

# THE GOLD OF THE APUSENI EXHIBITION: ABOUT THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE OF ROȘIA MONTANĂ (ROMANIA)\*

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**Keywords:** Roșia Montană, industrial heritage, Roșia Montană Gold Corporation, the *Gold of the Apuseni* exhibition, modernity, Romania

**Abstract:** This text is a critique of an exhibition dedicated to the history of mining in Roșia Montană (Alba County, Romania) and organized by the Roșia Montană's Town Hall, the National History Museum of Romania (Bucharest), the National Museum of Unification (Alba Iulia), and Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) – a private mining company interested in the resources of the region. I maintain that by the way the exhibits are presented the exhibition destroys the difference of the pre-modern pasts, naturalizes and promotes the present capitalist values and economic interests of RMGC.

**Rezumat:** Acest text este o critică a unei expoziții dedicate istoriei mineritului din Roșia Montană (județul Alba, România) și organizată de Primăria Roșia Montană, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României (București), Muzeul Național al Unirii (Alba Iulia) și Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (R.M.G.C.) – o companie minieră privată interesată în resursele regiunii. Susțin că prin maniera în care sunt prezentate exponatele expoziția distruge diferența trecuturilor pre-moderne, naturalizează și promovează valorile capitaliste și interesele economice din prezent ale R.M.G.C.

## Introduction

In 1999, the Euro Gold Resources SA company, which was renamed a year later Roșia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC), obtained the license to exploit the gold and silver deposits in the area of Roșia Montană locality (Alba County, Transylvania).<sup>1</sup> Euro Gold Resources SA/RMGC initiated a major mining project which was providing the exploitation and, hence, the radical transformation of the environment, including a large part of the locality. However, according to RMGC's discourse, promoted both on the official website and in the media, the project was meant to bring prosperity to the area. Among the measures promoted by RMGC as likely to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the locality, is included the restoration and enhancement of the cultural heritage. Thus, as the sources which support the project show, by 2011

“RMGC has already invested 11 millions dollars on the research and preservation of cultural heritage and will allocate 35 million dollars more, far beyond the specific legal requirements, as part of the company's commitment to enhance the cultural sites for tourism.” (*Călătorie* 2011: 32, see also the brochure of the exhibition *Aurul Apusenilor. The mining history exhibition from Roșia Montană*)

The first achievement to this effect of the RMGC's project was the opening, in 2010, of the *Gold of the Apuseni* exhibition, dedicated to the history of mining in Roșia Montană (Fig. 1), on which the Roșia Montană's Town Hall, the National History Museum of Romania (Bucharest) and the National Museum of Unification (Alba Iulia) have also collaborated. The exhibition was arranged in the House 325 of the Historical Center of the village, acquired by the company in 2003 and included, among other houses in the protected area of the locality, in a planned museum complex called the Mining Museum.<sup>2</sup> At the time of my visit (September 2011), the exhibition consisted of three halls: one of them had as theme the archeological researches conducted between 2001 and 2006 in Roșia Montană with RMGC's support under the *National Research Program "Alburnus*

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<sup>1</sup> According to RMGC's official website: <http://www.rmgc.ro/>; accessed: 23 November 2011.

<sup>2</sup> *Călătorie* 2011, pp. 22-25.