

“AMBER – SCIENCE, ART, LEGEND” – TEMPORARY EXHIBITION AT “GRIGORE ANTIPA” NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (BUCHAREST)*

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Abstract. At “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History of Bucharest a temporary exhibition of amber was opened. It was created in collaboration with the Museum of Earth from Warsaw and the Polish Institute from Bucharest.

Résumé. Au Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle “Grigore Antipa” de Bucarest a été ouverte une exposition temporaire d'ambre jaune réalisée en collaboration avec le Musée de la Terre de Varsovie et l'Institut Polonais de Bucarest.

Key words: amber, “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History (Bucharest).

In Romania it is present one of the most interesting amber collections of the world: that belonging to the Museum of Earth from Warsaw, Poland. In the same time a collection of Romanian amber – variety known as *rumanit* is presented.

The rich Baltic amber collection (*succinit*) of the Museum of Earth from Warsaw was presented in many countries, in 2003 and 2004 being present in Bucharest and in some other towns of Romania.

In Bucharest the exhibition was presented for almost 6 months (11th of April – 21st of September 2003) at “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History and displays 679 exhibits. The outlook of this exhibition belongs to Prof. Barbara Kosmowska-Ceranowicz, curator at the Museum of Earth from Warsaw. The exhibition had several sections:

The amber in archaeology. Amber objects (adornments and amulets) from the late period of the Neolithic (4000-2000 B.C.), from the Age of Bronze (2000-700 B.C.), from the Iron Age (700-1 B.C.), from the Roman period and the Middle Age are presented. All these objects, discovered on the Polish territory, demonstrate that in this region the amber was known and used for 6,000 years.

Processing of the amber all over the world. Different objects (adornments, fetishes, decorative objects) made of amber in different places of the world are displayed. From the most interesting exhibits the necklaces *heishi*, the smallest necklaces of the world made by the natives of the tribe Zuni from Mexico must be pointed out.

The amber in the contemporary art. Here there are jewelry and art objects made by the Polish contemporary artists; some of the jewelry got prizes at the most known manifestation dedicated to the amber – the Amberif International Exhibition – which takes place in Gdansk, every year.

* English translation by Mihaela Barcan Achim.

Amber processing in Poland. Different techniques of amber processing (compressing, autoclaving), as well objects made by Polish handcraftsmen are presented.

Amber deposits. The most important deposits from Europe (those from Ukraine, Germany, Poland) are presented on maps and amber samples; also here different types of amber from all over the world are presented.

Amber forgeries. Both forgeries made of natural resin, more recent (for example copal), and of synthetic materials (bakelite, galalith, polyester) are presented.

Varieties of Baltic amber. They are presented in a central showcase where there are samples of white, red, marbled amber, etc., as well a splendid work of art: a rose with white amber petals and leaves of gilded silver (Fig. 1).

Importance of the amber in workmanship, folk faith and medicine. It is represented by numerous decorative objects and adornments (necklaces, but also an amber chandelier from the region of Kurpie, NW of Poland), and by drugs made of amber, or amber objects considered to possess a therapeutic activity (Fig. 1).

Amber in Romania. In this exhibition we present amber from the locality Colți, the most important amber exploitation from the area of Buzău. The exhibited samples belong to the collections of the Faculty of Geology and Geophysics (Bucharest), of the Geological National Museum (Bucharest) and of the County Museum of Buzău. The greatest *rumanit* sample discovered in Romania weighs 3.5 kg.

Importance of the amber in palaeontology. It is demonstrated in a showcase with Tertiary fossils preserved in amber: vegetal inclusions (spores, pollen, leaf fragments, seeds, wooden slivers) and animal inclusions (insects, spiders, myriapods).

A rich collection of posters and publications on the amber research completes the exhibition (Fig. 2).

On the occasion of this exhibition a book entitled "Amber – from liquid resin to jewellery" was published.

EXPOZIȚIA „CHILIMBARUL – ȘTIINȚĂ, ARTĂ, LEGENDĂ” LA MUZEUL NAȚIONAL DE ISTORIE NATURALĂ „GRIGORE ANTIPA” (BUCUREȘTI)

REZUMAT

În perioada 11 aprilie–21 septembrie 2003, la Muzeul Național de Istorie Naturală "Grigore Antipa" din București a fost deschisă o expoziție temporară cu colecții de chihlimbar baltic și românesc.

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Fig. 1 – Images of the exhibition (Photo: Adrian Stoicoviciu)



Fig. 2 - Images of the exhibition (Photo: Adrian Stoicoviciu)