

PRIVATE INITIATIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THE ANIMATION OF TOURISM IN KESZTHELY, THE CAPITAL OF LAKE BALATON

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Közép-Európa legnagyobb kiterjedésű és turisztikai szempontból is legfontosabb tava kétségkívül a magyarországi Balaton. A tó partján fekvő falvak, kisvárosok a XIX. század utolsó harmadától kezdtek átalakulni turisztikai funkciójú településekké, a XX. század második felétől pedig a Balaton a német, az osztrák, a cseh, a dán, a holland, az angol, a szerb, a lengyel és az orosz turisták kedvelt nyaralóhelyévé vált. A turizmus fellendítésén nem csupán a helyi magisztrátus, az állami szervek dolgoztak, hanem fontos szerephez jutottak a helyi magánkezdeményezések is. Munkánkban a keszthelyi turizmus fellendítését szolgáló a XIX. század végén – XX. század elején, illetve a napjainkban működő magánkezdeményezéseket kívánjuk bemutatni.

ABSTRACT

Undoubtedly Lake Balaton in Hungary is Central Europe's largest and most important lake from the point of view of tourism. The villages and small towns lying on the shore began to transform into functional tourist settlements in the last third of the 19th century, and from the second half of the 20th century Lake Balaton became a popular holiday resort of the German, Austrian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Serbian, Polish and Russian tourists. Tourism has been developed not only by the local council and public bodies but also the local private initiatives which played an important role in it. In our work we would like to present the private initiatives helping to promote tourism in Keszthely at the end of the 19th century – the early 20th century and continuing this work to these days.

Keywords: *tourism, tourism history, civil association, social history, Lake Balaton-cult*

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry, including spa tourism in Hungary began to grow stronger only in the second half of the nineteenth century. While the wealthy Hungarians also often visited popular spa resorts of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary such as Karlsbad or Marienbad where they “could choose from carbonated, mud-, steam-, gas, electric and heat bath” (REDEN A.S.1989), the lake and Balatonfüred – perhaps the first of the resorts – visited by famous Hungarian writers and artists were only then began to come into fashion. At that time, the lakeside settlements were not capa-

ble to offer such versatile services as the long-time more frequented Czech and Austrian spas or the Hungarian Herkulesfürdő; though the inhabitants of these settlements could say by all right that Lake Balaton is ‘such fairyland of natural beauty where – in time – the foreigners shall assemble with amazement’ (provincial exhibition at Lake Balaton).

In respect of cultural offer, Keszthely – even if it could not compete with the Hungarian capital, Budapest – undoubtedly emerged from the other lakeside bathing areas. The Festetics family playing also a very important role in the history of Hungary made Keszthely

the centre of its estates and had a magnificent palace built in the 18th century which is a tourist destination of European significance today due to its beauty and unique library. The first bathing house and hotel at Lake Balaton was built in Keszthely in 1846, and the Festetics family also helped to boost tourism. Count Tassilo Festetics donated a big lake-shore area for perpetual use for the settlement in 1883 which magistrate decided to use it for tourism recovery. The bath was handled by the Balaton Spa Co. (Lake Balaton I) from 1869, but in 1890 the town took over the operation from the shareholders, founded a Bath Committee and stated “the city regards the bath not as a profiteering-object but as the factor of the city’s prosperity “(accounts of Balaton Spa). The magistrate had the path leading to the bath closed in 1895 and had a new one built instead of it so that the dust thrown up by the rushing cars does not cause discomfort the guests walking in the park. At the beginning of the 20th century, Keszthely was legally a large village (an incorporated municipality) but a town regarding its nature and attitude, its infrastructure more or less met the expectations required for a contemporary city, in many aspects it directly served the objectives of tourism. There was a hackney carriage service, street lighting and also an electric plant operating in Keszthely. A steamboat dock was built, and even the establishment of a permanent theatre was on the agenda.

However, the real motivating force of the boom in tourism at Lake Balaton was not the variety of cultural services but the infrastructure, especially the extension of the railway network, the significant expansion of the social basis joining the tourism, and the changing of travel behaviour. Keszthely could not be the primary beneficiary of the booming domestic tourism because of its geographical location (it is the furthest from the capital of the significant bathing resorts at Lake Balaton) and the changes in travel behaviour

– the continuous decline of the average length of staying at a spa. The situation became more complicated as the central government did not see it necessary to build a direct railway line to Keszthely, so the town had only a side-line access. The impact of the railway around the lake on tourism can not be overstated; the prosperity of Siófok is a good example for that. By 1909, over several decades, it had not only caught up with Keszthely in urbanization but also it had preceded it in many ways, such as: “before every house in the village there will be an asphalt pavement in Siófok in the summer” - wrote the Keszthely Newspaper, adding that in Keszthely there are “hair-raising conditions” in most of the streets. No wonder that János Sági, one of the most active and most dedicated advocate of the tourism of Keszthely, demanded for special trains to Lake Balaton and a denser and more predictable schedule during the season (Sági J.1909).

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY, THE RESEARCH METHODS AND SOURCES

In the literary sources dealing with tourism and Keszthely it is often mentioned that the local initiatives, the civil society organizations played a key role in the city’s life and in the development of tourism, so it is definitely worth analyzing these factors more thoroughly. The selection of this consideration is supported by the adjective of “spa town” inseparable from the image and aspect of the settlement, for which was much done by the local NGO-s and the network of private museums in present days, maybe because they recognized their own interests, on the other hand, sometimes being altruistic, sacrificing the “lake-cult”.

The biggest attraction of spa towns is given undoubtedly by their baths, but the cultural offerings in the neighbourhood are also not incidental, which are especially appreciated in cloudy or windy days. The operation of the

civil societies at the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, and of the private museum-network in present days in Keszthely is a good example that the attempts to preserve the cultural offer, and even expand it, could be successful.

In the first part of this study we would like to review the objectives and functioning of those civil associations on the turn of the century which greatly contributed to the maintaining and increasing of the city's tourist attraction. The research – beyond the bibliographical sources – is primarily relied on archival sources. However, we tried to use the data and aspects of the literature besides the documents relating to the Boating Society, the Skating Society, the City Beautification Association, the Keszthely Social Circle, the railway plans affecting Keszthely, the pavement constructions and the magistrate loans, the theatrical life of Keszthely, and the records of the Balaton Spa conducting the majority of the bathing turnover of the city. The archival materials are mainly related to the actual operation, the documents detailing the objectives and undertaken tasks of the associations are only a small part of the material, therefore highlighting and analyzing their ideas about the tourism in Keszthely was not an easy task. By studying the records of the associations' meetings and other documents the researcher can often face the fact that the authors slightly tended to exaggerate the importance and influence on the magistrate's of their own organization. It can be observed – probably because of the healthy local patriotism – especially in the documents dealing with the possibilities, the values and importance of Keszthely, so source criticism was especially important during the research.

Unfortunately, besides the sources of the archives those data also cannot be fully accepted which we can find and read in the contemporary statistical year books. The magistrate of Keszthely replied to the ump-

teenth request of the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office in 1900 that he cannot make the details of the guest numbers available to the office because this kind of data are not registered in a large village. Later they provided some data, however, it is not likely that they are concerned the whole settlement, only the Balaton Spa with the highest turnover. During the analysis of the documents we tried to gauge the real importance – affecting even on tourism –, their targets and their ideas to boost the tourism in Keszthely of the civil associations. The available statistical data relating to Keszthely were compared to the data of other lakeside towns and the results are to present graphically by using diagrams.

In the second part of our study – as being one of the unique private initiatives in present days – we attempt to present a network of establishing and operating seven private museums, which shows many similarities in operation, even in its objectives, to the former civil associations, though there are also individual characteristics. The cultural offer of Keszthely is so rich that the followings questions can be raised: Is it worth establishing further museums, attractions in a settlement? Do these new facilities not jeopardize the attendance of the existing cultural offer? Are the features of this private initiative identical or similar to the civil associations at the turn of the century, and what are the key differences in the goals and in operation? We tried to answer these questions by means of the available statistics, a qualitative interview with the establisher of the museum and the data of a questionnaire survey in four languages – Hungarian, German, Russian and English.

RESULTS

Despite the considerable support of the Festetics family, the continuous work of the magistrate and the proximity of Hévíz Keszthely lost the competition among the bathing resorts at Lake Balaton by the turn

of the century, especially against Siófok. Keszthely was recorded on the 12th place among the baths in the Kingdom of Hungary by the Statistical Yearbook in 1900 – there were more frequented baths in other parts of the

bath – but the difference between Siófok and Keszthely is more outstanding regarding the number of the temporary guests (7640:1542, almost five-fold) – who have spent less than a week but at least one night at the bath – or the

Table 1. Guest traffic of notable spas in Hungary in 1900

Spa resort	Ranking	Permanent guests		Permanent altogether	Temporary guests		Temporary altogether	Altogether
		Domestic	Foreign		Domestic	Foreign		
Herkulesfürdő	1.	2657	4694	7351	1787	590	2377	9728
Bártfa	4.	2815	105	2920	578	95	673	3593
Balatonfüred	5.	2727	117	2844	1694	403	2097	4941
Siófok	6.	2630	68	2698	7592	48	7640	10338
Hévíz	9.	1566	24	1590	104	0	104	1694
Keszthely	12.	1212	142	1354	1415	127	1542	2896
Balatonföldvár	23.	770	20	790	231	11	242	1032
Almádi	26.	703	0	703	647	0	647	1350
Parád	35.	509	1	510	646	8	654	1164
Fonyód	58.	309	0	309	24	2	26	335

Source: made by Törzsök A. 2010. Data based on page 64 of the Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1900. Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1901

Dual Monarchy – based on the tourist traffic but it was already overtaken by Balatonfüred (5th place), Siófok (6th place), and even the near Hévíz (9th place) and it was able to precede just Balatonföldvár, Almádi and Fonyód from

total number of guests (which is 10338:2896, more than three and a half times).

Siófok had already preceded Balatonfüred in the next decade regarding the number of perma-

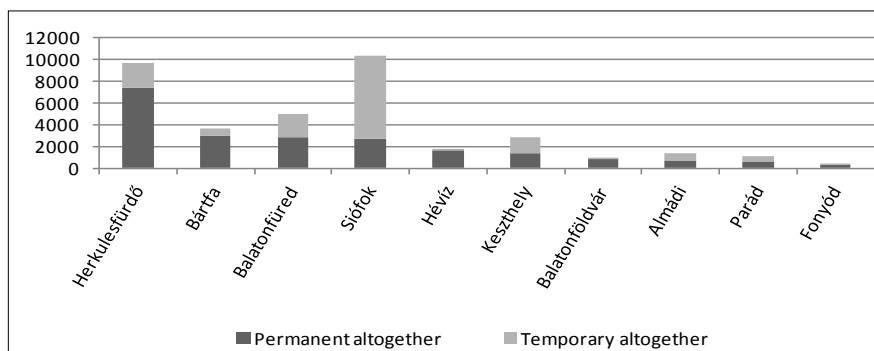


Figure 1. Permanent and temporary guest of the notable Hungarian bathing areas in 1900

(Source: made by TÖRZSÖK A. 2010. Data based on page 64 of the Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1900. Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1901)

the major lake-shore settlements (Table 1). The placing of the Statistical Yearbook was based mainly on the number of permanent guests – who have spent at least a week at the

permanent guests but Keszthely failed to significantly improve its occupied position in the tourism. The indicators used in present days in tourism cannot be projected back to the turn of 19th and

20th century because of lack of funds but we can determine – based on the data of table 1 – how many was *the minimal number* of the guest nights, so we can grasp the changes in travel habits in connection to each bathing resort. The sum of the number of permanent guests seven times and the number of temporary guests should be divided by the total number of guests; so the average number of nights spent in Keszthely in 1900 is at least 3,8. This number was undoubtedly higher in Balatonfüred (4,45), and lower in Siófok (2,56). At the turn of the century the changing of travel habits had already been noticeable, there has been a growing part of the temporary visitors, who spent less than a week at a bath, in the guest turnover (Figure 1).

Keszthely could not be regarded as the capital or metropolis of Lake Balaton even in 1900 regarding the guest turnover, though the number of permanent residents, its cultural offerings, the rich history of the town and its urban nature undoubtedly gave reasons for the use of these slogans. Keszthely's share in complete tourism of the fifteen lakeside bath was 11% in 1900, but the rapid growth of Siófok can already be felt in that period of time, which was primarily possible because of the railway line in the opinion of the magistrate in Keszthely.

Keszthely had almost everything from the determining features of tourism such as the natural resources, infrastructure, the existence of quality accommodation, the quantity and quality of gastronomic and other supplementary services, the favourable value proportionally to money and discounts at the turn of the century, although there were things to improve both on the accommodation and bathing establishments which was admitted by the local inhabitants, though some were hoping for additional revenue from the expansion of the target audience .

The establishments and facilities necessary to ensure the main services – hotel and bath – were operated by the town at the turn of the century, and the magistrate let out the two island-baths including 140 dressing cabins, special baskets created for young children and a lifeguard to tenants. There were two hotels close to the baths; the one with higher standard - “a true palace”, the Hotel Balaton with 38 rooms was considered. Altogether 220 rooms were available for the visitors in Keszthely. The hotels were characterized by “good food and great wines” (Keszthely Bath III.).

The theatrical and musical performances were permanent and very important services in

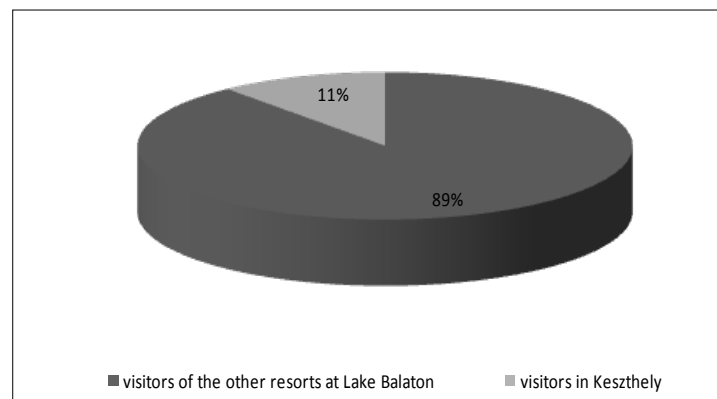


Figure 2. Share per cent of Keszthely in the visitors at Lake Balaton in 1900

(Source: made by TÖRZSÖK A. 2010. Data based on page 65 of the Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1900. Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1901)

the lakeside bathing resorts at the turn of the century. Keszthely was particularly a popular place for different theatre companies, though it had not had a permanent theatre yet, and the performances had had to hold in the great hall of one of the hotels – often in Hotel Hungary. Many itinerant troupes visited the town, including the company of Ernő Hídvégi which performed the pieces of the Comedy Theatre, the Hungarian Theatre and the National Theatre. Keszthely already had a permanent company at the turn of the century. Lajos Szalkay theatre director filed a petition to the Minister of Education, in which the magistrate ascertained that the “two other places at Lake Balaton, which are rather underpopulated and completely deserted apart from the season, Balatonfüred and Siófok – the latest with state aid – has long been boasting about their pretty theatres, which are excellent factors of the bathing life. And the reasons that due to Siófok had received a theatre aid are valid for Keszthely twice as much”. However, the “Honourable Minister” refused the allocation of the state aid in his reply “due to coverage difficulties.” (working in Keszthely...)

The Keszthely Beautifying Society was undoubtedly one of the earliest among the civil society organizations playing an important role in boosting tourism in Keszthely, the operation of which can be led back to 1863, but it was officially re-formed in 1889 on the initiative of the council – with 53 members – as “our city owns such a treasure in beauty of this region and water of the Lake Balaton, which is rare, if other cities can boast about and it is time not to let this treasure unused, but make it accessible and beneficial to ourselves and our country with joined forces” (documents of the Keszthely Beautification Society). The Keszthely Beautifying Society had its own concept of promoting tourism – even if it was not totally comprehensive. They wanted to maintain and increase the popularity of the spa through keeping the public

places in order, even renovating and beautifying the private houses. These objectives were fully consistent with the council’s visions; they were an important part of it. The Keszthely Beautifying Society had been very active. On one hand, it made suggestions for the council to keep, maintain, renovate or even buy some important building which could promote the town-image – for example the council had expropriated an area of 4206.36 square feet from seven owner by the initiative of the Society in 1897 –, on the other hand, it took a role in the work undertaken. The Society deposited most of its financial resources for the maintenance and renovation of the neglected buildings. The Society participated in the preparation of the town plans; in many cases it helped the decision-makers with development and installation plans, blueprints of individual houses and even with design drawings (documents of the Keszthely Beautification Society).

The founding of the Rowing Association in Keszthely brought along a new tourism-strengthening service in 1881. It “introduced firstly the boating sport in the Keszthely Bay” and “demonstrated by its work that it can provide enjoyable entertainment for both city-residents and spa guests” (documents of the Rowing Association). The association wanted to use up the “plain and unhealthy” part of the coast by leasing it from the town, and transferring it into a “nice place to stay” in 1891. Since 1891 the Rowing Association had served the interests of the town not only with water sport, but also with giving assistance to the steam-shiping at Lake Balaton. On the request of the steamship-company the association put the boats and servants (employed day-workers) of the association at the steamship-guests’ disposal for boarding and disembarkation, though it applied to the council for repaying its additional costs in the following year. However, the association contributed to bank up, organize and landscape the beach, its

main credit was held that “it is at the bathing guests’ disposal for excursions with a number of boats and keeps the hall of the port open in front of them for meeting, leisure and holiday activities”. It can be seen from the documents of the Rowing Association that even if it had no overall concept for boosting the tourism in Keszthely but it has undoubtedly contributed to the development of tourism in Keszthely by its operation (documents of the Rowing Association).

The Keszthely “Skater Clubb” was founded in November 1884 by the members of the Rowing Association. Its aim was to organize a new service important for tourism, or according to the rules of “Clubb”: “to give the members fun with physical training through skating and sledding.” The “Skater Clubb” – which had 17 members at the beginning, but 85 members next year – appointed one of the offices of the Boating Association out of use in winter as its residence, maintained its own ice skating rink, which the members were entitled to use “time as desired” alone or with their country-guests together, “and leave their skates, sledges and clothes in the club room to the servant’s custody for free of charge” (Skating Club papers). The impact of the new service on tourism could not have been particularly large, although it expanded the touristic offerings of Keszthely indisputably.

Like other associations, the Keszthely Social Circle was the meeting place of local intelligence, which was founded in 1885 by 59 members. It had 69 members in 1885-86, 62 members in 1886-87, and in 1922 count Gyula Zichy was also among its members. The social circle - which hired two rooms in a lodge – took also French and German newspapers in addition to other important civic and entertaining Hungarian newspapers (documents of the Keszthely Social Circle). The social circle was perhaps the only civil society organization with significant membership in Kesz-

thely, whose primary aim was not to boost the tourism industry but to ensure a meaningful recreation and public education. However, the social circle gave space for informal discussion of all the issues that affected Keszthely, so its impact on decision-makers, many of whom were permanent members, could not be negligible.

None of the acting associations in the large village had an overall concept of promoting the tourism, but in total they contributed to making the tourism in Keszthely more successful with their ideas and mainly with their actions. The Second World War put an end to the golden age of domestic tourism and its further development was re-started only in the Kadar era. Hungary and especially the Lake Balaton within were considered a special place in Europe divided by the Iron Curtain, both for the citizens in the West and the East. Hungary was if not a gate but at least a window to each other’s world for the citizens living in the free states of the western block and in the so-called Socialist Countries under Soviet influence. The first stage of German unification was done on the shore of Lake Balaton. The political leadership chose to develop camping tourism in particular – requiring little investment, though capable of accommodating many tourists – which proved to be particularly favourable for the westernmost Keszthely. From 1975 an area of 70 square feet was rented in the campsite of Keszthely by the World Federation of Hungarians, the Viennese Hungarian Cultural- and Sports-Association, the Viennese Hungarian Workers’ Association and also the Association of Hungarian School of Vienna. (Documents of the Zala County Tourist Office, 1979). Perhaps it is no coincidence that the first private camping was established also in Keszthely the Castrum Dr. Antal Réfi, president of the Hungarian Camping Association and owner of Castrum Camping recalled the opening as it follows. “The Castrum Camping of Keszthely

was to be made that he had heard on the radio that from now on it is allowed to build private campsites. We thought that nothing could be simpler, it should be demarcated and it is ready to go. So we started to do that. If we had known what it takes, obviously we would not even gone into it, but that's the past. In 1982 the first private campsite in the country was practically opened" (TÖRZSÖK A. 2011).

The private initiatives play an important role in tourism in Keszthely also in present days; this is clearly demonstrated by the network of seven private museums, of which the primary purpose is to expand the cultural offerings of the town. I would like to present the impact of this network has on tourism. The first member of the network was established in 1999, it was Central Europe's largest doll museum which was created in a former barn house purchased from the town and than reconstructed. Túri Török Tibor the founder of the museum - who was dealing with ethnographic research for decades - decided not to do a traditional ethnographic collection, but to show dolls dressed in traditional costumes, with ceramic and porcelain heads, hands, and legs, and fabric bodies. The museum material was collected with the help of civil cross-border cooperation so the certain ethnic costumes came from authentic locations, from their owners or their heirs. Many authentic folk costumes were sent from several villages, often after modifying the existing original dress, and adjusting it to the given size for the tender advertised on the columns of children's newspapers like the *Napsugár* in Cluj-Napoca, the *Írka* and others. Nearly half a thousand dolls present the folk costumes, clothes of craftsmen and the middle-class of the historical Hungary, the Transylvanian collection of 120 dolls is in two show-cases. The surplus attraction was given by the dolls, which made the basically ethnographic museum popular. It is really worth spending some time with the richly embroidered doll-miracles from

Kalotaszeg, dolls wearing the festive clothes of the Csangos of Hétfalu, the 150-year-old clothing of a Székely family of Kászonújfalu made of coarse linen and hemp yarn. On the third floor the visitor can look at the houses, churches, farm buildings of the dolls admired on the first two levels. The specific technology used to light the exhibition seeks to evoke the atmosphere of the villages too. The site also has a collection of historical ship-models with local connection, like the salt-carrier Phoenix of Fenékpusztá from the 18th century, the luxury ship called Stella, the Juditta, a cart-carrier ferry, and even the warship of Bori Antal, who was the ship-carpenter of György Festetics, was built - though scaled down. This in itself resulted in the undeniable increase of the cultural offers in Keszthely; on the other hand the final place of the "Snail Parliament" in 1999 was next door to the Doll Museum which is a unique model in the world since it was made of 4.5 million snail-shells of the Pannonian Sea during 14 years. The creation of Ilona Miskei is the model of the neo-Gothic Parliament building unveiled in 1896, which is seven meters long and 2.5 meters high and was built from 28 million-year old prehistoric sea-(nautical) remains from different mines in the country.

The Historical Wax Museum opened in 2000 presents the great figures of the Hungarian history from prince Árpád, through King Saint Stephen I., Saint Margaret of the House of Árpád, King Louis the Great, John Hunyadi the champion over the Turks and his son, King Matthias I, Sándor Petőfi the poet to József Mindszenty Archbishop. The costumes are not only beautiful but also faithful to the era, so the historical figures are a real tourist attraction.

In connection with the two new museums the professionals, of course, raised the question whether it is worth opening new museums in Keszthely, which is - in terms of cultural

offerings – undoubtedly have the right to be proclaimed the capital of Balaton. The answer can be clearly seen by the following data.

steady increase over the same period, the new museum did not weaken the turnover of the first one and proved that it may be

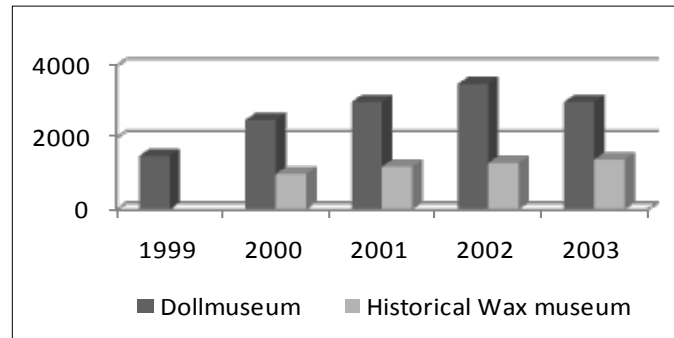


Figure 3. Attendance of private museums in Keszthely 1999-2003

(Source: made by TÖRZSÖK A.-GYURICZA L. 2013 based on data of the museum)

The diagram above reflects the number of tickets sold, not the actual number of visitors. The number of visitors is about a third higher because some groups – such as Hungarians beyond the borders, socially disadvantaged etc. – can visit the museums free of charge. The Traditionally-clothed Doll Museum together with the Snail Parliament sold already 1500 tickets in its year of opening (Whitsun of 1999) and it could also increase the number of (paying) visitors with 500 people every year until 2002, but it sold 3000 tickets also in 2003. The number of the paying visitors of the Historical Wax Museum opened in 2000 also showed a

worth establishing a new museum, attraction even in a settlement with rich cultural offerings like Keszthely.

A new museum was created in the neighbourhood of the previous two facilities in 2004, showcasing mainly medieval tortures, the Horrorarium (Torture Museum). The Torture Museum shows the instruments of torture – tormenting-interrogating tools and criminal methods – in a proven way, with wax figures in genre-paintings.

The new museum became popular especially among young people while the Doll Museum and the Historical Wax Museum preferred

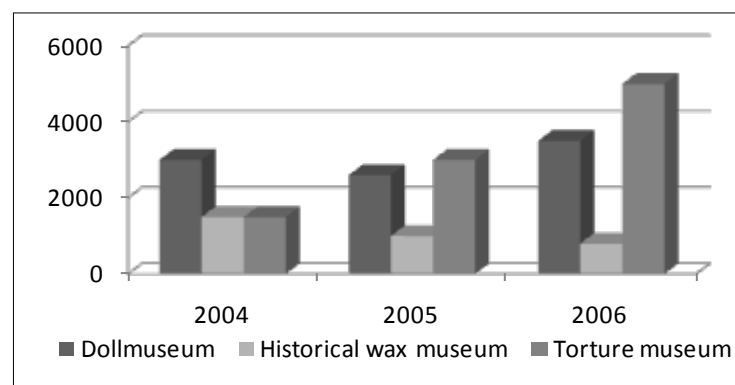


Figure 4. Attendance of private museums in Keszthely 2004-2006

(Source: made by TÖRZSÖK A.-GYURICZA L. 2013 based on data of the museums)

by families with small children became a constant program of school trips. The Torture Museum found its own audience, which is evidenced by the attendance figures.

There was no significant decline in the number of paying visitors of the Traditionally-clothed Doll Museum in the period of 2004-2006; 3000 tickets were sold in 2004, 2600 tickets were sold in 2005, and 3500 tickets were sold in 2006. The number of the paying visitors of Historical Wax Museum dropped from 1500 to 800 people, while the number of visitors in the Torture Museum was 1500 in 2004, 3000 in 2005, and 5000 in 2006. Overall, in 2006 the private museum network attracted more visitors than ever before.

In 2007 the network was expanded with a new museum of Erotic Wax Museum, which primarily focuses on renaissance erotic fantasies. The silicone figures - of about two dozen, which were made by the sculptor candidates of the Academy of Fine Arts and university students were modelled - are lifelike, almost perfectly look like real people with real skin. The museum points out its novelty and "bold naturalism" in its advertisements, perhaps this is the reason that it found its audience.

In the period of 2007-2009 the popularity of the Doll Museum, the Historical Wax Museum and the Torture Museum continued, though undoubtedly the year of 2007 proved to be the busiest. (The Doll Museum had 4000, the Historical Wax Museum had 1100, and the Torture Museum had 6500 paying visitors.) The attendance data of the Erotic Wax Museum were very modest at this time, but a dynamic growth can be observed. (In 2007 there were 500 paying visitors, 700 visitors in 2008, and 800 in 2009)

In 2010, the network expanded with another museum, perhaps the largest toy museum in Europe, the Vidorka Toy Museum which presented nearly 10.000 toys in its opening, but the collection has now exceeded 15.000 pieces as well. The museum is supposedly lived up to its expectations, as the number of paying visitors began to increase slowly and it is still popular.

In 2010 400 tickets were sold, 500 tickets in 2011 and in 2012 800 tickets were sold. In 2011, the network of the private museums increased with Nostalgia Museum, which is admittedly a Kitsch Museum as well. In this museum those objects are also displayed which were in use not so long ago such as a snuffers, the charcoal iron, the cylinder music camp or a camping

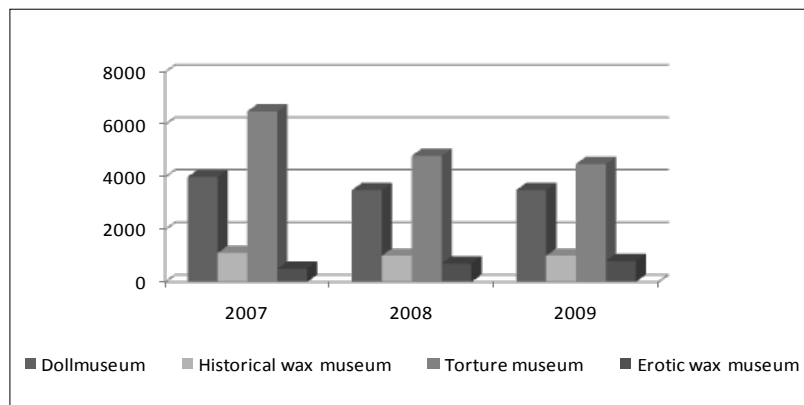


Figure 5. Attendance of private museums in Keszthely 2007-2009
(Source: made by TÖRZSÖK A.- GYURICZA L. 2013 based on data of the museums)

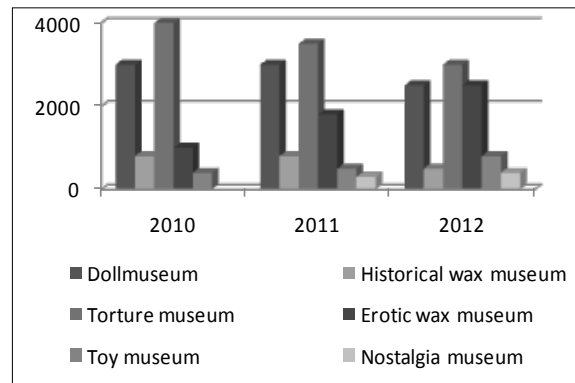


Figure 6. Attendance of private museums in Keszthely 2010-2012

(Source: made by TÖRZSÖK A.- GYURICZA L. 2013 based on data of the museums)

coffee maker. The number of paying visitors of the Nostalgia Museum is also increasing, 400 tickets were sold in 2011, but 500 already in 2012. In the period between 2010 and 2012, the Traditionally-clothed Doll Museum could retain most of its paying visitors, while the attendance of the Torture Museum and the Historical Wax Museum decreased slightly. The number of the visitors of the Erotic Wax Museum increased, though. (There were 1000 paying visitors in 2010, 1800 paying visitors in 2011, and 2500 paying visitors in 2012)

SUMMARY

Overall, the private museum network attracted 1.500 paying visitors in 1999, 9.700

people in 2012, however, 12.100 visitors in the best business year, in 2007. The number of paying visitors proved the viability of the different museums next-door each other. The museums are located around the downtown shopping precinct immediately, but the theme of the exhibitions – though the local historical interest is undisputed – is fundamentally different than in other museums in Keszthely, so it is no threat to their attendance.

The large-scale youth-surveys have shown that young people aged 15 to 29 go sensibly less to museums, exhibitions, and that is true for all age groups (Table 2), so it is particularly important that the private museum network is also able to reach out to young

Table 2. Monthly or more frequently visited institutions in 2004 and 2008, by age group and in percentage

Monthly or more frequently visited institutions	15-19 year olds		20-24 year olds		25-29 year olds	
	2004	2008	2004	2008	2004	2008
Year	2004	2008	2004	2008	2004	2008
Bookshop	28	17	34	21	33	18
Library	41	31	33	24	20	14
Cinema, multiplex	40	25	38	22	28	18
Theatre	11	7	8	5	8	4
Video-, DVD hire shop	28	12	28	12	22	11
Museum, exhibition	15	7	14	6	12	5

(Source: Bauer B., Budapest, 2011, 227.p.)

people with its topic-selection and the form of the presentation.

There is an unambiguous comparison in relation to the objectives between the private initiative, operator of seven private museums, and the civil associations operating at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. It is a common goal to boost the tourism of Keszthely; on the other hand, local patriotism - in a good sense - is also a common characteristic, which the exhibits of local connection refer to in the private museums as well. The existence of extensive collaboration is also a common feature. Collaboration was needed to create the Traditionally-clothed Doll Museum or the Historical Wax Museum as

well as for the activity of the Beautification Society or the Boating Association; however, there is a fundamental difference in the choice of the organizational form. Instead of a civil association, the private museum network is a business enterprise as well, which also keeps some social values in view during its operation, as the associations of the turn of the century. The private museums can be visited free of charge for the socially disadvantaged, the young members of boarding-schools, the honorary guests of Keszthely, groups of Hungarians who remained outside our borders, living in minority in their country, and for the participants of competitions and other events organized in the town.

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