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Editor's Note

The *Annual of Oral History* celebrates this year its 20th anniversary. Since 1997 when we got our first journal, it has been a long and exciting, albeit sometimes difficult endeavor to consistently offer to Romanian and international public original, root-based oral historical research. This was the red line that connected and gave coherence to issues across all years. Moreover, AOH tried to coherently approach in each publication relevant topics for Romanian society, by connecting them to international scholar debates. Thus, themes such as anti-communist resistance, the memory of the Holocaust in Romania, World War II, the oral history of different minorities, including the Roma, gold mining, and so on, have been tackled in special issues all these years. It has been a complex agenda which connects researchers' interests of at the Oral History Institute to main international debates such as the historiographical debate on the soviet history between the totalitarian and (post)revisionist schools, discussions on history, memory and remembrance, micro-history, history from below, history of marginal, orality, narrativity and representation, or gender. Consistent with this editing pattern, and complementing the previous AOH issue, the 20th number brings together five articles on the history of gold mining in the Apuseni Mountains resulting from research funded by the Ministry of Research and Innovation, CNCS – UEFISCDI, number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0874, within PNCDI III, contract no. 150/2017.

The research partially presented in this AOH issue aimed, firstly, to (re)construct miners' lived history and the history of gold exploitation in the Apuseni Mountains through life stories and interpretation of past artifacts. In this regard, it was based, on one hand, on a re-constitutive and analytical approach, that is mining history both as end and beginning of a cycle. On the other hand, the researchers looked at the imaginary and representations of the past as materialized in the memory of miners and communities they belong to. In the collective imaginary, gold acquired during the last century ethical and symbolic values which developed into a so-called "gold mythology" frozen in exemplary life stories and events, also mirrored by the negative mythology coming from long term (pre)Christian ethos; the representations by human beings: its magnetism, its curse, its social and economic role, as well as spiritual, ethical and professional values.

Secondly, the articles published here investigate traditional mining, revealing family and community strategies for economic survival, by pointing out continuities and discontinuities throughout history. The researchers scrutinized and tried to reconstruct miners' biographies and evaluate the economic and cultural status of this profession. Moreover, they analyze the perceived impact of "great history" events and phenomena upon the individual and familiar miner biographies such as modernization, industrialization, wars, reforms, political regimes, strikes, revolutions, etc. Last, but not least, the authors deal with the economic strategies and identity negotiation in the miners' world at the crossroads of tradition and modernization/industrialization: the miner profession in urban and rural areas, agricultural

occupations which double the peasant mining of gold washing technique.

The studies aim at connecting the history research the gold mining to recent analytical key instruments employed by recent international historiographical debates: (im)material cultural heritage, collaboration and resistance, gender roles in practicing the profession/craftsmanship as well as in miners' communities, modernization, minorities, environment and landscape, resistance, and migration. Some of the methodological questions addressed are: What are the continuities and discontinuities of gold mining in different epochs? How are the male and female experiences related to mining different? How the transformation of craftsmanship into a profession occurred? What was the impact of modernization on mining and miners' communities? What was the impact of mining on the environment and how the landscape changed within the *longue durée*? How is mining represented in individual recollections about the past? What was the impact of migration on gold mining?

To answer these questions, most articles use both archival and secondary sources as well as oral history interviews recorded between 2017 and 2019 in the gold mining areas of Alba and Hunedoara counties. Organized chronologically according to the time span covered, AOH opens with the work by Luminița Ignat-Coman, "Gold Mining in Transylvania in Modern Period," with a focus on the much-debated area of Roșia Montană. The author analyses how the technical innovations slowly and gradually changed not only the mining but local communities in general. The author provides a very useful overview of the central and local legislation on mines

during the period under scrutiny. A particularly interesting examination is made on work-related grievances, doubled by the nationalistic ones given the work ethnic segregation. The author concludes that "the modern era witnessed the steady and significant growth of gold mining in Transylvania."

Second, in the article "Work and Workmanship: Gold Mining at Gura Barza in the Latter Half of the 20th Century" Ioana Ursu shows how, when oral history reflects people's professions, unique information about the employee's daily routine, the tasks and working conditions, professional solidarity, job risks, leisure, and the troubles in combining work and family come to light. The article exploits 14 oral history interviews taken during a field campaign conducted in 2019 in Hunedoara County, with former miners or employees in technical or adjacent professions in the Gura Barza mining company. Moreover, the study explores how the attraction of the labor force from the town of Brad and surrounding villages, as well as the nature of the mining profession, have created professional solidarity and specific identities. Last, but not least, Ioana-Zoia Ursu offers a new perspective on work routines in the mine, the ethical values of the workers in the context of political changes, and technical developments in gold mining exploitation in Romania in the 20th century.

The third study is by Dr. Adrian Boda and is called "Gold Mining Accidents: Musariu Mine Fire in the Collective Memory." The author addressed one recurring topic in the recorded oral history interviews, i.e. work accidents. In the mines, accidents have been constant, depending on the type of activities and the environment in which they take place, as favoring or inhibiting factors for

their occurrence. Although their recurrence is higher in coal mines, work accidents have also occurred in the mining of precious metals. The author discusses how the Musariu mine fire is recalled by those who lived the event. There are two dimensions outlined in the remembering process, the first being the individual, of those who were directly involved in this tragic event. Secondly, there is a collective perspective on the tragedy, as the solidarity of mining communities in such situations is well-known. This case-study is privileged in terms of available sources, as the author confronts oral history testimonies, such for example the one by Nicolae Man – former deputy of the Electromechanical section of the Barza mining enterprise at the time of the fire – with archival documents, i.e. sketches and minutes related to the accident.

Ionela Bogdan brings the gender analysis to the fore in her study called "Feminine Narratives of Gold Mining in the Apuseni Mountains. An Oral History Research." In exploiting the life-stories of women living in gold mining communities, the author highlights elements such as dynamics and marital rules, gender relations, domestic financial management in miners' families, or the gendered labor division. The article also discusses the everyday life dynamic, namely the ways women reflect on, in the context of the control by the communist authorities. This appeal to memory is necessary to underline the strategies used by miners and their families to adapt to a world of a centralized economy, in which power relations change and rules of survival inevitably emerge.

The fifth contribution to the volume "Personal Mythmaking. Life Story Interviews of Former Employees at Barza Mining Company," by Călin-Andrei Olariu,

addresses the issue of life story interviews with former employees of Barza Mining Company. He analyzes the various, subjective ways in which witnesses build their life stories from different experiences and perspectives. The author tries to answer the question Why is it important for the interviewee to construct his life story in this way? to identify different ways in which the socialist past is interpreted and represented in post-socialism.

In the Varia section, Diana-Alexandra Nistor presents an extraordinary life-story in the article “A Story of a Century. War, Peace and the Everyday Life of a Roma War Veteran in Transylvania”. Augustin Poțo's biography is an example of how oral history can bring to the fore not only voices of ordinary people but of members of minority communities usually totally silent in the academic discourse.

Our younger colleague Andrei Dălălau wrote an excellent book review on Ioan Stanomir' book “La Centenar. Recitind secolul României Mari,” published in 2018. The last section of the volumes contains a series of photographs taken during the fieldwork campaigns in miners' communities as well as several images from the archives, documenting the Musariu mine fire. The current AOH issue closes with the list of contributors, which provide basic information about the authors, their institutional affiliation, and research interests.

Our final remarks are for the 250 people in gold mining communities in the Apuseni Mountains whom we interviewed, their families, and friends who understood the importance of recording their life-stories to preserve the memories and representations of the past for present and future. The research results presented here were possible

due to their availability, and to the assistance we receive from two extraordinary people who guided us throughout our fieldwork towards key people in the mining communities, i.e. Dr. Livia Coroi and Mr. Nicolae Pantea.

Gold Mining in Transylvania in Modern Period¹

Abstract: The article focuses on gold-mining in Transylvania, more precisely in the major gold-mining center of Roșia Montană, in the modern era. It discusses the intense dynamic of this industry, which involved the steady introduction of new technologies, the improvement of the technologies already in use, the opening of new mineshafts, and the upgrade of the old ones. Furthermore, the article shortly analyses the mining legislation in the province, emphasizing that it made this industrial sector more coherent and efficient. Throughout the modern era there were also many work-related grievances, all of them doubled by national grievances given the ethnic segregation of work in the mines. Based on the analysis, the article concludes that the modern era witnessed the steady and significant growth of gold-mining in Transylvania.

¹ This work was supported by a grant of Ministry of Research and Innovation, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0874, within PNCDI III, contract no. 150/2017.

Keywords: gold mining, Roșia Montană, Transylvania, modern era, legislation, technological progress.

Context

The Auriferous Quadrangle has been the main gold source of the Apuseni Mountains.² Due to its alpine geography and landscape and its well-known history, both as a Romanian land and as a major mining site, this is a sacred region, directly linked to the Romanian and European mining history. Geologist Fratišek Pošepný first described the region as a triangle, spanning from Hălmațiu in the NW to Baia de Arieș in the NE and to Săcărâmb in the South.³ Subsequently, the region was described by geologist Karl V. Papp and German engineer Fr. Schumacher as an irregular quadrangle extending on the NE-SW axis from Baia de Arieș to Căraci, from there on towards South-East, to Săcărâmb, and then back towards NE, encompassing Zlatna and all the other townships up to the departing point, Baia de Arieș. Besides, Fr. Schumacher has created quite a detailed map of the region mines, which includes the corresponding townships.⁴ The

² Horea Ciugudean, “Roșia Montană. Patrimoniu abandonat” *Roșia Montană. An Abandoned Patrimony*. in *Revista 22*, no. 875 (15 December 2006 - 21 December 2006) brochure available online http://www.cdep.ro/img/rosiam/pdfs/rev22_RM_sup.pdf, last visited on 15.05.2019.

³ Iosif Marin Balog, *Mirajul aurului. Economie și societate în patruleterul aurifer al Apusenilor. (The Mirage of Gold. Economy and Society in the Auriferous Quadrangle of the Apuseni Mountains). 1750-1914*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 28-29.

Work and Workmanship: Gold Mining at Gura Barza in the Latter Half of the 20th Century¹

Abstract: The large absorption of workforce at the “Gura Barza” Enterprise that attracted local residents of Brad town and the neighbouring villages, as well as the risk-taking nature of the mining profession generated professional solidarities and specific identities, which our paper proposes to explore. Through the help of oral history, our analysis will simultaneously follow the professional routine of those working in the mine, their work and their personal ethics, in an attempt to replenish the perspective on gold mining in the latter half of the 20th century, under the impact of technical and political change, starting from the case of the “Gura Barza” enterprise in Brad.

Keywords: professional monographs, gold miners’ biographies, safety measures, gold exploitation, mining techniques.

¹ This work was supported by a grant of Ministry of Research and Innovation, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0874, within PNCDI III, contract no. 150/2017.

Gold Mining Accidents: Musariu Mine Fire in the Collective Memory¹

Abstract: In the mining industry, accidents are a constant and miners are well aware of the dangers that threaten their safety. Although serious accidents occur more often in coal mines, they have also occurred in gold mines. The most notorious gold mining-related disaster happened in Certej, on October 30, 1971, when the collapse of a tailings dam resulted in 89 casualties and at least 76 people injured. Another tragic event, which took place underground, happened on January 3, 1973, at the Musariu mine - Hârnic central shaft. As a result of a fire that broke out during the second shift, 10 miners lost their lives and another 28 suffered severe intoxication due to carbon monoxide poisoning. This article discusses how the accident at the Musariu mine is recalled by those who experienced the event from different angles. Oral history interviews outlined two major dimensions of the testimony, the first being the individual, personal one, of those who were directly

¹ This work was supported by a grant of Ministry of Research and Innovation, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0874, within PNCDI III, contract no. 150/2017.

involved in this tragic event. The second dimension is represented by the collective perspective on the tragedy, as it is known that mining communities show extraordinary solidarity in such circumstances. Another interesting aspect of our research is the confrontation of the oral testimonies with the archive document to obtain a complete perspective over the causes, the evolution and the aftermath of this disaster.

Keywords: gold mining, disaster, Musariu gold mine, communism, Romania, oral history, collective memory.

The mining industry is one of the most important, but at the same time one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. The hazards of mining activities are a constant both for the men directly involved in underground works and for the communities located close to mining facilities. Disasters like Aberfan² or Buffalo Creek³

² The Aberfan Disaster was one of the worst coal mining-related disasters in the history of Great Britain. On 21 October 1966, after a period of heavy rain, a colliery spoil tip suffered a catastrophic collapse and slid downhill killing 116 children and 28 adults in Pantglas Junior School and nearby buildings in Aberfan, South Wales. For more information see: Gaynor Madgwich, *Aberfan – A Story of Survival, Love and Community in one of Britain’s Worst Disaster*, Y Loyfa Cyf Publishing, 2018; Sue Elliot, Steve Humpries, Bevan Jones, *Surviving Aberfan. The People’s Story*, Grosnevor House Publishing Limited, 2016.

Feminine Narratives of Gold Mining in the Apuseni Mountains: An Oral History Research¹

Abstract: The feminine memory of gold mining in the Apuseni Mountains area is a subject under researched until now, but on which it is worth focusing on, with emphasis on elements such as: matrimonial dynamics, gender relations, economic management in families of miners, division of labour among others. The dynamics of daily life will also be discussed, respectively the way in which women relate to it in the context of the control exercised by the communist authorities. This “memory exercise” is considered necessary to highlight the strategies used by miners and their families to adapt to a world of centralized economy, where power relations changed continuously and survival rules inevitably emerged. Using the methodology specific to oral history, this paper aims to bring to the fore the impact that gold mining has had on the wives and

¹ This work was supported by a grant of Ministry of Research and Innovation, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0874, within PNCDI III, contract no. 150/2017.

families of miners, in order to preserve the “stories” behind a disappearing profession.

Key words: oral history, women, gold mining, communist period, daily life

A history of gold mining in the Apuseni Mountains is proving to be a necessary research topic in the recent climate, of the wide debates and the massive wave of protests in recent years regarding the situation in Roșia Montană and other gold mining areas in the country. Such context opened the curiosity box in regard to the “stories” behind a craft that is slowly but surely becoming obsolete and, at some point represented the main occupation for entire communities. Even if general information about the craft of gold mining in the Apuseni area may be abundant, little it is known about the lives of those who actually practiced the craft itself, about their families, their day to day activities and the manner in which they coped with life itself. In this sense, the purpose of this paper is to accentuate the “humane perspective” of gold mining through the voices of those who more often than not are neglected: the women- wives, mothers, daughters of the men who worked underground in the mines, extracting the most precious metal of all: gold. Thus, the roles women played in “family management and labour” in mining communities needs to be taken into account since they were the ones who sustained the social life around the mines.²

² Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, “The Feminisation of Mining,” in *Geography Compass*, no. 9, 2015, p. 526.

Personal Mythmaking. Life Story Interviews of Former Employees at Barza Mining Company¹

Abstract: The aim of this article is to present the interlinking between the biography of a former employee of Barza Mining Company, ing. Nicolae Vela,² and larger historical events during the Romanian communist period. Similar to other life stories with former employees at Barza Mining Company the narrative construction of the interviewee's life story revolves around his professional career, his journey of becoming one of the most respected chemists of the time in Romania. However, he provides rich descriptions of other topics such as: the socialist planned economy, food shortages, blat/ the importance of personal relationships, student life during communism, free time.

Keywords: oral history, life stories, gold mining, communism, Romania

¹ This work was supported by a grant of Ministry of Research and Innovation, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0874, within PNCDI III, contract no. 150/2017.

² Vela Nicolae, interview by Lavinia Costea and Olariu Călin, audio file no. 1819, Oral History Institute Archive, Cluj-Napoca (hereinafter referred to as OHIA), Criscior, Hunedoara County, 24.04.2018.

Diana-Alexandra Nistor

A Story of a Century. War, Peace and the Everyday Life of a Roma War Veteran in Transylvania

Abstract: A particular concept of the image of Roma communities is that of marginality. While strengthened by many exceptions, the rule of being located on the outskirts of settlements remains a reality. This is how the perception of a small Roma community settled nearby villages and towns appear as a given or as an “inheritance” from the past. The great events of the twentieth century passed over and marked both center and periphery. The research tackled the stories of periphery, the manner in which they recall the facts that happened in the center and the events everybody underwent. In this respect, the paper aims at encountering history within the stories of a Roma war veteran, outlining his ordinary peripheral life in Petelea, a former Saxon village in Transylvania. His stories recall the Roma community living there during the interwar period, the Second World War and the communist years, not necessarily chronologically, but revealing a story of sameness, and emphasizing collective experiences. Being enrolled in the Hungarian and then in the German army, the interviewee described the course of the

Second World War, as he saw and understood it, his duties and experiences as an ordinary soldier. The questions to be answered in the paper are the following: Are histories of periphery revealing a different history? How can Roma life stories be linked to the Romanian history of the WW2? How are war experiences narrated and perceived by Roma in Transylvania? – Are they different from the other villagers?

Key words: oral history, Roma, World War Two, Transylvania, autobiography, mental map

By analyzing the daily life of Roma communities in Transylvania during the communist regime one could observe that despite the peripheralization of the Roma population present in the historiography, there were several situations in which Roma lived in the center – there is registered a fluctuating relationship between the Roma communities and center/ periphery they lived. The communist state's policy pursued a cultural and ethnic assimilation of the Roma, considering that they could have been “civilized” by giving up to their cultural heritage.¹ The rejection of Roma was manifested through the systematic absence of the term “Roma” in the public discourse of the regime. However, the state authorities and the Communist Party representatives drew up numerous

¹ Viorel Achim, *Țigani în istoria României*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1998, p. 162.

List of contributors

Luminița Ignat-Coman is senior researcher specialized in Modern History, with a Ph.D. degree awarded in 2009 from Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Her main research area are identities in Transylvania, nationalism and ethnicity. More recently, she became interested in gold mining in the Apuseni Mountains in the 19th century.

Ioana-Zoia Ursu currently works as researcher and curator at the Museum of National Union in Alba Iulia, Romania. Her specialization is in contemporary history of Romania, mainly on victims of communist repression, and her research interests are discourse analysis, oral history. As doctoral student, writes a thesis about “Rugul Aprins” de la mănăstirea Antim: istorie, memorie, discurs” [The Burning Bush at Antim Monastery: history, memory and discourse].

Adrian Boda currently works as researcher and librarian at the “Lucian Blaga” Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca, in the Special Collections. Oral Archive and Multimedia Department. His main research areas are oral history and the history of the Second World War. Between 2017 and 2019 he was a researcher in the project “The History of Gold Mining in the Apuseni Mountains”.

Ionela Bogdan has a Ph.D. in History from University of Iceland and Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. Her thesis is focused on the recent history of Roma women in Romania, emphasizing how gender and gender designated roles developed into Roma communities throughout the Communist regime. Ionela participated to several research internships at the University of Iceland between 2015- 2017 where she took part in a series of workshops and held a presentation within the Cultural Menace Course at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology. She was the recipient of an UBB Student Fellowship awarded by STAR-UBB Institute in 2017. She received the 2019 Gypsy Lore Society Young Scholars' Prize in Romani Studies with an oral history study about the Roma women in Romania and their daily life under the Communist regime. Ionela's interests are in the fields of oral history, gender studies, Romani studies and contemporary history.

Călin Andrei Olariu is enrolled as Ph.D. student at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, with the thesis "The State and the Roma in Socialist Romania. An Oral History Research," an analysis of the interactions between the communist State and Roma marginal communities during the period between 1948 and 1989. His areas of

interest are Contemporary History, Roma History and Oral History. Between 2015 and 2017 he was part of the research project: “The Untold Story. An Oral History of the Roma People in Romania.” Between 2017 and 2019 he was a research assistant in the research project “The History of Gold Mining in the Apuseni Mountains.” The host institution for the two projects was Babeş-Bolyai University, Oral History Institute.

Diana-Alexandra Nistor is currently working the Oral History Institute, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca as a research assistant. In January 2019 she has defended a Ph.D. thesis entitled “Centre and periphery. The oral history of the Roma communities between rural and urban areas in post-war Transylvania” which approaches the everyday lives of Roma during the communist regime in Transylvania in terms of space/habitat, migration and identity. Her areas of interest are contemporary history and oral history.

Andrei Dălălău is currently graduate student in the MA programme History, Memory Orality in the 20th century, at Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of History and Philosophy. His research interest are the history of the interwar and communist Romania.