



# THE ROMANIANS HISTORICAL PLACE

## IN

# EUROPE

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The Romanian people belongs to the large group of neo-Latin peoples of Europe, and is, today, the sole inheritor of the Oriental Roman world. It is, together with the Greeks, one of the oldest peoples in south-eastern Europe; the only Latin enclave at the gates of the Orient. The Romanians are also, when compared to the Albanians Bulgarians, Croatians, Greeks, Mayars, Serbians, etc., the most numerous people in the south-east of Europe, numbering today 24 million, of which the great majority (23 million) live in Romania.

The Romanians are the only Romanic people, except for the Rhaeto-Romans in Switzerland, who retained in their name the memory of Rome. Like the other Romanic peoples, they came into being during the first century after Christ. The way they formed as a people followed the general rule of genesis of Romanic peoples. The basic elements in the formation of the Romanian people are: the *pre-Roman autochthonous element*, that is, the Thraco-Dacians (the equivalent of the Gauls for the French) and the *conquering element*, that is, the Romans, the common denominator of all Romanic peoples. The Gaetae or the Dacians (as the Greek writers called them) are the northern branch of the Thracians, an Indo-European people, of whom Herodot said they were, after the Indians, the most numerous people in the world.

In the sixth century B.C., the Daco-Gaetae fought against Darius, the Persian king, in the fourth century against Alexander-Macedon and during the first century B.C. they confronted the Romans. After about 20 years of uninterrupted battles, in 106 A.D., the Dacian king, Diurpaneus-Decebal was defeated by the Romans who were led by Trajan (98-119), one of the most important emperors the Roman Empire ever had.

Following this victory, most of Dacia's territory was transformed into a Roman province. The centre of this province was situated in Transylvania. As a result of the *Romanization process* accomplished by a massive colonization and organised with Latinophone elements, by the colonists and natives living together and by the superiority of the Roman culture and civilisation, the Daco-Gaetae started to speak Latin, to adopt Roman beliefs and customs and, as had happened to the Gauls and the Caltibers, acquired a *forma mentis romana*. The Emperor Aurelian (270-275) was forced, because of the crisis the Roman Empire was going through, to withdraw Roman rule (the army, the administration and part of the citizens) from Dacia south of the Danube. The great majority of the Daco-Roman population continued, however, to live in the old Dacia, resisting the invasions of the barbarians (Goths, Huns, Gepidae, Avars, Slavs, etc.)

The Romanians enter history as a well-defined people in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries after they had assimilated the Slavs, the only *migratory element* (the equivalent of the Francs for the French who settled in Dacia in great numbers. Unlike the Bulgarians, the Magyars and the

Russians, the Romanians, similarly to the Greeks, do not retain in their collective memory an exact date of their becoming Christians. When the Romanians became known historically they had already been Christianized directly, through Latin, and their faith was strengthened by the missionaries who came from the south of the Danube in the fourth century.

During the ninth to fourteenth centuries, in spite of the hampering invasions of the migrators (Hungarians, Pechenegs, Cumans, Tartars), the Romanians organized themselves into political forms of incipient statal character and later into proper medieval states. When the first attacks of the pagan Magyar tribes were carried out against Transylvania, the Romanians had incipient states here (duchies or voievodships) of which the most important was ruled by Gelu the Romanian (*Gelu, quidam Blaccus*).

The conquest of Transylvania by the Magyars in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, after they had become Christians in the western way, determined some of the Romanian leaders to move their resistance centres south and east of the Carpathians (e.g. Negru Voda of Faragas or Bogdan Voda of Maramures) thus enhancing the process of statal development in these regions. Thus, while Transylvania remained an autonomous duchy within the Hungarian Kingdom, inhabited by Romanians mostly and partly colonized by alien populations, Moldavia and Wallachia became independent states in the fourteenth century. Internationally, they were integrated in the feudo-vassal system of the time. During the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, by their resistance against the Ottoman danger, these statal forms participated in the defence of central and western Europe. Under Voivodes Mircea the Old, Vlad Tepes, Iancu of Huucdoara, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, etc., the three Romanian countries were, after an expression of that time, real *gates of Christianity*. In 1599-1600 Michael the Brave united the three Romanian countries for the first time, showing that Transylvania, where ethnically the Romanians were in the majority, could become Romanian from the political point of view as well. Throughout the Middle Ages, although vassal and tributary to the Turks, the Romanian countries, unlike the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Hungary, and so on, preserved their statal form, that is, their autonomy, with their own institutions, not having been conquered by the Sultan's Empire. In the eighteenth century the Romanians in Transylvania, though excluded as a nation from the political life of the country and their orthodox religion not recognized, started a national emancipation movement in conjunction with the one in the Principalities. The period of democratic revolutions (1821-1849) signified the Romanians confirmation as a modern nation. In 1859, with France's support, the basis of the Romanian national state was laid by the unification of Moldavia with Wallachia. This state, called Ro-

mania, which included approximately one third of Romanians, accomplished absolute independence after a war against Turkey in 1877. As a consequence of the victory in this war, Dobrudja united with Romania in 1878. In 1918, after Romania had participated in World War I beside Antanta, a new democratic revolution broke out as a result of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. Through democratically elected representatives, according to the right of people to self-determination, it was decided on 9 April 1918, at Kisinev, to unite Bessarabia (occupied by Russia in 1812) with Romania; on 28 November 1918, at Cernauti, the union of Bucovina (occupied by Austria in 1775) with Romania; and on 1 december 1918, at Alba Iulia, the union of Transylvania, Banat, Crisana and Maramures with

Romania. Through the Peace of Paris of 1919-1920, the great powers confirmed the Romanian peoples decisions as well as similar acts of the Yugoslavians, Polish, Czechs, Slovaks, etc.

Thus, in 1918, Romania entered the concert of world nations with dignity as a unitary independent state within which the rights of all citizens, regardless of their nationality, were guaranteed by the constitution of 1923. After a short interbelic democratic experience there followed 50 years (1938-1989) of communism which have not altered the humanitarian spirit of the Romanian people. After the overthrow of the communist regime which stayed in power owing to a brutal dictatorship, today Romania strives for a natural reintegration into a Europe of free, equal nations.

## WHO OWNS THE LAND

In 1902 the Hungarian publicist, Balogh Pál, published in Budapest an extensive work under the title "A Népnyelvi Magyarországon" (Nationalities in the Hungarian Kingdom) edited by the Ministry of Education and Cults. It voiced the point of view of the Hungarian government. The purpose of this publication, which makes an analysis of the official census of the Hungarian State in 1890, was to prove that the Romanians "infiltrated" Transylvania successively. It also indicated the points of entrance as well as the places where they settled.

From the beginning, it is interesting to notice that in order to support his affirmation, the author does not provide any original documents. He has at his disposal mainly two sources, and the statistical data from Major-General Lenk Ignác's work: The Geographic, Statistic, Hydrographic-orthographic Lexicon of Ardeal, vol I - IV, Vienna, 1839.

Balogh Pál's study covers the entire territory of dualist Hungary which, to make the research easier, was divided into four parts of which we are particularly interested in the area called "Beyond the Piatra Craiului" (Tul Kralyhágón) covering the whole area of the former Great Principality of Transylvania. It consisted of 5 counties as well as the 8 counties in the Hungarian territory, namely, those in Banat, Crisana and Maramures which were outside the Great Principality of Transylvania.

In 1870 the "Law of Registration" was passed and enforced throughout Hungary. The entire territory of Hungary was measured, calculated and recorded in the registers compiled with the help of topographic sheets of each village. By 1890 all the villages and towns of Hungary had their registers, maps and deeds of ownership of the entire territory which belonged to them as well as the names of the landowners.

The first relatively complete census in Hungary, which besides the statistical data with regard to the population of the kingdom, also included precise data about the distribution of the nationalities over the entire territory, was carried out in Hungary in 1890.

## OWNS THE COUNTRY

*Mihai Racoltea*

On page 144 the author reveals a new element of great importance, which puts an end to all the groundless speculations which supported the theory of the "deserted land" of Transylvania and of the Romanians "infiltration" among the "native" Magyars. We refer to the data extracted from the 1890 census about nationalities in the kingdom and the lands owned and worked by them.

According to Balogh Pál, the situation in the Hungarian Kingdom in 1890 was the following:

No. Settlers	Nationality	No. Settlements	Area occupied <sup>1</sup>
7 548 644	Hungarians	4 718	21 231 155 c.u.
2 680 161	Romanians	2 981	11 950 547 c.u.
1 982 348	Slovakians	2 711	6 538 559 c.u.
1 726 168	Germans	1 114	4 561 164 c.u.
429 341	Ruthenians	612	2 300 699 c.u.
191 553	Croatians	237	480 864 c.u.
483 341	Serbs	149	1 567 512 c.u.
71 457	Vencis	147	138 197 c.u.
20 478	Others	17	79 209 c.u.
15 133 491	of these	12 686	48 847 646 c.u.
7 548 850	non-Magyars	7 968	27 616 491 c.u.

The figure 7 548 644 Hungarians includes 367 839 Szecklers and cca. 250 000 people of other nationalities (Jews and Gypsies) who in the census were recorded as Hungarians due to the language they spoke, not to their nationality. There were 6 883 203 Hungarians and approximately 8 000 000 non-Magyars.

The entire territory of Transylvania, covering 29 259 304 cadastral units, was distributed as follows:

<sup>1</sup> c.u. = cadastral unit = 5 600 square metres