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Alternative und komplementäre Heilmethoden in der Neuzeit

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The Spa as a Commercial Enterprise. The Beginnings of Commercialisation by Using the Example of Styria in the First Half of the 19th Century

Introduction

In the first half of the 19th century, the bathing tradition experienced a strong boost. Not was a visit to a spa undertaken for health reasons, but it was also becoming increasingly popular for relaxing and entertainment.¹ In order to meet this rising demand, numerous new spas were founded and existing spas were extended and modernized, with the result that some local structures changed completely within only a few years. This expansion can be observed particularly in Styria.² Even though in 1820 there were already 59 spas,³ a large part of the curative waters was exploited only to a limited extent or not utilised at all. Only a few health springs had achieved regional or trans-regional importance. The one with the best reputation was Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn/Rogaška Slatina in today's Slovenia, but the warm baths at Tobelbad – located south of Graz –, Neuhaus/Dobrna and Römerbad Tüffer/Rimske Toplice near Cilli/Celje, were also renowned and respected while Gleichenberg in Eastern Styria was still in the construction phase. Compared to international bathing tourism, none of these institutions played a significant role.⁴ In the first section the circumstances are investigated of how

- 1 Cf. Vladimír KRÍŽEK, *Kulturgeschichte des Heilbades* (Leipzig 1990); *Große Welt reist ins Bad. 1800–1914. Baden bei Wien, Badgastein, Bad Ischl, Franzensbad, Karlsbad, Marienbad, Teplitz. Ausstellungskatalog, Schloss Grafenegg bei Krems* (Passau 1980); Heinz BIEHN / Johanna HERZOGENBERG, *Große Welt reist ins Bad. Nach Briefen, Erinnerungen und anderen Quellen zur Darstellung gebracht* (München 1960).
- 2 Cf. for example Elke HAMMER-LUZA, *Steirische Kurorte in der Biedermeierzeit*, in: *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Steiermark* (= ZHVSt) 103 (2012), 153–204; Helmut HAINZL, *Heilende Wasser in der Steiermark und historischen Untersteiermark, unveröffentliche phil. Diplomarbeit* (Universität Graz 2000); Johann SCHLEICH, *Heil- und Wunderquellen in der Steiermark* (Graz–Wien–Köln 1998); Johann SCHLEICH, *Heilende Wasser. Heilbründl, Heilquellen und Thermen in der Oststeiermark* (Graz–Wien–Köln 1997); Alfred SEEBACHER-MESARITSCH, *Die steirischen Heilbäder und Gesundbrunnen* (Graz 1990); Margit NUMMER / Ursula PRUTSCH, *Heilquellen und Kurorte der Steiermark*, in: Gerhard M. Dienes / Franz Leitgeb, Hg., *Wasser. Ein Versuch* (Graz 1990), 286–295; Günther R. BURKERT, *Geschichte des steirischen Fremdenverkehrs*, in: Gerald Schöpfer, Hg., *Menschen & Münzen & Märkte. Steirische Landesausstellung 1989 Judenburg, 29. April–10. Oktober 1989, Katalog* (Graz 1989), 179–190; Alfred BRUSSELLE, *Heilquellen und Kurorte der Steiermark*, in: *Steiermärkische Landesregierung, Hg., Die Steiermark. Land, Leute, Leistung* (Graz 1956), 507–511; Josef HÖHN, *Die Mineralquellen in der Steiermark* (Graz 1915).
- 3 Carl SCHMUTZ, *Historisch Topographisches Lexicon von Steyermark II* (Graz 1822), 547–551; Adolf SCHMIDL, *Das Herzogthum Steiermark* (Stuttgart 1839), 18–19.
- 4 Cf. Reinhold LORENZ, *Bäderkultur und Kulturgeschichte. Forschungen über den Sozialcharakter der österreichischen Heilquellenorte*, in: *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 117/2 (1949), 197–305.

the Styrian spas developed in the first half of the 19th century and which factors influenced their expansion. Subsequently, the focus is placed on the commercial side of the spa business, where organization, personnel and public appeal are described. The last section deals with commercialization and marketing with a description of the commonalities and differences of the single institutions.

Formation and development

For the Styrian spas at the beginning of the 19th century, we can assume that the conditions were extremely primitive; even the famous Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn was no exception. In 1801, there were only three inns, run by farmers, where guests could be accommodated; any other visitors had to live in “makeshift shelters” on site. The drinking fountain was not protected from pollution and a donkey’s stable served as a “makeshift bath”.⁵ In 1803, the Styrian estates started to develop the spa business. This development continued for several decades and resulted in them attracting 1,600 guests in 1845.⁶

A similar development can be observed for almost all Styrian spas which experienced a remarkable growth period, especially in the second quarter of the 19th century. The number of guests, and hence turnover and profit rose, and most spas doubled their economic output in this period. But despite this common success story there are significant differences between the spas; these differences were significant for the profitability of the single commercial enterprise.

It became apparent that the ownership situation was key to the spas’ development. The two warm baths at Neuhaus and Tüffer were privately-owned at the start of the 19th century;⁷ while this had the advantage of allowing for unlimited decision making power but was also associated with a comparably restricted economic basis. In addition, the landed gentry and bourgeois lacked entrepreneurial skills, which led to these two spas expanding only a little until the 1840s. Significant growth was only achieved after a change in ownership. In 1840, Tüffer was sold to the Triestine entrepreneur Gustav Uhlich, the owner of a huge brewery and a spinning factory. He expanded and improved the existing structure through high expenditure and effort.⁸

5 Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (= StLA), Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 4: Steirische Bäder und Gesundbrunnen; Sch. 2, H. 14: Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn.

6 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 7: Tobelbad: Ausmaß über die Anzahl der Gäste in Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn 1836–1844; J. HOISEL, Der landschaftliche Curort Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn in Steiermark (Wien 1875), 33.

7 StLA, Wildenstein, Familie, Sch. 17, H. 306: Tüffer, Verpachtung und Verkauf, 1802–1810; Neuhaus, Familie, Herrschaft und Bad, 1512–1844.

8 Mathias MACHER, Das Römerbad nächst Tüffer in Steyermark, in *physikalisch-medicinischer Hinsicht dargestellt für Cur-Gäste* (Graz 1826), 6–20; Mathias MACHER, Das Römerbad nächst Tüffer in Steiermark in *physisch-medizinischer Hinsicht dargestellt* (Graz 1846), 26–29; StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 2, H. 18: Römerbad nächst Tüffer; Puff Rudolf Gustav, Nachlass, K. 8, H. 274: Heilquellen; K. 8, H. 289: Tüffer, Orts- und Gegendbeschreibung; Elke HAMMER-LUZA, Zdravilišče Rimske Toplice v prvi polovici 19. Stoletja, in: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 48/2 (2013), 9–25.

The development of Neuhaus was similar: only from 1847 onwards did the new owner, Johann Count of Hoyos, set the essential impulse for transforming Neuhaus into a modern spa.⁹

Diverse starting conditions can be reported for the spas owned by the estates, such as Tobelbad and Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn. Despite the diversities of these two spas, they could count on significant financial power; however, they had to struggle with cumbersome administrative structures. This had a negative effect on leasing out the institution, shown by the example of Tobelbad at the onset of the 19th century. Only when the estates took over the spa under their own initiative, did the anticipated profit ensue.¹⁰ The spa in Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn had been managed in this way from the beginning and hence it was more successful.¹¹ For this spa we can observe a very intensive period of expansion which was possibly due to the immediate competition of the Gleichenberg acidulous spring in Eastern Styria.

The third, and at the same time most progressive type of ownership, is the private limited company – this system was implemented only in Gleichenberg. In 1834, Mathias Constantin Capello, Count of Wickenburg, founded the “Gleichenberger und Johannisbrunnen Aktienverein”. One thousand shares each priced at 100 florins were issued and the amount received from the share issue formed the nominal share capital of the company; it also served for purchasing the required land for building the spa.¹² This business model turned out to be extraordinarily profitable and trendsetting. After two long construction periods, supported by private and commercial building contractors, the expansion of Gleichenberg to a modern spa was finished by 1848.

It is interesting to note that the infrastructure had no determining role for the development of a spa. Admittedly the spas in Lower Styria would benefit from the construction of local and regional roads and the push of the Southern railway from Vienna to Trieste from the 1840s onwards;¹³ however, the examples of Tobelbad and Wildbad Einöd show that easy access alone is not enough. Tobelbad was located only a few kilometers south of the regional capital Graz,

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- 9 Cf. Gustav von KOTTOWITZ, Bericht nebst einer monographischen Skizze über das Bad Neuhaus nächst Cilli in Steiermark vom Jahre 1849 (Graz 1850), 39–47; Max Josef SCHÜLER, Der landschaftliche Curort Neuhaus bei Cilli in Untersteiermark (Wien 1862), 12–13; Karlmann TANGL, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Herrschaft und des Badeortes Neuhaus, in: Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark 3 (1852), 160–222; Elke HAMMER-LUZA, „Es ist zum Sterben langweilig, wie in einem Kloster.“ Bad Neuhaus/Dobrna und sein Kurgast Anna Ploch 1825/1826, in: Blätter für Heimatkunde 87/1–2 (2013), 6–21, here 7–10.
- 10 StLA, Wartinger Josef, Nachlass, K. 2, H. 20: Über Tobelbad (Bad und Kuratie), Konzept und Materialsammlung; Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 6: Tobelbad; F. C. WEIDMANN, Illustrierter Fremdenführer von Graz und seinen malerischen Umgebungen (Graz 1859), 281–282; Max Josef SCHÜLER, Der steiermärkisch-ständische Curort Tobelbad (Graz 1856), 11–12; Erich LINHARDT, Geschichte der ehemals steirisch-ständischen Kuranstalt Tobelbad und deren Einfluss auf die Entwicklung des Ortes gleichen Namens, unveröffentlichte phil. Dissertation (Universität Graz 1982).
- 11 Rudolf PUFF, Erinnerung an Sauerbrunn nächst Rohitsch und seine Umgebungen (Graz 1853); Ernst Hilarius FRÖHLICH, Die Sauerbrunnen bei Rohitsch (Wien 1857).
- 12 StLA, Bad Gleichenberg, Ort, K. 1, H. 1: Share of the „Gleichenberger und Johannisbrunnen Aktienverein“, 1834; Rudolf Gustav PUFF, Erinnerung an Gleichenberg. Eine kurze historisch-topographische Skizze dieses Badeortes und seiner malerischen Umgebungen, als gemüthliches Andenken den allverehrten Gründern dieser Kuranstalt und den sie besuchenden Freunden der schönen Natur gewidmet (Grätz 1839); Carl Ludwig SIGMUND, Gleichenberg, seine Mineralquellen und der Kurort. Ärztliche Mittheilungen (Wien–Grätz 1840); Anatol P. FUKSAS, Bad Gleichenberg 1837–1997. Erste Kursaison – Zeitwenden im Heilbade (Graz 1997), 8–52.
- 13 Tadej BRATÉ, Von Graz südwärts nach Laibach, in: Gerhard M. Dienes, Hg., Die Südbahn. Vom Donauraum zur Adria (Wien – Graz – Marburg – Laibach – Triest) (Graz–Wien 1987), 52–58.

and despite its long tradition, it only prospered to a limited extent until the mid-19th century. Wildbad Einöd was situated along the post road from Judenburg to Klagenfurt and attracted solely local guests.¹⁴ The spa at Gleichenberg however, was built in the midst of a swampy valley in Eastern Styria, far from trans-regional roads; nevertheless, it managed to achieve rapid growth.

The spa as a commercial enterprise

During the first 50 years of the 19th century running a spa was a booming business and high profits could be generated – if the necessary expertise was put in. This was especially true for the spas with cold wells for drinking purposes. These spas were perceived as more modern, lively and easy-going than the traditional acratotherms.¹⁵ This period-related preference was beneficial for Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn and Gleichenberg. The Styrian spas at Neuhaus, Tobelbad and Römerbad Tüffer tried to meet the new demands and offer their curative waters for drinking, but they lacked the skills to progress the idea and failed.¹⁶

Demand always exceeded supply in all the Styrian spas, with the shortage of guest accommodation creating a bottleneck. Rooms and apartments were mainly offered by the spa's operators; therefore it was up to them to increase the amount of accommodation available by building more. While the private investors were limited by financial resources, the spas owned by the estates inhibited their own development by striving for monopolization. In Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn, all available estate-owned rooms and apartments had to be occupied before the innkeepers or other private landlords were allowed to rent their rooms.¹⁷ Only from 1823 onwards did the first people interested in buying property in Tobelbad get a chance to build houses and hotels in the town – this resulted in a retarded expansion.¹⁸ Gleichenberg however, put emphasis on private initiatives from the beginning, whereby it was able to offer a large number of hotel rooms much earlier.

In order to optimize the occupancy levels, the spas aimed at dividing the cure into periods, so-called “rounds”, and to request binding reservations from the guests. Customers' wishes could only be fulfilled to a limited extent. Depending on the spa there were five to six “rounds” which lasted between 21 and 24 days. The cure season started at the beginning of May and lasted until either the end of September or October.

Such a health spa business required a large number of employees. The management of the baths lay in the hands of the bath director, who was supported by a controller and/or a clerk for all administrative tasks.¹⁹ Due to the presence of the spa doctors, the high standard of health

14 Cf. Walter BRUNNER, *Dürnstein-Wildbad Einöd. Burg und Gemeinde – Thermal-Heilbad* (Graz 1982), 93–108; Georg GÖTH, *Das Herzogthum Steiermark; geographisch-statistisch-topographisch dargestellt und mit geschichtlichen Erläuterungen versehen. III: Judenburger Kreis* (Graz 1843), 578; StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 8: Bad Einöde.

15 Cf. KRÍZEK, *Kulturgeschichte*, wie Anm. 1, 124.

16 KOTTOWITZ, *Bad Neuhaus*, wie Anm. 9, 39–40.

17 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 2, H. 16: Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn.

18 Cf. LINHARDT, *Geschichte*, wie Anm. 10, 189.

19 For example: StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 2, H. 14: Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn: *Instruktionsentwurf für den Brunnenverwalter*, 1803.

care in the Styrian spas was promoted in the early 19th century. The estate-owned spas had a clear competitive advantage in this respect: Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn hired a doctor in 1804; Tobelbad did the same in 1810.²⁰ Privately-owned spas could or would not afford such expenditure at that time. Only with the expansion of Römerbad Tüffer and Neuhaus in the 1840s, were the first spa physicians employed.²¹

Other members of the staff were male and female servants who were responsible for cleaning and filling the baths as well as to provide immediate support to the guests before and after bathing. So-called bottling servants or fountain maids helped at the drinking fountain; cleaning was done by chambermaids and servants; the laundry was dealt with by special laundresses. The catering manager and his employees took care of food and drink. Larger spas had additional boilermen, gardeners and coachmen. These however, were merely seasonal jobs in the summer months; during winter these job opportunities were absent.

The spa represented an important economic factor from which the local population benefited.²² The food supply for the guests had to be guaranteed, and although these villages had created vegetable gardens and greenhouses and were keeping domestic livestock as well, there was a high dependency on deliveries from outside the area. In the course of the increasing level of bathing tourism, the guests imposed ever growing demands upon a spa. Whether or not a spa responded to the customers' wishes could be decisive for its prosperity. In the first half of the 19th century whey treatments were very popular and were offered at almost all the Styrian spas. Whey served as an additive to both the acidulous springs and the bathwater. Every day the doctor, the pharmacist or the spa's own dairyman provided the guests with the desired product, sweet and warm whey from cows or goats.²³

Another fashion in those days was shower baths, which undoubtedly required an enormous amount of technical effort. In 1836/37, Gleichenberg promoted a special "rain or douche bath/shower bath";²⁴ some years later Tobelbad and Römerbad Tüffer followed this example. The renowned spa Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn, was the only one to ignore this development until 1855. If a spa wanted to attract the upper-class guests with their fine tastes, it had to be very creative. Gleichenberg for example prescribed baths with soap, bran or malt and used the natural spring water for compresses, enemas, and injections, while Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn focused on traditional methods like herbs and potash.²⁵ Overall, Gleichenberg proved to be very innovative and

20 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 4: Steirische Bäder und Gesundbrunnen.

21 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 13: Bad Neuhaus: Jos. JUTMANN / Joh. PEINTINGER, Kurze Anleitung zum zweckmäßigen Gebrauche der Mineralbäder zu Neuhaus, Juni 1833; Mathias MACHER, Die laueren Warmbäder (Akratothermen) des Herzogthumes Steiermark Neuhaus, Topolschiz, Römer- und Franz-Josefabad, Einöd-, Grubegg- und Tobelbad nebst einer Beschreibung der Kaltwasser-Heilanstalt zu St. Rade Gund am Schöckel bei Graz (Graz 1867), 38.

22 To the negative aspects cf. Jacques GUBLER / Suzanne HORN-PUHLMANN, Eine Saison in zwei Kurorten, in: Herbert Lachmayer / Sylvia Mattl-Wurm / Christian Gargerle, Hg., Das Bad. Eine Geschichte der Badekultur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Salzburg–Wien 1991), 209–219, here 211.

23 Rudolf PUFF, Erinnerung an Sauerbrunn nächst Rohitsch und seine Umgebungen mit lithographirten Abbildungen (Graz [1841]), 45; Rudolf Gustav PUFF, Wegweiser für den Badeort und die Umgebung von Gleichenberg (Graz 1845), 18–19; KOTTOWITZ, Bad Neuhaus, wie Anm. 9, 39–40.

24 Gustav von KOTTOWITZ, Der Curort Gleichenberg mit seinen Heilquellen im Herzogthume Steiermark (Wien 1847), 76–77.

25 Ernst Hilar FRÖHLICH, Die Sauerbrunnen bei Rohitsch in Steiermark. Mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die dortige ständische Heilanstalt nebst Anleitung zum Kurgebrauche (Wien 1838), 48; KOTTOWITZ, Curort, wie Anm. 24, 71, 78.

creative. Some rooms in their dairy farm were equipped with holes in the floor in order to allow the vapour from the cowshed underneath to rise up into the room. Inhaling the ammoniac professed to have a positive effect on people suffering from a lung disease.²⁶ Effective or not, this treatment caused amazement and was much talked about – and the initial purpose set by the managers was fulfilled.

Commercialization and advertising

Just like any other company, the spas needed to market themselves. With regards to promotion, the Styrian spas mainly chose the traditional way,²⁷ some of them however opted for more aggressive, modern approaches which had positive effects on their reputation and awareness.

Typically, the tradition of a particular spa was traced back as far as possible. The oldest and most esteemed spas were those which dated back to Roman times.²⁸ Every link to show the spa had been in use since ancient times was used to promote audience appeal. The Römerbad Tüffer or Roman Spa Tüffer carried this affection in its name and displayed Roman stones in publicly visible places.²⁹ Gleichenberg also placed a Roman ring fountain in the centre of the park.³⁰

In addition to telling sagas from former times, particular “new legends” were invented.³¹ Developers and promoters of the revived institutions were presented in a very dramatic way that would draw attention to the modernization efforts. In Gleichenberg for example, the springs were named after important people e. g. “Constantin’s spring” in memory of the spa’s founder, the Governor of the Region Mathias Constantin Capello Graf von Wickenburg or “Werle spring” in memory of Wickenburgs comrade Dr Ignaz Werle from Graz.

A similar strategy was applied to famous personalities who visited the spa only one time. Reference to Archduke John and the “Archduke’s Grove” created by him had to be made in every tourist guide about Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn.³² The highest recognition and award was the visit of the Emperor, whose glamorous reception was the best publicity. Another important

26 KOTTOWITZ, *Curort*, wie Anm. 24, 86.

27 Cf. Wolfgang KOS, *Zwischen Amüsement und Therapie. Der Kurort als soziales Ensemble*, in: Herbert Lachmayer / Sylvia Mattl-Wurm / Christian Gargerle, Hg., *Das Bad. Eine Geschichte der Badekultur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Salzburg–Wien 1991), 220–236, here 228–229.

28 P. Jacob WICHNER, *Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des Heilwesens, der Volksmedizin, der Bäder und Heilquellen in Steiermark bis incl. Jahr 1700*, in: *Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark* 33 (1885), 3–123, here 85–86.

29 StLA, *Römerbad bei Tüffer*, Ort, K. 1, H. 1: *Beschreibung des Ortes und Kurbades*, um 1850; Rudolf Gustav PUFF, *Wegweiser in sämtliche Gesundbrunnen und Bäder der Steiermark. Für Reisende und Curgäste* (Graz 1854), 210.

30 Albert von MUCHAR, *Archäologische Ausgrabungen in Gleichenberg*, in: *Gratzer Zeitung* 42 (15. März. 1845); Victoria HAAN, *Bad Gleichenberg. Von der römischen Heilquelle bis zur Gegenwart* (Graz 1999), 17.

31 Cf. KOS, *Amüsement*, wie Anm. 27, 229–231.

32 Anton SCHLOSSAR, Hg., *Erzherzog Johanns Tagebuchaufzeichnungen von seinem Aufenthalte im Kurorte Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn und über seine Reisen in Untersteiermark aus den Jahren 1810, 1811 und 1812* (Graz 1912); Mathias MACHER, *Physikalisch-medicinische Beschreibung der Sauerbrunnen bey Rohitsch in Steyermark, mit Anleitung zum Gebrauche derselben an der Heilanstalt für Cur-Gäste* (Wien–Graz 1823), 6–7.

drive to raise a spa's reputation was the recommendation by doctors or scientists. At the beginning of the 19th century, the spa's managers personally ordered chemical analyses of the springs in order to use them as evidence of the beneficial effect of the thermal or acid waters.³³

At the same time, journalistic techniques were increasingly used to promote the spa. Some Styrian newspapers regularly published articles which should have been objective, but one could recognize that they were rather biased. In some cases the flattering words about the advantages of the spa were too good to be true, for example, "*Tobelbad has the power to maintain youth and delay ageing*".³⁴ Even more subjective were the spa-produced travel guides and advice which flew from the pen of the spa's doctors or directors. Great emphasis was placed on publishing medical histories. Both their structure and messages showed an astonishing similarity to reports about miracles which can typically be found near places of pilgrimage.³⁵ The stories of the suffering of various visitors were described in an anonymized and episodic way; their unsuccessful attempts at finding a cure at other facilities are illustrated before they found their way to the one and only spa that could help them.³⁶

A lot of publicity was created in Tobelbad, where newspaper articles were published on a yearly basis from 1810 onwards. In reality, Gleichenberg was the role model for a profitable marketing strategy. Already during the construction phase of the bath, visits by scientists and doctors were arranged. Their reports about the village and its uniqueness were already available in the bookshops in Graz in 1836, long before the start of the first season. The bookshops in Vienna were also supplied with publications. Over the course of some years, a series of papers were published under the spa's name, and thanks to a targeted public relations campaign these papers were even translated into Hungarian, Italian, French and English.³⁷

Despite their enthusiasm, the management of the Styrian spas knew well about their lack of sophistication compared with the really famous spas in the realm; therefore they tried to catch up with their role models with regard to advertising. In the 1840s, Römerbad Tüffer started to promote itself as "*Gastein in Styria*", which refers to a very famous spa in the region of Salzburg.³⁸ Rohitsch-Sauerbunn, on the other hand, served "*artificial water from Karls-*

33 Cf. Anton Franz REIBENSCHUH, Die Thermen und Mineralquellen Steiermarks. Separat-Abdruck aus dem 17. Jahresbericht der k. k. Staats-Realschule in Graz 1889 (Graz 1889), 2.

34 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 6: Tobelbad: Amadé LESSING, Fortgesetzte Beobachtungen und Verbesserungen im ständischen Tobelbad vom Jahre 1825.

35 Cf. Elke HAMMER, Mariazeller Mirakelliteratur der frühen Neuzeit, in: Helmut Eberhart / Heidelinde Fell Hg., Schatz und Schicksal. Steirische Landesausstellung 1996 Mariazell (Graz 1996), 193–208.

36 For example: N. N., Das Bad in Neuhaus, eine auf eine 36jährige Erfahrung gegründete Belehrung zum Vortheil der Gesundheit zu gebrauchen (Laibach 1814), 6–7; Notizen dreier Krankheitsfälle, welche durch das ständische Tobelbad in der ersten Tour im Monate Mai 1824 bei dem Dasein des Unterzeichneten gänzlich geheilt worden sind, in: Der Aufmerksame, Beilage zur Grätzer Zeitung, Nr. 91 (1824).

37 Leopold LANGER, Hg., Die Heilquellen des Thales Gleichenberg in der Steiermark (Graz 1836); Franz UNGER, Reisenotizen vom Jahre 1838, in: Steiermärkische Zeitschrift N. F. 5/2 (1839), 75–128, here 120; Josef RIEGLER, 150 Jahre Curort Bad Gleichenberg 1834–1984. Katalog. Ausstellung im Tagungszentrum Bad Gleichenberg 16. Mai bis 19. August 1984 (Bad Gleichenberg 1984), 72–73.

38 MACHER, Römerbad, wie Anm. 8, 38–41; Max LEIDESDORF, Das Römerbad Tüffer in Steiermark (Wien 1857), 9–10; Emanuel BUNZEL, Das Römerbad (vormals Tüffer), das steirische Gastein (Wien 1866), 8–13; Hermann MAYRHOFER, Curort Römerbad, das steirische Gastein (Wien 1874).

bad’.³⁹ Gleichenberg, together with European first-class spas like Spa (Belgium), Pyrmont and Selters,⁴⁰ turned out to be very bold by naming their springs.

A decisive impetus for the institutions came from the systematic dispatch of mineral water;⁴¹ this however could only be applied by Rohitsch and Gleichenberg. On the one hand this helped to maintain contact with the former guests and on the other hand the spa’s name was further publicized, thus attracting even more new customers. When the Styrian estates started selling the water in Rohitsch in 1803, the amount of bottles sold was 12,000. By 1810, this number had risen to 200,000 bottles and by the 1840s more than 500,000 bottles were distributed.⁴² This rapid distribution helped to increase the awareness of the single spa’s brand. It is no accident that most of the guests at Rohitsch came from the main sales regions such as Hungary, Slavonia, Croatia and the coastal region. Specially employed bottling servants scooped the water from the spring and poured it into bottles. To show place of origin, these were corked, sealed with pitch and labelled with the Styrian Coat of Arms.⁴³ The significance of a well-organized “mail order service” was taken into account during the foundation of Gleichenberg and used to achieve the objectives of the spa. A tight network of resellers in larger cities – starting from Prague in the North via Budapest in the East down to Trieste and Agram – guaranteed good coverage and aimed at creating the need of getting to know and visiting the respective spa.⁴⁴

Summary

At the beginning of the 19th century, the spas and cure resorts in Styria did not know how to profit from the boom in bathing tourism. Stuck in strict structures, they stayed within the traditional geographical and economic boundaries and only expanded hesitantly. Ownership and financial power were the crucial aspects for the development of a spa. Generous investments, entrepreneurship as well as visionary thinking were necessary in order to expand the business rapidly into a competitive institution. A private limited company had a clear advantage compared with private ownership or public authorities. Undoubtedly the initial spark was inspired by the foundation of Bad Gleichenberg in 1837. Feeling the growing competition, and having a modern example in front of them, other spas in Styria ventured to take a decisive step forward. In order to attract new guests, they had to react to trends and customer needs and wishes as well as to show an innovative spirit. Commercialization and advertising were an integral part of modern entrepreneurship. By moving in this direction, the two largest Styrian health spas Bad Gleichenberg and Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn managed to attract between 1,000 and 2,500

39 This water was nothing else than heated mineral water, which had lost a little bit of its carbon dioxide. PUFF, Erinnerung, wie Anm. 23, 23–24.

40 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 10: Gleichenberg: JOS. ONDERKA, Bemerkungen über drei wichtige Mineralquellen im Grazer Kreis, in: Medizinische Jahrbücher des k. k. österr. Staates 18, N. F. Bd. 9.

41 Cf. Kos, Amusement, wie Anm. 27, 230.

42 StLA, Werle Anton, Nachlass, Sch. 1, H. 4: Steirische Bäder und Gesundbrunnen; Sch. 2, H. 14: Rohitsch-Sauerbrunn.

43 FRÖHLICH, Sauerbrunnen, wie Anm. 25, 25–30; PUFF, Erinnerung, wie Anm. 23, 13–25.

44 About 1850 the sales were run by 100 authorized persons in 32 places. Cf. PUFF, Wegweiser, wie Anm. 29, 38.

guests respectively in the 1850s; the baths in Tobelbad, Neuhaus and the Römerbad Tüffer however, only welcomed several hundred.

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