The European Spa Crowdsourcing Project (Online Workshop)

The European Spa represented a type of urban development, which was usually situated in a rustic environment, but displayed a clearly defined urban planning and architecture. Functional buildings, such as pump rooms, baths, hotels and later sanatoria displayed a lavish and luxurious design and were interspersed with open public spaces like parks and promenades. Together they created a therapeutic landscape, in which the 'taking of the waters' and bathing offered medical treatment and relaxation. Sociability and entertainment, musical and theatrical performances, salons, and casinos added enjoyment, and turned the resorts to early destinations of nascent modern tourism. **Therapy, relaxation, consumption and socializing coalesced and formed the basis of modern European "spa culture".**

In the course of the long 19th century, the spas transformed from seasonal meeting places of the elite, initially exclusively enjoying their scientific, social and cultural achievements, into seasonal destinations for the emerging middle classes. Already throughout the "long" 19th century, roughly speaking between the French revolution and the First World War, some of the European spas developed into genuinely transnational public spaces, and many more of them functioned as stages for the negotiation of political, social and cultural issues of European relevance.

Our project, "The European Spa as a Transnational Public Space and Social Metaphor", launched with the help of a HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) grant in 2019, aims, firstly, **to reconstruct the emergence, flourishing, and possible demise of the European spa, from the "golden age" of the 18th and 19th centuries,** through the challenges and changes of the 20th century up to the present day. Secondly, we aim to discuss the importance of this transnational heritage for a revaluation and reinvigoration of the Spas across Europe in the 21st century.

One of the main aims of our project is **to trace how the concept of the spa town, and its offspring, the seaside resort, developed and spread across Europe**. A late 19th century German source counted about 650 of them in Europe, and it is our ambition to map their dissemination across Europe as completely as possible. To realize this ambition, we depend on your expertise and help.

A second important hypothesis of our project is that both **the grand and the lesser well-known spas across Europe emulated a basic model, which also informed the development of seaside resorts and climatic spas.** Therefore, we are attempting to map the layout of spas across Europe, collecting information about the emergence (and possible demise) of key spa institutions such as the sanatoria, the (grand) hotels, the casinos, parks and promenades in more detail. While not aspiring to the same completeness as with the spa towns in general, we hope to be able to document the spatial layout of a sufficiently high number of resorts in detail. Again, **you can help us, with your local expertise, by entering information on such spa facilities and certain elements of urban infrastructure into our database.** The nodegoat database technology allows us, (and you, too!) to easily produce detailed maps of each resort across Europe, reflecting the dynamics of the temporal development of each of the spas.

In preparation for the workshop, watch our promotional video and check out the crowd-sourcing section on our website.