In our country hydrotherapy virtually ceased by the end of the Byzantine years, although cases were reported using the hot water from the Turkish conquerors. Not until later did the Ottoman Empire resume its interest in the state for its thermal springs.

The first government in Greece, with Ioannis Kapodistrias as the governor and Othonas as King, showed great interest in the development of hot springs. In 1830-1833 German doctors and chemists made the first analysis of thermal waters. Also a group of doctors visited the hot springs of Kythnos Island and studied its thermal springs. Later, during the reign of Otto the first hydrotherapy center was created.

Spa of the island of Kythnos

The Spa of Kythnos is located at Loutra. The building dates from 1857 and has hot springs with healing properties. You can see from up close the baths of the first royal couple in modern Greece, Otto and Amalia that are there.

The first king of Greece, Otto with his Bavarian advisers, recorded hot springs in the country and the metallic properties of water. The first auctions on renting spas by the Decree of 1836 concerning “the taxation of land and animal products” were made.

In 1861 the act "mines and minerals" gave an impetus to the use of spas.

In 1917 the Greek government appointed 12 doctors for the study of hot springs and the establishment of the field of Hydrology.

In 1918, the Ministry of Finance created the Office of Foreign Affairs and Exhibitions, now officially responsible for its thermal springs.

In 1927 a permanent branch of hydrologists and doctors was established and up until 1940, 12 of them were placed to study the main springs of the country.
In 1936, the spas passed to the responsibility of the State Secretariat of Press and Tourism and in 1938 The Greek mineral resources are accurately recorded in the interwar years by M. Pertsis, a chemist who in 1923 gave a detailed chemical analysis of the water of about 750 springs.

In 1938 was established the University of Clinical Hydrotherapy and medical climatology, with Professor Eugenio Foka\(^{(1)}\), which was dissolved after the war.

In 1950 the jurisdiction relative to the hot springs passed over to the Greek Tourism Organization\(^{(2)}\) who later distributed them to the government and to some other individuals.

At this time the systematic recording and studying of geological chemical-physics, Therapeutic and other characteristics of thermal springs began and thus a new chapter of thermal tourism and thermalism begins.

In 1983 the Association of Municipalities and Communities of Greek Spas is founded and the gradual transfer of Spas to the jurisdiction of local authorities begins. (www.thermalsprings.gr)

In 1992 the organization above establishes the Greek Thermal Company, whose headquarters are in Thessaloniki.

\(^{(1)}\) Eugenio Foka

As professor of Hydrotherapy, he undertook the task of teaching his students the importance of this subject, given the wealth of Greece concerning its springs and their hydro-metallic and therapeutic properties. He encourage the scientific study of Thermal Springs, statistical studies, laboratory research and medical observation at a laboratory of the Medical School in Goudi, which he helped to fund for his research. His findings were announced at Medical meetings both in Greece and Europe, and were also published in Medical Journals. His work was involved in organizing the main thermal spa towns, creating the Hydrotherapy Centre in Kamena Vourla, the reconstruction and re-organisation of the drinking water Therapy Centre in Kallithea Rhodes, the creation of the Hydrotherapy Centre in Ypati, and improving the function and equipment of Spa Towns such as Platystomo, Smokovo, Kaifa, Thermopyles and others.

With excessive correspondence to the Greek Tourist Organization (EOT), Fokas attempted to raise the interest of the State in the Greek Spa Towns by promoting them as health benefactors for the Greek people and as a source of economy for the Country. He tried to raise awareness of the progress of European Spa Towns through lectures and scientific gatherings, radio broadcasts, newspaper articles with his own constant informing and his own expenses. It was
through his own contribution that therapeutic remedies at spas were adopted, funded and recognised by the Ministry of Health, the State Welfare Fund and other organisations, as was the case in the rest of Europe at the time.

(2) **Hellenic Organization of Tourism**
The Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) is a Public Entity (PE) supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.
The evolution of hot springs is closely related to the perceptions of Medical Pathology. At times when medical science applied natural remedies to various illnesses, we can observe development in thermal springs.

With the boom in chemical pharmacology and the development of surgery, the use of thermal springs and the belief in the therapeutic properties is abandoned. The improvements of most thermal spas which are still in use today were made in the 1930’s.

The exploitation and the gradual organization of Spas in the country started in the late 19th century and continued in the early 20th century. Among the first developed springs, are Edipsos of Kythnos, in Kyllini, in Loutraki and in Kaiafa. Many of these areas evolved into large resorts that flourished during the interwar years, due to their use by the upper classes of the time.

The period between the wars will mark a new era in health tourism as the state was reorganized, the middle class grows, and the choices expand with the annexation of new territories. After 1920, Greek spas are growing rapidly, centered on the elegant architectural buildings and luxury hotels which attract Greek and European visitors of a high income level.

Famous bath centers in our country were Edipsos, Ypati, Lagadas, Loutraki Corinthias and Methana.

In 1929, in Sariza on Andros Island, the sale of bottled water begins while in Kaiafas renovated hotels, the bathhouse with individual baths and the existence of various forms of entertainment (theatre, dances, cinema etc.) are advertised.

In 1930 the new premises at Platystomo in Fthiotida are opened and Kamena Vourla is fully utilized. These premises are presented as organized tourist resorts, with hotels, restaurants and other facilities, even a casino, such as in Loutraki. The clientele even consisted of financially prominent Europeans and Arabs, who took advantages of the Spa treatment combined with a more cosmopolitan lifestyle.

Then one by one area all over Greece with hot springs and easy access to them begin to work on their development.

In Greece, because of its geographical position and geological structure, a large number of spas and spa towns exist. Greek spas used to be a meeting place and they offered
communication, therapy, leisure entertainment, wellness and relaxation. Today the
word SPA it is used generally for its hot springs. The name originates from or is deemed
by the name of the homonymous city SPA in Belgium near Liege or the initials of the
Latin phrase sanitas per aqua which means health by water. The official bathing season
is primarily summer (June-October) as established by the Romans. Today more and
more people believe that at least twelve spa therapies every year, particularly for the
old, strengthen the body and help them cope with the hard winters. This habit of
preventive treatment and relief of physical pain, despite the fierce competition of
bathing in the sea, for the same reasons will never be defeated.

CLASSIFICATION OF THERMAL SPRINGS IN GREECE

ACCORDING TO SIZE AND THE DEVELOPMENT
Depending on the land management requirements and their development in Greece, the
springs are classified into the following categories.

- **Resorts**: organized bathing facilities that are associated with the development of the urban
center.
- **Baths**: Multi-functional centers: Organized spa baths and entertainment function
independently and interact with the local community.
- **Multi-functional complexes**: Organized facilities for bathing and recreational functions,
autonomous and independent from the residential network in the region. These centers are
developed exclusively for therapeutic tourism.
- **Bathing stations**: Organized facilities for bathing in small regional settlements. Therapeutic
tourism is the only thing on offer in such places.

DEPENDING ON THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WATER
Depending on the temperature of the water the hot springs are classified as shown below

- **COOL HOT SPRINGS**: the hot springs of thermal mineral waters which have a temperature
of up to 20°C and are used primarily for bottling and drinking. Such sources are Souroti of
Thessaloniki, the Eleftheroton Kavala, Nigrita of Serres, Sariza of Andros, Doubia Halkidiki,
Metalikou Kilkis, Myrtia Aitoloakarnanias and Sour Water of Florina.
- **HYPOTHERMAL HOT SPRINGS**: The source of thermal mineral waters which have a
temperature of 20-40 °C and are usually chlorinated sources of alkaline earth. Such
sources are Nigrila of Serres, New Kessani of Xanthi, Plastisimomo and Ypatis of Fthiotida,
Krinides of Kavala, Loutraki of Corinth, Loutraki Aridaiai Pozar and Nymphopetra of
Thessaloniki.
- **MESOTHERMAL HOT SPRINGS**: Hot springs of thermal mineral waters which have a
temperature of 35-50°C. Such sources are of Eleftheres Kavala, Langada, Smokovo and
Aidonohori Karditsa, the Angistou, Sidirokastro and Nigrita of Serres, Nea Apollonias Thessaloniki, Eftalous and Gera Lesvos, Kamena Vourla, Edipsos and several others.

- **HYPERTHERMAL HOT SPRINGS**: Hot springs of thermal mineral waters which are above 50ºC. Such are Edipsos, Polychnitos, Lisvoria and Megalon Thermon Lesvou, Agiasmata of Chios, Ikaria, Kimolos, Kythnos and Nea Kessani Xanthi.

- **THERMAL AND HYPERTHERMAL SPRINGS**: In this category are the hot springs of Amarantos and Koukou Ioannina.

**DEPENDING ON THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF THE WATER**

The distinction is based on the amount of dissolved salts within the thermal mineral waters and refers to the electrical conductivity of the water, the type of salt, the minerals and gases that the water contains.

Most spas in our country, at least the 142 that were examined for their thermal mineral waters contain the follow minerals:

- Sodium Chloride at a percentage of 47.18% (Sodium-chloride sources)
- Sodium Chloride carbonic acid at a rate of 26.7% (Carbonic acid- sodium chloride sources)
- Calcium-magnesium carbonic acid at a rate of 26.7%

Springs which are classified as thermo-metallic are those with a high water temperature, dissolved salts or gases, or that contain even a small percentage of compounds or elements not found in the waters of the usual sources, such as sulfur, hydrogen sulfide, iodine, arsenic, radioactive substances, etc.

The therapeutic properties of thermal springs are largely due to these properties and with proper treatment and medical monitoring will improve bathers health both physically and mentally.

Of the total 822 sources, 752 can be developed, but today only 348 are used to a greater or lesser degree. (Approximately 42%)

Of these sources 180 are used for spa therapy, 20 for spas and drinking water and approximately 148 for drinking water only.

One hundred and forty two sources have been chemically analysed and 76 of these have been deemed as Thermal Springs. From the officially designated Thermal springs, 23 are characterized as Thermal springs and of touristic importance and 53 Thermal springs are of local and historical importance.
1. TABLE OF THERMAL SPAS ACCORDING OF THEIR SIZE AND DEVELOPMENT

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