THE HISTORICAL AND TOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF THE SZEJKE BATHING RESORT FROM ODORHEIU SECUIESC

ISTORICUL ŞI POTENŢIALUL TURISTIC AL STAŢIUNII BĂILE SZEJKE DIN ODORHEIU SECUIESC

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Abstract: *In the 1900s Odorheiu Secuiesc was called the city of balneary resorts. In the past as well as in the present the Szejke Bath represents a major tourist. It offers the benefits of an original natural landscape endowed with some remarkable places to visit, such as the tomb of Orban Balazs which is an artistic monument; the szekler gates exhibition which reflects various aspects of the traditional and authentic Szekler folklore; the open air stage which has been the scene of the Folk Festival showing the living traditions of the Szekler culture; the greatest and permanent exhibition is that of mineral water and bath; Hydro geological Reservation- The Moss of Szejke Bat.*

Key words: *touristic potential, tourist attraction, balneary and climatic effects.*

INTRODUCTION

As we examine the history of the city Odorheiu Secuiesc we can state that in the 1900s it was known as a city of balneary baths. The Szejke Bath is situated in the city of Odorheiu Secuiesc, near the road toward Sovata, at 504 above sea level. The resort also known as „Szejker Bad" belongs to the green region of the city having balneary and climatic effects. The mineral water tastes like „petrol" and it is rich in iron and sulphuric acid.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of the present paper used the following research methods: collecting data, processing, the analysis of the data and drawing conclusions

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ethnographers say that the word „SZEJKE" means cloudy water. Supposedly it was discovered in 1766 by a shepherd who, during he gave water to his sheep, washed his ill legs in the water and miraculously got healed. The mineral water used to be kept in jugs and transported in the city by cart.

In 1850 on the Szejke Bath area there was a pool with walls made of trellis.

Orbán Balázs (1829-1890), writer, historian, ethnographer, publicist, photographer and public figure, who is considered to be „the greatest among the szekler community" bought a 22ha property in 1871 (1866-1890) on which the baths were renovated taking in consideration the special requirements of that age, and soon they became very popular. He also organized the transportation of mineral water in other towns by carts and using specific jugs. (Photo 1.)

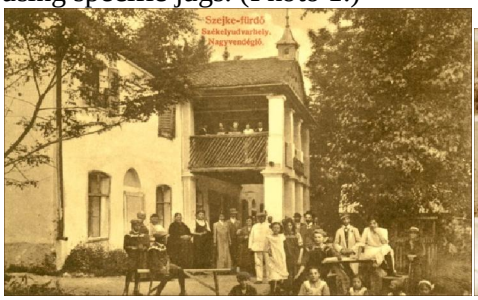


Photo 1. Old photo



Photo 2. Old photo

The greatest period of the Szejke Bath is closely linked with Orban Balazs who proved to be a good organizer and a talented architect. He built termal spas, restaurants and a hotel in order to establish the grounds for a well thought turism. (Photo 2.)

Through the analysis of the land registry book number 200 of the city Sambatesti we learn that on the 17th of August 1927 the Szejke Bath Resort became the property of the Bokor Carol and Gyarmathy Anna couple. Then on the 11th of January 1947 through donation this property passes in favor of Bokor Carol and Dr. Bokor Zoltan. In 1945 through sounding up to 182, 5 meters a mixture of methane gas, carbon dioxid and salt was found.

On the basis of the document number 1431 from the 3rd of September 1959 the District People's Council according to decree number

308/1953 registers the right of property upon all apartments with title of nationalization in favor of the Romanian state.

The water of the main spring from Szejke, (Sarolta spring)which has stone paving and above it there is a building, used to be transported in town by two carts drawn by buffalos and later only by one cart. The numbered jugs made of clay hung on the edge of the guest's gates and the noise made by the carts awarded the town with a special atmosphere, that of the beginning of the century. Later the buffaloes were replaced by tractors and after the installation of the potable water system this image of the city and these memories disappeared. In 1971 in the place of the well the city rebuilt the Mofette.

Nowadays the Baths are in the property of the State the main administrator being the city of Odorheiu Secuiesc. The land, where the mineral water spring number 3 is located, is given to the Haaz Rezso Museum.

Nowadays the Szejke Baths have got three mineral water springs with balneary and climatic effects. The mineral water tastes like „petrol" and it is rich in iron and sulphuric acid.

The Szjeke spring (Sarolta spring) with carbonated water, rich in Ca, Na ions, total dry residues of 2327,84 mg/kg is used as table water. It can be used in the treatment of hipostenic Dispepsis. .

The Orbán Balázs (Attila spring) spring with carbonated water with sulphurides rich in Na ions total dry residues of 3097 mg/kg, with a yield of 20 l/min. This is used for warm tub-baths with 11 tubs for curative purposes and in gastro-intestinal or hepato-bilial problems. It is also good for osteo-articulation diseases and gynaecological problems.(Table 1.)

Spring number 3 with carbonated water, light sulphuride content, alkaline ions, total dry residues of 2948 mg/kg, with a yield of 9,5 l/minut. The mineral water of spring number 3 can be used in internal treatments and for the cure of the digestive system and hepato-biliar diseases.

Table 1.

The chemical composition of the Orbán Balázs spring

Anionic		**mg/l**	**Cationic**			**Other**		
Chlor	Cl-	1794,1	Natrium	Na+	1102,2	Sulphuric Acid	H_2S	2,83
Iodine	I-	0,04	Kalium	K+	19,6		$SiOH_2$	12,179
Fluor	F-	3,07	Litiu	Li+	1,61	Dry residue		3907,0

Sulphuric	SO_4 --	26,31	Calcium	Ca++	254,1
Bicarbonic	HCO_3-	898,3	Magneziu m	Mg++	53,82
	S_2O_3	2,7	Iron	Fe++	2,89
			Mangan	Mn++	0,4

At Szejke Baths there are mixed muds for a large variety of treatments.

There are no medical facilities, there are warm baths with 11 bathtubs, there are open air baths with dimensions of 16 /33 m. (Photo 3.)



Photo 3. Baths with dimensions

The Szejke Bath region has got incontestable touristic potential. It offers the benefits of an original natural landscape endowed with some remarkable places to visit, such as the tomb of Orban Balazs the folk costume exhibition; the open air stage; The Mineral Water and Bath Museum; Hydrogeological Reservation- The Moss of Szejke Bath.

The tomb of Orban Balazs is considered to be an artistic monument according to the registry of monuments of Harghita county (1992). The last wish of the great historian Orban Balazs was to be burried near Szejke Baths. In the period of World War I. the tomb was destroyed and robbed. Orban Balazs was reburied but the new tombs didn't prove to be lasting. In the present the place is marked by a monument made of rock representing Orban Balazs. The monument was made by the sculptor Orban Aron in 1969. (Photo 5.)

The aim of establishing the szekler gates exhibition was to preserve and show the ornamental popular art. It was possible to build the szekler gates with the help of many people who love popular art and the Haaz Rezso Museum from Odorheiu Secuiesc. Near the tomb the first gate

belonged to Orban Balazs and it was carved in 1888 and brought to Szejke Bath. Under the arch of the gate we can go for a walk to the tomb of the great szekler.



Photo 4. The szekler gates



Photo 5. The tomb of Orban Balazs



Photo 6. Open air stage

The oldest gate is about 200 years old and comes from the neighbouring village Fenyed (Bradesti- the first city on the national road to Miercurea Ciuc), according to the carving from 1818. This period was the period of peaceful buildings, it was possible to put out 13 gates, 9 of which are from the 19th century. (Photo 4.)

On this area there is also an open air stage where the Szejke Folk Festival is held and through which the living, authentic szekler folk tradition is brought to life. This event is organized every year in June and it is an interesting manifestation. (Photo 6.)

In 2008 the greatest and permanent mineral water exhibition was opened-The Bath and Mineral Water Museum. A lot of old jugs and carts are exhibited, and one can follow the process of how mineral water is produced. The visitors can also taste the sulphuric water of the Sarolta spring.





Photo 7,8. The Bath and Mineral Water Museum

In the present the mofette and the healing mud aren't exploited. The Szejke Bath functions as a pool with two tubs and a bath with warm water. The moss of Szejke Bath is a reservation of the hydrogeologic type. On the territory of 2 ha between the mineral water spring and hot bath there is a 28000 meter moss through which a lot of mineral water springs flow. The

moss was discovered in 1901 and it is under environmental protection having a great variety and specific vegetation of mud and slop.

CONCLUSIONS

I consider that the city of Odorheiu Secuiesc disposes of a complex touristic potential which is known on a national scale.

The city of Odorheiu Secuiesc, the Szejke Bath region has always been a place where tourism was practiced and it is mainly popular for its mineral water springs which have therapeutic effects. The mineral water can also be used as table water being good for different treatments.

The Szejke Bath region can be part of the touristic attractions from Romania and also Europe through promoting the Szejke Baths as touristic balneary station on European level. This can be achieved also through the redevelopment of the place, he modernization of the material needs for the treatment area and the development of the touristic potential of the hydrogeological Reservation-The Moss of the Szejke Bath.

Gifted with a special touristic potential which is varied and diversified through the different landforms, the favourable climate for practicing tourism almost all year, a great fauna and flora rich in species and unique in Europe with natural balneary curing factors, the Szejke Bath is a cultural patrimony-a historical and architectural reference on a global scale.

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