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VISITATION OF „GRIGORE ANTIPA“ NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (BUCHAREST) WITHIN THE PERIOD 2001–2005

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Abstract. The number, dynamics, origin and the structure of the visitors of „Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History are analyzed for the period 2001–2005. The analysis was made comparatively with the last decade of the 20th century, for underlining the evolutions occurred after the beginning of the rehabilitation works of the museum building.

Résumé. On analyse le nombre, la dynamique, l'origine et la structure des visiteurs du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle „Grigore Antipa” pendant la période 2001–2005. L'analyse a été faite comparativement avec la dernière décennie du 20^{ème} siècle, pour souligner les évolutions apparues après le commencement des travaux de réhabilitation du bâtiment du muséum.

Key words: museum visitation, analysis, share, grouped visitors, ungrouped visitors, dynamics.

The beginning of the 21st century was also the beginning of numerous changes within the social, economical, political and, not the least, cultural environment. The place and the importance of the museums in society tends to be reconsidered, and within this context, a re-evaluation of the indicators which underline the position of the museums in the social system (whose they belong and serve) takes place. Activity diversity, which carries on within museums, in general, and especially within the museums of natural history, generated the necessity of some feed-back mechanisms which are able to point out fast and efficiently the value of the new cultural approach and the reply of the social and economical environment to it. Within this context, the indicators capable to reflect as much faithfully as possible the public's interest for the museum activities get new values. General public's interest, entirely or only in some parts of it, has to be efficiently evaluated in order to allow the development in a certain direction or, according to circumstances, the re-orientation for the satisfaction of the public's new interest.

The importance of the public's quantitative and qualitative analysis was underlined several times. The conclusions of this analysis permitted, many times, the museum board of directors to direct its decisions towards specific activities which could draw a numerous and diverse public's attention and, also, to put the institution on a proper direction within the cultural and social context. This paper continues the long series of studies of this type made by “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History since 1971, presenting a synthetic analysis of the public who visited the museum during these five years of the 21st century. The analysis of the museum visitation within this period is related to the previous results which followed the evolution of the museum visitation during the last two decades of the 20th century (Matache & Stănescu, 2004).

English translation by Mihaela Barcan Achim.

METHOD

As in the previous papers, on the period 2001 – 2005 regarding the museum visitation, primary data were taken from the official reports completed by the scientific staff at the end of each day. These data were centralized and updated periodically on computer using a tabular calculus application, especially created by the first author.

From the very beginning we have to say that during the analyzed period, two important events took place, which surely influenced the evolution of the museum visitation:

- the transfer of “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History from the Ministry of Education and Research to the Ministry of Culture, by the Governmental Decree no 743 of the 3rd of July 2003. A year later, on 28th of June 2004, the leadership of the Ministry of Culture approved the new museum Regulations of organization and work.
- the increasing of the number and diversity of the educational and cultural entertainment activities, beginning with 2003. At the same time, „Leo Burnett & Targett” Advertising Agency developed a re-branding activity for raising “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History as a public institution of science, education, culture and entertainment¹. The new site of the museum (www.antipa.ro) contributed to a more efficient communication with the potential public. All these things led a larger number of visitors, and the participants in the new activities getting a larger and larger share within the public of the museum.

For the analyzed period, the data on the museum visitors were centralized (in days, months and years) both those grouped and individual. According to their origin, the visitors were divided into two categories: foreign and Romanian, the last ones being divided into those from Bucharest and those outside it.

As regards the structure of Romanian grouped visitors, according to their age, five categories were established: children, pupils, teen-agers, students and adults (soldiers, workers, retired people, specialists who attended training courses, etc.).

The decreasing of the visitation days imposed a new approach to the analysis. So, in order to compare the studied period from the grouped visitors, origin and structure point of view, the annual average of each category was calculated, and then presented in percentages in pie charts.

For the knowledge of the influence which the Romanian grouped visitors from Bucharest and outside it had, we made a comparison of the share which each county had in establishing the annual total number of Romanian grouped visitors, Bucharest being considered a county.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Further on, we present some considerations on the total number of visitors, as well as the categories of the grouped and ungrouped visitors.

¹ The re-branding campaign of “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, as a public institution of science, education and cultural entertainment, carried on under the slogan “Hard to forget” and it was declared “campaign of the year” at the 2004 “Ad’Or” Advertizing Festival.

Table 1

The number of visitors between 2001-2005.

Year	Total number of visitors	Grouped visitors					Total ungrouped visitors
		Total grouped visitors	Rumanian			Foreign visitors	
			Total	Bucharest	Outside Bucharest		
2001	59688	35878	35107	13316	21791	771	23810
2002	54345	23564	22573	9841	12732	991	30781
2003	42427	17637	17383	7751	9632	254	24790
2004	45387	23360	23156	9053	14103	204	22027
2005	47847	18544	18070	7304	10766	474	29303

1. Total number of visitors, between 2001 - 2005.

From table 1 and figure 1 it results that the maximum number of visitors was recorded in 2001 (59,688). Within 2001-2003, the visitors' number decreased, the minimum being reached in 2003 (42,427 visitors). This decline seems to be a continuation of the tendencies recorded at the end of the 20th century (Matache & Stănescu, 2004).

In 2004 and 2005 the number of visitors was brought to a normal state. It is important especially if we take into consideration that it happened when the visitation programme was reduced. Thus, comparing the annual average (in days) of the visitors' number for the analyzed period, it can be observed a high decreasing in the first part of the period (from 192,262 daily visitors in 2001 to 137,639 daily visitors in 2003), followed by a re-establishing in the last two years of the studied period (162,086 daily visitors in 2004 and 183,939 daily visitors in 2005).

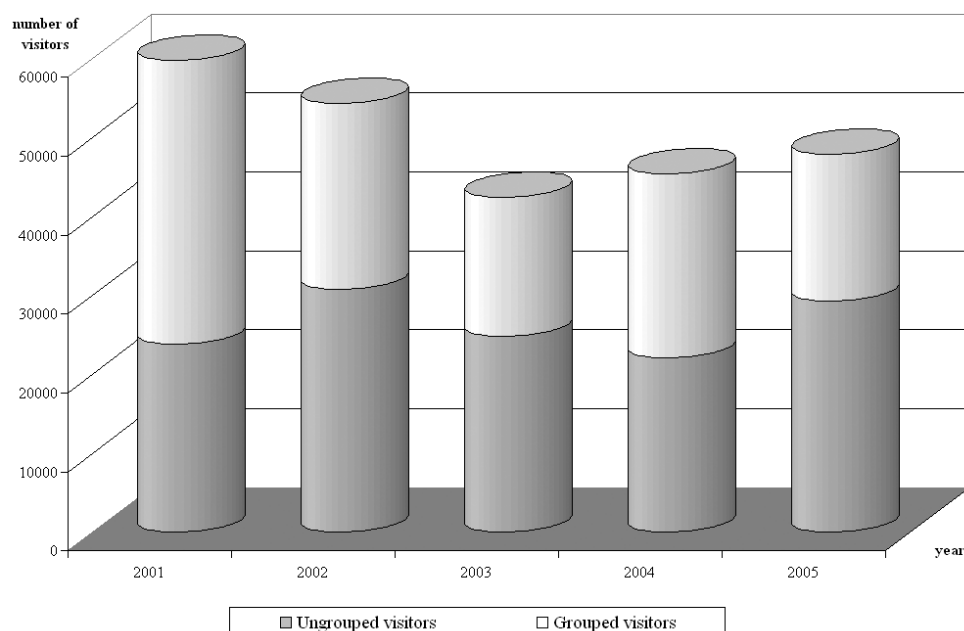


Fig. 1 – The dynamics of the visitor number during 2001-2005.

Table 2

The mean of visitors between 2001-2005.

Year	Daily average
2001	192,262
2002	176,573
2003	137,639
2004	162,086
2005	183,939

2. Grouped visitor number and origin.

Table 1, as well as figures 1 and 2 present comparatively the absolute values and, respectively, the percentages of the different grouped visitor categories along the entire analyzed period.

The number of the grouped visitors knew a continuous and serious decreasing in the first three years of the studied period (from 35,878 grouped visitors, in 2001, to only 17,636 grouped visitors, in 2003). The year 2004 represented a slight recovering of this indicator (in the museum entered 23,360 visitors organized in groups of different size) and in the last year of the studied period a new decreasing being recorded, about similar with the minimum value of the entire studied period (only 18,544 grouped visitors in 2005). Taking into account that the total number of visitors increased constantly in 2004 and 2005, this evolution is mainly due to the ungrouped visitors, their number and share increasing constantly in the second part of the studied period. Constant tendencies confirm the evolution of the last decade of the 20th century which makes the inversion of the ratio between these two large visitor categories.

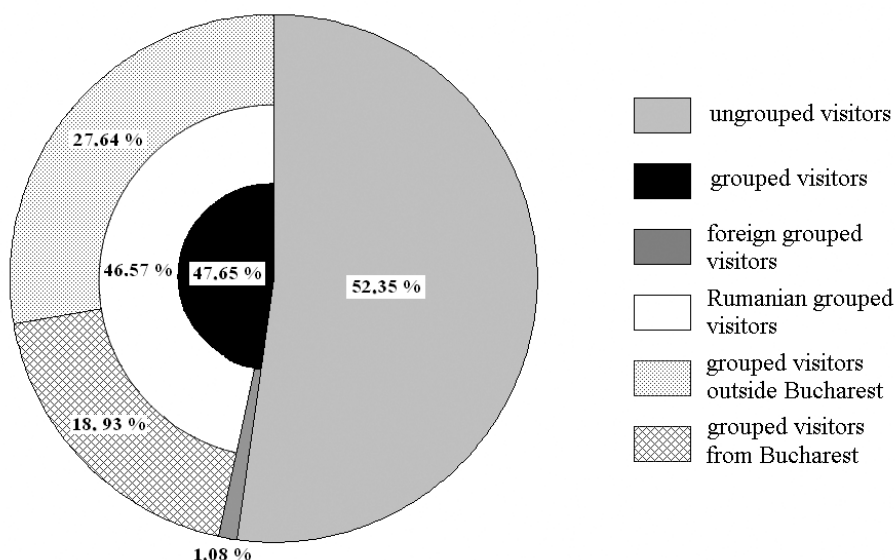


Fig. 2 – The share of different visitor categories during 2001-2005.

Within the grouped visitors the number and the share of the Romanian and foreign visitors (Tab. 1) were followed.

The number of the *foreign visitors* decreased dramatically, from the maximum of 991 (in 2002) to only 204 (2 in 2004). Figure 2 represents the serious decreasing of the foreign visitor share related to the total number of visitors, which decreased to 1.08 %. This continuous evolution confirms the tendencies of the last decade of the 20th century, when the share of the grouped foreign tourists decreased to 3.93 % during 1997-2000.

As regards the *Romanian visitors* organized in groups, their number reached the maximum in 2001 (35,878). Then, a significant decreasing followed, reaching the number of 17,383 grouped visitors in 2003. After this period a short recovering took place (23,156 grouped visitors in 2004), followed by a slight decreasing in the last year of the studied period (18,070 grouped visitors in 2005). This evolution is confirmed also by the evolution of the grouped visitor share along the whole studied period.

Table 1 and figure 2 present the number and the share of the grouped visitors of Bucharest and outside it. For the studied period, the maximum number of the grouped visitors from *Bucharest* was recorded in 2001 (13,316) and the minimum number, at the middle of the period, in 2003 (7,751). During 2001 – 2005, Romanian grouped visitors from outside the capital exceed those from Bucharest, with 8.71 % (Fig. 2).

The evolution of the grouped visitor number *outside Bucharest*, according to the county they came, and the share of the grouped visitors from each of the 41 counties of Romania in comparison with those from the capital, was pointed out in the maps of figure 3. In order to make easier the analysis of the share of the grouped visitors in each county along a year, we used five value periods: 0-1.99 %, 2-3.99 %, 4-5.99 %, 6-7.99 % and over 8 %, as in the previous papers. This report is synthetically presented in table 3, too.

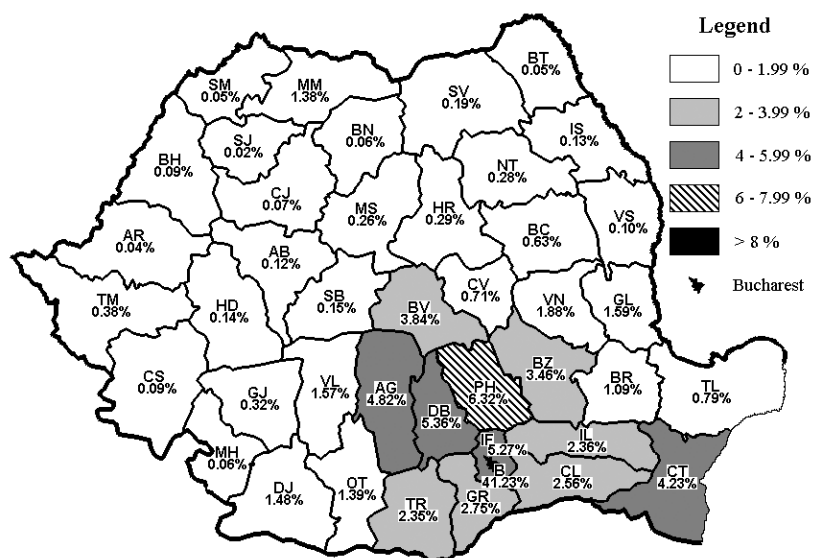


Fig. 3 – The share of the Romanian grouped visitors from the provinces and Bucharest, during 2001-2005.

Table 3

Number of counties after their contribution to the total number of grouped visitors.

Year	0 - 1.99%	2 - 3.99 %	4 - 5.99 %	6 - 7.99 %	> 8 %
2001	28	8	3	1	2
2002	30	6	4	0	2
2003	31	6	3	0	2
2004	29	9	1	1	2
2005	31	5	4	0	2

From the data analyses, it can be observed that Prahova county remains in the value classes 6-7.99 %, recording the highest number of visitors. In the class 4-5.99 %, the counties Dâmbovița and Ilfov are in important places, followed by the counties Argeș and Constanța. Totally, the number of the counties with a share of 2-3.99 % remained low, only six counties being in this period.

3. Dynamics of the monthly evolution of the visitor number.

As in the previous studies (Matache & Stănescu, 2004), we used the calculation of the monthly value average for analyzing the dynamics of the monthly evolution of the visitor number, as for the entire period. The bar chart (Fig. 4) confirms the constant evolutions of the last decade of the 20th century. So, relatively constant values of the ungrouped visitors were recorded while high values of the grouped visitors were recorded in May – June and October – November.

During the studied period, grouped visitors – mostly represented by children, pupils and teen-agers – prevailed numerically in May – June, October – November. In the other months they are constantly exceeded by the number of the ungrouped visitors. But, it can be observed that the grouped visitors continue to influence significantly the monthly fluctuations recorded in a year more than the ungrouped visitors (which have numerical fluctuation significantly smaller month to month).

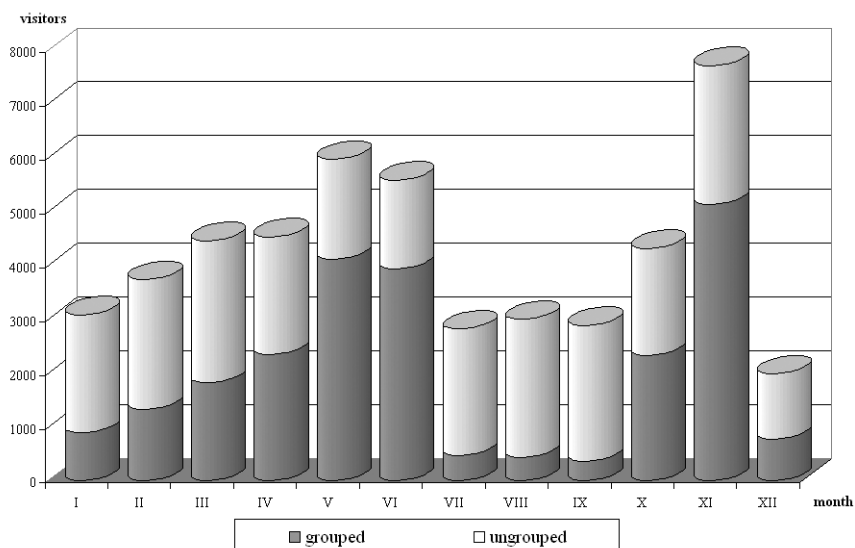


Fig. 4 – Average monthly dynamics of the grouped and ungrouped visitors during 2001-2005.

4. The structure of the Romanian grouped visitors.

The state of the five categories of the grouped Romanians according to their age (children, pupils, teen-agers, students and adults) is presented in table 4 and figures 5 and 6.

The pupils continue to be the prevalent category, the evolution of the numerical level of this category influencing essentially the general level of the grouped visitors and, at a larger scale, the general level of the museum visitation. The significant decreasing of the number of the grouped pupils in the first part of the studied period, from 29,480 in 2001 to less than a half (12,155) in 2003 influenced definitely the global evolution of the museum visitation within this period. The recovering from 2004 is also associated with a slight increasing of the grouped pupils (17,376). In the last year of the studied period, a new decreasing followed, almost reaching the minimum recorded in 2003, but this decreasing was not followed by deep changes anymore, being balanced by the increasing of the visitor number of the other categories.

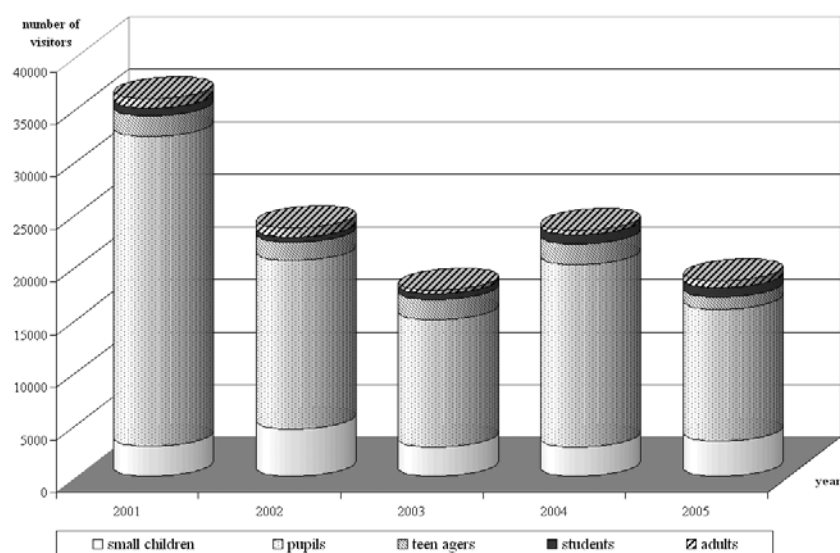


Fig. 5 – The distribution on age classes of the grouped visitors during 2001-2005.

Table 4

Structure of the Romanian grouped visitors.

Year	Grouped small children	Grouped pupils	Grouped teen agers	Grouped students	Grouped adults	Total Romanian grouped visitors
2001	2787	29480	2007	702	902	35107
2002	4477	15970	1763	465	889	22573
2003	2723	12155	1900	562	297	17383
2004	2722	17376	1900	914	448	23156
2005	3319	12557	1089	912	667	18070

Within the analyzed period (2001-2005), the variation of the grouped children is insignificant, as well as that of the grouped teen-ager and adult number. Only the number of the grouped students decreased in the first part of the period (from 702 in 2001 to only 465 a year later), but in the last years it significantly increased (914 in 2004, 912 in 2005).

The analysis of the ratio between the five categories of the Romanian grouped visitors (Fig. 6) confirms the important share of the school-aged grouped visitors. The share of the other age categories remained constant in comparison with the last decade of the 20th century (Matache & Stănescu, 2004).

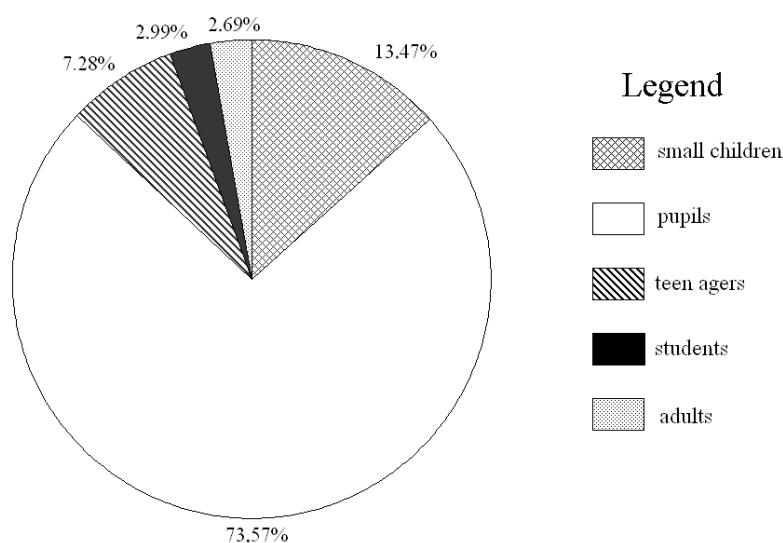


Fig. 6 – The share of the five age categories of the grouped visitors.

5. The number of the ungrouped visitors.

In table 1 and figures 1 and 2 we present the absolute values and the share which this category of visitors has in the global evolution of the museum visitation for the five years of the analyzed period.

The number of the ungrouped visitors reached a record in 2002 (30,772). The share of this category, in comparison with the total number of visitors, increased significantly, frequently exceeding 60% in the period 2001-2005. It has to be underlined that the visitation recovering in 2004 and 2005 accomplished mainly by the increasing of the number of the ungrouped visitors (which recorded a significant increasing, from 22,027 in 2003 to 29,303 in 2005), and less by the increasing of the number of the grouped visitors.

Conclusions

The analysis of the museum visitation in the period 2001-2005, correlated with the data previously published, underlines a series of interesting evolution tendencies for the beginning of the 21st century.

The deep decreasing of the total number of visitors (from a daily average of 192,262 visitors in 2001, to only 137,639 visitors per day in 2003) was followed by a recovering period in 2004-2005. The ratio between the two large categories of

visitors – grouped and individual – continue to be in favour of the second category, a tendency remaked since the last decade of the 20th century.

The increasing of the ungrouped visitor share, who came to museum of their own initiative, demonstrates that "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History enjoyed a high public's attention, both due to its exhibits and to the cultural and educational events organized within this period. The re-branding campaign, made by „Leo Burnett & Targett” for the museum had also a significant influence, as well as the site of the museum, which permanently informed and promoted it.

As regards the grouped visitors, the number of the foreign visitors continued to decrease, reaching an insignificant share in the general visitation of the museum. This state is due to the delay of the cultural tourism recovering after the change of the political regime in Romania, in December 1989.

Important changes took place in the structure of the Romanian visitor groups. The first change refers to the share of the visitors from Bucharest and outside it. It was observed a slight decreasing of the share of the Romanian grouped visitors outside Bucharest, mostly because of the relatively bad organizing of the school tourism, which is responsible for bringing a large number of pupils at the museum of Bucharest. This assertion is also supported by the important decreasing of the school-aged visitor number, constant in 2001-2003, which influenced negatively the general level of the museum visitation. That is why, it is necessary to reconsider the school – museum relation (e.g. a diverse and attractive offer for the teachers of biology, the creation of a partnership with schools, etc.).

The changes occurred in the five analyzed years underline the constant evolution of the last decade of the 20th century and also the new tendencies. Their correlation with the new methods of public's attraction gives hope in using some active and dynamic strategies which could impel also the positive evolutions in the museum visitation during the years to come.

Abbreviations used in figure 3 for the names of the counties:

AB = Alba	CV = Covasna	NT = Neamț
AG = Argeș	DB = Dâmbovița	OT = Olt
AR = Arad	DJ = Dolj	PH = Prahova
BC = Bacău	GJ = Gorj	SB = Sibiu
BH = Bihor	GL = Galați	SJ = Sălaj
BN = Bistrița-Năsăud	GR = Giurgiu	SM = Satu Mare
BR = Brăila	HD = Hunedoara	SV = Suceava
BT = Botoșani	HR = Harghita	TL = Tulcea
BV = Brașov	IF = Ilfov	TM = Timiș
BZ = Buzău	IL = Ialomița	TR = Teleorman
CL = Călărași	IS = Iași	VL = Vâlcea
CJ = Cluj	MH = Mehedinți	VN = Vrancea
CS = Caraș-Severin	MM = Maramureș	VS = Vaslui
CT = Constanța	MS = Mureș	

VIZITAREA MUZEULUI NAȚIONAL DE ISTORIE NATURALĂ "GRIGORE ANTIPA" (BUCUREȘTI) ÎN PERIOADA 2001-2005

REZUMAT

Sunt analizate numărul, dinamica, proveniența și componența vizitatorilor Muzeului Național de Istorie Naturală "Grigore Antipa" în perioada 2001-2005. Analiza a fost realizată comparativ cu ultimul deceniu al secolului XX, pentru a surprinde evoluțiile intervenite după începerea lucrărilor pentru consolidarea clădirii muzeului.

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