

Tourism by the Sea: Development of Customs, Habits and Fashion on the Beach

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Abstract

The paper studies the development of seaside tourism, presenting the phases of its development: from health resorts, swimming in the cold sea, and slowly moving towards the warmer southern seaside destinations. It touches upon the initiators and promoters of medical treatments with sea air and bathing. It also focuses on customs and fashion on the beach. In order to understand the evolution of the bathing suits, the processes and circumstances, which influenced the development of customs, regulations on the beach and fashion, will be presented. How did the “evolution” of the bathing or swimsuit take place during the 19th and 20th century? It is important to understand when and why the previously “dangerous” and unfriendly sea has acquired healing characteristics and what were the factors and dynamics that encouraged the fashion of bathing in seawater. The aim is to present how the rituals on the beach evolved and how the life on the beach changed throughout time and became one of the most spread and popular leisure activity in summer.

Keywords: Seaside Tourism; Tourism; Fashion; Bathing Suits.

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Introduction

When in the novel *The Invention of Wings* (Sue Monk Kidd) the writer describes a journey of one of the main characters, Sarah Grimke, to the seaside in Virginia's Penn Marina, it is represented as a new, a bit dangerous adventure of the women. When Sarah, who is unable to swim, enters the water, she holds a rope as other swimmers do. She enters the water completely dressed. The first experience with seawater — we cannot talk about swimming yet — is far different, as we know it today. Today, we cannot imagine swimming fully and uncomfortably dressed. When we enter the water we usually swim, not just watch our step, avoiding going too deep. At the time of Sarah Grimke's life "swimmers" usually dived into the water up to their wastes. Rituals for entering the water, as Sara observed, were different for men and women. They did not take a bath together. Nonetheless, she really enjoyed her first sea bathing experience.¹ What have changed since the second half of the 19th century?

In the present article, the development of customs and fashion on the beach will be studied. I will firstly present the beginnings of tourism development at seaside, its initiators, promoters and phases of development. In order to understand the evolution of the bathing suits, it is important to present the processes and circumstances, which influenced the development of habits, regulations and fashion (bathing suit) on the beach. It is important to understand when and why the previously "dangerous" and unfriendly sea has acquired healing characteristics and what were the factors and dynamics that encouraged the spread of bathing in seawater.

In the following paragraphs, the institutionalization of the life on the beach will be discussed. Who and how the accommodation and other tourist facilities and services emerged at seaside localities and how the managers regulated the "life" at the beach? The paper will also address the evolution of the swimwear and the change of fashion during the 19th and 20th century. The aim is to present how the rituals on the beach evolved and how the life on the beach changed through time. The healing purpose and nature of the seaside resort gradually lost this characteristic, to become a place of fun, and relaxed vacationing. Actually, it is still one of the most popular tourist activity during summer months.

Healing and Bathing at Seaside, a New Fashion

It can be assert that the most important factor of development of modern tourism was medicine. Medical discourse initiated and was the first to promote medical treatment with water. It was the warm and sweat thermal water, which doctors attributed positive healing effects, especially for diseases, which tormented the population of the industrial period. Practicing bathing and drinking of the thermal water was already known in the ancient period and somewhere this practice persisted through the late middle ages and the early modern period. Nonetheless, only during the period after the first industrial revolution (revolution in transportation, urbanization, social and cultural changes) and the so-called period of modernization, the thermal resorts, developed in spa centres for healing and leisure purposes. The first known "modern" thermal resort was the British thermal locality in Bath, which especially in the 18th century became the most famous and acclaimed health spa.²

Medicine was the harbinger of new trends. Thus, it initially promoted the healing properties of thermal water, and then discovered and recognized healing effects of seawater. Until the end of the 18th century, seawater and air did not arouse special interests related to medical or even tourist purposes. Physicians and medical scientists believed that salty water did not have any positive healing effects, but would even harm the internal organs. Similarly, to bathing in thermal water, bathing in the sea was popular during the ancient period and practiced especially by the Roman elites. Bathing persisted after this period, but was mostly diffused among the lower social classes. The elites even considered it as an immoral custom. However, in the period of the first industrialization and modernization, the changed perspective, based

1. Sue Monk Kidd, *In dobila je krila* (Ljubljana: Založba Mladinska knjiga, 2015), 237 and 240.

2. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 46–49.

on new acquired knowledge within medical studies and the revealed ancient discourses about healing properties of seawater, led to the formation of the first seaside health resorts. Medical studies discovered the positive preventive and curative effects of air and cold seawater for treatment of diseases of physical and psychological origin (as sadness, anxiety and depression). The past prejudices and fears were overcome.³ In fact, medicine can be identified as the most important factor, which influenced and encouraged the development of seaside tourism. For the development of seaside health resorts, appropriate locations with natural resources needed to be identified: the sea, the beach, the sun, sea air, brine, marine mud. Further facilitation of development was played by the investments in bathing infrastructures and other tourist facilities, as good accessibility of the localities (by train or steamship) and appropriate accommodation facilities for the upper classes (grand hotels, elite villas).

The first important step has been made. The fear and preconceptions have been overcome. Along with the new relation towards water, new rituals and rules regarding bathing, exposure to the sea air and other medical treatments were created. The thermal facilities for elite tourists were built around the thermal baths, including facilities for entertainment. A similar process took place along the beaches, with the layout of bathing, accommodation and other facilities. Medicine has also established rules regarding bathing and swimming in the sea. Special attention was given to appropriate (decent) and suitable swimwear, especially for women. Under medical "supervision", the control, regulation and ritualization of the life on the beach and fashion was implemented.⁴ According to doctors, not all type of beaches and seawater were suitable for bathing and healing purposes, it depended on the typology of the beach, temperature of the water, wind etc. In this sense, doctors followed their own agenda, promoting the localities where they have opened their seaside sanatoriums or hospitals in the first place. However, gradually, the attitude towards the beach, water and bathing changed.

From Cold to Warm Sea

Bathing in the sea was not an invention of the period of industrialization, but during this period, it acquired an important role within healing practices, becoming a popular activity of the upper class. If sea and sunbathing was for a long time considered an immoral practice of the lower social classes (regarded inferior, since they have worked the land and were exposed to the sun) and even unhealthy, during the 18th century, medical treaties recalled the preventive and curative positive effects of sea air and salty cold water. With the attribution of positive therapeutic effects of the sea for the body and mind, the attitude towards it changed.

We have already briefly explained when and why the seaside health resorts began to develop and who its initiators were. In this chapter, the phases or stages of seaside tourism in Europe will be presented. In order to understand when, how and why the life at the beach changed, the process of changed attitude towards the sea and the beach needs to be taken into consideration.

As mentioned, positive effects of medical treatment using sea air and water needed to be recognized. Medicine attributed beneficial healing effects to cold seawater at first and promoted the establishment of seaside health resorts. A proper infrastructure for resort guests needed to be arranged, such as bathing and accommodation facilities. One of the most important and successful promotor of medical treatment with sea air and bath was Richard Russel (1687–1759),⁵ a physician who opened a medical practice and was the most prominent doctor in the seaside resort of Brighton (England). According to Russel, swimming in the sea strengthened rickets children and weak girls and even helped sterile women. Besides

3. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 49–53.

4. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 76–77.

5. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 19–20. Doctor Russel was also famous because of his work *Dissertation on the Use of Sea Water in the Diseases of Glands*. In Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 51.

bathing in seawater, eating seafood, he even recommended to drink⁶ the salty water.⁷ He influenced the development of seaside health resorts also through his scientific publications. Other doctors followed this doctrine and promoted the effective effects of such resorts especially for pulmonary or chronic diseases, as well as for diseases of psychological origins.⁸ Another example is the study of doctors from Caen medical school (in 1846): “Without attributing a miraculous function to swimming in the sea, I can say without hesitation that many diseases, especially chronic ones, which we have unsuccessfully fought against with other, common treatments, with the persistence of this therapy, its action will be more successful.”⁹

Since positive effects for health were attributed to the cold water first, specific rituals developed on the beach. People swam or better say bathed in the sea only for a few minutes – due to the cold water and recommendation of the doctors.¹⁰ Since the elites, which were the first to benefit from this new supply, were not experienced swimmers, they did not immerse into deep water. Especially ladies were assisted by bathing guides. It was usual to “swim” among the waves. Since doctors did not attribute positive healing effects to the sun, bathers did not engage in sunbathing and did not expose their skin to the sun. Right the opposite. During their walks along the beach, recommended by the doctors, they were fully dressed and covered. An umbrella was very suitable to protect the head from the sunlight, as dark skin was not in vogue. As mentioned, it was considered a characteristic of lower social classes. It is important to emphasize though, that swimming in the sea in elite resorts was only a small part of the daily routine of tourists. Reading, walks, playing cards, dancing, concerts, sports competitions and other forms of socializing were in forefront.¹¹

At the beginning of seaside health tourism, tourist visited the seaside health resorts in summer months. The vacationers used the beach only for a quick descent into the water and for walks.¹² The most famous seaside resort was the before mentioned Brighton¹³ in England. Before several investment in tourist infrastructure, Brighton used to be a small fishermen town that during the 1820's become the most popular and successful health resort in England. The royal family also promoted the locality. The medical practice of dr. Russel furtherly encouraged the development of the resort.¹⁴ Other resorts were opened in other parts of England. The English example was followed by the continental Europe, finding appropriate localities especially by the North and Baltic Sea (Travemunde, Swinemunde, Norderney) and Atlantic coast. The most prominent seaside health resorts in France were for example Dieppe and other

6. Drinking the seawater could have been uncomfortable, at least at first, due to the taste and feeling of a heavy stomach and thirst. However, according to doctors, such feelings usually slowly disappeared after fifteen to twenty days. In Augusto Guastalla, *Studi medici sull'acqua di mare* (Milano: Angelo Bonfanti, 1842), 76.

7. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 78.

8. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 51.

9. Gabriel Désert, “La balneoterapia,” in *Per una storia delle malattie*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Charles Sournia (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1986), 379.

10. The duration of bath was limited also due to caution, in order to prevent any inappropriate pleasure and sensuality. In Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 81.

11. Gabriel Désert, “La balneoterapia,” in *Per una storia delle malattie*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Charles Sournia (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1986), 383–84.

12. Patrizia Battilani, *Vacanze di pochi, vacanze di tutti. L'evoluzione del turismo europeo* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2009), 104–06; Maria Luisa Cavalcanti, “Traguardi consolidati e problemi irrisolti della storia economica del turismo,” in *Tourismus und Entwicklung im Alpenraum*, 18. –20. Jh: Beiträge des ständigen Seminars zur Wirtschafts- und Unternehmensgeschichte in den Alpen in Neuzeit und Gegenwart, *Turismo e sviluppo in area alpina secoli, XVIII–XX: atti del seminario permanente sulla storia dell'economia e dell'imprenditorialità nelle Alpi in età moderna e contemporanea*, eds. Andrea Leonardi and Hans Heiss (Innsbruck: Tourism & museum: Studienreihe des Touriseum, Tourism & Museum: collana del Touriseum 1. Studien, 2003), 43–81.

13. For further reading about the history of British seaside resorts see: John K. Walton, *Blackpool* (Edinburg University Press, 1998); *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000); book editor of *Histories of Tourism: Representation, Identity and Conflict (Tourism and Cultural Change)* (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2005).

14. L.W. Lauste, “Dr Richard Russell 1687- 1759,” *Section of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 67 (May 1974): 29–32.

places in Normandy (like Deauville and Tourville), attributing their success to sandy beaches and fresh wind. In Dieppe, a large bathing complex was built in 1822. The locality developed into a fashionable centre for Parisian elites. Although it did not acquire international visibility, it became a model for the development of such localities, hosting and organizing various activities for vacationers. The bathing facility (*Kursaal*) also consisted of a long gallery facing the sea, were entertainment halls for ladies, billiard rooms for gentlemen, a terrace where guests could admire the sea, restaurants and curtains behind which they changed before and after returning from water were arranged. Other important incentive for development of these localities were, according to Franco Paloscia,¹⁵ the better economic development of the region and a more efficient transport and communication network, which allowed better access to the resorts to wealthy aristocrats and bourgeois guests. In fact, for the first successful seaside French resorts, the vicinity of Paris and transport accessibility were crucial. The seaside resorts of Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne, Havre and other Atlantic destinations have also successfully developed. In Spain and Portugal, bathing establishments were set up in San Sebastian, Porto, Lisbon and Cádiz. In Germany, sea resorts developed between the Baltic and the North Sea, among which the most famous and successful were the abovementioned Doberan, Norderney, and Warnemünde.¹⁶ The number of seaside resorts increased greatly between the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Dark skin became a symbol of prosperity and vacation only during the 20th century. The warm Mediterranean coast in summer months was not yet attractive. However, since the mid-19th century, the southern localities firstly offered tourism services as alternative winter seaside resorts, with the season from October to April. The mild winter climate in the south offered an appropriate alternative for vacationing by the sea. The sea was not too warm during the cold months and the air was fresh. In May, these localities emptied. This can be asserted as the second phase of development of tourism by the sea. The pattern of tourist or health supply in resorts was structured in the same way as in summer months on northern localities. It was not a new form of tourism, but a new product, that relied on an already established form of supply. In the French Mediterranean coast, localities like Marseilles and Sète, Cote d'Azur with Nice and Cannes developed following this model. On other coasts, similar supply also developed: on the Italian coast, the Riviera Ligure or Sorrento, Capri and Taormina on the south, Pau in the Pyrenees, Malta, Cyprus, Corsica as well as Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor in Egypt.¹⁷ This form of health/tourist supply was still designated to the upper classes — European aristocrats and other wealthy individuals, like Americans and elites also from distant lands. The clientele was in search for a mild climate and a different environment, where luxurious infrastructure for wealthy guests was offered and provided: casinos, grand hotels, luxurious villas, parks with exotic vegetation. These localities, former predominantly agricultural lands (fishing, farming), have developed into international destinations. On contrary, the above-mentioned resorts on the north retained a “local” clientele. This type of supply was mostly popular until the beginning of the last century (until the 1920s and 1930s)¹⁸ when swimming in the sea finally settled in the summer season. The investments (private, local administrations) in tourist infrastructure were crucial for their development as well.

With the gradual discovery of the therapeutic effects of warm water, the season in the Mediterranean shifted towards summer, which gradually took hold in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the winter season did not completely end and some places were visited throughout the whole year.¹⁹ Once again, doctors were the initiators of health treatment with the sun.

Both thermal and seaside health resorts have developed into successful destinations with the help of the upper class and authorities. The most eminent promoters were members of the royal families²⁰ and

15. Franco Paloscia, *Viaggi e turismo nella storia delle civiltà* (Roma: Agra editrice, 2005), 267–67.

16. Augusto Guastalla, *Studii medicii sull'acqua di mare* (Milano: Angelo Bonfanti, 1842), 97.

17. Franco Paloscia, *Viaggi e turismo nella storia delle civiltà* (Roma: Agra editrice, 2005), 268.

18. Franco Paloscia, *Viaggi e turismo nella storia delle civiltà* (Roma: Agra editrice, 2005), 267.

19. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 49–53.

20. Seabathing was firstly promoted by the King George II and his family, becoming a really fashionable practice during the

important political figures, artists and other intellectuals as well,²¹ who brought the fame and even international recognition to once unknown places. To give an example: the Austrian (later Austro-Hungary) Empress Elisabeth herself contributed to the recognition and development of Corfu, Madeira and Cap Martin on the French coast, since she frequently visited those sites.²² Nonetheless, the popularity of the new health resorts was conditioned also by the diligence of the resort managers, doctors and its inhabitants.

At the turn of the 20th century, with the discovery of the healing effects of the sun and bathing in warm water, seaside tourism developed especially on the Mediterranean coast. The doctors were again the initiators and promoted the therapeutic effects of sea air, bathing in warm water, and the beneficial effects of the sun. With the new attitude towards the sun, the attitude towards the beach also changed. In the 1920s and 1930s, the fashion of sunbathing and the tanned body on the beach slowly prevailed, which has since then played a central role on the beach. Bathing has slowly lost its therapeutic role and became an activity concentrated on fun and relaxation.²³ Tourists have become swimmers and indulged in sport activities. The popularity of the warm southern sea prevailed. The former Mediterranean winter destinations have transferred their season to the summer months.²⁴ Finally, the third typology of seaside tourism prevailed. Along with the changed attitude towards the sun and the beach, significant changes occurred also in the social life. The once elite tourism slowly transformed into a socially more accessible activity. Tourism, especially after the end of WWII, has reached the wider population. With the differentiation of tourist supply — which has developed according to the different demand — the tourism industry has finally extend to all (or almost all) population strata. In this period, mass tourism has developed. The exposure to the sun, the tanned skin and the life on the beach with sport and entertaining activities have become the centre of vacationing.²⁵ The therapeutic function was eluded by fun.

Swimwear, the Development of a Fashion

As explained in the previous paragraph, rituals and habits on the beach changed throughout time. The development of seaside tourism, the new customs related to the “life at the beach”, the bathing practices and the swimwear fashion developed into a specific routine. This process was long and influenced by changes in medical science, but especially fashion promoted by the elites (in the frame of tourism industry). However, doctors were the ones who firstly determined the codes of behaviour on the beach, the dress code, the time and places of socializations. They have homogenized the rituals on the beach.²⁶

For the purpose of descent behaviour, the resort administrators (health commissions) and local authorities issued decrees and regulations for a proper conduct on the beach. Within the Health Commission's regulations, the health season was determined as well.²⁷ In the Italian coastal town of Livorno, for example, the season lasted until 31st August. Even if the weather was still nice and warm in September,

rule of George III. In Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 20.

21. Gabriel Désert, “La balneoterapia,” in *Per una storia delle malattie*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Charles Sournia (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1986), 379–86.
22. Franco Paloscia, *Viaggi e turismo nella storia delle civiltà* (Roma: Agra editrice, 2005), 267.
23. Ursula Becher, *Geschichte des modernen Lebensstils: Essen, Wohnen, Freizeit, Reisen* (München: C. H. Beck, 1990), 196–222; Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988).
24. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 53.
25. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 73–5.
26. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 76–77.
27. See Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819–1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017).

the tourists did not bathe. They followed the regulations.²⁸ The first resorts in the east Adriatic coast — in the frame of the Habsburg Empire (and since 1867 Austro-Hungary) — were also established as winter-climate resorts. The most elite and distinguished Habsburg seaside resort of Opatija/Abbazia (today Croatia) opened the first season in 1890. The health government of the Kronland of the Austrian Littoral (*Österreichisches Küstenland/Litorale Austriaco/Avstrijsko primorje*) issued the health law and regulation. The article 33 determined the health season from 16th October until 15th May.²⁹ In the islands of Mali and Veli Lošinj/Lussinpiccolo and Lussingrande (today Croatia), the health season lasted from the 1st October until the 31st May.³⁰ On contrary, in two other health resorts of the Austrian Riviera, Grado/Gradež (today Italy) and Portorož/Portorose (today Slovenia), the health and bathing seasons were during the summer months. In Grado, the health season started on the 1st April and lasted until the 31st October, the bathing from 15th May until the 30th September.³¹ In Portorož the health season was from the 1st March until the 31st October.³²

In order to ensure decency, the seaside health resorts during the 19th and somewhere early 20th century were usually divided into three parts. One was designated for men only, one for women and one for couples and families. It was important to follow a strict dress code. A man, bathing in the part of the beach for couples and families was required to be fully dressed — from neck to knees. If he bathe in the part, reserved only for men, he was allowed to wear only swimming shorts, without the shirt. Women, on the other hand, needed to be fully dressed in all parts of the beach.³³ They also covered their head, in order to avoid the contact of salty water with hair.³⁴ Doctors were not opposed to naked bathing, but it was still considered as morally inappropriate. They have mostly recommended woollen, as loose as possible and wide clothing, which would not impede movement in the water. Since the change of clothing was not allowed on the beach, the cabins for changing were invented. The cabins, the so called bathing machines, were also used for other purposes. They were carried or transported on wheels or dragged by horses into the sea, until the first waves, where bathers could descend into the water. Special escort was arranged for women. The bathing guide (caution, discretion and proper behaviour were expected from them) accompanied the bathers, sometimes carrying and lowering them into the water.³⁵ In this first phase, the sea was seen especially from a medical point of view. The vacationers mostly walked along the beach, fully dressed, sometimes riding a horse or engaging in boat trips. The sea was something to be admired, to be smelled. Only children were able to express more freely. They could play, run and roll on the sand. Their nudity was not problematic. The adults, on the other hand, were much more limited. There was a specific time, dedicated to the bath. Exaggeration was not recommend, the swimming activity was limited in order to avoid fatigue.³⁶ Since the bathers, especially women, were escort by bathing guides, the emerging tourist industry offered new job opportunities for the local population. Beside the employees at the beach, workers in hotels and restaurants were needed. Locals also sold their

28. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 69.

29. Zakonik in ukaznik, Oznanilo c.–kr. namestništva za avstrijsko-ilirsko Primorje z dne 13. januarja 1890, n. 490, V. izdatek, 5, 14. Already in the year, the health season was changed into “whole year” in Zakonik in ukaznik, Oznanilo c.–kr. namestništva za avstrijsko-ilirsko Primorje z dne 16. aprila 1891, n. 5961, 11, 26.

30. Article 33 of the Law: Zakonik in ukaznik, Oznanilo c.–kr. namestništva za avstrijsko-Ilirsko Primorje z dne 26. 9. 1892, XXI. izdatek, 16.467, 28, 100.

31. Article 18 of the Law: Zakonik in ukaznik, Oznanilo c.–kr. namestništva za avstrijsko-Ilirsko Primorje z dne 7. julija 1892, n. 11532, 16, 28, 41.

32. Article 16 of the Law: Zakonik in ukaznik, Oznanilo c.–kr. namestništva za avstrijsko-Ilirsko Primorje z dne 27. januarja 1898, n. 26641 ex 1897, 6, 15.

33. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 97.

34. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 70.

35. Gabriel Désert, “La balneoterapia,” in *Per una storia delle malattie*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Charles Sournia (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1986), 381–82.

36. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 65.

home produced food and drinks to the resort. Thus, tourism helped the economic development of the locality.

The doctors were the ones who prepared recommendations for a proper bath. The bath in the cold water took only a short time (from five to twenty minutes per day). They recommended a quick dive into the water, without any hesitation; while in the sea, a constant movement was suggested. After bathing, physical exercise or walk were also appropriate, along with a refreshment, for example with a biscuit and a glass of Spanish wine.³⁷ The bath was not recommended for one or two hours after a meal. While on the open, the head needed to be protected from sunlight. The most appropriate time to swim was during the warmest hours of the day.³⁸

In order to ensure and provide an appropriate environment where the bathers could change their clothes in private, the above mentioned bathing machines were invented. The machines were equipped with wheels, to enable the transport of bathers into the water. This phenomenon was characteristic for British and northern seaside localities. In some cases, as in Travemünde: “a complicated apparatus allowed bather to immerse themselves under movable tarpaulins without getting out of the box and thus without confronting the great marine void.”³⁹ On the southern (Mediterranean) coast, the cabins were placed on pedestals and were thus fixed. The northern localities also provided wicker baskets on the beaches, on the south tents and shadow zones were designated. The reason for the different approach was caused by different climate conditions. On the north, the need to protect from wind was evident and on the south, bathers needed to be protected from the sun.⁴⁰ The discovery of the sea and the overcoming of prejudices was long and as Urbain asserted: “the refusal to detach oneself from land in the ocean bathing”⁴¹ shows the still present fear of the unknown and terrifying sea. Nonetheless, towards the end of the 19th century, the attitude towards the sea changed. The sea and the beach have slowly transit from a place to be “afraid of” to a place of enjoyment and fun. The transformation from bathers to swimmers occurred.⁴²

Obviously, throughout time, the bathing and swimwear culture has changed. The once very conservative beach clothing has slowly become more comfortable and bold. During the 19th century, the bathing suit represented modesty and decency that prevailed over the form and function. The ladies bathed in long dresses (made of wool and large enough), which purpose was to cover the entire body. Even though the “beach fashion” was strict and “sober”, the rituals on the beach and sea bathing enabled the “transgressions and the other emancipations that have marked the history of beach bathing.”⁴³ In fact, during the period from 1870 until 1914, the “war” between decency and indecency took place at the beach. The main conflict was about the moral norms and décor regarding the body. Since the sport (swimming, cycling, tennis, gymnastics etc.) and holiday fashion evolved, the perception of the body has changed. The need for a more comfortable clothing was imminent.⁴⁴ At the beginning of the 20th century, the bathing suit enabled women to uncover the arms and the adherence of the fabric to the body. This “transgressions” were though limited to the sport activities in summer months. They were restricted to certain places and times. Despite all the limitations and regulations regarding swimwear,

37. Gabriel Désert, “La balneoterapia,” in *Per una storia delle malattie*, ed. Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Charles Sournia (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1986), 381–82.

38. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 70.

39. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 71.

40. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 63.

41. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 72.

42. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 85–7; Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 133–39.

43. Jean-Paul Urbain, *At the Beach* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 77.

44. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700–1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 77–8.

this process of transformation influenced also the evolution in other spheres of everyday life.⁴⁵ The Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman, for example, who was arrested in 1906 in USA for her swimming costume, made a “revolutionary” action. She wore a one-piece adherent swimsuit, exposing her thighs, which on the other hand enabled her a better swimming. Her “indecent” action caused a real scandal. However, her action was significant for the further development of the swimsuit, especially those for women. In 1914, the swimsuit for women has indeed become “lighter”: a skirt up to the knees, socks and shoes. As Giorgio Triani points out in his study, in the post WWI period, the female swimwear has gone through significant changes: “After the war, something disappeared every year...bare arms up to the shoulders...plunging necklines...a one piece suit...short trousers...in 1927 the women suit was similar to men swimwear”. In this process, an important role was played by sports women, which indicated the reasons and meaning for the transformation of the swimwear. They have imposed a “sport stile”. This new fashion also helped and enabled the “liberalization” of women.⁴⁶ The doctors, who recognized the positive effects of sunlight, also played an important role. As mentioned, they have attribute positive healing effects to warm sea and the sun, which has also changed the attitude towards the beach that has become the centre of vacation and place of fun and relax. The once darker skin colour of “the poor” has slowly become a status symbol.⁴⁷

The 1920s swimwear was characterized by simplification. After 1927 the colours have changed, passing from the traditional black and blue to more brilliant colours, emphasizing forms and sexuality. The “final” revolutionary step was made in 1946, with the bikini revolution and its atomic effect. The (re)introduction of the two piece swimsuit was the final step to the unveiling of the female body.⁴⁸ Not immediately, but the bikini slowly became an integral part of popular culture. Since that period, the swimwear, especially for women, has retained the acquired “liberal” form.⁴⁹ Men swimsuits, on the other hand, did not get that much attention from the “moral” point of view. Since the beginning of fashion of sea bathing, the men suit was not subject to that many restrictions and rules. Proper morality was a “burden” that especially women needed to follow.

Conclusion

Tourism is an economic, social and cultural activity. In its pre- and modern forms it has influenced the life, habits and customs of people. Indeed, people travelled throughout history for various reasons, such as work, education, religion, health and pleasure. During the period of industrialization and modernization, tourism acquired significant importance in the economic sector, providing specific services for elite vacationers. Tourist supply was offered in thermal and climate resorts, as well as at seaside. The popularity of seaside tourism, of tourism on the beach, increased especially during the 20th century and is still today one of the most spread and fashionable leisure activities.

The development of seaside tourism was related to medical discourse and treatment at first. As doctors discovered the positive healing effects of salty water and air, vacationers spent their time at seaside resorts. According to doctors and the society rules, new customs and habits at the beach were designed and issued. The fear of the mighty sea was still present during the 19th century, when people mostly bathe under specific rules. The swimwear, especially for women, was in accordance with modesty and decency. During this first period, seaside health tourism mostly involved the upper social classes, which could afford the long and expensive vacation in elite resorts. The social life on the beach, which included sports

45. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700-1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 84.

46. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700-1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 159-61.

47. Petra Kavrečič, *Turizem v Avstrijskem primorju. Zdravilišča, kopališča in kraške jame (1819-1914)* (Koper: Založba Univerze na Primorskem, 2017), 65-8.

48. Giorgio Triani, *Pelle di luna, pelle di sole. Nascita e storia della civiltà balneare 1700-1946* (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 1988), 165 and 175.

49. In this article the “western” type of swimwear is taken into consideration.

activities, swimming and sunbathing, came in vogue only during the 20th century. The development of different activities on the beach have also influenced the swimwear fashion, which has adjust to the new undertakings of vacationers.

The paper presented the phases of development of seaside tourism, focusing on bathing rituals and swimwear. It explained when and how the beach evolved from a place to bathe fully dressed for a few minutes to a place of fun and exposure to the sun in a bikini. The aim was to present how the life on the beach changed through time. The healing purpose and nature of the seaside tourism gradually lost this characteristic, to become a place of fun, and relaxed vacationing.

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