

ECSTASY AND AGONY IN ZARANDIAN MINING

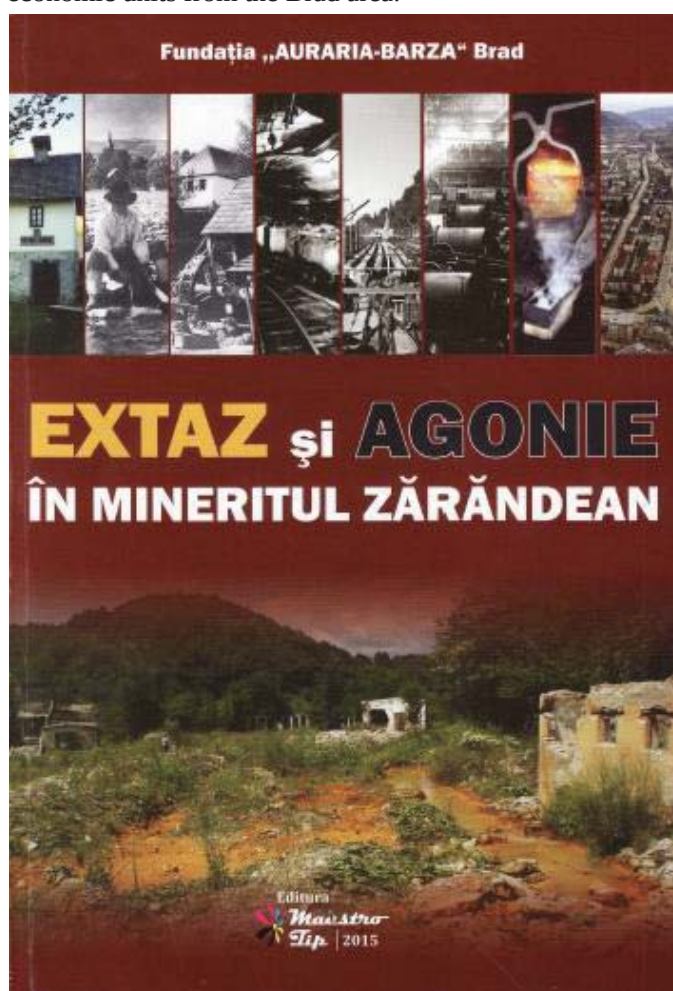
On 29.01.2016 in the “Horia, Cloșca and Crișan” Middle School’s sports hall from the Brad City took place the presentation and release for the book called “Ecstasy and Agony in Zarandian Mining” in front of more than 400 guests mostly miners or their relatives.

The book release meeting was honored by the presence of the Brad Municipality officials, officials from nearby villages where gold mines operated in the past and the officials of the foundation “Auraria – Barza” – Brad.

To this meeting took place also past directors from mining units nearby Brad, past mining research – design collaborators, but also past collaborators from scientific and culture institutions of Hunedoara county and other parts in Romania.

There were plenty of speeches, the meeting turned into an appreciation and honor of the ones who worked in mining in the past and lived in the Zarand region.

The paper “Ecstasy and Agony in Zarandian Mining” arose under the patronage of the foundation “Auraria – Barza”, with the financial support of the Brad City Hall and of some societies, companies, economic units from the Brad area.



After a period of hard research and sustained work, today we have in front a complex work of synthesis, well documented, written by a collective of people well knowers of the area and of the activities taking place in this part of Romania.

The paper has in its first part a micro-monography of the Zarand region, a natural citadel with open gates towards the western fields of Transylvania, where it is underlined at first synthetically the historical past of the region numbering the main events who took place in the past, until now.

Furthermore, the book presents the land, the climate, vegetation and fauna from Zarand region, but also the human settlements and people occupations, where we can distinguish the agriculture, fruit and animal growing and mining activities. At the end of this part there is presented a series of geologic considerations on the territory and there are nominated and even characterized the deposits of useful mineral ores from the area.

Going through this part of the paper the reader notices that things are logically and well presented, getting an overview on this rich and beautiful area, but with a hard history.

The second part of the paper called “The Barza gold-silver mining complex, operating for more than two millenniums” manages to present through its structure, in an interesting

and attractive way, the numerous archeologic discoveries, which prove the settlements and activities of the people from this region, in time.

Based on certain proofs on multiple ancient written documents and on the events lived by the authors, there are reviewed the Ancient period, the Middle Ages and the Modern period.

For the Ancient and Middle Age period there are displayed mostly the historical elements and less the mining organization and technique, while for the Modern period the things are analyzed on stages being structured based on the Economic Companies who operated and managed the mining activities in the area.

Therefore, during 1884-1920 the area is operated by the Company “Ruda 12 Apostoli”, during 1920-1948 the area is operated by the “Mică” Romanian Company, while during 1948-2006 the area is operated by the Barza Mining Enterprise.

Personalități care au marcat activitatea minieră în Zarand



The historic documents mention that a part of the Greeks who settled in Dobrogea, on the shores of Black Sea, in the 7th century, found out about the mineral riches of Transylvania, including on the existence of gold in Apuseni Mountains. As a result, they crossed the Carpathians and reached the area of Brad where they began the organized exploitation of gold ore.

In his fourth book, Herodot describes the war started in 513 BC by Darius, king of Persia, against the Scythian Empire which included Transylvania. Herodot said that on the banks of the river Maris – today's Mureș lived a nation called Agatarsi – part of the Scythians which mastered the gold exploitation and the gold ornaments crafting.

The archeologic materials found in the Brad area confirms the existence of an intense activity of extraction and preparation of ores since the prehistoric age.

In the Caraci mine there was found a rock hammer (diorite), it is believed that it is the oldest found in Romania, while in Musariu there was discovered a rock axe (trachyte), also here there found skin bags for tools. In Baia de Criș there were found rock icons and three anthropomorphic statues - rock menhirs, representing miners with pickaxe hammers fixed under the belt and carrying a bag or a basket for ore transportation. By our information these are the oldest statues in the world who describe miners.

After the Roman period, which played an important role in the development of the mining in Dacia, during the Middle Ages, the mining is organized at technical and managerial scale, performing larger productions.

Coming back to the Modern period, for each of the three stages, there are analyzed the management of the companies, their possessions, the organization and management of mining activities, the production investments, the product exploitation, preparation and capitalization activities, the auxiliary activities to support the production, the costs for product unit and overall. Also for every stage in mining exploitation there are underlined also the social achievements and activities.

In a different part of the book there are presented the concern for labor training towards the basic and auxiliary mining activities and the cultural

and sport achievements.

The political and economic changes after 1989 had also a major impact on the Romanian mining, being forced to reorganize in order to fit the demands of free markets and to compete with other companies from the European Union.

As a result, the mines from Brad area went to a stage of radical reorganization, finalized with the complete closure of the mines in the area in 2006.

Reading the book, you become surprised by the objectivity and the accuracy the facts are presented, which cannot be done only by fair people who lived the events. It is impressive the concern of the mining and sectorial leaders, but also the concerns of the underground miners who made big efforts to extend the life of the mines.

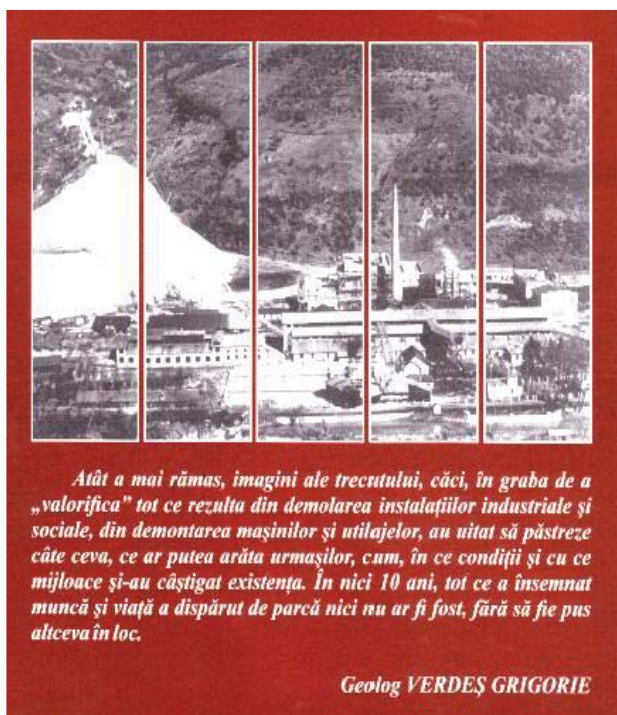
The efforts were in vain, things went from bad to worse, there was no one to help and everything ended up with mine closures.

Knowing that in time we lost the gold, one of the biggest national riches, to the empires: Roman, Ottoman, Austrian-Hungarian and after we witnessed the total gold mining closures in Romania, I ask myself just like the authors of the book: what is next ? will we lose the country golden ores of the 21st century to the foreigners ?

After mine closures, ex-miners started to look for jobs outside mining. Most of them qualified for jobs demanded on the labor market, others started some small businesses while the ones who owned land started to work in agriculture. Many of the past miners – mostly the young ones – left the country to find jobs abroad.

The authors of the book know the activities and achievements of the past miners, which proves that they remained strong spiritually connected.

The city of Brad is proud by having the “Gold Museum” being an attraction point for specialists and for the public. In the book there are shown the concerns for the museum development in time, the completing



and enriching the mineral collection but also the past years fight by the municipality officials and Auraria Foundation for this institution to stay in the city of Brad.

The paper ends with the presentation of the most important personalities which activated and lead the mines and preparation plants from Zarand region.

During the entire activity stages of mining in the Brad area, the people represented the most important development and progress factor. They influenced all the achievement, they also faced the hardest difficulties specific to the industrial mining activities.

In order to describe and characterize people, one has to know them, to sit beside them, to work together. The authors of this book knew directly most of the mining leaders from Brad area, not only physically but also knew their behavior, their work and operation, their social activities. As a result, they could appreciate objectively the life and activity of ones of the most important mining leaders from Zarand region.

The authors of the paper also considered the book aesthetics, trying to make it attractive through its numerous photos, maps and well-chosen technical drawings, which complete adequately the text.

The paper “Ecstasy and Agony in Zarandian Mining” addresses to the public who lived and worked in the Zarand region, scientists, historians, researchers, engineers, technical specialists, mining specialists, scholars. Every one of these will find in this book rich and well-structured information.

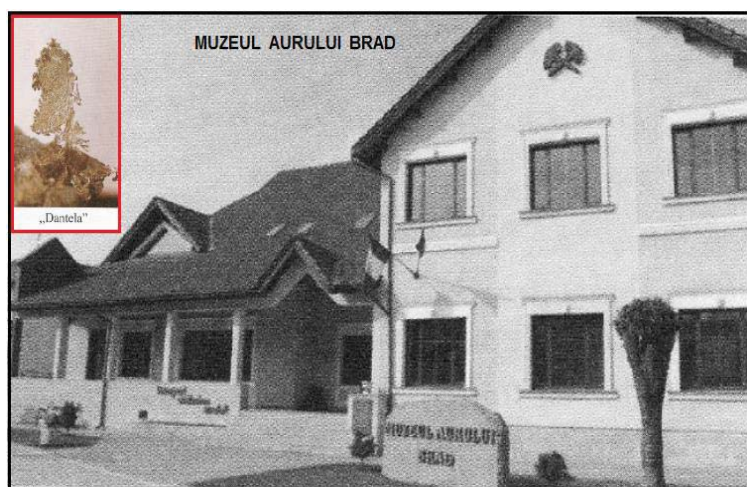
I was impressed by the plenitude of data this book contains and by the objectivity and fairness the facts are described and registered.

I also think that this book, aside of its utility for a large number of readers, will remain a historical proof of the mining activity in the Zarand region.

This book is the kind of the ones you start reading and you cannot let it down until you finish it. I hope that the work will remain in the memory of the readers and will be often used as reference in studies, books, papers or treaties.

The book “Ecstasy and Agony in Zarandian Mining” is a tribute to the ones who worked in mining or were connected, in one way or another, to this domain.

I congratulate the collective of authors for their work and the results they got by publishing this interesting, beautiful and useful paper !



Prof. Eng. Ph.D Dumitru FODOR
Member of the Romanian Academy
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THOUGHTS ON A NEW BOOK

A new book will open its files to the readers ... It is said that a book represents an universe re-created through the words. This book re-creates an universe through the words of its authors – a huge universe of work, solidarity, today representing an universe of past memories – the universe of goldsmiths from Barza.

It is an universe, a world different from today, which I've re-lived, felt and still feel it, painfully, in my heart. Because I cannot easily erase from my soul my daily trip in front of my beloved museum, the pleasure of the encounters with Mrs. Ursoi and Mr. Verdeş and their beautiful stories, which made me love both this institution and its people.

They opened my eyes to the funeral stars of the centuries from where the eyes of the gentle miners from the first centuries of this nation watched me, people who chiseled the famous Roman Stairs, completing the rudimental Thracian-Dacian craft of gold extraction.

They told me the story of the carriage, which revolutionized the underground transport, invented by an anonymous carpenter whose face is projected over time on a large scale of primary moral traits: passion, creativity, dedication, which should be replied through a monument which to dominate, among others, the Golden Plaza in Brad and remind the visitors about the miracle invented centuries ago.

Through this people I discovered the miracle of poems on those who left to the mine, the pain of the losses who didn't spare their close-knits, just as in the poem of Vlaicu Bârna, from the village Crişan, about Ana Buran whose husband "Leaving always to come again / Until one evening / When his colleagues brought silently / His axe, lamp and boots./"

I will not forget neither the gentility shown by the past directors, such as Nicolae Lungu, when they welcomed you to the office, opening the door for you and pulling the chair for you to sit, nor the people leaving the company gate at the end of the daily program or the rush towards the corner shop before 1989, as a sign they brought in merchandise. I will not forget the Gurabarza Club and Mr. Bucureşteanu always fixing or straightening something, always with a pair of pliers and a sledge in his pocket, as a sign of care for the place he worked, the Zarand Cinema Club and Mr. Împărat I collaborated passionately for the sound, text and voice of films like "Goldsmiths", "Chalk" and other amateur movies, I will not forget the famous Mining Days with the panorama of events, facts and faces.

I remember that once was Barza, name derived from the ancient Thracian-Illyrian adjective "barz" – meaning greyish or bluish, just as the cliffs hiding the precious nuggets of the gold metal, nuggets which keep inside them people and facts, an equation of the human life from past towards future, a past which delivers us the methods needed to shape our future. Which future, you will say ? I cannot give you a coherent answer.

What I know is that, in a period when values are desecrated, myths are shattered while others rise, it is needed to remember the crucial moments of our existence here.

Therefore, a few years back, the Foundation Auraria decided the "UNTOLD" to become "TOLD" because this is the only way to free ourselves, because only by having a clear overview of our history we can become free from the past of these places, now when only a part of it exists, and let the life flow through the cycle of future generations.

This is what the authors of this book worthily do, with modesty and common sense, describing, without scientific demands, their and their colleagues' work in Barza. The idea of a book was considered since the first meeting for structuring the Foundation, in 2010, through the voice of an ex-miner, now and then the mayor of Brad city – Florin Cazacu.



I have to admit that at first I was one of the skeptics, considering that for a larger number of people in the redaction, the idea of a book on mining will be harder to achieve.

However, the mining solidarity said its word again, together with the tenacity, perseverance and courage of the “Auraria” Foundation president, mr. Pantea and of the book coordinator, mr. Verdeș, the ”spiritus rector” mandatory for the existence of this book.

Aside the historic part, in the chapter about personalities drafted by Nae Stoica you will find among the domains and sectors activities a large number of symbolic landmarks, not just local people, but also persons who remained here. They were the technic and scientific elites from Barza, who cannot be erased from its history. They were the ones who distinguished themselves every time through the quality they’ve given to the society.

The chapter “The beginning of the end” is impressive, signed by vice-mayor Aurel Circo, who lived all the moments after the revolution. Or “The Decline”, written by eng. Nelu Ștefea, with the details on the last moments in the life of the gold mine founded in Barza, and, ironically, died sadly, closed and forsaken, humiliated in Corcodan. The pain together with the revolt towards the indifference, towards the infringement of dignity of goldsmith miners, basically the human dignity, can be found in many chapters of the book, but mostly in this one.

Also mentioning the story of the semiprecious stones written by Mr. Illeș, whose passion for shiny stones didn’t disappear, those becoming true art works in his paintings.

Actually everything there is sincere. All the authors wrote this book with their mind and hearts.

This book leads you from ecstasy to agony but not towards death – since we still kept our hope, just as the geologist Grigore Verdeș – the coordinator of the paper – said in the foreword – it is a book about lights and shadows. The light and the shadows are, metaphorically speaking, the two keys for reading the book.

This book was written with the mind and the heart. With the mind remembering the past and gratitude for the ancestors. With the heart since those local personalities identified their life with mine working, they ennobled the place, the city, the area.

By this book, we render homage WITH and THROUGH the words and tenths of imagies, the accomplishments and aspirations of some special people, who are or are no longer among us, some who left or some who remained here.

We render the dream that could repeat at least at a smaller scale, what once was here. The dream that we could revive again, on our gold nuggets still haunts us.

It was a dream for me to work for 40 years in a magnificent company, built by goldsmiths for goldsmiths, but the greatest honor in my life was that before my retirement they allowed me to stand aside them.

Because both me and the others present when this book was released could say in our minds the same rhymes: “To Apuseni we keep the way, / And our soles are jaded by words, / My people still dream about gold, / Still vowing down the valleys.”

Such a vow was the base for this book. It represents a gift for Brad from Auraria Foundation.

Bianca LEUCIAN

„DE BON AUGUR” FOR THE BOOK „ECSTASY AND AGONY IN ZARANDIAN MINING”

I regret that I cannot be there to the authors of this outstanding publication at its release, but I wish to express the joy and satisfaction for this editorial moment.

I notice that after 37 years, while the Zarandian mining faced glory and decline stages, there was published a new high level monography of an exceptional and historical value.

The book reflects a daring approach of the authors to investigate and reconstruct the mining traditions of the Zarand region, especially of the areas nearby Brad, for a period of 130 years, when the mining exploitations in the areas were highly regarded in Romania or Europe, not only for its gold production but also for its advanced working techniques.

The names of the personalities who influenced the mining activity from the Zarand region, contributing to the economic prosperity of the golden region are found in a special chapter of this book, signed by Nicolae Stoica.

The authors of this monography do not stop in glorifying the best periods of the Zarandian mining, but continue with the objective and critic analysis of what happened with the social-economic structures during the regression of the main occupation in the region: gold mining. The causes and consequences of this phenomenon are described in the chapter called „The union movements and social concerns at E.M. Barza after 1989”.

But who are in fact the authors of the book and how did I get to meet them ? I could also ask what is the initiative for this editorial collective force, mobilizing not only human resources but also providing materials and other stuff.

To answer the first question, I have to name Grigore Verdeş, not only as coordinator but also as an exact lector for the texts provided by different collaborators, but also for the graphic section – mostly novel – which gives the book a special look. I congratulate him as “spiritus rector” of this project for the passionate effort and dedication. I wish to express him also my gratitude for the generosity he helped me with during my 40 years of research in mining history.

The answer of the second question is simple: the accomplishment of this highly expected work by the people of Brad wasn't possible without the support of the Foundation Auraria – Barza Brad, guided by the passionate local patriot Nicolae Pantea, who also wrote a chapter about the major cultural and sports activity.

In the end I hope that the book „Ecstasy and Agony in Zarandian Mining” will have as many readers as possible in order to be appreciated for its value.

Volker WOLLMANN
Obrigheim, 25 January 2016