

HEALTH RESORT OPATIJA AND ITS HEADMASTER PROFESSOR JULIUS GLAX (1846 –1922)

LJEČILIŠTE OPATIJA I NJEZIN UPRAVITELJ
PROF. JULIUS GLAX (1846.–1922.)

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SUMMARY

This article presents professor Julius Glax as one of the leading figures in the development of Opatija into a health and seaside resort.

In Opatija he was a practicing physician, head physician of Southern Railways sanatoriums, head physician of the Austrian society White Cross, member of Opatija health resort commission, chairman of various societies, and author of professional articles and books. As the director of the health resort in Opatija (1899-1919), he supervised all management and logistics necessary for the development of this seaside settlement into a Austrian Nice.

Key words: History of medicine, 19th, 20th century, Abbazia/Opatija, Julius Glax, climate resort, health resort, sea bath

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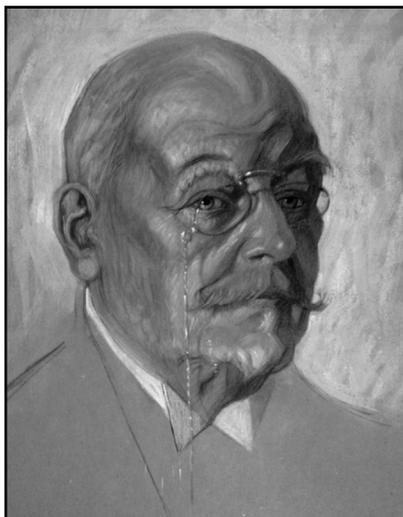


Figure 1 Professor Julius Glax (1846 –1922) in a portrait painted by his daughter Stefi

Slika 1. Prof. dr. Julius Glax (1846.–1922.) na slici koju je naslikala njegova kći Stefi.

Professor Julius Glax (Fig. 1) was born in Vienna on 11 March 1846 as the only child to Heinrich Glax, a university professor, historian, politician and member of the Frankfurt parliament, and Flora von Seckendorff-Aberdar of noble descent, who opened her sons doors to Austrian aristocracy. He studied medicine in Vienna, Innsbruck and Graz, where he graduated on 21 June 1871 from Karl Franz University. As a student he assisted professor Rollet at the Physiology Institute. In December 1871 he became assistant to a renowned internist, professor Moritz Körner at the Medical University of Graz. At the same time he worked as a seasonal physician in Rohitsch Sauerbrunn (now Rogaška Slatina in Slovenia). This health resort had a long tradition and expanded it's medical services. For twelve years he continued as an emeritus assistant in Graz and as a summer physician in Rogaška Slatina [13].

He became assistant professor at the University of Graz in 1876. On the basis of his numerous scientific papers, which were partly published by the Royal Academy of Science, he became university professor in 1880.

His book *Reformvorschläge für Rohitsch Sauerbrunn (Recommended Reforms for Rogaška Slatina)* from 1881 was well received in the business

community worldwide, especially among financiers and economists who participated in the biggest project of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time: the Southern Railway. It was a construction project which included the railway throughout the empire and infrastructure (railway stations, guardhouses, houses, apartments for workers, hotels, sanatoriums) In his book he criticized the conditions in Rogaška Slatina health resort, bad work habits and the ignorance of workers. Professor Glax realised that Rogaška Slatina was not taking the advantage of its natural resources and proposed a number of measures to improve business of the health resort.

Sources state that the book written by Amand von Schweiger-Lerchenfelda (1846-1910, Austrian traveler, writer and an officer) *Abazzia: Idylle von der Adria (Opatija: The Idyll of the Adriatic Sea)* thrilled professor Glax so much that he wanted to see it. In September of 1883 he visited Opatija for the first time. A settlement under the slopes of Mt. Učka enchanted him with its seaside position and laurel trees. He reported his impressions to the author of the Vienna World Exposition, His Excellency Schwarz-Senborn, who introduced Glax to the general director of Southern Railways Friedrich Schüler. Schüler advised Glax to spend some time in Opatija to come to know it better and Glax spent there two seasons (1885 and 1886) with his family [13].

At the same time there were two other renowned physicians in Opatija: professor Max Oertel and professor Theodor Billroth. After consultation with all three scientists, Schüler decided to back the idea of the people of Opatija that their place should become a climate and sea health resort, just as professor Leopold Schrötter von Kristelli and Dr Juraj Šporar proposed earlier [13, 10].

In 1887 Glax and his family moved to Opatija to stay. He came with rich experience and knowledge, which were of vital importance for Opatija to become a world known sea health resort.

First he drafted a local health regulation (a modern-day health resort management act) with his friend, Count Benedikt Giovanelli, then the mayor of Trieste. Local government passed the regulation with minor amendments. This regulation defines the organisation of a successful health resort [13].

Another thing he undertook, was to define health standards needed for, as he believed, the development of any place, and especially of a health resort. Later he presented his proposal of health standards in a book *Hygiene der Kurorte (Health Resort Hygiene)*, which he wrote on

request of the International Committee for Postgraduate Education of Physicians [5].

According to professor Glax, the basic health standards of every health resort are:

- clean air
- clean drinking water
- clean, environmentally friendly, and professional waste incineration
- isolation for infectious diseases
- modern cemetery
- suitable arrangements for nursing
- speedy and safe transport of patients
- effective rescue services and fire department
- control over and professional incineration of drugs
- controlled building construction in town
- healthy food in restaurants
- peace in spa resort
- organised health care and pharmacies
- chemical-bacteriological institute and metrological observatories
- literature which would truthfully present the spa and its offer [5].

The vision of Friedrich Schüler and the wish of the people of Opatija became reality with professor Glax. Opatija was officially declared a climate health resort and a marine bath on 4 March 1889 by decree L.G.B1 No. 12. By the turn of the century it was the second largest health resort in Europe [11,12,15].

Opatija as a health resort and the work of Glax can be appreciated by reading tourist guidebooks *Abbazia Führer für Kurgäste*. These books were complimentary to health resort guests. They described the entire offer of Opatija down to the smallest detail.

The authors of the first guidebook through health resort Opatija: *Wintercurort und Seebad Abbazia (Winter Health Resort and Sea Bath Opatija, 1891)* were professor Julius Glax and Dr Igo Schwarz. By that

time, Julius Glax was already the head physician of Southern Railways and head physician of White Cross in Opatija (a society established in 1882 for the rehabilitation of war-injured soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army). Dr Igo Schwarz was the director of a privately owned sanatorium Quisisana [8,9].

In the official report of the health resort commission, which was added to the guidebook, professor Julius Glax was mentioned as the first of four health resort and sea bath physicians who practiced in Opatija. His office hours were from 16.00 to 17.00 in the hydropathic pavilion in Angiolina Park.

Besides being the head physician of Southern Railways in Opatija, he also ran the town's health resort facilities. These included various whole body baths with heated seawater or freshwater, partial baths, French seated baths with vaginal, hemeroidal, rectal or lumbar showers, Roman/Irish and health baths; swimming in the sea and swimming courses; various drinking diets with fresh cow milk, yogurt, or mineral water; diet with grapes and walking (*Terraincurwege*), especially adapted to patient's condition, with walking paths and resting spots designed by professor Oertl.

The book *Abbazia als Kurort (Opatija as a Health Resort, 1906)*, which was dedicated to the 60th birthday of professor Julius Glax, mentions important figures of the time who were Glax's patients: sons of the German imperial couple, King Carol I of Romania and his wife Elizabeth, also known as the poet Carmen Sylva; Archduke Adolph of Luxemburg; Princess Clementine of Saxony; Duke Friedrich of Baden; Prince Johannes of Liechtenstein; Prince Peter Karađorđević; and Stephanie, the widow of the Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg, who referred to Glax as My dearest Professor! in her private letter (Fig. 2) [2, 13].

In the official report of the health resort board of directors that accompanies *Opatija: a Guidebook for Health Resort Guests (Abbazia Ein Führer für Kurgäste, 1912)* professor Glax, is referred to as the spa general director.

In addition to his resort office hours between 16.00 and 17.00, professor Julius Glax also had private practice in Depandance I of Quarner Hotel which is now a restaurant (Sv. Jakov) every day between 12.00 and 13.00. The number of general practitioners in the resort grew from 4 to 29.

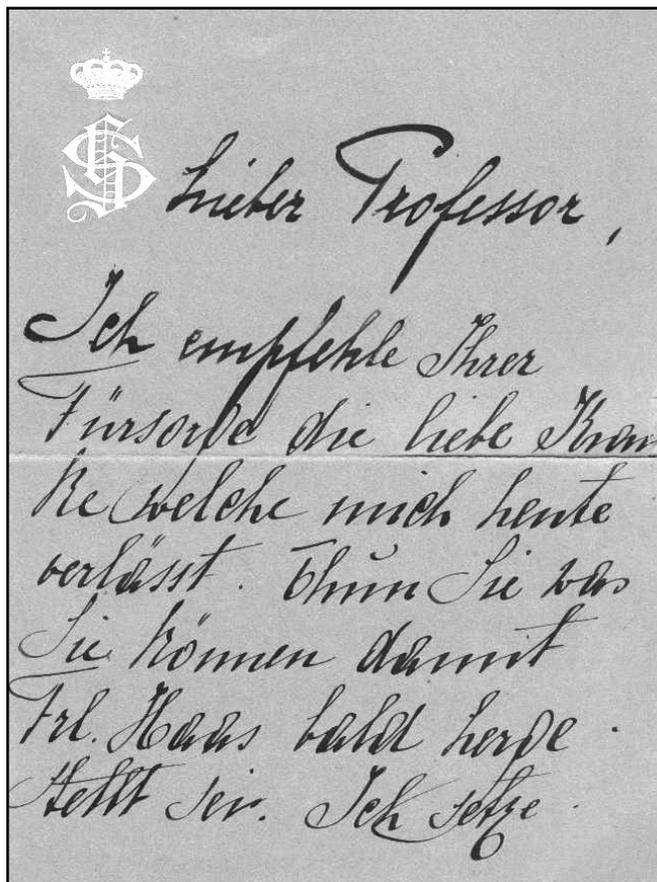


Figure 2 A letter from Stephanie, widow of the Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg, to prof. Glax. (Family archive Glax-Fischinger)

Slika 2. Pismo udovice prestolonasljednika Rudolfa von Habsburga, Stephanie, prof. Glaxu (obiteljski arhiv Glax-Fischinger)

In 1912 Julius Glax became the president of the physician's club in Opatija.

Dr Franz Tripold succeeded Glax as the head physician of the sanatorium of the Imperial and Royal Society White Cross. A newly established sanatorium of the Golden Cross Society was ran by Dr Julius von Cohn. Southern Railways no longer owned a health institution there. Three physicians had their own sanatoriums: Dr Koloman Szego, Dr Franz Schalk, and Dr Julius Mahler [2].



Figure 3 Visit of the Emperor Franz Jozef to Opatija in 1904, left prof. dr. Julius Glax. (Family archive Glax-Fischinger)

Slika 3. Posjet cara Franje Josipa Opatiji 1904.; lijevo je prof. dr. Julius Glax (obiteljski arhiv Glax-Fischinger)



Figure 4 Oskar King of Sweden in Opatija in 1904 on the way to the Lutheran church. (Family archive Glax-Fischinger)

Slika 4. Kralj Oskar od Švedske u Opatiji 1904. na putu prema luteranskoj crkvi (obiteljski arhiv Glax-Fischinger)

Resort guest guidebooks *Abbazia Führer für Kurgäste* of 1908, 1912, 1914 state that professor Julius Glax was also the chairman of the Society for the Advancement of Opatija. Among other things, this society maintained, renovated and added numerous walking paths with rests. These were great attractions on offer for the health resort guests. Walking was the contemporary and, by the merit of professor Oertl, widely accepted method of preventive and medical treatment. Paths with numerous rests were intended for all patients, as well as for healthy individuals who came to this glamorous health resort in order to see it and to be seen.

According to the information found in *Abbazia Führer für Kurgäste* professor Julius Glax was also the president of a committee for the entertainment of guests. This committee organised concerts in the open on a daily basis when the weather was fine, played by the resort orchestra of 28 musicians. The concerts were held in Angiolina Park, and if the weather was bad they were held at Quarnero Café. On Monday afternoons the orchestra played in the Bay of Lipovica; and on Monday and Friday mornings in the bathhouse Slatina. Twice a week the concerts were also held in Hotel Stephanie and at Quarnero Café. Performances were advertised on posters. In addition to paying for the health resort fee, guests also had to pay for a music fee [2].

The entertainment committee made sure that the guests had at their disposal the reading room at Villa Angiolina and a tennis court at Villa Slatina.

The committee arranged a wide selection (31 options) of day trips to the near and far surroundings such as Ika, Ičići, Mošćenice, Rijeka, Trsat, Kastav, hiking tours to Mt. Veprinac or Mt. Učka, or boat trips to Pula [2].

As the director of the health resort, professor Julius Glax was receiving important figures from the world of politics, science and art that visited Opatija. He retired on 8 March 1919. Two photographs remain preserved in the family archive of the Glax-Fischingers that were made at the encounter of Emperor Franz-Joseph with the Swedish royal couple (Fig. 3, Fig. 4) in April 1904. Also preserved is his private book of guests who visited him in his villa at Vaskanski 91, where he resided from 1890 to 1897. There we can find signatures by Erzherzog Ludvig-Wictor, Littrow, Virchow, and Billroth, (Fig.5) [1,3].

The peak of his efforts to promote Opatija was the organization of the IVth Congress of Austrian Balneologists in 1904 and the IVth International

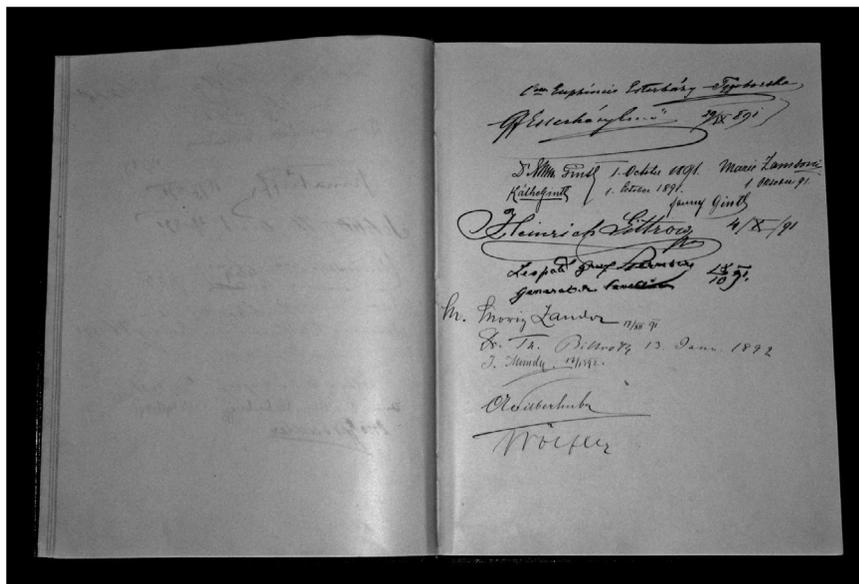


Figure 5 Signatures in the guestbook owned by prof. dr. Julius Glax. (Family archive Glax-Fischinger)

Slika 5. Potpisi u knjizi gostiju prof. dr. Juliusa Glaxa (obiteljski arhiv Glax-Fischinger)

Congress on Thalassotherapy in 1908, (Fig. 6). The official languages were German, French, English and both local languages, Italian and Croatian [7,13,14].

Following his own convictions, he wrote many science works and professional articles and was the co-author of many book chapters related to balneology and thalassotherapy. The most important and comprehensive work is his *Lehrbuch der Balneotherapie I, II (Balneotherapy Textbook)* in two volumes: *Allgemeine und Specielle Balneotherapie (General and Special Balneotherapy)*. In a chapter on balneography, he listed all known European health resorts, and did a systematic presentation of most of them (not all resorts sent the requested data in spite of numerous requests) [4].

Thanks to numerous contributions published by the Vienna Imperial and Royal Academy of Science and Letters in various parts of Europe, professor Glax became a corresponding member of the Imperial and Royal Society of Physicians in Vienna. For his work he was awarded the title of the Imperial and Royal Court Counsellor, honorary citizen of Volosko and was decorated with many medals [2,13].

Verhandlungen
des
IV. internationalen Kongresses
für
Thalassotheapie

Abbazia, 28.—30. September 1908

Im Auftrage des Kongresses

herausgegeben von

Dr. J. Glax

und

Dr. J. Kurz

k. k. Regierungsrat u. a. o. Professor,
Präsident des Kongresses

Generalsekretär
des Kongresses

Berlin SW 48

Allgemeine Medizinische Verlagsanstalt, G. m. b. H.

1909

Figure 6 Programme of lectures of the IV. International Congress on Thalassotheapie in Abbazia. (*Family archive Glax-Fischinger*)

Slika 6. Program predavanja IV. međunarodnoga kongresa o talasoterapiji u Opatiji (*obiteljski arhiv Glax-Fischinger*)

As a director of the health resort in Opatija, he managed to complete the project which he prepared with Theodor Billroth and Max Oertl in 1885, on the suggestion of the general director of Southern Railways Friedrich Schüler.

Trough his endeavours Opatija acquired:

1. new supply lines of fresh, drinking water from Mt. Učka
2. a sewage
3. first aid station
4. a new, modern cemetery
5. a waste incinerator
6. a hospital for infectious diseases
7. electrical railway which connected Opatija with Matulji and Lovran
8. a number of walkways and city parks
9. a wide offer of cultural events
10. trips to near and far places
11. A yearly edited complimentary guidebook, written in various European languages which was given to tourists
12. The title of a climate resort and sea bath

Thanks to natural resources and professor Julius Glax, from a small costal settlement Opatija became not only a spa but also a resort of glamour and international renown. His work as a physician was of such significance that he is mentioned in the Austrian bibliographic lexicon. In memory of professor Julius Glax Opatija named a street after him and put a memorial plaque on the building of the former *Dependance I*, where professor Julius Glax had his practice and residence.

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SAŽETAK

U članku se opisuje profesor Julius Glax (1846.–1922.) kao jedna od vodećih osoba zaslužnih za razvoj Opatije u zdravstveno i kupališno središte. Julius Glax bio je opatijski liječnik, glavni liječnik Sanatorija Južnih željeznica i austrijskog Crvenog križa. Uz to je bio član Povjerenstva Zdravstvenog centra u Opatiji, predsjedavatelj različitih društava i autor stručnih članaka i knjiga.

Kao ravnatelj Zdravstvenog centra u Opatiji (1899.–1919.) nadzirao je i upravljao izgradnjom infrastrukture potrebne za razvoj Opatije iz ribarskog mjesta u austrijsku Nicu.

Ključne riječi: povijest medicine, XIX. I XX. stoljeće, Abbazia/Opatija, Julius Glax, klimatsko lječilište, zdravstveno lječilište, kupke