

MUTATIONS IN THE TOURIST TURNING TO ACCOUNT OF THE NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM COMPLEX OF GALATI MUNICIPALITY

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The Natural Science Museum Complex is the only tourist's anthropic objective in Galați municipality drawing high touristic flows after the 90's due to the certain quality mutations, which increase its attractiveness considerably. Such mutations include the annual development and enrichment of the Botanical Gardens with new objectives of interest for tourists – the Exotic plant Conservatory opened in 1992; the Rosarium in 1997; the Japanese Garden in 1999, the Ornamental Expoflora in 2001. We should add there the new Natural Science Museum located inside the gardens, opened in 2002, which also draws numerous tourists due to: its numerous fauna collections and exhibitions; aquariums with species of the native ichthyologic fauna and equatorial or tropical endemic species; diverse manifestations and scientific observations (partial eclipse of sun of October 3rd 2005); the Planetarium and the multimedia room. Thus, the Natural Science Museum Complex is presently the most attractive anthropic objective for tourists in Galați municipality, receiving annual visits from approximately one third of the municipality population.

Key words: dynamics, high touristic flows, development and touristic attractiveness

1. Introduction

The Natural Science Museum Complex is one of the larger museums of natural science in Romania,

being in the same time the “youngest” and the most modern complex of natural science in the country

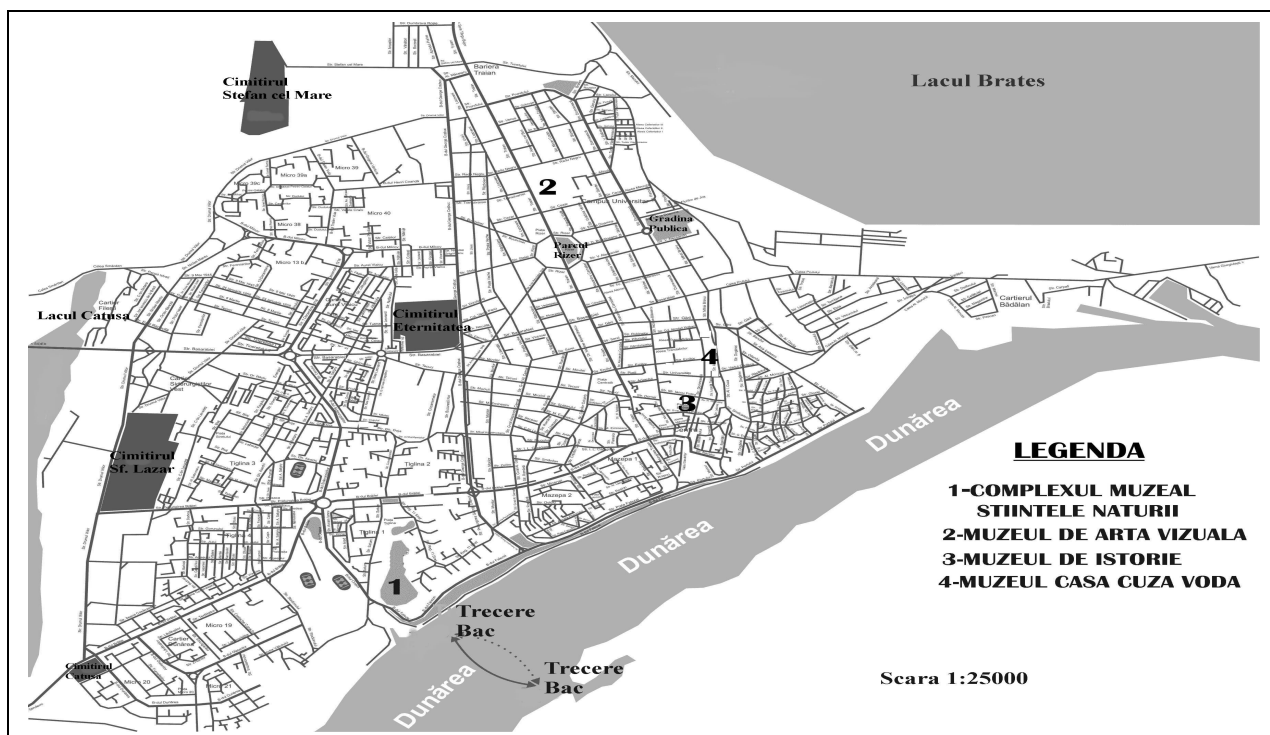


Fig. 1. Artistic and architectural touristic objectives(according to P.U.G. Galați with alters)

The Natural Science Museum Complex presently includes the Botanical Gardens and the new building of the Natural Science Museum, located on the left bank of Danube, in the area of Tiglina I residential district, being the southern limit of the higher cliffs of Danube, in the proximity of the area where the Danube is crossed by ferry.

With a surface area of 18 hectares, the Natural Science Museum Complex also includes the Zoological Gardens located in Garboavele Forest, on a surface area of 7 hectares, 17 kilometers north-west of Galati municipality.

Access to the Natural Science Museum Complex is achieved through three points: the one north the complex, located close to the former "Children's Fun Fair"; the proper one, coming from the Francezi self-contained district, located in the proximity of Emil Racovita Secondary School, and the one south the complex, close to the ferry crossing point.

2. Space Dynamics

In the period of 1956-1990, the Natural Science Museum was located on Domneasca Street, close to the Catholic Church. The museum owned over 39000 exhibits arranged by collections: the ornithological collection, the entomological collection, the malacological collection, and the botanical collection.

Reorganized by scientific criteria, the permanent exhibition of the museum shew the ornithological fauna of southeastern Moldavia, in the area-specific context, emphasizing on the importance and role of birds in maintaining the biological balance and at the same time the need to protect them. Among the ecosystems present in the exhibition, special attention was paid to protected areas: Hanu Conachi, Breana-Roscani, Garboavele, as well as the RAMSAR ecosystems, favorable environments for the development of aquatic birds. Collection were also turned to good account by temporary itinerant exhibitions such as: "Fossil Mammals on the territory of Galati County", "Birds to the use of Man", "Present and Future Issues of the Environment", or "The Place of Man in Nature and his Evolution". As most touristic objectives after 1990, the Natural Science Museum embarks upon a period of decline caused by both the massive decrease of tourism and especially by the need to set up new Botanical Gardens in Galati. Thus, in September 1990 a document was signed for the establishment of the new Museum Complex of Natural Science,

located on the left bank of Danube, on the land of the old valley of the slaughter house.

At the beginning, starting from 1990, the Botanical Gardens are developed; in terms of surface, they were larger than the ones in Cluj, which extended on 14 hectares, but smaller than the ones in Iasi, which had 105 hectares. The Botanical Gardens of Galati already has a number of 4000 classified species (taxons), as compared to the Cluj one, which, though going back to 1920, has only 10000 taxons and is presently developing a series of objects of interest that increase its touristic attractiveness. Tourist attractions in the Botanical Gardens include: the **Exotic Plant Conservatory** opened in 1992, the **Rosarium** (the youngest in the country, the only one showing a scenery architecture well-defined by specialists, holding over 300 sorts of roses) inaugurated in 1997, the **Japanese Garden** developed as of 1999, the **Ornamental Expoflora** organized annually at the Rosarium since 2001. The year 1996 marks the beginning point in the development of the new Natural Science Museum, the proper building of today's Museum Complex.

The architecture of the building presently allows access from the central hallway of the museum to the basic exhibition, the conservatories, and the aquariums. The attractions of the museum include: the **Aquarium** populated by ichthyologic species specific to the hydrographic basin of Danube and species specific to the Amazon basin; species specific to the Mediterranean Sea and to the lakes of Tertiary origin from Africa; the **Spaces for Scheduled Exhibitions and the Multimedia Room**, located at the first level with 150 seats and modern endowment; the **Planetarium and the Terrace** at the second level (the terrace of the Museum Complex has a view to the Macin Danube it self in the area of "Cat's Elbow", as well as part of the city).

3. Dynamics of the Receiving Tourist's Flows

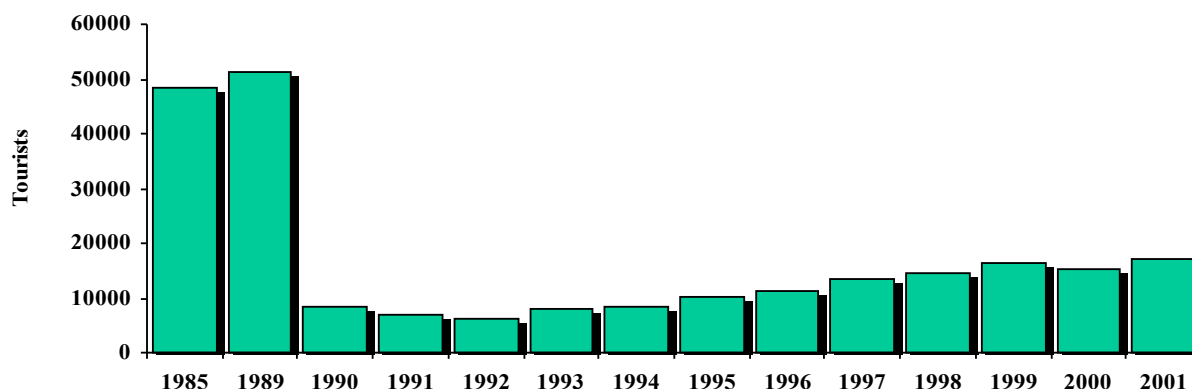
Along the existence of the Natural Science Museum, of the Botanical Gardens, and finally, of the Natural Science Museum Complex, the dynamics of tourist's receiving flows shows three distinct periods:

The period from 1956 to 1990, characterized by the sole existence of the Natural Science Museum, which recorded considerable tourist flows annually summing up 16.9% of the municipality population, being a real competition for the other anthropic attractions of the municipality. The

large number of tourists before 1990 was due to the social – political system existing in Romania. Thus, during that period, pupils and students were obliged to visit annually all the museums of the municipality, visiting actions being carried out during classes.

The period from 1990 to 1994, characterized by the legislative establishment of the new Natural Science Museum Complex located on the left bank of Danube and the incipient development of the Botanical Gardens.

Fig. 2. NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM - DYNAMICS OF THE RECEIVING TOURIST'S FLOWS FROM 1985 TO 2001 (according to the statistics of Natural Science Museum)

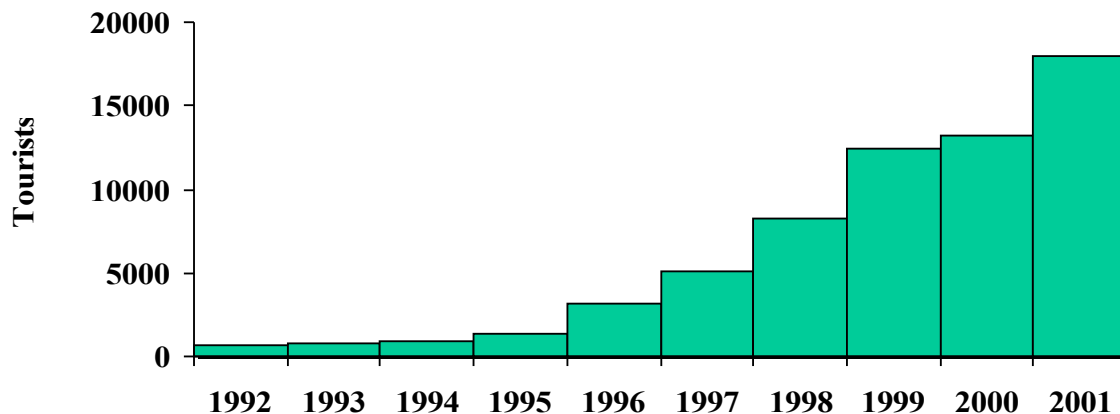


Thus, touristic flows abruptly diminished for the Natural Science Museum located on Domneasca Street, progressively increasing in the case of the Botanical Gardens between 1992 and 1994 from 0.20% in 1992 to 0.40% of the municipality population in 1994. The decrease of touristic flows for the Natural Science Museum is due to the change in social – political conditions, while the increase of tourists' number for the Botanical Gardens is due to the opening in 1992 of a conservatory showing a small collection of exotic plants.

The period from 1994 to 2005, characterized in the case of the Botanical Gardens by its complex

development, represented by the appearance of the three tourist attractions: the **Rosarium**, the **Japanese Garden**, and the **Ornamental Expoflora**, which lead to an increase of size in touristic flows to 6.5% of the municipality population in 2002. Thus, the opening of the Rosarium leads to an increase of attractiveness of the gardens, 50590 tourists in 1997 respectively; the opening of the Japanese Garden in 1999 marks a new increase of tourists' flows, 12400 tourists respectively, and finally the Ornamental Expoflora opened in 2001 attracted 5000 tourists in only two days.

Fig. 3. BOTANICAL GARDENS -DYNAMICS OF THE RECEIVING TOURIST'S FLOWS FROM 1992 TO 2001 (according to the statistics of Natural Science Museum Complex)

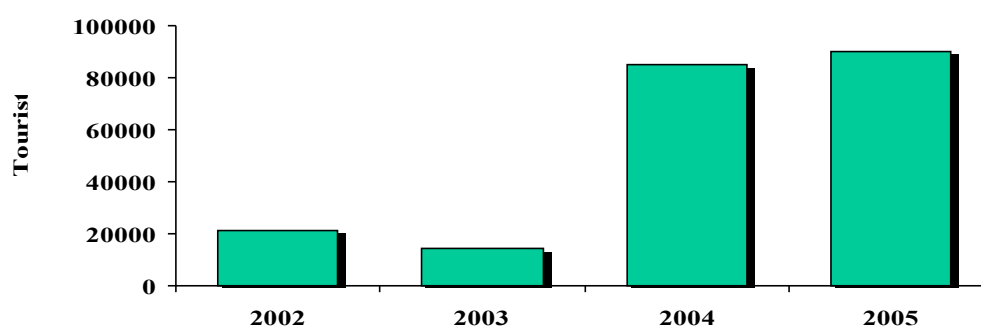


For the Natural Science Museum, this period marks a progressive increase of tourist flows from 3.47% in 1996 to 5.3% of the municipality population in 2001. In addition, the construction of the new building of the Natural Science Museum starts in 1996.

As of 2002, the Natural Science Museum and the Botanical Gardens unite under the name of The Natural Science Museum Complex. The Natural Science Museum therefore resumes its activity as of 2002 in the new location on the left bank of Danube.

Analyzing the trend of the touristic flows, even though the year 2003 marked an insignificant diminishment as compared to the previous year, the year 2004 represented the peak of the ascent that had begun in 1992. Actually, in 2004 the number of tourists increased four times as compared to 2002, representing 26.2% of the municipality population. The main cause was the modern location of the Natural Science Museum, which became the main attraction.

Fig. 4. NATURAL SCIENCE MUSEUM COMPLEX- DYNAMICS OF THE RECEIVING TOURIST'S FLOWS FROM 2002 TO 2005
(according to the statistics of Natural Science Museum Complex)



4. Conclusions

Before 1990, the Natural Science Museum recorded high touristic flows generated by adequate turning to account, approaching in size those met by the other anthropic objectives of the municipality. The size of the tourist flows in this period is strongly influenced by the social and political conditions mentioned, under which the pupils and students were obliged to annually visit all the museums of the municipality during classes. After 1990, the museum has considerable decrease of touristic flows, but the qualitative mutations represented by the development of the Botanical Gardens in 1992, and mostly the architecture and endowment of the new museum located inside the gardens considerably increase its attractiveness. The museum and the Botanical Gardens presently go under the name of the Natural Science Museum Complex, which is the most attractive anthropic objective for tourists in Galati municipality, being visited every year by an impressive number of tourists, as compared to the other anthropic objectives of the municipality.

A new significant increase of touristic flows profiles in the near future, due to the completion of the last tourist attractions in the structure of the

Natural Science Museum Complex, namely: the completion of the **modern aquarium** and the opening of the fourth basic exhibition under the title of “**Humid Ecosystems and their Importance**” and the new conservatory foreseen for 2006-2007.

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