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*The development of the Kurbadkultur in Mecklenburg - Vorpommern
between the years 1848 – 1933*

Dissertation assumptions

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The goal of this dissertation is to show the history of the chosen spas, localized in Mecklenburg – Vorpommern between the years 1848 – 1933. My work will include the identification and analysis of the factors which were responsible for the establishment of the described coastal villages and later for their evolution in more or less known seaside resorts with its therapeutic and recreational offer including the needed infrastructure. I am going to concentrate on the economic and social historical factors that influenced the stride of these Baltic resorts. The chosen timeline begins with the European Revolution in 1848 also described as the Spring of Nations and ends with the dawn of the Weimar Republic which was followed by the Nazi regime.

The basic references on which this dissertation is constructed was based upon the historical materials representing the listed places. These include written sources, old photographs and reproductions describing the beginnings and functioning of the chosen seaside spas between 1848-1933. These documents were gathered in the local archives (f.e. Szczecin, Heiligendamm or Greifswald). I have also used actual iconographic materials created by myself – photographs of the most important infrastructure and preserved buildings which date to the XIX century. The further historical analysis is based upon interviews with coeval chroniclers of the Rugian and Usedom spas. Finally I have used specialistic German literature which included the history of medicine and the development of the described Baltic seaside resorts.

The primary research method in this dissertation is the historic philological method, based on the critical analysis of the written sources. This method verifies their credibility and compares all the included information. The cultural research method in the history of medicine will complement the historical philological method, so that the analyze discussing the advancement of the history of medicine through history and practice can be inscribed in the political, economical and sociocultural approach in the chosen period of time.

The main goal of this monograph is to show the genesis and the functioning of the chosen German resorts localized on the Baltic shore in the former Prussia (currently Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). The achievement of this goal will be possible after answering the following questions:

1. Which factors were responsible for the development of the chosen spas in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern between 1848-1933?
2. Did the presence of the seaside resorts influence the changes in the surrounding area, and if yes than how?
3. What were the main medical conditions which affected the patients treated in these resorts, and how did it influence the development of the local infrastructure in the described resorts?

4. How did the medical and scientific activity of the local physicians influence the changes in the selected spas?

This dissertation begins with an introduction followed by seven chapters, the conclusion, annotations, bibliography and photographic documentation.

The first chapter describes the sources, chosen scientific methods and the current state of knowledge. The existing literature describing the chosen seaside resorts will be critically analyzed. The overview of the first chapter will introduce and characterize the chosen scientific methods.

The second chapter characterizes the history of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in which the chosen seaside resorts are located. It also describes the main factors which influenced the growth and expansion of the villages and cities in which the spas were located as well as the changes in their medical profile.

The third chapter presents the health of the population of Prussia and the northern Germany in the chosen period of time. It answers how did the medical condition of the population affect the popularity of the treatment used in the seaside resorts.

Chapters four to seven illustrate the chosen Baltic spas (respectively Heiligendamm in chapter 4, Hiddensee in chapter 5, the Rugian resorts – Binz and Baabe in chapter 6, the Usedom spas – Ahlbeck, Heringsdorf and Bansin in chapter 7). Every of them include a short characteristic of the resort from its beginning through the XIX-th century up to 1933, as well as the most important events which affected its history. The second part of the chapter concentrates on the description of the spa infrastructure and its medical profile. Finally it shows the patient profiles and the local physicians as well as their academic work related to the individual resorts.

The last eight chapter is dedicated to the physicians which treated the patients between 1848 and 1933 and the therapeutical methods used in the described resorts with its comparison to the current state of knowledge.

The conclusion of this monography shows the outcome of the analyzed material presented as answers to the questions stated above.