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*Humans and Non-Humans at Spas. Senses, Environment, and Everyday Life in Early Modern Italy*

In their writings on spas and thermal waters, Italian Renaissance medical, humanistic, and religious authorities characterized these places as natural wonders. The special characteristics of these water springs could be only known through empirical investigation: indeed, early modern sources emphasize the role of the senses as a primary and direct way to know the curative powers of these waters.

The paper focuses on selected cases of Italian thermal water springs, and their environments. By analyzing treatises, images, travel literature, and manuscripts, I will explore the everyday life at spas, emphasizing the quotidian actions and works related to thermal waters, and the presence of animals in these sites. I will examine how spas and thermal springs were perceived through the senses. The paper will highlight how the boundaries between natural and built environment were somehow vague and blurred, and how humans and non-humans experienced thermal water springs thanks to different senses.