the second half of the nineteenth century all around Europe. With nineteenth century urbanization processes, the form of contact with nature and environment profoundly changed when people became more aware of and concerned with appearance of the urban surroundings and nature. In other words, the devotion to urban values and general feelings of urban pride were a new invention. Accordingly, town mayors, distinguished citizens and societies for beautification of towns initiated foundation of parks and promenades. Societies for beautification of towns were founded during the nineteenth century; they encouraged

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<sup>85</sup> HR-DAR-029, file 2221/898 in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 30.

<sup>86</sup> (HR-DARi-029, file 1462/903 in Ibid, 31.

<sup>87</sup> HR-DARi-029, spis 2468/903 in Ibid, 97.

<sup>88</sup> (HR-DARi-029, spis 3661/913 in Ibid, 33.

urban planning and park design and collected voluntary contributions for laying out parks and promenades. Urban dwellers were well aware that parks were very necessary for more beautiful and healthier urban life and for the enjoyment of all of them. The development of parks of all kinds reflects a high level of civic awareness and the aesthetic, urban and garden culture of town administrations and town dwellers of all kinds.<sup>89</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century public parks had become an essential part of the urban space as well as the effort to raise living standards as libraries, art galleries and museums.

In the late nineteenth century the “park movement” spread in seaside towns as well. However, in seaside towns and resorts, parks were seen as being part of the attractions offered to visitors, rather than as lungs of fresh air in a polluted city, or as places for social, moral and physical improvement of working people. In that sense communal “gestures in the service of beauty or visual expression of municipal pride could be considered only if connected with projects (which are) promoting obvious economic gain.”<sup>90</sup> Seaside resorts were and still are a type of business enterprise that was directly and indirectly trying to profit from nature.<sup>91</sup> Forms of seaside architecture that are directly related to nature, such as seaside promenades, parks and gardens -- were constructed by the state or private companies as communal public attractions designed to lure and retain visitors in seaside places.<sup>92</sup>

In Opatija, with the arrival of *Southern Railways Company*, beautification and aesthetics of Opatija’s visual landscape gained a new goal – creation of tourist profit. This company, with Julius Schüller (1832-1894) as its director, did not allow private interests to endanger the conception of health resort creation. Therefore, whole of Opatija’s coastline and large park areas were preserved as a public space until present time. In May 1885 Anton Silberhuber (1839-1899) who was a president of the Austrian Tourist Club (*Österreichisches*

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<sup>89</sup> Bojana Bojanic & Obad Scitaroci, *Gradski Perivoji Hrvatske u 19. stoljecu*, (Zagreb: faculty of Architecture, 2004), 218-224.

<sup>90</sup> Olsen, Donald J., *The City as a Work of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 24.

<sup>91</sup> Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 45.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

*Touristenclub*) -- founded a section of the Tourist Club in Opatija, which immediately started to arrange the landscape and pathways. Afterwards the Association for Beautification of Opatija (*Verschönerungs – Verein des Curortes Abbazia*) took the responsibility to plant parks and organize pathways.<sup>93</sup> The association was financed by subventions of the Municipality and *Physicians' Committee* as well as by incomes of rich individuals. Among them the most deserving was the Romanian king Karol I who financed the construction of the long forest promenade, which is today named *Carmen Silva* (pseudonym of his wife, Queen Elizabeth).<sup>94</sup>

Members of local political stream (Croatians) in the municipal council were particularly aware of the environmental and natural ambient values of their region, and did not hesitate to protest against 'inappropriate' initiatives. After the first proposals to remove the old St. Jacob church in 1897, mayor Stanger strongly disapproved, arguing that "...Opatija's local residents appreciate and love the church as its main sanctity [...since] it has an antique value that needs to be protected for the future."<sup>95</sup> Another idea from 1909 was rejected as well. Namely, there was an attempt of silting and leveling the existing small docks for the sake of constructing a new and bigger one. The explanation was that it would reduce the value of property, and change the atmosphere of an old fishermen bay.<sup>96</sup>

Since preserved natural environment was seen as an important aspect of each health resort in the nineteenth century, and health and nature were considered related to each other, it is not unusual that the municipalities invested efforts in maintaining the parks and green open spaces. However, the great care with which the municipalities in Opatija approached preserving the indigenous laurel vegetation is surprising, especially when taking into consideration that by the end of the nineteenth century ecological awareness and regulated

<sup>93</sup> HR-DARi-029, file 586/885 in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 39.

<sup>94</sup> Majnaric, *Opatija- Croatia divina*, 46.

<sup>95</sup> HR-DARi-029, file 719/897, in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 8

<sup>96</sup> HR-DARi-029, record from municipal meeting 13.031909, in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 8.

nature conservation did not exist in present-day form, it was only in its outset.<sup>97</sup> At the time laurel was a traditionally appreciated plant since prior to emergence of tourism it was a significant source of income for local residents who were now adapted to the new circumstances. Aromatic characteristics were attributed to the plant, as well as the possibility to keep away mosquitoes that were known as ‘dangerous’ bearers of diseases.

Physicians’ committee was actively involved in preservation of laurel grooves:

(if the land with laurel groove would not be bought from the ‘private owner’...), “the last laurel plantations that have been the hallmark of Opatija would thus be reduced to a minimum and fall as a victim of recent building activities. It is not even needed to mention that the laurel plantations are not only the major feature which attracted the foreigners to Opatija, but also the factor that prevents appearance of mosquitoes and other unbearable insects that represent real trouble for other southern resorts. If these insects appear in Opatija, the number of summer visitors, which recently increased, would get lower and local population would thus suffer harm.”<sup>98</sup>

Natural and planted laurel grooves were protected by the official regulations, and unauthorized cutting of it was fined,<sup>99</sup> and for some period even building permissions were conditioned on the replanting of laurel root found on the construction site.

### *Urban Modernization*

Following nineteenth century urbanization and town planning movement, the implementation of new urban technologies was regular. At the end of the century all cities in Europe struggled with the challenges to provide higher quality of infrastructure and to develop technical expertise to deliver it.<sup>100</sup> The seaside resorts were the fastest growing towns at the time, and driven by the profitable enterprise they became important consumption mechanisms. State and private companies were providing all the modern

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<sup>97</sup> The late nineteenth century is considered as the time of the first conservation movement, firstly with the protection of bird species laws. First national park was proclaimed in 1909 in Finland, 36 years after the Yellowstone in the United States.

<sup>98</sup> HR-DARi-029, file 667/1896, in Zakošek, *Opatijas album*, 95.

<sup>99</sup> HR-DARi-029, file 2221/898, in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 29.

<sup>100</sup> Meller, Helen, *European cities in 1890-1930: history, culture and the built environment*, 13.

communal facilities, as well as public attractions in order to lure and keep people in particular seaside places.

Opatija developed rapidly at the end of the century as a planned resort and with its high quality of modern infrastructure and modern technology usages it differed from other places on the eastern Adriatic coast.<sup>101</sup> As an advantage were that the money coming from the most developed Central European centers, mainly Vienna, through the *Southern Railways* joint stock company, and from wealthy individual entrepreneurs as well. *The Southern Railways Company* in 1895 constructed the lighting of these objects parallel with the construction of the first hotels. Soon after, the electrical power station was put into operation. It was a thermal power plant on coal, and the concession for electricity production was given to the company *Abbazianer Electricitätswerke J.N. Scanavi*, owned by Baron Nikolaus Scanavi from Vienna.<sup>102</sup> A small electric tram operating on the 12 km long route from Matulj through Opatija to Lovran, was launched in 1908, although the idea to replace the old fashioned horse tram with the modern technical solutions emerged as early as 1892. The first solution was based on a steam engine tram – an idea brought by Budapest writer Gustav Fuchs, which was rejected as unprofitable. Finally, Viennese engineer Jakob Ludvig Münz constructed the tram in cooperation with the *Aktiengesellschaft für elektrische Unternehmung* Company and soon it became a tourist attraction (operating until 1933).<sup>103</sup>

(Image 1.)

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<sup>101</sup> Except developed towns with industry such as Rijeka (Fiume) as an important harbour at time.

<sup>102</sup> HR-DARi-019, document 'Power station', in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 20.

<sup>103</sup> HR-DARi-029, files 2356, 3587, 3445/912, in *Ibid*, 19.



**Image 1. Opatija's electric tram in 1913.**

Investments in 'Post Telegraph Telephone' infrastructure were important at the time. The Austrian Ministry of trade in 1885 made the decision to build a post-telegraph office in Opatija, which was provisionally settled in *Villa Gruber*, and the present day post office building was raised in 1913.<sup>104</sup> Telephone link was established locally in 1886, and in 1899 with Vienna.<sup>105</sup> Water supply system was arranged parallel to the construction of hotels from the Klara spring, and in 1897 the water pipes system was built for the whole municipality to transport water from the Učka Mountain. Due to a dense construction and rapid increase in the number of residents, the risk of fire in the town increased and *Southern Railways* organized its first fire brigade in 1885 to protect their objects. The official name of the association was *Freiwillige Feuerwehr des Curortes Abbazia* (The Health Resort Opatija Volunteer Fire Brigade) and later it was integrated with *Rettings-gesellschaft* (Rescuing association) in *The Health Resort Opatija Volunteer Fire Brigade and Rescue Society*.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>104</sup> HR-DARi-029, 596/885, in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 21.

<sup>105</sup> HR-DARi-029, 383/896, in *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>106</sup> Fischinger, Janez, "Health Resort Opatija volunteer fire Brigade an Rescue society", *Acta med-hist Adriat* 2011;9(1); 47-64.

*The Station for Medical Emergency Help Abbazia* was founded in 1894 following the model of the Viennese one<sup>107</sup>, the first in Europe.<sup>108</sup>

The modern and developed town at the turn of the nineteenth century could not be taken seriously without a representative Town Hall. Therefore municipal representatives decided to build a new luxurious town hall based on the project of the renowned Viennese architect Carl Seidl, which was opened with ceremony in 1908. At the turn of the century Opatija had a new modern market building, and the highest quality medical services in its sanatoriums. Education was also not neglected and the first Croatian *realgymnasium* was opened in 1909.<sup>109</sup> There was also a semi private German school as well -- *Deutsche Privat-Volksschule in Abbazia mit Öffentlichkeitsrecht* opened in 1900.<sup>110</sup> Opatija thus had all the necessary amenities that a nineteenth century developed town should have. However, since it was a seaside resort town, it had to provide leisure and amusement facilities as well as health services which will be presented next.

### *Amusement and Leisure*

Seaside resorts needed to do more than make money out of nature and ‘healing water.’ They thus offered a wide range of leisure, entertainment and health services for visitors to consume, “with the resorts themselves becoming spectacular sites of consumption that needed to be both produced and reproduced.”<sup>111</sup> Resorts offered a utopian world that combined leisure, pleasure, health, and nature far from work and sometimes even from family and community and they emerged as a response to people’s desires for vital

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<sup>107</sup> First emergency service was founded in Vienna after the disastrous fire at the Vienna Ring Theatre in 1881, and it served as a model for similar societies worldwide.

<sup>108</sup> Fischinger, Health Resort Opatija Volunteer Fire Brigade and Rescue Society”, 1-10.

<sup>109</sup> HR-DARi-029 report from the municipal meeting 13.03.1909, in Zakošek, 32.

<sup>110</sup> HR-DARi-029 report from the municipal meeting 17.03.1900, in Ibid, 32.

<sup>111</sup> Gray, *Desining the Seaside*, 45.

environments. Therefore, the landscape of consumption was created subjected to various representations and imaginings, and as such was an illusionary one.<sup>112</sup> Resorts' open spaces provided various ways of experiencing nature, leisure, pleasure, health and socializing.

Cultural events, tourism services and facilities grew enormously: public libraries, promenades, more villas and hotels, tennis courts, various music events, -- all developed during this period. The central social space became the model "Viennese café house," a typical Viennese cultural institution in the form of a café where the bourgeoisie class met to mingle, read and exchange intellectual and political intrigues. At the turn of the century the café was the characteristic establishment of the towns in Central Europe since the public space was divided between a public and private sector, the café represented a semipublic sphere.<sup>113</sup> *Café Kvarner* and pavilion *Glacier* were the most fashionable meeting places in Opatija at the time.<sup>114</sup>

Clearly, the health and landscape were not enough for breaking the leisure melancholy and amusement was thus an additional product essential for the success of the seaside resorts business. Various social groups in Opatija used different places for socializing. At the end of the nineteenth century when the entertainment business started to develop, there was already a kind of amusement tradition in Opatija --elites were visiting private banquets in *Villa Angiolina*, while local folk were visiting traditional church festivities. There were hardly any French tourists in Opatija but at the end of the century French language was fashionable and was seen as an expression of snobbish exclusivism. Therefore elites went gambling in *Casino des Étrangers*, café was drank at *Café sur la plage*, while lingerie was bought at *Maison de lingerie et de confection* in Villa Devana.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Gray, *Desining the Seaside*, 46.

<sup>113</sup> Gyani, Gabor *Identity and Urban Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 97.

<sup>114</sup> Sand Corak and Irena Ateljevic, "Colonisation and 'Taking the Waters' in the 19th Century: The Patronage of Royalty in Health Resorts of Opatija, Habsburg Empire and Rotorua, New Zealand", in *Royal Tourism*, ed. Philip Long and Nicola J. Palmer, (UK: Channel View Publication: 2008), 128-140.

<sup>115</sup> Zakosek, *Opatijski album*, 97.

During the period when tourism becomes an industry --- so called “Stanger’s era,”<sup>116</sup> Opatija offered various kinds of entertainment, and as it was a common trend in the European urban centers at the time, in Opatija too, all the important events and visits were followed by public ceremonies and festivities. Emperor Franz Joseph I visited Opatija twice for official business meetings with German Emperor Wilhelm II in 1894 and with the Norwegian king Oscar II, who was staying in *Villa Jeannette* in 1904. Apparently the Emperor was not fascinated with the place and locals were disappointed that the municipality did not receive gratitude message from the Emperor for the organization of his ceremonial reception.<sup>117</sup> However, while aristocracy was entertaining in private spaces rarely seen by common public, local citizens was gathering in the national institutions and clubs.

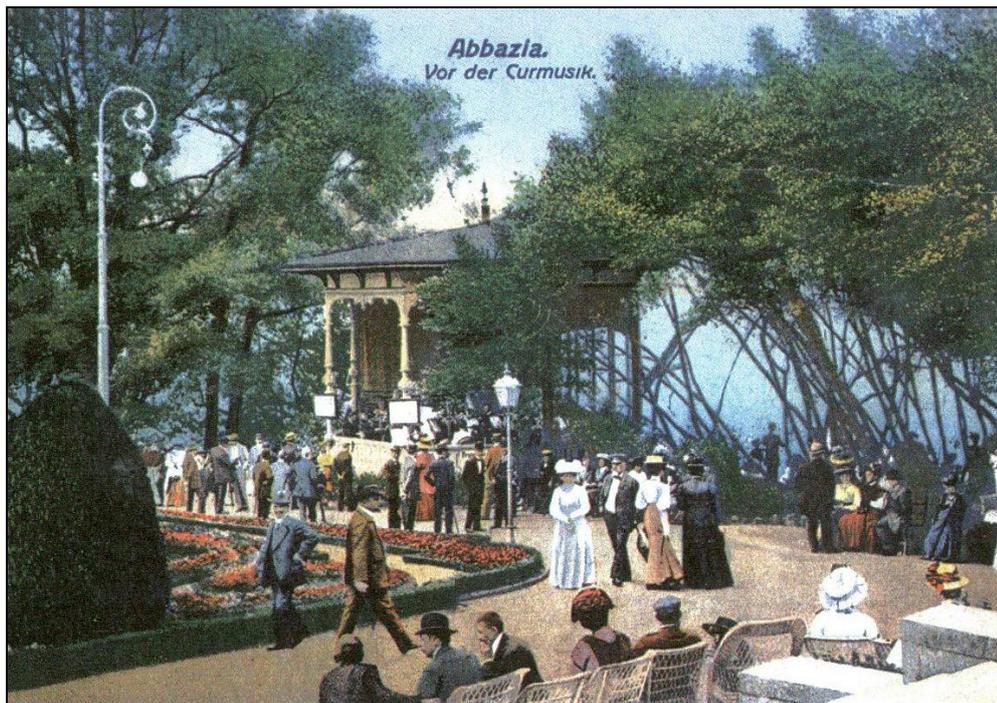


Image 2. Musical event in the park. (1908)

<sup>116</sup> The term refers to a period from 1895-1918 when the lawyer from Volosko Andrija Stanger (1853-1934) becomes a municipal major. This is the period when Opatija receive all attributes of a modern, developed town.

<sup>117</sup> Zakosek, *Opatijski abum*, 37.

During the summer season majority of events were taking place on the terrace of hotel *Quarnero* and *Angiolina* bath. Popular shows of the “belle époque” were fashion shows, dancing gatherings (‘Coriandoli Schalcht mit Tanzkränchen’), ‘Kaiserfest’ (celebration of emperor’s birthday), ‘Blumenfest’ (floral festivity), ‘Pfaufederfechten’ (fencing with peacock feathers), and beauty pageants.<sup>118</sup> Around 1910 exotic attractions in public spaces were rides on donkeys owned by Arabian Abdullah Abu-Khalil and the first small aircraft exhibitions. Music events were important and restaurants with gipsy music were popular. The first movie shows appeared in 1905, and in 1910 the first cinema *Riviera* was opened by the entrepreneur from Trieste Virginia Perini.<sup>119</sup>

Entertainment was often divided on a national level, especially when taking place in national community houses and clubs. Local residents, Croatians, had *Zora* – a community house with a library, café and restaurant. Few musician associations were actively participating in the ‘*Zora*’ community such as *Lovor* choir, and folk festivities were taking place.<sup>120</sup> For the local Austrians and Germans the main gathering place was *Leseverein*, with international books and journals reading room, beerhouse, café, and restaurant. *Deutscher Männergesangverein ‘Quarnero’* (German male singing society ‘Quarnero’) performed there, and German songs were regularly performed in the *Musikvereina Abbazia* manifestations. Besides Croatians and Germans, Czechs and Slovenes had their national cultural communities as well.<sup>121</sup> (Image 2.)

At the end of the nineteenth century when organized leisure was no longer reserved for the upper classes only, and broader segments of European society gained wider access to free time, the number of sport activities increased and sport clubs became an essential part of urban communities. The first organized sport grounds in Opatija were those for ‘lawn

<sup>118</sup> Zakosek, *Opatijski album*, 39.

<sup>119</sup> HR-DARi-029, book 156, file 5103/909, in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 43.

<sup>120</sup> HR-DARi-029, file 4027/902, Ibid, 44.

<sup>121</sup> HR-DARi-029, files 385/908 and 6038/912, Ibid, 44.

tennis' (similar to present day tennis) arranged in 1890. *Physicians' Committee* naturally encouraged sport events related to the sea, therefore international competition in swimming, jumping, and diving was organized in 1885 by the *Wiener Amateur-Schwimmklub* (Amateur swimming club from Vienna). In 1911 this competitions grew into an ambitious event 'Internationale Sportwoche Abbazia' (International Sports week) with swimming and rowing disciplines, organized with an idea to attract numerous tourists and to promote Opatija as Austria's most important destination for water sports.<sup>122</sup>

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century another modern leisure culture 'invention' became popular – bicycle riding. It was one of the first important travel machines in Europe, and when in 1890s due to a lower prices became accessible to lower-class budgets, bourgeoisie was worried that by using the new vehicle, lower strata would break the sporting etiquette of the 'bicycling gentleman'.<sup>123</sup> By the turn of the century bicycle became an important social marker – the way one cycled, behaved, and his position and attitude on the bicycle "differentiated the gentleman from the worker".<sup>124</sup> For the bourgeoisie, the art of cycling consisted of skill, elegance and grace, as opposed to working-class for which it was a pursuit of speed and efficiency, or a professional delivery tool. Opatija had several bicycle clubs at the time as well as a cycling training ground. Bicycle races were regularly organized since 1889, and from 1908 on the international level as well.<sup>125</sup>

The youth of the 'fin de siècle' enthusiastically embraced the modern trend of enrolling in sport clubs. Moreover, workers in the tourism sector, as well as craftsmen and traders gained at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century more free time due to a reduction of working hours. Sport associations often had a national mark, such as the Croatian 'Sokol' *Volosko-*

<sup>122</sup> HR-DARi-029, files 1734/911 i 2228/912.

<sup>123</sup> Christopher S. Thompson, "Bicycling, Class, and the Politics of Leisure in Belle Époque France", in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar, (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 131-143.

<sup>124</sup> Thompson, "Bicycling, Class, and the Politics of Leisure in Belle Époque France", 132.

<sup>125</sup> Manifestation 'Campionato d'Istria' organized by 'Club Ciclistico Triestino', HR-DARi-029, file 4761/908.

*Opatija* gymnastic association founded in 1904, the rowing club *Illyria* and the football club ‘Opatija’ from 1911.<sup>126</sup> In contrast to the ‘healthy’ and respected sport activities, lower-class workers and common folk often looked for amusement in various local pubs and wine houses, certainly not participating in cruising and tennis which were practiced by the wealthier ones.<sup>127</sup> Numerous documents concerning complains on the violation of the public order are preserved, and they can give us an interesting insight into the daily atmosphere and social reality. For instance, when drunkenness became problematic, mayor Stanger had to protest: “To ensure the significance of the health resort and protect required night quietness, local municipal committee concluded that any individual, without exception, who would dare in the late night hours to yell, sing, or provoke a street incident, [...] immediately and without exception should be taken to prison”<sup>128</sup>

Furthermore, from the police reports it is noticeable that gambling was a frequent and problematic activity. In 1898 municipal physician reported on an increased number of venereal diseases and identified cheap pubs in Križišće as places these diseases were spread in, and also blamed the women of a bad reputation that used to come with the evening ship from Rijeka to do their business.<sup>129</sup> Around 1910 “suspicious women” openly offered themselves and bothered passengers in the *Health Institute’s Park* (park Angiolina), and for these ‘services’ it was possible to pursue even some popular singers.<sup>130</sup> Therefore, it seems that the hidden and street prostitution emerged as a problem at the end of the century in Opatija. The valet of the baron Reyer was judged for homosexuality in 1886, and Arpad Rona lost his concession for managing hotel *Slatina* in 1914 for the same reason.<sup>131</sup> From these stories and the number of amusement varieties for all social class, it seems that Opatija

<sup>126</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 48-49.

<sup>127</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 50-51.

<sup>128</sup> HR-DARi-029, files 1375/911.

<sup>129</sup> Agata Hanzič provided services to men, in the street number *Holy peace* 100. in Križišće, under the guise as tailor, HR-DARi-029, 1342/898.

<sup>130</sup> Mila Kubiček alias Emilie Camarotti in the Apolo music troupe, was accused for such HR-DARi-029, file 1342/898.

<sup>131</sup> HR-DARi-029, spis 32/886, and HR-DARi-029, file 4537/914, in Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 53.

was a very active resort town. It was not only the fashionable and artificially invented resort town for bourgeoisie as one could presume, rather it was a lively and mixed town where all social classes had a place for themselves, like any common modern town in Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the turn of the century.

### *Social Image and Perception*

The numerous householders used to come to Opatija from different parts of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, equally from the Austrian and Hungarian parts. Most of them came because of work: numerous hoteliers, physicians, traders, craftsmen, and bureaucrats. Newcomers participated in the social life of the town and they brought their culture with them. Therefore, in the end of the nineteenth century a multicultural and multiethnic society whose main profit was created from tourism.

Even before the development of tourism, Opatija was a multiethnic community since there were many Italians immigrating, and Italian language was used almost to the same degree as Croatian. By the end of the nineteenth century German language prevailed over Italian as the second one. At the end of the century Austrians were the main investors, with the manager of *Southern Railways* Friedrich Julius Schuller (who was the most significant) and many doctors such as the respectable Julius Glax. The architects most responsible for the recognizable urban style in Opatija were Austrians. By developing the ‘backward’ Adriatic region through introducing the German culture, Austrians sought to integrate it more fully into the hinterlands of the Monarchy.<sup>132</sup> Some observers noted that this transformation gained success in Opatija, once an insignificant Croatian fishing village which at the turn of

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<sup>132</sup> Pieter, Judson, “Every German visitor has a völkisch obligation he must fulfill”: Nationalist Tourism in the Austrian Empire”, 1880–1918” in *Histories of Leisure*, 169.

the century flourished as the centre of German high culture.<sup>133</sup> Henrich Nöe promoted Opatija in some Austrian journals in 1894 with these arguments:

In past days while I traveled through Dalmatian and Istrian coast, I would always think to myself, and was sad about it, why our Germans when traveling over mountains by train toward the blue southern sea always pilgrimage only to Italy. Shouldn't they, with the same favor of the heavens, feel more comfortable in Austria, the land of common tribe, than in foreign lands and, although ancient, culture of completely different origin. This is supported by the fact that the authorities in Austria use German as an official language and that the post office and many other things necessary for maintaining the contact with homeland are in German.<sup>134</sup>

However, it seems that those from the highest positions in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy disliked Opatija. Franz Ferdinand on one occasion described Opatija as “disgusting Jewish aquarium trapped between Slavs and irredentists”.<sup>135</sup> The fact is that the owners of many villas, pensions and shops were Jews, and Zakošek stated that in the archives not one anti-Semitic incident is to be found registered. Jewish community counted at the end of 1930s, 389 members, among which there were numerous Opatija's physicians. One pension (Breiner's Pension) served as a Synagogue.<sup>136</sup>

The Hungarians were owners of numerous Hotels and pensions with mostly Hungarian maids working there. Two therapeutic sanatoriums were opened and managed by Hungarian doctors. Among doctors there were also Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and others living in Opatija. Among visitors there were noblemen, European crown heads, politicians, well known writers and musicians, and many other reputable health seekers. Anton P. Chekhov was among the well-known writers who visited Opatija. In his novel *Ariadna*, although very negatively, he wrote about his impressions of the place, inspired by the experience of his visit to the resort in 1894 due to tuberculosis problems:

Have you ever been at Abbazia? It's a filthy little Slav town with only one street, which stinks, and in which one can't walk after rain without goloshes. I had read so much and always with such intense feeling about this earthly paradise that when afterwards, holding

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<sup>133</sup> Judson, 169.

<sup>134</sup> Nöe, Heinrich (*Ein Blick auf die Küste von Abbazia*, Gartenlaube Heft 7, Vienna 1894, p.212), published in Croatian in: Zakošek, *Opatijski Album*, 99.

<sup>135</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 38.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 80.

up my trousers, I cautiously crossed the narrow street, and in my ennui bought some hard pears from an old peasant woman who, recognising me as a Russian, said: "Tcheeteery" for "tchetiry" (four) -- "davadtsat" for "dvadtsat" (twenty), and when I wondered in perplexity where to go and what to do here, and when I inevitably met Russians as disappointed as I was, I began to feel vexed and ashamed. There is a calm bay there full of steamers and boats with coloured sails. From there I could see Fiume and the distant islands covered with lilac mist, and it would have been picturesque if the view over the bay had not been hemmed in by the hotels and their dépendances -- buildings in an absurd, trivial style of architecture, with which the whole of that green shore has been covered by greedy money grubbers, so that for the most part you see nothing in this little paradise but windows, terraces, and little squares with tables and waiters black coats. There is a park such as you find now in every watering-place abroad. And the dark, motionless, silent foliage of the palms, and the bright yellow sand in the avenue, and the bright green seats, and the glitter of the braying military horns -- all this sickened me in ten minutes! And yet one is obliged for some reason to spend ten days, ten weeks, there!<sup>137</sup>

The relations among different social classes and nationalities were not always ideal, since it was not easy to coordinate lifestyles, aspirations and culture of all the groups in the town.<sup>138</sup> Aristocracy, wealthy newcomers, bourgeoisie, and proletarians were all property owners with the same rights. Elites built their villas on relatively small plots, without the possibility of complete isolation, which would suit their exclusivist habits. Their physical space was limited between the coastal promenade on one side and main road on the other side where the traffic noise was increasing every year with the increase in number of guests. Urban scenes of accelerated street life typical for the modern world emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>139</sup> Peasant women were selling goods, pushing on the sidewalk and 'staining' the fashionable dresses of the ladies, carriers were rushing through the park to be the first to arrive in front of the ship coming to port, where room renters were yelling offering the best accommodation and photographers were arguing for the best positions. Leisured upper classes were often complaining about the 'rude' habits of the peasants coming from the surroundings, such as the street sellers of agricultural products. Liberal and 'vulgar' manners of working classes were problematic in relation to bathing

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<sup>137</sup> A.P. Čehov, *Ariadna*, taken from <http://classiclitt.about.com/library/bl-etexts/achekhov/bl-achek-ariadne.htm> (accessed, June 1, 2012).

<sup>138</sup> Zakosek, *Opatijdko album*, 81.

<sup>139</sup> Zakošek, *Opatijski album*, 81.

regulations. At the time when *Southern Railways* opened their first hotels it was normal for local men to take a bath naked which was ‘shocking’ for the health seeking guests, and despite numerous regulations and bans, complains about immoral behaviors were frequent.<sup>140</sup>



Image 3. “Emergence of mass tourism”. 1910

Following the first decade of the twentieth century the trend of transformation of the town into a mass tourism resort is evident, especially since tourism stops to be the privilege of the aristocracy and becomes part of the lifestyle of middle classes. Nevertheless, considering the original concept that *Southern Railways* established (small parcels, big hotels, public usage of sea coast) this kind of development was completely logical and acceptable.(Image 3.) The First World War put an end to Opatija's growth. In spite of many endeavors, Opatija never again resumed the image of both winter and summer resort and health resort that it had prior to the dissolution of Austrian-Hungary Monarchy. With the Rapallo Treaty of November 12, 1920 it was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, and since it was positioned in a marginal part of the country, its tourist development was hindered.

<sup>140</sup> There was no separated baths for lower classes. HR-DARi-029, spisi 262/905, 3816/908, 3024/908, 4068/910.

## Leisure Architecture

The urban processes and architecture are reflection of wider cultural, political, and social ideologies. In other words architecture does not reveal only the purpose for which the building is used; it is a medium that expresses wider socio-political undercurrents and transmits the ideas, beliefs and trends of the society in general. Further more, it tells us a lot about the values and aspirations of builders, owners and regular citizens. In particular, changing attitudes to nature, questions of taste fashion, gender and class divisions and other social distinctions are all important elements in explaining the production and changing use of seaside architecture.

Invention of the Western seaside as a site of leisure went hand in hand with the development of a novel urban form – seaside resort with its pleasure-purposed architecture.<sup>141</sup> As an urban form artificially designed for the purpose to attract leisure seekers and intended to generate income and profit, architecture became a defining characteristic distinguishing seashores from other places, and it was a significant element in the consumption of the seaside holiday.<sup>142</sup> However as the word *holidaymakers* implies, people taking holidays are not passive recipients of what they consume, instead they make a direct contribution to designing the seaside, mainly in helping to determine popular images of the seaside resort and its architecture.

In the nineteenth century, perceptions of the sea and shore changed and the seaside began to be valued not only for its assumed medical benefits. There appeared a growing image that the seaside should be appreciated for its beauty, natural views, and the relaxation that it could provide together with the quality of the air.<sup>143</sup> For that reason a remarkable new array of architecture and open spaces was produced on the seaside, such as promenades,

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<sup>141</sup> Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 7.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*,7.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*,23.

pleasure piers, pavilions and terraces which all served as platforms from which one could experience sea views and breathe sea air. The sea view was probably the first main guideline in the seaside architecture planning. In the nineteenth century sea air and curative sea bathing<sup>144</sup> were more important than spending time in the sun. The main season was thus spring and autumn to a lower extent, unlike summer at present time. All this influenced the particular creation and importance of open public spaces since the best way to consume air and sea views was to stroll. In the second half of the twentieth century when the sun and beaches were the main attractions, the promenades, parks, and private gardens lost their importance since the place to sleep (room or apartment), place to eat and the beach to spend whole day sunbathing, came to be sufficient places for a seaside resort.

However strolling was certainly not a seaside invention; it originates in the *flâneur*, an important form of the bourgeois urban leisure culture and public sphere which was established after the French revolution, even before the invention of municipal public parks.<sup>145</sup> The changes in urban public space conditioned the establishment of bourgeois lifestyle, and therefore shops, public parks, cafés and later, railway stations, museums, exhibition halls, and arcades were essential for the *flâneur's* leisured and curious inhabitation of the urban realm,<sup>146</sup> which was at the seaside transferred to semi-urban environment with green promenades. The early seaside resort architecture was consistently structured around social divisions since the first landowners were exclusively elite and respectable middle-class visitors, and this changed only at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The same can be said for Opatija that had been transformed in a short period from a little fishing village into an elite resort, and was classified among the top healthcare destinations of the time. It became a famous destination for high society, aristocracy,

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<sup>144</sup> Nineteenth century 'bathing' is different than today swimming since not many visitors could swim, 'floating' in the sea was perceived as unnatural activity. Gray, 29.

<sup>145</sup> In the first half of the nineteenth century the first public parks were still royal parks opened to the public.

<sup>146</sup> Esther Leslie, "Flâneurs in Paris and Berlin" in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar, (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 62-75.

bourgeoisie, and artists. The influx of 'tourists' from all over the Monarchy brought the style and spirit of the time, which resulted in Opatija becoming the meeting point of Central European and Mediterranean culture – which has permanently marked that coastal region. Hotels and spa institutes within the architectural typology of the late nineteenth century were trying to reach a high standard through their services and their Central European appearance. Architecture designed for bathing structures carries characteristics of inland bathing centers of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, for example Baden near Vienna, and Karlovy Vary. Even though this is architecture for tourism, Opatija is an example of active affirmation of the city where the infrastructure and the level of urban life had been developed parallel with special-purpose buildings.”<sup>147</sup>

### *Opatija within an European Architectural Context and its Stylistic Influences*

In all stages of Opatija's development, natural and social conditions and economic and political circumstances have always been key elements. The town had spread longitudinally along the coast line and its present urban image was already formed by the beginning of the twentieth century. By this time, most of Opatija's hotels, guesthouses, summer houses, villas, and palaces were built in the laurel groves, among the slim palm trees and subtropical flora. Architects who were building in Opatija were Carlo Conighi, Max Fabiani, Emil Hoppe, Marcel Kammerer, Otto Schonthal, and Carl Seidl. Seidl (1858-1936), an imperial-royal adviser as well as a professor and architect, is probably the most responsible for the recognizable urban style, having built a large number of villas, hotels, pensions, and public buildings in Opatija.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Darja Radovic-Mahecic *The Transformation of Opatija 1882-1897 – The Beginnings of the Tourist Architecture* (Zagreb: Institute for Art History, 2002), 148.

<sup>148</sup> Miljenko Majnarić, Ed., *Opatija - Croatia divina*, (Zagreb: Tektakris, 2005) 72-84.

The Austrian influences in Opatija can be seen in the very idea of its foundation as a therapeutic health resort and in the implementation of this idea. The Society of Southern Railways and many other investors in villas, hotels and medical institutions came from Austria and therefore the job of planning building and landscapes around them was given mostly to the Austrian architects. The architectural achievements in Opatija styled in classic historicism are evidences on the spreading of Austro Hungarian Monarchy, with its recognizable architectural characteristics reaching all the way to its periphery. This is the architecture of the inland continent (Vienna and small villages around) transplanted to the Mediterranean and here one can notice some striking confrontations between features unsuitable to the environment (alpine roofs of many villas) and some Mediterranean features.<sup>149</sup> “If you wish to meet Central Europe come to Opatija” was the new tourist promotion slogan proposed in 2004 by Opatija’s tourist board,<sup>150</sup> and this can indeed be applied to the description of Opatija’s architectural image.

In Central European history of architecture, in the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the term historicism represents all the variations which are using a vocabulary based on historical styles. Parallel terms used for the historicism in architectural history terminology are eclecticism and romantic architecture. It can be explained as an uncritical copying or interpreting of historical style patterns. With the emergence of secession as the first modern style at the end of the nineteenth century, historicism was described as backward, too ornamental, and less artistic than the new styles.<sup>151</sup> It is often thought that historicism as a style is anti-historical because it does not represent the time, and its time is described as a period without original style. On the other

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<sup>149</sup> Majnarić, *Opatija – Croatia divina*, 78.

<sup>150</sup> News about the purposed slogan, in the regional daily newspaper *Novi List* online. <http://novine.novolist.hr/default.asp?WCI=Rubrike&WCU=2859285928632859285A2863285A28582858285C286328972898286328632859285A285A285C2858285B2863286328632863K> (accessed June 1, 2012).

<sup>151</sup> Mladen Obad-Scitaroci., “Historic Landscape Architecture in the Image of the Adriatic Cities”. In *Historical Gardens and Parks in the North Coast Croatia*. Split symposium, 1998.

hand, it can be read as an authentic product of society and the period. The nineteenth century is a time of great changes in the history of mankind: ideologically, politically, socially, economically, technologically and scientifically.<sup>152</sup> People were introduced to the steam engine, railway, telegraph, cities, and relative political freedoms.

One natural reaction against the great amount of inventions in the short period was the escape to history, often to the medieval times, to the nature, idyll, idealism, utopia, orientalism, mysticism, or spiritualism. These terms are also referring to nineteenth century romanticism which was, as a social phenomenon and art movement, the key basis for understanding historicism. Moreover, romanticism as a movement and style appears in the period of the emergence of the new urban society which does not believe in absolute values. Romanticism was rediscovering a historicity of society, and the idea of an escape from evils of the rapidly industrializing over populated cities was strong.<sup>153</sup>

In Central European architectural history historicism is divided into romantic (1830-1860), strict (1860-1880), and late (1880-1914) historicism. Early, romantic historicism usually combines elements of historical styles and applies them on plain facades. Strict or mature historicism uses antique and renaissance patterns without using elements of other styles, only in its later periods it uses some Baroque elements. Late historicism expresses itself through Baroque and Rococo style, and focusing on new constructions, partly takes the form of upcoming secession.<sup>154</sup> These divides can be applied to Vienna, particularly for the monumental architecture of the 'Ring'. But they are insufficient in general, because they are discharging the regional historicism varieties which display marks of regional architectures. In the given divide, it is hard to place the architecture of the Mediterranean neo-Renaissance villa, which belongs to the first romantic phase of historicism according to its stylish

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<sup>152</sup> Hannu Salmi, *Nineteenth century Europe: a Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 12-29.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 12-29.

<sup>154</sup> Diana Glavočić and Ljubica Dujmović Kosovac, *Arhitektura historizma u Rijeci, 1845-1900: Moderna galerija Rijeka* (Rijeka: Moderna Galerija, 2001), 12.

vocabulary, but chronologically distant from it by 30-40 years. In the actual periodization we cannot find the answer to where to place Opatija's Mediterranean villas. Is it Italian, as it is often named in Viennese projects, is it a Croatian coastal type, or is it in the frames of Mediterranean style, without belonging to any national frame?<sup>155</sup>

The range of historical styles seen on the facade of Opatija's villas is very broad: from pure neo-historicism and romanticism in which the mixed idioms of Renaissance style are recognizable, neo-baroque, neo-rococo, neo-classical, and entirely new solutions created on a base of historical styles.<sup>156</sup> Opatija's architecture recorded the arrival of Art Nouveau (floral and geometric), but only as an adjustment to the new language, new style, in some rare exceptions such as the *Palace Hotel*. There are not many secessionist realizations because this "first modern style" was not fitting to the spirit of the romanticist ideal which was searching for an idealized history; historical architectural styles were more able to satisfy the needs for the romantic atmosphere.<sup>157</sup>

Apparently in Opatija's Riviera, and in the whole coastal Croatian region, there was no architect who was able to recognize and interpret the building heritage of anonymous local architects. The building designs were usually done according to a pattern, a tested and proved model. There was no need to educate local builders and architects. However, Carl Seidl had realizations which were based on Croatian traditional coastal architectural model, but this was not sufficient to determine a special type or morphological pattern of Mediterranean villa from the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. In his best examples it is a conglomeration of Croatian seaside architecture, Italian

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<sup>155</sup> Berislav Valušek, "Vila Munz u Ičićima" Rad. Inst. Povij. Umjet. 33 (2009): 295-306.

<sup>156</sup> Majnarić, *Opatija - Croatia divina*, 72-84.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 72-84.

Renaissance, Venetian Gothic and Viennese, or Central European architecture of the time, blended with a measure of architectural universalism (not belonging to any national style).<sup>158</sup>

Carl Seidl had his own style, which was far from stereotypical. He always adapted the new to the old; in whatever environment he had to work he treated it as a valuable space. Creating architectural details was important for his work – details that were inspired by historical styles creating romantic and romanticist atmosphere. The gardens and parks of Seidl's villas contributed to the harmony of nature and architecture, while creating relationships between colors or shapes of architecture and vegetation. In terms of construction Seidl was a modern architect of his time because he combined the local architectural heritage with his own expression.<sup>159</sup> Seidl with his villas and hotels contributed to Opatija's distinctive architectural and accordingly cultural image.

### *Characteristics of Villas*

One of the ways to conceptualize a place's urban identity is to analyze its defining urban structures and in the case of Opatija these are its villas. Villa culture was present in the Adriatic region already in Roman times in the form of *villa rustica*. These "countryside" houses were characteristic for the Adriatic landscape in antiquity, located on picturesque isolated bays and islands. This type of villas was flourishing in renaissance Dalmatia, especially Dubrovnik, and was built by noble landowners. The main characteristic of these *villa rustica* forms of villas is that they were not only places for relaxing and epicurean enjoyment in nature; they had an economic aspect as well since a big part of the surrounding

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<sup>158</sup> Berislav Valušek, "Ars Combinatoria: The Architect Carl Seidl" *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, 1875-1945*, The Wolfson Foundation Of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, Inc., Miami, (1990) 85-89.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 85-89.

land was cultivated and planted with Mediterranean cultures, mainly vineyards and fruits.<sup>160</sup> Villa culture as a way of life and a type of architectural planning was present in coastal summer houses during the eighteenth century as well, as an integral part of culture, but only as a privilege of the upper classes, aristocracy, wealthy merchants and sea captains.

However, Opatija's nineteenth century villas, as explained in the previous chapter, were following Viennese examples. The Central European initial interest in villas surprisingly did not come from the relatively nearby Italy and its Mediterranean type of country house; rather, it came from distant England. The initial conceptual basis can be found in the picturesque country house from the middle of the nineteenth century, as a consequence of a 'return to the nature' movement, and planning in harmony with nature: a return to the historical styles, free ground planes, usage of traditional and local materials and rehabilitation of craftworks which are truly romantic attitudes. Within the planned development of Opatija as a winter spa resort, after 1884 an impressive number of villas appeared. Their typology was established already in 1844 with the creation of Opatija's first villa "Angiolina".<sup>161</sup> The Villa is now considered the first building proposed for tourism purposes along the Adriatic coast, as well as the last example of individual holidaying, which in the next century was to be replaced by a mass-elite tourism.

When compared with other seaside resorts formed before the end of the nineteenth century in Europe, Opatija is one of the rarest, being built on a place without a defined urban structure. For that reason planners did not face 'urban limitations,' there was no existing real urban structure that they needed to respect in town planning. The basic rule when planning villas was to place them as close as possible to the coastline, which meant between the main road and the coastline. Further, they should possess designed garden space as wide as possible, with direct approach to the sea arranged with wooden or stone constructions,

<sup>160</sup> Nada Gruić, Ed., *Kultura Ladanja*, (Zagreb: Institut za Povijest Umjetnosti, 2006) 11.

<sup>161</sup> Valušek, "The Villa Munz in Icici", 295-306.

bathing huts, and a small port. The front entrance to the villa is always looking toward the sea, with the wide windows and door which are leading to a porch, terrace or balcony, while the main and service entrances are placed on the side of the street. The majority of villas belong to the residential type of buildings, planned for the occasional family stay, with clearly separated elements of private space.<sup>162</sup>

Town development was not organic (unplanned); rather, it was a result of decisions made by a specific social class, after recognition and validation of the natural and climatic characteristics of the location.<sup>163</sup> Since it was visited by a high-class society of European aristocrats, capitalists and artistic elites, the basic structures of the resort (villas, hotels, therapy institutes, bathing buildings and facilities, promenades, parks, and gardens, all conformed to the adequate high-level infrastructure) and the way they are constructed reflect their patrons' wishes and their taste -- both influenced by the need to display their status.

Already on the cadastral plan dating from 1897, 113 villas are indicated, placed in the main strip beside the sea and the main street, as well as in the central part. They are all surrounded with gardens and green spaces, usually without strong physical boundaries (such as walls and fences). That was probably a result of a wish to plan the large area as a unique park landscape. On the top of the same cadastral plan there are also 3 hotels, 6 pensions and 3 medical institutes indicated; civic institutions include schools, libraries, post office, and market place as well.<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless, in addition to villas, in Opatija existed all other necessary public and private town buildings. The town developed longitudinally along the coast and it is characterized by a recognizable unity of urban planning, architecture and public gardens – an image formed at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The main structures

<sup>162</sup> Visible in a cadastral plans from 1897 and 1914, as well as in present-day Opatija.

<sup>163</sup> Koraljka Vlahtar-Jurković, "Istraživanje urbanističkog razvoja Opatije" County institute of sustainable development, Rijeka (2004), 29.

<sup>164</sup> It is written on the top of the cadastral plan dating from 1897.

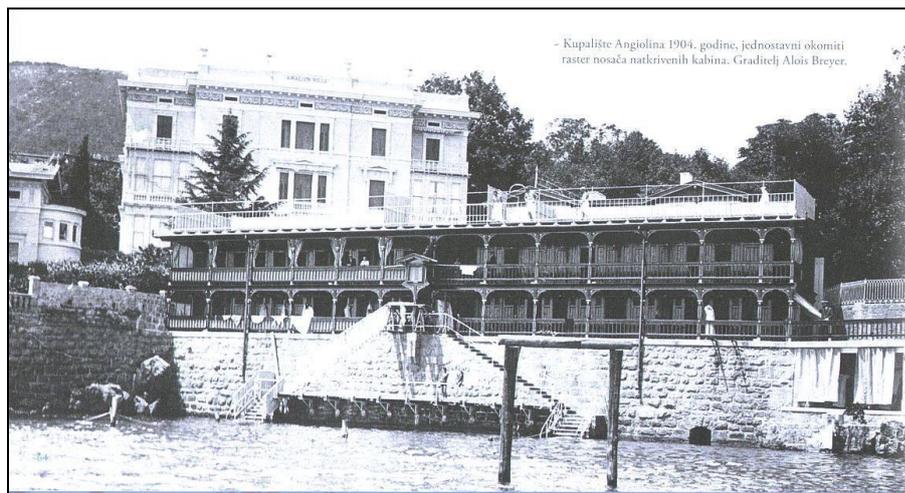
forming that image are: the sea and the coast with the long coastal promenade, public gardens and other structures of park architecture, vegetation on the slopes of Mount Učka as its natural framework, architectural styles of historicism, the main street with its amenities and some individual characteristic parts (e.g. the area around the Church of St. Jacob, market place, administrative centre with the town hall, and the old town Volosko with its small port).

### *Architecture for the Sea*

Seaside leisure architecture includes a broad scale of forms, not only obvious ones such as hotels, pensions, restaurants, promenades and pavilions, but also a range of bathing structures and sometimes even small bathing huts and promenade shelters. As the notion of holidaying by the seaside appeared in the eighteenth century and was slowly developing with fairgrounds, piers, holiday camps, boardwalks, swimming pools and casinos at a number of British coastal resorts, these were taken further as a model for the seaside resorts in continental Europe and beyond. With the development of balneology in the beginning of the nineteenth century on the coast of North sea, Mediterranean first buildings with closed baths and pools filled with mineral and sea ‘healing’ waters appeared, while the bathing structures for swimming in the open sea came a bit later. Although the bathing forms constructed in Rimini in 1843 were taken as a model for following bathing establishments all over Adriatic,<sup>165</sup> the first bathing architecture on the Adriatic was constructed in 1820 in Trieste.

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<sup>165</sup> Kos and Baraković *Kvarnerska kupališna baština*, 32.



**Image 4. Angiolina bathing establishment -1904.**

Bathing establishments on Adriatic were positioned parallel to the sea coast, constructed mainly from wood and iron based on the concrete foundations. One of the first large bathing establishments on the Quarnero bay which was specifically constructed and adapted to the coast line was Quitta (1906) in Opatija.<sup>166</sup>



**Image 5. Slatina bathing establishment. 1896**

<sup>166</sup> Kos and Baraković, *Kvarnerska kupališna baština*, 33.

With their form and decorations, bathing establishments follow various stylistic patterns the most popular among were Oriental ones.<sup>167</sup> (Image 4,5) Seaside architecture was used to intimate other exotic and pleasurable places and times. Therefore, “fantasy architecture” was suitable to “transport users to alternative worlds”.<sup>168</sup> In the nineteenth century distant countries were capturing European imaginations. The depictions of exotic places were thus common in popular visual culture and literature, mainly due to the colonization period, romanticized notions and emergence of “colonial culture.”<sup>169</sup> The first seaside building considered as the invention of seaside Orientalism was Brighton’s Royal Pavilion, designed by John Nash in 1815 and the breakthrough in popularizing Orientalism came with Brighton’s West Pier in 1866.<sup>170</sup> Since then Orientalism was applied to the increasing range of seaside buildings, including bandstands, seafront shelters, pavilions, winter gardens, theaters and concert halls, and became a defining characteristic of Western seaside resorts. However, this style was using numerous varieties in styles, and according to some scholarly opinions this style never fulfilled the quest for distinctive architecture to differentiate seaside leisure buildings from others and to set resorts apart from other towns, since “unlike, say, banks and town halls, such buildings had no architectural or stylistic ‘symbolism of Function’”.<sup>171</sup>

Planning and construction of bathing establishments in Adriatic is closely connected with the development of thalassotherapy,<sup>172</sup> and medical studies on therapeutic and curative characteristics of water/sea. Town (communal) bathing establishments do not contain solely bathing functions; rather they are significant places for socializing. Angiolina, Opatija’s bathing establishment owned by the *Southern Railways Company* was described as an

<sup>167</sup> Bathing establishment in Rimini from 1873 had a form of Indian pagoda.

<sup>168</sup> Gray, *Designing the seaside*, 91.

<sup>169</sup> Salmi, *Nineteenth Century Europe: A Cultural History*, 120.

<sup>170</sup> Gray, *Designing the seaside*, 92.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 92

<sup>172</sup> The term derives from Greek word *thalassos* which means sea, and it is the use of sea water, mud and climate in curative purposes.

elegant gathering parlor, for socializing in the shade. During the summer various activities such as concerts were organized not only in the terrace of hotel *Quarnero*, but also in the *Angiolina* bathing establishment, because of its position by the sea.<sup>173</sup> Although as very atypical structures for the Adriatic coastal landscape, bathing establishments (albeit sometimes raised as temporary) at the time of their formation became integral and important segments of communal infrastructure of coastal towns. If the bathing structure still existed in Opatija, it would probably become a protected tourist heritage. However, due to the easy dilapidation of the iron constructions and the inflammability of wood, none of the bathing establishments survive and the last bathing establishment was *Lido* which burned down in 1989.

### *Parks and Gardens*

The distinctive feature of Opatija and its advantage, as it has already been emphasized, was its characteristic urban concept based on the unity of town planning, building and park architecture. In this manner, a unique identity of the town was created, and already in the first part of the twentieth century Opatija was perceived as a ‘park town’.

By the end of the nineteenth century public parks had become an essential part of the urban space in Europe and the word ‘municipal’ was synonymous with pride for local authorities and their ability to effect positive change. A visit to the park offered to the working classes a “vital escape from the built environment by entry into a world of greenery, leisure and freedom”, and it is common that they were unavoidable part of every seaside resort where “together, these spaces emphasized the importance of preserving areas in which residents could connect with nature, participate in civic amenity, be amused, and

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<sup>173</sup> Amir Muzur, *Kako se stvarala Opatija* (Opatija-Rijeka: Katedra čakavskog sabora, 1998) 39.

contemplate their existence.”<sup>174</sup> In the nineteenth century, strolling through gardens and parks was not just a characteristic way of contemporary citizen behavior; it was rather a way of life which strived toward the connection between civilization comfort and natural environment that imitates nature. Park promoters hoped that by retreating into the park, urban workers would feel not only healthier by breathing ‘country air’, but also psychologically refreshed, while the formulation of such landscapes served the greater interests of the city in both environmental and social terms.<sup>175</sup> Park popularity brought on the concept of nature as “repository of purity, simplicity, harmony and morality”, presenting it as an ideal contrast for the perceived “degradation, complexity, tension and corruption of city life”.<sup>176</sup>



**Image 6. Palms on the promenade -1907.**

Since the establishment of Opatija as a health resort, its parks were vitally important as places for social events and meetings, walking, recreation, and therapy (they had field therapy routes, which were used in rehabilitation).<sup>177</sup> Their elegant design contributed to the

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<sup>174</sup> Karen R. Jones & John Wills, *The Invention of the Park*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 43-44.

<sup>175</sup> Jones and Wills, *The Invention of the Park*, 44.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

<sup>177</sup> Obad-Scitaroci, “Historic Landscape Architecture in the Image of the Adriatic Cities”, 25.

status of Opatija as the highest ranked resort. Its rich natural vegetation and many exotic species offered evidence that the climate was suitable for long tourist seasons.<sup>178</sup> The parks form a significant mark in the shape of the town and its atmosphere to such extent that some parks or their parts became symbols of the town. Besides, the parks of Opatija exhibit indigenous vegetation— primarily laurel groves (unique in this part of Mediterranean) and pubescent oak groves. As fine examples of historical parks in a health resort, they have cultural and scientific importance for the history of park architecture and the richness of the dendro-flora gives them educational value as well.<sup>179</sup>

All the parks created in the last two decades of the nineteenth century as part of a single park project around the buildings on the land owned by the *Society of Southern Railways* have common historicist style characteristics, and they are responsible for today's unique image of Opatija as a park town.<sup>180</sup> The parks of Opatija are significant for their abundance of plant species, especially the *Angiolina Park*, which can be described as a botanical garden of sorts. In the creation of the parks mainly the indigenous flora was used, among which the natural laurel and oak grooves are the most important. However, in accordance with the period they were created in, Opatija's gardens are filled with exotic plants. (Image 6.) The most common park architectural structures inside them include pavilions, fountains and sculptures.

Most of these parks which are now serving as public spaces originally belonged to villas or hotels and were spatially related to them. Only in the *Angiolina Park* the relationship between the park and the villa remained unchanged until present time, while in all other parks it has been changed during the last century. In *Angiolina*, it is visible that the part in front of the building was a low parterre, allowing free view of the building and

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<sup>178</sup> Exotic plants tolerate only mild winters.

<sup>179</sup> Now the schools from all parts of Croatia organize excursions to educate students and pupils about garden culture and heritage.

<sup>180</sup> In all present day tourist advertisements and catalogs, Opatija is presented as a town with a valuable parks and gardens heritage.

emphasizing its main façade and the stylistic harmony of the park. Furthermore, it seems that the connection between the park and the sea is important, because there is a direct view to the sea. Moreover, the relationship between the sea and parks (and all green spaces) is the main relation in Opatija's landscape.

### *Urban Specificities and Values*

“At the distance of only several steps from the villa there is the famous oak that looks like a display in an exhibition. Nowhere else on the edges of that southern sea is there such a powerful tree that bends over the water. Beneath are the rocks covered with algae and splashed against by waves while apple-sized red sea urchins are wandering around the sand. Five-armed Adriatic sea -stars tightly fitting the rock cracks, succulent leaves of sea salad covered with salty foam and two or three feet above them an eastern oak! This combination can hardly be seen elsewhere in the Adriatic and entire Mediterranean.”<sup>181</sup>

As Henrich Nöe, an Austrian writer noticed in 1894, Opatija's identity and its main distinctiveness, and probably the main reason for the originality which produced its distinctive landscape identity, lies in its natural environment. During the town planning and development, the landscape's natural “stability” was valued and preserved as much as possible.<sup>182</sup> The local natural conditions such as the terrain configuration, indigenous vegetation, coastal indentations and visual qualities, were used and respected in planning as important advantages. Therefore many natural elements were preserved in natural form. For example, elements of ecological stability were not disturbed, such as natural water streams. They were preserved in their original flow, and even today places where small streams meet the sea are visible, and sometimes emphasized by fountains.

The terrain configuration is probably the most recognizable of these natural elements which was highly respected in urban planning. The whole area of Opatija is placed on a

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<sup>181</sup> Nöe, Heinrich, “Ein Blick auf die Küste von Abbazia”( Gartenlaube Heft 7, Vienna 1894) in *Opatijski Album*, Boris Zakošek, (Rijeka: Državni arhiv u Rijeci, 2005), 10.

<sup>182</sup> Conclusions in this subchapter are drawn upon the information taken on field research, spatial inventory and from old plans and image (mainly old postcards) analyses.

steep terrain which was unfavorable for urban constructions, while this had great advantages in other aspects. For example, often very steep, rocky accesses to the seashore were not taken as a negative element, but were rather used as interesting scenes all along the promenade. Steep shoreline was followed by irregular seaside promenade, which is maybe the most valuable of all introduced architectural structures when considered from an ecological point of view. Its urban value lies in the fact that the narrow and most attractive zone beside the coast was preserved as public space.

The whole coast to the north and south of Opatija is rocky and picturesque, and in the background there are high hills, ending with Mount Učka in the distance. Numerous forest paths were arranged climbing towards the hills in the surrounding area. The purpose of winter tourism certainly influenced the importance that was given to these natural landscapes in the surrounding areas, in contrast to summer tourism where everything happens in the narrow coastal line area. Indigenous vegetation was an important factor for creating attractive spaces for the elites that came from inland Central Europe. Opatija's vegetation consists of numerous evergreen plants (such as evergreen oak and laurel) which is a distinctive characteristic of the area. In the northern areas of Central Europe the only indigenous evergreen plant species are coniferous trees. Therefore, a visitor from Austria was probably pleased to have green leaf woods during the whole winter. The specificity of Opatija's climate<sup>183</sup> (sufficient amount of rain and sun) can be interpreted through observation of particular vegetation, since one can find all sorts of exotic plants beside those characteristic for alpine gardens.

The originality of Opatija's urban and constructed space lies in the fact that Central European urban architecture is transferred into a Mediterranean atmosphere and environment; in other words, Viennese architectural conventions were placed in a sub-

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<sup>183</sup> Humid subtropical climate (cfa) according to Koppen climate classification.

Mediterranean climate. The historicist style, when it is introduced into the Mediterranean environment, receives new expressions. The stylistic architecture of the Central European towns represents something different in the original continental urban environment, and when it was copied in a foreign setting, a unique environment was developed. In other words, even though patterns for Opatija's urbanism and architecture came from Central European milieu and were stylistically marked by it, they did not accomplish the same expression as there, but rather they realized a unique style in a natural environment.

The architecture of these villas is not a peculiarity, but when it is surrounded with laurel woods it becomes a unique type of villa. Gradually, existing nature and vegetation became important mediators in the process of planning and creation of 'villa culture.' For instance, when an existing, authentic oak, becomes an important part of the garden, this creates a new dimension -- the natural environment is utilized as decoration. The vegetation is a dynamic feature, and the ambience and sceneries change with the seasons and passing of time. As described in the previous chapter, laurel wood was unique to Opatija's natural environment and it is probably partly "responsible" for the selection of Opatija's region as a seaside resort.

The natural environment was used as a base in planning, which was to some extent a novelty of the period. Urban architecture entered the natural environment, which enriched the constructions and changed its urban identity, while the introduced architecture changed the identity of the natural space and enriched the content of the environment. Chosen locations carried their peculiarities, and their natural valuable features were valued and protected. Artistic architectural level is introduced into nature, and the forms of its vegetation changed it and created a new art level. At the same time nature receives an artistic value because it is shaped and changed in order to serve the art of architecture and 'villa culture.'

Romantic architecture was not considered sufficient to create a desirable environment of idyllic leisure. With the help of the mild climate, it was easy to introduce exotic plant species which were fashionable at the time and used for the creation of unique and distinctive ambience, such as the illusion of the Garden of Eden. The high class of those who stayed in Opatija affected the selection of the flora, since it was considered a status symbol to be the first to have a unique type of the exotic plant.



(Image 7) Carefully selected exotic trees and

**Image 7. Exotic plants with cave stalactite in the Villa Angiolina garden, 1907.**

rare flower species such as Japanese camellias and magnolias were planted.<sup>184</sup> Camellia was especially fashionable plant at the second half of the nineteenth century and the first one was planted by Igino Scarpa, and since then the ‘Camellias cult’ exists in Opatija, thus they became a symbol of the town. Due to the proximity of the trading ports of Trieste and Rijeka, it was easy to purchase exotic plants from southern continents. Palmes were also introduced at the time and soon they became creators of the recognizable town image.<sup>185</sup>

Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), a famous American ballet dancer visited Opatija in 1902 and later in her published diaries she wrote:

At that Villa in Abbazia there was a palm tree before our windows. It was the first time I had seen a palm tree growing in a temperate climate. I used to notice its leaves trembling in the early morning breeze, and from them I created in my dance that light fluttering of the arms, hands and fingers, which has been so much abused by my imitators; for they forget to go to the original source and contemplate the movements of the palm tree, to

<sup>184</sup> Based on the field research, by the author.

<sup>185</sup> Today palms alleys are growing on the Opatija’s main streets and promenades, and the palm sort lat. *Trachycarpus fortunei* became a domesticated plant growing wild everywhere.

receive them inwardly before giving them outwardly. Often as I gazed at this palm tree all artistic thoughts left me, and I remembered only the moving lines of Heine: “A *lonely palm in the South. . .*”<sup>186</sup>

However, it is important to mention that the palm was kind of a symbol of seaside resorts all over Europe, probably for the same reasons as the Oriental architecture was introduced, the quest of the exotic plants was to create a notion of another exotic place.(Image 6) In other words the palm “has been an idea and symbol of the exotic and the pleasurable other,”<sup>187</sup> and thus it often formed artificial interior decorations, and it was common (also in the recent times) to display it on a resort’s advertisement posters, even if the ‘northern climate’ resort is presented. However, while the natural specific environment was the element that created Opatija’s unique identity on the Central European level, exotic plants and garden structures were used to distinguish the places inside Opatija on a micro level (individual gardens), since most of the gardens had preserved natural vegetations. Nevertheless, it is clear that the architecture was subordinated to nature, since locations with specific natural predispositions were chosen.

While the villas were planed longitudinally along the coast, the valuable natural transversal corridors can still be recognized in the green spaces between them. These transversal zones are preserved corridors of the autochthon vegetation, and in a way they connected the natural environment of the surrounding hills with the seaside, and contributed to its bio-diversity and environment. The main value of this kind of spatial organization is seen in these natural passageways which helped the preservation of the natural stability of the place. Nevertheless it is clear that the relationship between landscape and architecture was one of the most important elements of urban planning, and it influenced the creation of the distinguished landscape identity of Opatija.

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<sup>186</sup> I. Duncan, *Moj život, Znanje*: Zagreb, 1969, 65.

<sup>187</sup> Gray, *Designing the Seaside*, 106.

## CONCLUSION

Opatija's gardens and parks were filled with exotic plants brought from all over the globe, and all of them flourished next to each other with tolerance, similar to the intercultural tolerance that pervaded in every aspect of its urban and social identity at the end of the nineteenth century. From the example of Opatija's development, the significance and huge influence of tourism sector is obvious in many fields. On the one hand it changed the particular space by bringing modernization and urban development on the coast and on the islands. Opatija was the first place in the region to have electricity and the first hotels usually introduced the newest modern facilities (such as bathrooms, elevators). Furthermore, except from these 'goods of modernity', tourism introduced interculturality by gathering different nationalities and societies in one place. Spa resorts were a stage for self representation where different social groups went to see and to be seen. In a way tourism was also used in promoting the national identity by emphasizing one's nation's cultural specifics, or it was also a tool for producing a unique national culture in diverse societies.

Even though Opatija's architecture imitates the 'fashionable Ringstrasse' or other elite resorts styles, the development of Opatija in 1860's started as a response to the original attempts and needs of those who wanted to create a perfect seaside leisure place with a specific urban identity. However, this was not completely achieved because the modernization at the turn of the century was too fast, therefore the capital and consumption overtook the need for the idyll of nature, and replaced it with a need for being fashionable. Therefore, I think that the original intention was different from the final result. However, the main characteristic of Opatija's turn of the century urban space is still recognizable after more than a century, and the authentic Opatija's 'villa architecture' is partially preserved for the present time.

The form that was rapidly changed, and is still changing, is the tourism itself. Sensibility towards the existing natural environment changed because the demands in tourism changed. In other words, there was another role that tourism was playing. Already in the beginning of twentieth century the main season for spending holidays by the seaside was summer, and the main activity was swimming. As a result the significance of the environment was reduced, since only in the winter seasons the main activities occurred on promenades or parks, in which the dwellers were breathing the curative seaside air. Furthermore, with the emergence of the twentieth century new seaside activities, the interaction between villa and the space around it became less important.

In the twentieth century, the natural character of the chosen location (for the future tourism structure) was mostly not important. The architecture was valued for its facilities and function, while its surrounding landscape was artificially redesigned, in order to support the functions of the building. Nowadays, tourism is in a different crisis, primarily because of the environmental issues. While looking back to the origins of 'modern tourism', maybe we can find some positive (especially urban and environmental) solutions for the future planning, or on the other hand, maybe it will be shown that the modern tourism was unsustainable in its first form because of its close relation with the changing society. However, it would be wrong not to make an effort to preserve those examples of towns planned for pleasure tourism, because the places like Opatija are not just a tourist attraction, but they are also a document from which we can read the culture of the period, in other words they are historical sites.

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