

THE SPA AND SEASIDE RESORT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EURO- MEDITERRANEAN TRAVEL AND TOURISM – THE CASE OF BRIJUNI ISLANDS

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The paper will offer a new perspective in elaboration of key phases of the tourism development on the Brijuni Islands, by analysing their important function as an élite Mediterranean spa and seaside resort in a transnational framework. The author will show how cultural practices and patterns of tourist behaviour, characteristic for European early spa and seaside resorts, spread throughout Mediterranean during the 19th and early 20th century. Similar to an established network of European spas, transnational cultural transfers and common features characterized also a Euro-Mediterranean network of climatic seaside resorts. Many of them developed on the place of ancient spas and aristocratic residences, such as the first modern élite resorts in Italy and France. We can follow a similar process in the Adriatic, where first climatic spas patronized by royalty attracted a fashionable clientele. The author explored and compared some of the well-known island aristocratic residences, such as the Isle of Wight, the Hyères Islands, Capri, Mallorca, Corfu and Brijuni. The conducted research indicated that the beginnings of modern tourism in the Adriatic followed existing patterns of the European leading spa and seaside resorts. The main contribution of this paper would be in linking revitalisation of unique cultural heritage with a local tourist tradition as a model for sustainable development.

Key words: Mediterranean, tourism, European spa, seaside resort, Adriatic, Brijuni



INTRODUCTION

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In the history of European travel and tourism, the Mediterranean has a central position, as a contact zone characterized by intense transnational mobility and intercultural encounters: „It is where the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia meet and where North faces South in an asymmetrical relationship. Its histories—of Greece and Rome, of Christianity and Islam, of modernity and tradition—have evolved through exploration, trade, pilgrimage, imperial expansion, imaginings, vacation and migration“ (Crowley et al. 2011). In the historical constructions, from Braudel (1949) to Horden and Purcell (2000) to Abulafia (2011) the Mediterranean has been central to the development of humanity since known history began, remaining a focal point of international affairs as well as of the European tourism demand. After the destabilizing economic and political consequences of the 2008 crisis and Arab uprisings of 2011, it has found itself recently as the centre of the transnational migration flow between Africa, Asia and Europe. New social dynamics including, on the one hand, the terrorizing of tourists and tourism spaces and concomitant securitization of travel and border politics, and local communities protesting against over-tourism on the other, point to the crises of the existing model of the political economy of Mediterranean tourism (Bianchi and Selwyn 2018). Balancing between constant changes in the global market, influenced by political and economic insecurity, Mediterranean destinations, often in the maturity stage of their life cycle, seek to reposition and reinvent themselves to maintain competitiveness and market share.

The making of the modern Mediterranean tourist industry started where Braudel's history ends, as Lofgreen points out, with the period of gradual decline of the Mediterranean world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the economic and cultural focus of Europe was shifting to the northwest and the Atlantic coasts. During the following centuries the Mediterranean world turned into a European periphery and the new imports were tourists, as the region became a destination for northern European elites in search of classic culture. For



them, the journey south was not only a journey back in time but a search for the roots of Western civilization, and thus an important educational project (Lofgreen 1999). From the Grand Tour to wintering on the French Riviera, in Italy, Malta, Egypt or Greece, the European aristocracy followed the ancient itineraries, discovering, inventing and popularising Mediterranean destinations, attracted by the rich legacy of antiquity, the abundance of archaeological ruins and cultural heritage. Seeking health, cultural and spiritual uplift, and fleeing industrialized, highly urbanized western civilization, European middle class followed and copied the models of aristocratic leisure (Pemble 1987). The new era of democratization and industrialization of travel was accompanied by the emergence of mass tourism. Although the main motive became summer seaside vacation, the seasonal mass migrations continued in the same direction, southwards.

Over time the Mediterranean region has developed a unique blend of tourism activities associated with sea, health, sports, nature, business, as well as cruise and culture, offering consistent employment (11% of total employment) and economic growth (11% of regional GDP). Thanks to its unique combination of mild climate, rich history and culture, exceptional natural resources and proximity to major source markets, the group of 29 countries around the Mediterranean Sea is today the world's leading tourism destination. The largest tourist area in the world receives one-third of international tourists annually; three quarters of them come from Europe (Segreto et al. 2009) and three quarters of these arrivals are concentrated in just five countries (in order of importance: Spain, France, Italy, Turkey and Croatia). However, the economic growth due to tourism development has often been to the detriment of environmental integrity and social equity. Sea-Sand-Sun (3S) dependency, weak governance and degradation of cultural heritage, environmental pollution and resource depletion, contribution to climate change and climate vulnerability, political insecurity and social instability, economic and human capital leakage are some of the issues that threaten the long-term sustainability of the Mediterranean region and the tourism sector itself. Nowadays



three simultaneous crises are affecting Mediterranean tourism: social conflicts and political turmoil; terrorism and insecurity; and economic slow-down and unemployment (Fosse & Le Tellier 2017). On the other hand, according to Lanquar (2013), various crises (political, financial and economic) had no major impact on its growth, which confirmed the resilience of tourism in the Mediterranean and the huge potential in this sector.

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Current challenges particularly affect the countries that are most dependent on tourism, such as Croatia, where international tourists' expenditure amounts to almost 20% of GDP, by far the largest share in the EU. Croatia features a typical "sea and sun" tourism model with stays concentrated in coastal areas in the summer months, with the highest seasonality in the EU (Orsini and Ostojić 2018). Although the beginnings of tourism development in our region were characterized by some specific types of tourism (health and cultural tourism), which did not have a seasonal character, today Croatia is still positioned and recognized mostly as a summer destination. Such drastic seasonality, at the same time, represents a serious threat to the sustainability of the natural, cultural and social environment. In such a context, certain specific forms of tourism, which already marked the history of Croatian tourism, could be analysed as a sustainable alternative to seasonal mass tourism and a positive generator of change.

This paper will offer a new perspective in the elaboration of the key initial phases of the development of modern tourism in the Adriatic, by analysing as a case study the Brijuni Islands as an elite Mediterranean spa and seaside resort in a comparative and transnational framework. The author will show how similar cultural practices and patterns of tourist behaviour, characteristic for European early spa and seaside resorts, spread throughout Europe and the Mediterranean during the 19th and early 20th century. The conducted archival and field research indicated that the beginnings of modern tourism in the Adriatic followed existing patterns of the European leading spa and seaside resorts. The main purpose of the research was to find a model of revitalisation and sustainable valorisation of unique historical, cultural and natural heritage, using a local tourist tradition as a



model for sustainable future development. Combining archival and field research, the author explored and compared some of the well-known island aristocratic residences, which developed as popular seaside resorts in the 19th and 20th century, such as the Isle of Wight, the Hyères Islands, Capri, Mallorca, Corfu and Brijuni. Preliminary findings indicate the great potential for valorisation of the unique history, cultural heritage and revitalised spa infrastructure in reflecting on the sustainable future through responsible tourism that has marked the history of Brijuni Islands. Many Euro-Mediterranean destinations, often in the maturity stage of their life cycle, seek to reposition and reinvent themselves in that way. The main contribution of this article would be in linking the key elements of the local tourism tradition with responsible tourist valorisation through cultural, health and eco-tourism, offering in that way a sustainable development model for other Euro-Mediterranean destinations.

HISTORY OF MEDITERRANEAN SPA AND SEASIDE RESORT

The privileged groups of the population cultivated the first journeys for pleasure and leisure. As Lofgreen (1999) indicated, contrary to common beliefs, tourism existed long before the famous Grand Tour of Mediterranean Europe by English aristocrats. After first documented visits to famous monuments and relics of ancient Egyptian culture, ancient Greece and classical Rome also gave impetus to travelling and particular forms of holiday. Holiday travel became increasingly important due to the development of infrastructure and a well-developed road network. In the first century AD, there was already developed touristic economy which organised travel for individuals and groups, provided information and dealt with both accommodation and meals. The well-off Romans sought relaxation in the seaside resorts in the South or passed time on the beaches of Egypt and Greece. The classical world did not only have the “bathing holiday”, but also developed an early form of “summer health retreat” in thermal baths and luxury locations visited by rich urban citizens during the hot months. Something that had its origins primarily in healthcare soon mutated into holidays for



pleasure and entertainment (Gyr 2010). For Augustan society, the shoreline from Rome to Naples was comparable to the contemporary French Riviera. The most famous resorts were in the Bay of Naples, from Cumae and Cape Misenum on the west, to Sorrento peninsula just past Mount Vesuvius on the east. There, beautiful villas and seaside resorts reproduced the life and society of Rome in terms of social status and cultural habits: it was Rome away from Rome (Lomine, in Walton 2005, 69-87). Roman luxurious residences in the Mediterranean included the seaside villas and residential landscapes, such as the major tourist centers and aristocratic residences around the Bay of Naples or the *villae maritimae* (seaside villas) of the eastern Adriatic coast.

According to some recent research, Istria was exceptional in the scale and density of its coastal Roman villas. By contrast with some of the Italian *villae maritimae* which were wholly devoted to the pursuit of *otium* (enjoying from the natural setting restorative powers), many of the Istrian villas give good evidence for extensive production of oil and wine. As noted by Bowden, some of the Istrian villas around Verige Bay on the island of Brijuni, were built on a colossal scale with all the architectural ambition of the *villae maritimae* of the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy. Since the area was within easy reach of Italy (and of Rome itself), it is unsurprising that the villas of the region have strong similarities with their Italian contemporaries. Istria in particular, as part of regio X, was an area that had particularly strong links to the senatorial aristocracy of Rome, and this is reflected in the *villae maritimae* of the region, which are on a greater scale and aspiration to villas elsewhere on the Adriatic coast (Bowden 2018).

According to Begović and Schrunk, the Brijuni's maritime villa in Verige Bay is the most luxurious example of Roman maritime villas on the Adriatic coast it could be compared with opulent villas in the bay of Naples (villa Pausilypon), in ancient Stabiae, Sorrento, and above all, with the imperial villas on the island of Capri (villa Damecuta and villa Jovis). Like Brijuni, the island of Capri was an exclusive real estate, and its maritime villa displayed the socio-political stature of the elite in the Augustan period which was the time of unprecedented economic and political growth (Begović and Schrunk 2007, 50-52).

The Grand Tour, undertaken by young aristocrats between the 16th and 18th centuries, as an early form and precursor of modern tourism, was focused on the western Adriatic coast and the rich cultural heritage of southern Italy, neglecting the eastern Adriatic, burdened by constant conflicts on the Balkan “Triplex Confinium”. From England, the tours went on to the Mediterranean, trips to the classical sites of Italy representing the highpoint of the journey. During the early phase of modern tourism, which lasted from the 18th century to the first third of the 19th century, touristic travel remained confined to a minority of wealthy nobles and educated professionals. For them, travelling was a demonstrative expression of their social class which communicated power, status, money and leisure (Gyr 2010). The international spa resort, as the next stage of development of modern tourism, and as a site of leisure, health and pleasure, might provide its own cosmopolitan microcosm of high society. After Spa in Belgium, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were also the period which saw the first signs of the development of the English spas (such as Bath, Buxton, and Tunbridge Wells) as fashionable health resorts. Members of the higher classes took up residence in luxurious spa towns with newly built casinos, such as Baden-Baden, Karlsbad, Vichy and Cheltenham, where life centred around social occasions, receptions, balls, horse races, adventures and gambling.

According to Walton, the first seaside resorts, such as Brighton, Margate, Weymouth and Hastings, initially developed in early 18th century, primarily on the south coast of England to service the huge market of London, and later around the entire British coast, reflecting strong regional economic and urban development in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. In the 18th century the seaside resort spread to the Continent, from the French channel, Belgian and Netherlands coasts to North Germany and Scandinavia by the early 19th century. One of the first substantial English sea-bathing resorts which had a great early boost from royal patronage, was Brighton, as it became the favoured resort of the royal family from the late eighteenth century. The early rail communication



with London was a vital asset, which positioned Brighton as a specialized seaside resort by the dawn of the railway age in 1841, in the uniquely and increasingly competitive circumstances of the seaside holiday market in England. Opened to new influences, it made an early switch from a late autumn to a summer-dominated season, and managed to go down market by opening out to burgeoning middle-class demand while stily retaining an aristocratic image and reputation. Brighton also moved, early in Victorian times, from a predominant sea-bathing rationale to a basis in leisure, luxury and entertainment (Walton 1997, 48).

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Modern tourism first developed in the highly industrialized and urbanized areas of Western Europe, thanks to a coordinated system of rail and maritime transport infrastructure. Rail lines, extended from Paris lines to Nice in 1864, helped fuel the subsequent development of the Côte d'Azur, which was created as a tourist destination by British aristocrats visiting Hyères and Giens, in the Var. Many came to the Mediterranean for milder winter weather and the English aristocratic tourists played an important role in establishing winter resorts on the Mediterranean and creating the winter season (Pemble 1987). Prominent personalities who helped promote tourism to the Mediterranean included the Prince of Wales in Monaco, Napoleon III in Nice, and Queen Victoria in Hyères (Gordon 2003).

Nice concentrated European demand for warmth, climatic comfort, health and high fashion, and its success in image creation was helped by the late Victorian rise of Monte Carlo and its enjoyably infamous casino within easy reach. Nice, moreover, retained its royal patronage, but it came from all over Europe and mingled excitingly with the new wealth of the Americas and the super-rich of other continents. On the other side, San Sebastian was faithful to the Spanish royal family, especially between 1887 and 1928, when the Queen Maria Cristina stayed there every summer in her modest residence. Under these auspices San Sebastian became the summer seat of government, exploiting at the same time a distinctive climatic reputation, and offering seasonal escape from Madrid's suffocating summer heat (Walton 1997, 49).



The key feature of European spas and seaside resorts was the high degree of similarity that they had to each other, not only due to the similarity of functions between spa and seaside, but also the huge influence of dominant centres. As indicated by Peter Borsay (Borsay and Furnée 2015), resorts simply copied each other and followed the leaders' models: there was the inclination among resorts to emulate, replicate and copy, by turning a dominant model as an exemplar. Powerful models of spa and seaside emerged, that were closely related to each other, and exerted a heavy influence on the form of new resort locations. The model spa and seaside resort evolved in key locations: Bath, Brighton and Blackpool in the UK, Spa in Belgium, Vichy and Nice in France, Baden Baden in Germany, Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) in Czech Republic, etc. Though these models changed over time, they created a resort culture that shared many common elements – the search for health and the pursuit of nature, sociability, status acquisition and class assertion. The process of place emulation, and the transnational implications of this, can be seen in the way resorts were described: Opatija as “Austrian Nice”, or Brijuni as “a unique kind of spa, a garden by the sea, a rarity, perhaps only comparable to the Isle of Wight” (Urošević 2014).

According to Borsay, spas and seaside resorts encouraged mobility, cultivating trans-regional and transnational identities and norms. The 18th century Enlightenment origins of the modern spa and resort encouraged the adoption of a universalist culture which favoured metropolitan and international values at the expense of vernacular local ones. There was a tendency for spas and resorts to be engineered to deliver a common set of cosmopolitan practices and values, that can be seen in leisure facilities, social routines and rituals, patterns of behaviour, dress, architecture, and the performing and visual arts. This culture, and the success of a resort, depended not only upon investing heavily in real facilities, but also upon constructing an image that met visitor expectations and shaped their experiences. Written and visual texts – guidebooks, travel writing, novels, letters, paintings, posters and postcards - were critical in facilitating this. The resort models, and the common culture that



they promoted, encouraged a Europe-wide cosmopolitanism (Borsay and Furnée 2015). Though this was threatened by the rise of nationalism in the later nineteenth century, new technologies of travel and communication, allied to a broader process of globalization, have helped sustain the spa's and seaside's traditional role in promoting cultural transnationalism and a common Euro-Mediterranean heritage.

CREATING MEDITERRANEAN PARADISE

A prerequisite for the intensive development of modern tourism in the Adriatic was the creation of a coordinated system of railway and maritime communications. It began after the introduction of regular steamship lines of the Austrian Lloyd from Trieste to the Bay of Kotor in 1838, which enabled the access to the future Austrian Riviera, and the completion of the Southern Railway in 1857, connecting Vienna with Trieste and bringing the Viennese upper classes to the Adriatic. When the State shipping company, the Austrian Lloyd, introduced regular steamers lines along the Adriatic coast, a new culture and fashion of Adriatic cruises was followed by specialised travel publications, travelogues and travel guides, featuring the mild Mediterranean climate, exotic landscapes, and a rich cultural heritage. Thanks to the coordinated action of the visionary director of the Southern Railway Julius Schüller, who was inspired by the economic success of the seaside hotels and resorts built by English railway companies, as well as recommendations of experienced travel writers and physicians who studied therapeutic benefits of mild climate, Abbazia (Opatija) turned into the first seaside health resort on the Adriatic from 1844 to 1889. This combination of united efforts of ingenious entrepreneurs, inspired travel writers and scientists (whereby the scientists discovered, publicists promoted, and entrepreneurs created new tourist facilities) was to become the formula of success for other destinations too (Urošević 2014).

The first promoters of the Austrian Riviera were physicians, climatologists and climatotherapists, who studied and recommended the therapeutic benefits of the mild coastal climate with



a high concentration of aerosols and sea-water baths (Baskar 2010). Swimming and bathing did not become widely popular until the late 19th century, although the medicinal benefits of the sea air and baths had been known since the mid 17th century. The visitors from Northern Europe, mostly aristocrats, visited its South mainly in winter, until they discovered the charm of the warm Mediterranean, where the first seaside resorts in France in Italy were built on the English model (Walton 1997). The early development of Mediterranean destinations was based on restoration of health through climate rather than sea bathing. The leisured and genteel had long frequented Provence, and the French and Italian Rivas were already becoming fashionable winter health resorts before the railways (Walton 1983, 38). Nice and its environs were emerging as winter climatic stations rather than sea-bathing resorts.

According to Walton, the formative and persisting importance of royal patronage of one sort or another stands out; and this was a recurring theme across Europe, from Ostende to Abbazia (Walton 1997, 50). The British aristocracy enjoyed Brighton and the Côte d'Azur, or wintered in Malta, Madeira or Egypt (Gyr 2010). Members of Austria's ruling Habsburg family also had an important role in promoting the new Riviera on the Adriatic. Some of them were pioneers of tourism in the Mediterranean, such as the Archduke Ludwig Salvator, who during his Mediterranean cruises 'discovered' and popularized many island destinations like Mallorca. Mallorca was obviously a model for the development of an exclusive archipelago resort, as one of the first 'Mediterranean paradises', which successfully attracted an elite aristocratic clientele and a cosmopolitan colony of artists and intellectuals (Walton 2005, 179-194).

Following successful models of international competition, in the era of industrialisation and democratisation of travel, the first tourist publications promoted the beauties of exotic landscapes and the economic potential of the hitherto neglected and forgotten Adriatic coast, encouraging tourist infrastructure development and seeking to arouse the interest and to sell travel – an escape from the urbanised, industrialised reality into a Mediterranean Arcadia (Urošević 2014). In these early literary



and visual representations, the Brijuni Islands have also been imagined and narrated as a Mediterranean paradise, utilised as the symbolic location for the idealised landscapes and aspirations of the Western imagination. According to Sheller, islands have a particular resonance in the imagining of paradise, due to their intangible qualities of separateness, exclusivity, and holism (Scheller and Urry 2004).

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The tourist gaze was constructed through various literary, artistic and media representations, tourism texts, images and narratives, which included distinctive and extraordinary features of the Adriatic cultural landscape, but also stereotypical images of the 'Mediterranean paradise' and cultural imperialistic projections of 'the Austrian South', highlighting the importance of the Austrian 'cultural mission' on the Eastern Adriatic. Thus, the travel literature reflected also current political issues, imperialistic ambitions and power relations, in the period when imperial ideology, and the entire modernist developmental philosophy, is reaching its apogee at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries (Mackenzie, in Walton 2005, 34). This period of intense imperial modernization, urbanization and tourism development in the Adriatic area, as a specific contact zone and meeting point of Mediterranean and Central European culture, was characterized also by competing processes of national building (Italian, Croatian and Slovenian) which contributed to creation of multiple, hybrid, transnational identities (Balota 2005).

BRIJUNI AS A EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SPA AND SEASIDE RESORT

Although sophisticated spa establishments and culture existed already in the Roman times, the beginnings of modern tourism in the Adriatic, in the mid-19th century, were connected with development of the first seaside resorts, mostly climatic spas for winter tourism. After Opatija as the first modern tourist destination of the "Austrian Riviera", at the end of the 19th century new, modern climatic spas (Lošinj, Hvar, Rovinj, Brijuni) developed, which based their competitive advantage on the benefits



of a pleasant climate, sea, sun, aerosols and Mediterranean vegetation. The new “Austrian Riviera” used as a model the French Riviera and experiences of the most famous spa resorts in Western Europe.

In 1893, the Viennese industrialist and steel magnate Paul Kupelwieser bought uninhabited malaria-ridden islands at the entrance to the leading Austrian naval port of Pula. Twenty years later, on the eve of the World War I, the Brijuni Islands had been transformed into an elegant health resort, a world-renowned elite seaside destination, an exclusive meeting place for the European aristocracy, artists, and financial magnates, a symbol of cultivated relaxation, and a unique blend of nature and culture. The Brijuni Archipelago came to be known as a Mediterranean paradise at the foot of the Alps, a pearl of the Austrian Riviera, and an oasis of peace (Urošević 2014). Thanks to the frequent visits and extended stays of the Habsburg imperial family, close relations with the top industrial and military circles, and good maritime and railway connections with European capitals, shortly before the First World War, Brijuni developed into a focal point of social life on the Austrian Riviera, and an unique hub of technological and tourism innovations. As an Austrian counterpart to other prominent Mediterranean rivieras and resorts, Brijuni also had an extraordinarily important political, military and diplomatic function as an elite resort and cultural centre near the main naval port.

As we can read in the first tourist magazines (*Brioni Insel Zeitung*, 1910–1914) and guidebooks as well as in the collections of rare documents in the Austrian archives (*Kupelwieser Collection*), a hundred years ago, Brijuni was a year-round elite destination for cultural, health, congress, sports and ecotourism, linked to the whole Europe and the Mediterranean by coordinated rail and ship connections, with the peak of development in pre-war 1913 when 5 island hotels with 500 beds were visited by 5,000 guests, who could enjoy the island all year round, thanks to the newly opened swimming pool with heated seawater. The conducted research on rare collections in Austrian archives has shown that this first indoor swimming pool with heated sea water in Europe with a luxurious wellness center



66 | was conceived as the centre of the future Brijuni spa complex (Urošević 2019). The prerequisite for the development of exclusive spa infrastructure was the eradication of malaria in the islands. In his memoirs (1918), Paul Kupelwieser describes that on November 18, 1900, he invited the famous bacteriologist Robert Koch, who eradicated a dangerous disease by the end of the following year. After an ambitious project of landscaping the English park on the island (by a forester and property manager Alojz Čufar), started the construction of water supply, hotels and associated infrastructure.

In the unpublished part of his memoirs, Paul Kupelwieser mentions plans for the construction of a sanatorium projected by the architect Kramer, in the framework of his ambitious plans to develop a health tourism resort: “I’m thinking about the future enlargement of our hotel resort through the arrangement of about 100 rooms in the hotel on the west coast of Brijuni, perhaps at the same place where a sanatorium was planned, not as a private joint stock company, but in the joint venture with our own hotel company and led by well-paid medical staff” (Kupelwieser 1917, 373–374).

In the publication *Die Bedeutung der Insel Brienz als hervorragender Climatischer Kurort der Nordadria*, we can read that immediately before the outbreak of the WWI, large investments were completed: the heated swimming pool, connected to the hotel rooms with a heated corridor, should be the centre of future development of Brijuni as a winter spa, insisted the Dr Otto Lenz in conclusion of his very informative guide (Lenz 1930). He also announced intensive equipment of the spa centre, the building of a new sanatorium, in addition to the existing hotels, where guests will be offered special treatments, massages and hydrotherapy, mud therapy, diets, and seawater inhalation, ‘as in Salsomaggiore spa’. The future spa and wellness centre would include a gym room and fitness in the pool, along with the unavoidable walks over 80 km of decorated paths. In conclusion, the indications for treatment were listed.

In a booklet *Spaziergänge auf Brioni* (Lenz 1926), the island’s physician, through a proposal of 12 walks through the picturesque Brijuni Islands, also recounts the history of Brijuni as a



modern European spa, elaborating a significant project to build a sanatorium in Madona Bay, which was planned before the start of the First World War. Because of the best climatic conditions in the Madona Bay, after a long period of reflection on arranging the winter sanatorium for convalescence, a joint stock company was organised. The plans were completed, the construction was approved by the Austrian command of the naval port (with the condition that the building be coloured green so as not to become the target of the enemy), the capital for construction was also ready; then the war came and blocked the project.

This information is confirmed by an unpublished development study from 1919, which is also kept in the *Collection*. After the war and in the year of Paul Kupelwieser's death, his heirs founded the Brioni joint stock company in 1919. The contract, held in the Department for the Rare Collections of the Austrian National Library, is one of the few documents related to the company's business (Kupelwieser 1919). This document, which presents a feasibility study and a strategic framework for further development of the islands at the same time, apart from financial structure (which includes both future British and US investors), mentions detailed ambitious development plans, including, for example, connecting the Veli Brijun to Mali Brijun (Brioni Minor) by a bridge, and further spreading of the health resort offer through a new sanatorium in Madona May, as well as new spa complexes on both islands. Another document related to this substantial investment, which was unfortunately interrupted by World War I, is an architectural project for a never-built health resort in the Madonna Bay, a work of the well-known architect, Eduard Kramer (who designed almost all hotels in Brijuni) dating back to 1915. Along with another unrealized project, a large 1905 seafront hotel, there is also a project for a large Kurhaus building that was to be built in Dobrika Bay. The spa building was supposed to be five stories high in the central part and only one floor in the wings. About 120 accommodation units were planned in this impressive health resort.

After the war, when, after great political changes, Istria and Brijuni fell under the authorities of Italy, only huge debts remained. Paul Kupelwieser died shortly after the collapse of the



monarchy in 1919. His son Karl continued his venture with less success, and new investments in golf and polo fields only increased the enormous debts. After additional family problems, he took his own life in 1930, and in 1936 Brijuni was sold to the Italian state.

VALORISING COMMON EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HERITAGE

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At the end of the Second World War, on 5th May 1945, the Brioni Islands were liberated with the rest of southern Istria, and were under the control of the Yugoslav Government, in contrast to Pula, which was then under Allied control. Josip Broz Tito, the president of the Federative Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia, came to Brioni on 20th June 1947 and declared them a residential area (Begović and Schrunk, 2007, 155-166). Since that time, extensive work had begun on their recovery from the damage inflicted by bombing. From 1952 to 1981, numerous foreign dignitaries visited Brijuni, including members of European royal families and highest-ranking diplomats. The summer presidential residence was built on the Island of Vanga. The Brijuni Islands were an important venue of historical meetings of the 20th century. In October 1983, the Brijuni Islands were declared a National Park.

Already in 1948, a year after Josip Broz Tito visited Brijuni for the first time, the Islands were declared a protected natural area. It is well known that a special section of Brijuni's history is connected with the Nonaligned Movement. The meeting of Tito, Nasser and Nehru on Brijuni in 1956 resulted in the Brioni Declaration, which marks the beginning of the Nonaligned Movement. To promote this legacy and tradition, it was planned to continue with activities connected with a global vision of a policy of peace with organization of international meetings at the highest level. Already after the designation as a national park and memorial site in 1983, it was planned to register the Islands on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The first development studies from 1985 (NP Brijuni 1985) suggested that the Islands, because of their historical and symbolic role, should be a site of an important scientific center or international



organization (the UN or the Euro-Mediterranean Center). The stationing of international organizations and scientific institutions in the islands (such as the Center for European Tourism, International Center for Research on Development, UN Office for International Cooperation and Economic Cooperation, European Federation of Natural and National Parks) would be accompanied by the organization of thematic conferences, seminars and workshops. In this way, the rich cultural, tourist and political history of the “Islands of peace” would be used as a symbolic capital and a basis for the ‘domestication’ of international scientific and research institutions. In order to preserve and protect the natural and cultural heritage as a key comparative advantage of the islands, another 1989 study by Institute for Tourism (NP Brijuni 1990) proposes the establishment of a European Environmental Laboratory of the Mediterranean (project to link conservation and experimentation) in to which the Croatian, Italian and European faculties would work jointly with the Mediterranean countries on the African coast. Such international networking and cooperation would allow continuation of successful tradition of scientific, cultural, diplomatic, and eco-tourism in the Islands.

REINVENTING THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SPA AND SEASIDE RESORT

In their turbulent history, from the Roman era to the modern times, the Brijuni Islands had a significant economic function, related to elite leisure, but also a prominent cultural, political and diplomatic role, as a residence and a venue of high-level international meetings. The research conducted showed how the modern tourism industry has become a dominant force shaping cultural landscapes in the Mediterranean region. Although the beginnings of European tourism were connected to longer stays in thermal, climatic and seaside resorts of members of European upper classes, motivated both by health and leisure, contemporary tourism most often refers to mass coastal tourism and seasonal migrations from northern Europe to the Mediterranean. Nowadays, many destinations in Europe and in



the Mediterranean are in the maturity stage of their life cycle, facing either stagnation or a decline in tourist numbers. Because of an increased competition of emerging destinations, the main goal of destination management in such resorts should be to devise mechanisms for rejuvenating their products and reinvent themselves. The survival of destinations, especially of traditional ones, whose product has reached maturity or stagnation stage depends on their ability to reinvent themselves, through better or unique market positioning accompanied by innovative marketing strategies. According to marketing experts, mature destinations whose products and infrastructure are dated, and accompanied by a tired or boring image, need to reinvent themselves through significant improvements in infrastructure, a range of products and more effective destination management (Weber and Tomljenović 2004).

Apart from the necessary investments in tourism and transport infrastructure, the solution for the more sustainable future might be perhaps found in the past, by using the local tourism tradition and heritage in spa and resort development. As we already mentioned, a hundred years ago, Brijuni Islands were a year-round elite destination for cultural, health, congress, sports and ecotourism, linked to the whole Europe and the Mediterranean by coordinated rail and ship connections. Instead of inventing the hot water again, the optimal solution would simply be to reach out to local best practice and 'reinvent' the destination as an elite Euro-Mediterranean spa and seaside resort, properly valorizing its unique history and heritage, including existing attraction base for health, cultural, scientific, congress and eco-tourism. This uniqueness could be further emphasized by some international heritage labels, such as the European heritage label or the planned nomination to the World Heritage list. Another possibility would be basing an international organization on the Islands.

In that way, the beauty of this unique Mediterranean cultural landscape and the wealth of its cultural heritage could be protected from environmental threats related to uncontrolled tourist development and adequately valorised in the broader Euro-Mediterranean context.

CONCLUSION

The paper synthesized the results of research on specialized rare collections and first tourism publications, as well as strategic documents, projecting a sustainable future of an elite Euro-Mediterranean resort in relation to the most successful periods in local and regional tourism history. Special emphasis was put on the development concepts and plans of the first owner of Brijuni, Paul Kupelwieser (1843-1919), presenting his very ambitious projects for the development of health, cultural and ecotourism, based on research of rare archival material.

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The conducted research elaborated very ambitious plans for the development of special interest tourism, which were not implemented because of turbulent political events and geopolitical changes in this specific border zone. On the other hand, the mentioned plans could be very useful today, especially considering the fact that special interest tourism is rapidly growing and is a strategic priority in the Croatian tourist offer. Special interest tourism, based on natural healing factors, unique cultural heritage and developed spa tradition is the priority of current strategic plans for the development of Croatian tourism, which could, according to experts, triple the duration of the coastal tourist season and reintroduce the year-round season that was usual in the beginnings of modern tourism.

The proposed innovative models of tourist valuation of cultural landscapes of special value, advocate an integrated approach to the management of cultural and natural assets through sustainable and responsible tourism. This implies a development concept that places cultural and natural heritage and limited spatial resources at the heart of the sustainable development of the heritage community, which is responsible for its sustainable valorisation, through specific forms of tourism that will respect local tradition through responsible innovation. The research, which included a combination of cultural-historical analysis, archival and field research with a review of recent theoretical literature and analysis of strategic tourism documents, in search of an optimal development model, linked issues of sustainable tourism development and valorization of valuable local



and Euro-Mediterranean heritage through specific selective forms of tourism (health, cultural, congress, sports and ecotourism), especially in areas of special importance such as national parks.

Based on the conducted research, a sustainable development model was proposed, which should respect the local tourist tradition and valuable Euro-Mediterranean heritage, valorizing the unique island cultural landscape precisely through sustainable and responsible forms of tourism that marked the history of Brijuni Islands: cultural, health, sports and ecotourism.

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