

DR FRANZ TRIPOLD (1865-1956), ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PIONEER PHYSICIANS IN OPATIJA/ABBAZIA

FRANZ TRIPOLD (1865.–1956.), JEDAN OD NAJZNAČAJNIJIH LIJEČNIKA-PIONIRA U OPATIJI

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SUMMARY

*Dr Tripold was one of the first Austrian physicians to practice in Opatija. He graduated from Karl-Franzens University in Graz in 1889 and moved to Opatija in 1891. Along with his medical practice, Tripold was the head physician of the Volunteer Fire Brigade and Rescue Society of Opatija and meteorological observer. In 1906, he published a climatological study entitled *Das Klima von Abbazia (The Climate of Opatija)*, which was based on his own 8-year observations of the weather conditions and the 12-year observations done by his predecessor, E. Krainz. In 1908, he was appointed Imperial Counsellor by the Austrian emperor. For his medical practice in Opatija, Dr Tripold received several foreign awards, and the Viennese Volunteer Rescue Society appointed him its honorary member. The Tripolds moved to Turin in 1947. He was buried there at Cimitero monumentale. Opatija, Town-Museum of Central Europe, a project designed to identify and reunite old friends, has honoured the memory of Dr Tripold by including him in a poster of the ten most famous citizens of Opatija, and the fire station in Opatija placed a plaque on the wall in his honour.*

Key words: history of medicine, 19th and 20th century, Dr Franz Tripold, Abbazia/Opatija

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As early as 1873, Austrian Southern Railway, managed by Friedrich Schüller (1832-1894) connected a little littoral village of Opatija (a.k.a. Abbazia) with Vienna [1]. It was Schüller's dream that Opatija would become a health resort, so he bought Villa Angiolina in 1882 and his railway company started building the resort-to-be infrastructure shortly after that. Hotel Quarnero (now known as Hotel Kvarner) was open to public on 27 March 1884; Depandance I (Hotel Quarnero's outbuilding now known as Hotel Sv. Jakov) on 8 September 1884, and Hotel Kronprinzessin (now known as Hotel Imperial) on 15 December 1885. Austrian Touristenclub opened its local branch on 14 June 1885. This branch started constructing a twelve-kilometre-long southern coastal *walking* path, called *Lungomare*, as well as *walking* paths built as part of the rehabilitation programme for chronic heart-disease patients, called *Teraincurwege*. These paths, which led to the hill of Veprinac, had three difficulty levels depending on how steep was the climb. They were designed by a German otorhinolaryngologist, Professor Max Oertel (1835-1897), [2,3].

According to several sources, Opatija used to be the most beautiful place in the whole Bay of Kvarner. Its beauty has been described by Amand von Schweiger-Lerchenfeld in 1883, Heinrich Noe in 1884, Peter von Raditsch in 1884, Ludwig Salvator von Habsburg in 1886, and Josef Rabl and Anton Silberhuber in 1888 [2]. However, probably the best presentation of Opatija as an enchanting health and seaside resort was the one by two renowned local physicians Professor Julius Glax and Dr Igo Schwarz. Their books were meant to attract to Opatija travellers and those interested in healthy living.

Resort guests would receive a guidebook *Abbazia. Ein Führer für Kurgäste* for free. Its section Official Reports lists all physicians chronologically as they arrived to practice in Opatija. Dr Franz Tripold is listed fourth [2].

We do not know what motivated Dr Tripold to move to Opatija. He could have been attracted by the promotional booklets or he just could not get full-time employment at Nothnagel's Clinic in Vienna. He probably saw an opportunity in the fast developing Opatija that officially became a health resort on 4 March 1889.

Dr Franz Tripold was born on 3 December 1865 in Graz to Dr Wolfgang Tripold, a lawyer, and Luisa Tripold née Gotscheber [5]. After completing a grammar school, in 1883 he enrolled in Karl-Franzens University in

Graz. Tripold graduated in medicine on 21 March 1889 [5]. His first position was assistant physician at the Children's Hospital in Graz. Later he became *aspirant* at the First Medical Clinic in Vienna (*Die 1. Medizinische Klinik der Univesität Wien*). Its head physician was the famous internal medicine specialist Professor Hermann Nothnagel (1841-1905). The clinic was later named after him [6].

Dr Franz Tripold came to Opatija in 1891 to start his own practice [6]. He married Rosa Glax (1878-1961), Professor Julius Glax's daughter, on 14 June 1896 at St. Ana's church in Volosko. According to the notes kept in the private Glax-Fischinger archive, the marriage was an important social event in Opatija (Fig. 1). Franz Tripold and Rosa Glax had a son Hans (1897-1978) and a daughter Eva (1906-1975). The family was staying at Depandansa I and Dr Tripold had his office there. He treated patients between 3 and 4 pm [2].

In addition to medical practice, Dr Tripold actively volunteered. He was the physician of the Volunteer Fire Brigade Opatija (*Freiwillige*



Figure 1 - Dr Franz Tripold and Rosa Glax's wedding procession in 1896 (from the Glax-Fischinger family archive)

Slika 1. Svadbena povorka dr. Franza Tripolda i Rose Glax 1896. (Obiteljski arhiv Glax – Fischinger)



Figure 2 - The Tripold family on the balcony of the Fire Brigade station in 1930. Standing from left to right: Dr Franz Tripold, Eva Tripold (daughter), Rosa Tripold (wife), Hans Tripold (son). Sitting: Hermine Glax, Professor Julius Glax's widow, Dr Tripold's mother in law (from the Glax-Fischinger family archive)

Slika 2. Obitelj dr. Franza Tripolda na balkonu Vatrogasnog doma 1930. godine. Slijeva nadesno: dr. Franz Tripold, kći Eva, supruga Rosa, sin Hans, sjedi: punica Hermine Glax, udovica prof. dr. Juliusa Glaxa (Obiteljski arhiv Glax – Fischinger)

Feuerwehr des Kurortes Abbazia). When Opatija got its rescue station in 1894, the Volunteer Rescue Society of the Health Resort Opatija (*Freiwillige Rettungs-Gesellschaft des Kurortes Abbazia*) was founded. The news was published in the Vienna newspaper *Die Presse* on 15 January 1894 [7]. Dr Tripold was appointed head of the society. Soon enough, the society gained renown and acclaim thanks to Tripold's hard work and organisational abilities. Limited financial means forced the society to unite with the Volunteer Fire Brigade Opatija on 26 December 1901, following a decree issued by the imperial government office in Trieste. The new, joint society was called the Volunteer Fire Brigade and Rescue Society of the Health Resort Opatija (*Freiwillige Feuerwehr und Rettungsgesellschaft des Kurortes Abbazia*). Dr Tripold became the first head physician of the society [8]. However, we could not establish when he left this position.

In 1889, Opatija got its Health Administration Board (*Curkommision*) [9]. At the beginning, its headquarters were in Villa Slatina, later in Villa Angiolina. The board consisted of eighteen members, chaired by Professor Julius Glax and vice-chaired by Dr Andreas Stanger, a lawyer and honourable citizen of Volosko. Since 1895, Dr Tripold was the treasurer of the board. The Board's office was open for tourists from 8 to 11 am and from 2 to 5 pm on workdays and Saturday, and only in the morning on Sundays and holidays [2]. Every year it issued a new tourist guide in German, French, and Czech. These guides were probably written in other languages as well. The number of printed copies rose from enviable 10,000 in the beginning to incredible 15,000 in 1903. Resort guests got their copies for free [10].

Beside the fire brigade and the rescue team, there used to be two more humanitarian institutions in Opatija, the Military Health Resort



Figure 3 – Dr Franz Tripold and his wife Rosa in Turin in 1954 (from the Glax-Fischinger familyarchive)

Slika 3. Dr. Franz Tripold sa suprugom Rosom u Torinu 1954. godine (Obiteljski arhiv Glax – Fischinger)

(*Militärcurhaus der Oesterreichischen Gesellschaft vom „Weisen Kreuz“*) and the Sanatorium for State Officials (*K. k. Staatsbeamten-Curhaus der Gesellschaft vom „Goldenen Kreuz“*). From today's point of view, these used to be holiday residences. Each had its own physician. Dr Tripold was head physician in the first residence (since 1897) and Dr Julius Cohn in the second [2,6].

Dr Tripold also presided over the Committee for Entertainment at the Health and Seaside Resort Opatija. In 1903, he, professor Glax, and Dr Stanger organised festivities for Emperor Franz Joseph's birthday [11,12].

The Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (*Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik - ZAMG*), established in Vienna in 1851, founded a second-order weather station in Park Angiolina in 1885. Its caretaker and meteorological observer (air pressure, temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind (air movement), cloud cover and sea waves) was Dr Tripold, who noted weather information on daily basis. He published his first study on the influence of Opatija's microclimate on general health in 1906 [13,14].

Health and seaside resort Opatija hosted two important medical congresses: the 4th Scientific Congress of the Austrian Balneology Association in 1904 and the 4th International Congress of Thalassotherapy in 1908. Dr Tripold was in charge of the logistics [16].

The Opatija Guide from 1910 mentions local physicians who worked at the spas over the summer such as Gleichenberg, Ischl, and Karlsbad [2]. Dr Tripold worked in Warmbad Villach from 1909 to 1913 [17].

The beginning of World War I put an end to the great economic boom of Opatija. Many projects were cancelled, like the construction of a huge Health Administrative Board building. Dr Tripold and his family moved to the Fire Brigade Headquarters in 1914 (Fig. 2) that had a flat and a laboratory for blood and urine testing. This laboratory was advertised in the Opatija Guide [2].

DR FRANZ TRIPOLD'S ACTIVITY AFTER WORLD WAR I

Any specific information on Dr Tripold's medical practice during World War I and between the two world wars is scarce. The Volunteer Fire Brigade archive in Opatija keeps a few photos of those times with Dr Tripold on them.



Figure 4 - The Tripolds' Urn Tomb. Cimitero Monumentale di Torino. (from the Glax – Fischinger family archive)

Slika 4. Groblje Cimitero Monumentale di Torino. Grobnica za urne dr. Tripolda i njegove supruge. (Obiteljski arhiv Glax – Fischinger)

There is a record about a special Medical Week in Opatija (*Abbazia Ärzte-Woche*) from 14 to 17 September 1927 referring to Dr Franz Tripold, Dr Stefan Stein, Dr Koloman Szegö, Dr Jakob Kurz, and Dr Anton Grgurina as lecturers. Other presenters were Dr S. Bondi, Dr Otto Hans, Dr M. Miculicich, Dr F. Hartmann, and Dr E. Polya. Dr Tripold opened the meeting with a lecture entitled “Opatija as a Winter Health and Seaside Resort” [2,4].

Opatija got its municipal hospital after World War I on 8 June 1919. It was closed down in 1947 [9,18]. Dr Tripold occasionally worked at that hospital.

Italian authorities abolished Opatija’s status as the topmost health resort and downgraded it into a category three spa. Tripold’s family, completely assimilated into the local society by then, remained in Opatija [19].

A preserved family letter, dated 24 September 1946, reads: “... hatte Franzl (Dr Franz Tripold) Inspektionsdienst im Krankenhaus in Fiume



Figure 5 - Dr Franz Tripold - detail of the poster Opatija, the Museum Town, has honoured the memory of Dr Tripold by placing him on the poster (2003) of the ten most famous citizens of Opatija. (courtesy of Professor Amir Muzur MD, PhD)

Slika 5. Dr. Franz Tripold - detalj postera Opatija - grad muzej, poster (2003.) desetorice najznačajnijih Opatijaca. (Ljubaznošću prof. dr. sc. Amira Muzura)

und ich konnte den ganzen Vormitag in seinem Zimmer sitzen...". It suggests that Dr Tripold occasionally worked at Rijeka hospital [20].

For his medical practice, Dr Tripold received several recognitions: the Knight of the Romanian Star in 1897, the Civil and Military Order of Merit of Adolphe of Nassau in 1904, and the Schaumburg-Lippe Knight's Order. Vienna Volunteer Rescue Society appointed him its honorary member. In 1908, he was appointed Emperor's Counsellor [2].

The Volunteer Fire Brigade and Rescue Society was facing serious financial problems after World War 1. Its members were forced to sell the fire station and to reorganize the society. In 1926, the society celebrated its 40th anniversary. For this special occasion, its members received gold, silver, and copper medals. Gold medals were awarded to Dr Tripold and

Dr Norbert Zdrahal. They both had worked for the society for more than thirty years [21].

It is not known why the Tripold family left Opatija. There is no written evidence about it neither at the City Hall of Opatija nor at the State Archive in Rijeka. Glax-Fischinger family archive holds several letters from the period between 1945 and 1947. In one of the letters, dated 2 October 1946, Eva Tripold informed her parents that she was staying with her aunt Stefi Glax in Milan and that she was moving to Turin on business the next month [20]. During the second half of 1947, Dr Tripold and Rosa also moved from Opatija to Turin (Fig. 3). They both died there. They were buried at Cimitero monumentale di Torino (Fig. 4).

Opatija, Town-Museum of Central Europe - a project designed to identify and reunite old friends - has honoured the memory of Dr Tripold by placing him on the poster of its ten most famous citizens (Fig. 5) and the town's fire station decorated a wall with a plaque in his honour.

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SAŽETAK

Jedan od prvih liječnika koji su došli raditi u Opatiju bio je dr. Franz Tripold. Godine 1889. promaknut je za doktora opće medicine na Karl-Francovu sveučilištu u Grazu.

U Opatiju je došao 1891. godine. Uz obavljanje liječničke prakse, bio je i šef-liječnik Dobrovoljnoga vatrogasno-spašavajućeg društva te skrbnik vremenske stanice u Opatiji. Godine 1906. objavio je klimatološku studiju Das Klima von Abbazia (Opatijska klima), koja je nastala na osnovi njegova dvadesetogodišnjeg bilježenja opatijske klime. Godine 1908. car Franjo Josip odlikovao ga je titulom dvorskog savjetnika. Za svoj rad u Opatiji dr. Tripold primio je niz odlikovanja. Dobrovoljno spašavajuće društvo u Beču proglasilo ga je svojim počasnim članom.

Godine 1947. odselio je u Torino, gdje je 1956. preminuo. Sa suprugom je pokopan na Cimitero monumentale di Torino.

Opatija – grad muzej ukazala je dr. Franzu Tripoldu poštovanje uvrštavanjem na plakat desetorice najznačajnijih Opatijaca te spomen-pločom na Vatrogasnom domu.

Ključne riječi: *povijest medicine, XIX. i XX. stoljeće, dr. Franz Tripold, Abbazia/Opatija*