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Paolo Prodi, Adam Wandruszka, eds. *Il luogo di cura nel tramonto della monarchia d'Asburgo: Arco nella fine dell'Ottocento.* Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 1996. 345 pp. Lit 38,000 (paper), ISBN 978-88-15-05536-1.

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Spas and the Twilight of Empire

This excellent book is a collection of lectures and papers which were presented in a conference on 21-22 April, 1995 in Arco, one of the most beautiful spas (*Kurorte*) of the Italian region Trentino-Suedtirol, in the area north of Lake Garda. The Italian-German Institute of History in Trento took a prominent part both in organizing the conference and in publishing its papers, creating the forty-third volume of its first-rate series of books. The typography of the volume is pleasant, and some nice photos help to recall the genuine atmosphere of a spa "microworld" as an important place of social life of the *belle epoque*, of the *fin de siecle*, of the peaceful decades before the First World War. From one of the photos two well-known figures glance at us: the former king of Naples, Francis II of Bourbon, and the commander of the last victory by Austrian troops (Custozza, 1866), Archduke Albert of Habsburg, cousin of the Austrian emperor and Hungarian king, Francis Joseph I.

In his introduction Professor Prodi confesses that the centenary of these illustrious persons' death (1894, 1895) offered a good pretext to realise an ambition with the help of a conference: to present not only various local historical events, but to demonstrate the world of the spa as one of the important moments of a "collective European identity." This important idea appears in three thematic groups of lectures: 1. the model of the *Kurort* in a mental, cultural and therapeutic structure; 2. economic and urbanistic-architectural problems; 3. the connection of Arco to Trentino and to the Habsburg Monarchy. It is remarkable to read the list of institutions and firms that deemed it important to support Professor Prodi's and his colleagues' scientific effort, from the State Secretary of Austria and his vice-consul in Trento through the Italia-Austria Society and the Institute of Austrian Culture (Milan) to the excellent journal *Il Sommolago* and the *Cassa rurale* (mortgage bank) of Arco.

The beauty of the country was already characterized by the title of the conference: *La valle incantata* (The Enchanted Valley). Indeed, like Riva or Merano, Arco has a parklike environment and a first-class climate appreciated both by sick persons in olden times and by tourists in our days. Leafing through this book, the reader feels like making a visit to the thermal springs of the city and passing down its famous promenade toward the Palazzo Archiducale ...

The volume has two parts. The first, titled "The Myth and the Reality of the Spa," is dedicated to the theoretical problems of this topic. The second, titled "The *Kurort* in the Habsburg Monarchy between Illness and Tourism," deals with specialised "bath or spa history." The first chapter, with four papers, is introduced by the longest study of the volume, "The Health and Illness of the 'Man of the World' at the Twilight of the Ancien Regime." The author, Giuseppe Olmi, treats in detail how people thought about health and illness in the European courts of the early modern era. Inherited from ancient times, a magical (in the ethnographic and religious meaning of the word) view dominated in public thinking: a faith in the relation between the ruler's health and the prosperity of the state. The Christian tradition knows this idea well as part of the conception of illness as a punishment from God. Olmi uses in his analysis two fundamental works written by famous physicians of this era: Luis Lobera de Avila (Toledo, mid-sixteenth century) and Bernardino Ramazzini (Modena, first decades of the eighteenth century). Comparing them, he is able to precisely demonstrate how the ideas of the Enlightenment altered public conceptions.

In light of scientific rationalism and progress, illness lost its transcendent associations and the assurance of health became a part of the quest for happiness in real life. From this point of view the order of things changed, too: prevention became more important than medical treatment. Thus, one of the basic questions of the Enlightenment–how can we live right?–appeared in the field of medicine and the answer was the follow-

ing: live in harmony with nature! Presenting the leading ideas of the book *Essai sur les maladies des gens du monde* (1770),[1] Olmi determines a close relationship in their thinking between the author, the physician of Lausanne, Samuel-Auguste Andre- David Tissot, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's well-known idea was "back to nature." As a medical prescription, it presented itself on the pages of Tissot's work discussing the influence of air, clothing, and food on one's health. The advice that derives from the medical aspect is the same as from the political one, advice addressed to millions of citizens instead of the small circles of aristocrats and "men of the world": he who lives more simply and naturally will be happier.

In his last section, Olmi explains that while medical practice propagated the fundamental principles of a healthy way of life, sentimentalism and romanticism discovered a special connection between the misery of the artist and his power of creation. Indeed, a perspective of death appearing in the form of a long, mortal illness undoubtedly can inspire a special atmosphere and unique works. Thus, melancholy and, especially in the nineteenth century, tuberculosis have attained a curious value in literature. This idea became an important element of the spa "microworld" as an extraordinary sector of modern social life.

Gian Paolo Marchi's focus is on this last mentioned topic, "Cultures in Confrontation at Bathing Resorts." He stresses an important logical-spiritual connection between travel and life in a spa. Modern medicine knows and uses travel for its special therapeutic effect and a *Kurort* can really offer a similar choice: different country, people, climate, food, new clothing, experiences from everyday life to religion, more informal social relations (particularly with respect to sexuality), and many possibilities of psychic and moral recovery or recreation. Arco provides an excellent example for Marchi's purpose of presenting the "spa belt" of the Lake Garda region as a meeting zone of North and South, the German and the Italian cultural spheres. His main sources are the works of Franz Kafka and particularly the letters of Giovanni Boine, who himself also died of tuberculosis, but the author mentions several times the fundamental novel dedicated to the special human relation between spa life and society: Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*.

Luciano Bonuzzi's study, "Psychotherapy and Existence in the Spa," completes the cultural mosaic with elements of the *Kurort* world recalling the master of romantic medicine, Mesmer, and the leader of the homeopathic movement, Hahnemann, who revived the view of "nature with a soul," a "Dionysos-aspect," a "psychosomatic" approach to illness. The water of thermal springs was favored both by alchemy and by modern chemistry and this new–naturalist and psychological –aspect popularized and favoured the spa in contrast to the traditional hospital. In the first half of the nineteenth century water, but in the second half air, was admired and considered a purely natural (and for this reason, of course, occult) force which can regenerate the organic life-functions in recovery. The geography of spas, i.e. the construction of a park- or garden-town, was an aspect of domesticated nature. But on the other hand, the spa was a magic captive (the "Magic Mountain" again!) and, in a certain sense, it was easier to depart from there towards death than towards recovery because there illness was a normal condition of life. The First World War, and streptomycin, ended the classical prosperity of the spa, but it was rediscovered as a centre of health and sport tourism and *asylum psychiatricum*.

The last article of the first section is by Rodolfo Taiani, "Environment and Health: The Myth of the *Kurort* between Scientific Presuppositions and Cultural Processes." He writes that the people of last century experienced the complex recovery power of the spa as a rebirth of the ancient *vis medicatrix naturae*. But this ancient tradition and popular methods of medical treatment were supported by modern science, which investigated nature in itself rather than on the analogy of human beings.

The first four studies of the second part present the topic promised by its title: the *Kurort* in the Habsburg Monarchy between illness and tourism. Luigi Zangheri's "Architects of Spas and Thermal Cities in the Habsburg-Lorraine Dynasty" reveals the typical elements of this kind of settlement. Its origin is generally based on a similar situation: patronage by a ruler. The Habsburg archdukes of Toscana supported the expansion of Bagni di San Giuliano and Montecatini in the 1770s. The archbishop of Cologne in Bad Godesberg, Austrian Emperor Francis I in Franzensbad, Archduke Charles in Baden bei Wien, Archduke John in Badgastein, Cardinal Rudolph, Archbishop of Salzburg in Bad Ischl, played the same protector's role. The leaders of the spa as well as the bath-owners took advantage of the prosperity initiated by the princely persons as well as the thermal water. The architectural pattern was provided by Karlsbad. Step by step, year by year a new kind of settlement developed, the spa with some characteristic horticultural element. Surveying this structure from the park to the covered promenades, Zangheri notes in the background the contradiction between the idealistic environment and a cruel struggle against misery, illness and death.

Andrea Leonardi investigates the subject from a rare point of view; his title is "The Economic Importance of *Kurorte* in the Development of Austrian Tourism." He stresses that after the Baroque peregrination, from the 1820s on spa-tourism became an important economic element in Austria, particularly in three areas: products and services, entertainment, and their organization. Consulting the volumes of Statistical Yearbook of Austria[2] for 1864, the author demonstrates the more important quantitative changes in a number of interesting tables and figures: the number of spa guests, migration of patients and tourists, proportion of foreigners, selective data collections and those permutations from several point of views. I think researchers of Austrian tourism will use these tables with good result.

One of the best studies of the volume is Mauro Grazioli's panorama of the spa-history of Arco, "Arco Felix: The Reality and Myth of the Spa." The expression *Arco felix* is a clear reference to the famous historical slogan *felix Austria* and, indeed, Arco's development was determined by the fact that, despite the victory of Garibaldi at Bezzecca in the war of 1866, Trentino remained in the hands of Francis Joseph I. After a short period of economic recession, the prosperity of the Garda region was accentuated by elite therapy tourism from the beginning of the 1880s, because this "enchanted valley" had not only first-class thermal springs but also the best climate of all the provinces and countries of the Habsburg Monarchy. The above-mentioned princely persons discovered the Southern Trentino. Soon the "upper ten" began to visit Riva on the shore of Lake Garda in summer as a treatment for melancholy, and in winter Arco because of pulmonary disease.

Arco's historian, Grazioli, presents the social structure of the city and its tensions, even contradictions. The old town was a settlement of agricultural and crafts people while the new town, on the other hand, was the world of the aristocracy, rich bourgeoisie, and moneyed classes. Italian-German nationality problems had a social character, too, because the best hotels, the bulk of the "albergo industry," were in German hands: the most notable family names were Nelbock, Peer, Reinalther, Strasser, Schlegel, Hoder etc. These groups represented a remarkably conservative, clerical and pro-Habsburg bloc in the city council. By reason of their dynastic loyalty, they were led politically by the Catholic dean, Dr. Giuseppe Maria Chini, and displayed their own interests as those of the spa guests. Native people of Arco, influenced by such respected Italian bourgeois and business men as Prospero Marchetti and Francesco Chinatti, declared that although "the German, Hungarian, Polish or Russian guests will always be welcomed, honoured and respected" they did not interfere in the business policy of the owners. The author calls our attention to the new elements of this long national-economic struggle after Dr. Koch's discovery of the tuberculosis bacillus. On one hand, the best physicians of Arco declared pure natural therapy an illusion and demanded the introduction of several suitable methods of disinfection by the city council. On the other hand, there was a populist and somewhat xenophobic propaganda against diseased persons who poisoned the air and endangered the city's future.

In Grazioli's mirror we meet the protagonists of Arco at the fin de siecle: physicians, hotel directors, famous guests, and notables of local political life like Carlo Marchetti, the most creative mayor (*podesta*) of that age. Marchetti recognizes the signs of indubitable decadence and the danger of a "Magic Mountain" syndrome: a faith that people in a spa-asylum live out of history, in the same way that Hans Castorp felt that immersion in the sanatorium would enable him to leave the problems of real life down below, at the foot of the mountain. But he indicates the path to a new economic prosperity, by a focus on groups of cardiac patients, neurotics, and convalescents instead of those with pulmonary disorders.

Maria Garbari received the task outlining the more important political processes of Trentino in the age of Austrian-Hungarian dualism as a background for the Arco story. Indeed, her title "Trentino: a Small Patria in the Habsburg Monarchy" helps us understand the purposes of a national movement organizing expressly within the empire's borders. Garbari's hero is Paolo Oss Mazzurana, the mayor of Trento and the leader of an "economic risorgimento" and a struggle for the autonomy of his "small patria"–Southern Tyrol vis a vis Innsbruck. Indeed, Mazzurana and his compatriots had many allies in the Reichsrat because the Slavic federalist party supported the advocates of autonomy in the regions and provinces. Regarding this question the emperor was generally neutral; he not only granted Mazzurana an audience and listened to his political ideas, but also gave him the Order of the Iron Crown (1893). The real enemies of Trentino's autonomy were in the diet at Innsbruck.

Garbari portrays Italian irredentism in the Southern Tyrol through the stages of the emergence of the dual monarchy: the wars of independence, the Triple Alliance, and the fin de siecle. The local implications of state-church relations, the changes of bureaucracy and administration, the press, and public opinion are presented. Garbari illuminates Mazzurana's excellent development program in the light of the basic data of economic and

social life, the migration of population, railway development, schools, libraries and museums, flood problems, electricity, and the appearance of national sentiments in the alpinist movement. According to her definition, the cultural achievement of Trentino was national, but not nationalist and not aggressive. And she calls our attention to the political reaction to Italian irredentism: in 1880 the *Deutscher Schulverein* was born.

Richard Schober's study, "Archduke Albert at the Habsburg Court: Military Rank and Political Undervaluation," has a different literary form that the articles presented up to now. But the topic fits absolutely into this volume because Albert undoubtedly became a decisive member of Arco's community. More problematic are some errors of the author. He exaggerates Albert's antimagyar feelings: he was opposed only to the concrete form of Austro-Hungarian Compromise as conceived by Ferenc Deak. Albert was the first, at the end of 1850s, who directed Francis Joseph's attention to the danger of a new rebellion of Hungary and proposed entering into negotiations with his conservative aristocratic friends as a way out of absolutism. St. Stephen's crown was buried in the ground at Orsova (not Orsawa!) by Bertalan Szemere, and not by Lajos Kossuth. Albert's father-in-law was only Louis I, king of Bavaria, so it is wrong to use this same expression for his son, Maximilian II. Schober also overestimates the role of empress Elisabeth in the Hungarian Compromise of 1867. I think many historians would disagree with his assertion that the dissolution of Habsburg Monarchy was a fundamental historical error.

I must admit I don't understand why the volume ends with Angelo Ara's text, "Crisis and Decline of the Habsburg Monarchy." It seems to me that this is only a chapter (not faultless, but not a bad chapter) of a schoolbook in which the author summarises the well-known facts of the last years of Habsburg rule. Without any new data, it was unnecessary to include it in a collection on spa history. I don't miss the English summary for this article, but I do for the others. These valuable results deserve a larger public, but are now unable to cross the Italian language border.

Notes:

[1]. S. A. D. Tissot, *Essai sur les maladies des gens du monde* (Lausanne: [s.n.], 1770).

[2]. *Tafeln zur Statistik der Oesterreichischen Monarchie* (Wien: Statistische Central-Commission, 1864).

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