

The Romanian Space between Emigration and Immigration

- a historical perspective –

Although perpetually divided and aggressed along its history, the Romanian space has been a multicultural one, open to tolerance and cohabitation.

SHORT INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE BEGINNINGS

The oldest traces of the hominids' habitation in the Carpathian-Danubian territory might be dated, after some historians, around 600,000 B.C.

More Neolithic cultures have developed in time, out of which the most interesting and the most developed being the Cucuteni culture, in the zone of the Moldavian plateau. It has some similarities with some cultures of ancient China. The lithic tribes¹ were invaded by the Indo-European tribes, tribes of shepherds and warriors that, (unlike the lithic tribes) had the horse, the metal and the battle axe. The Thracians were part of these tribes. They "Thracianized" the Carpathian-Balkan space in the period around 2000 B.C. The Dacian tribes represented the northern branch of the Thracian population. The Dacians were organized in about 100 tribes² which were often rivals. Burebista, C.I.Caesar's contemporary, unified the Dacian tribes for the first time. Along their history, the Dacians were influenced by: the Scythians (7th – 6th centuries), the Greeks (6th-3rd centuries), the Celts (4th-3rd centuries) and the Romans (2nd cent.B.C.-3rd cent.A.D.) On the threshold between the 3rd and the 2nd century B.C., the Germanic Bastarnae and the Iranian Sarmatians settled on the Moldavian plateau. They became the Dacians' allies in their wars against the Romans. The Daco-Roman wars were numerous and with changeable results. They culminated in the wars between Trajan and Decebalus³, which led to the conquest and subsequent Romanization of Dacia. The Romanization organized by the Roman empire was massive, intense and quick. The Romanization was accomplished along 3-4 generations⁴, as statistically demonstrated by the succession of the first names on the tombstones remained from the period 106-275.

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1. from lithos = stone; inhabitants of the stone age.
 2. the name "Dacians" or "Getae" is a generic, conventional one; in fact each tribe had its own specific name (e.g. Carpae, Caestobogi, etc.)
 3. between 101-102 and 105-106
 4. Dacia was organized and administrated by the Romans between 106-275.

The Romanians were formed as people and language both to the north and to the south of the Danube. The Romanian language is a direct descendant of the whole Carpathian-Balkan Roman world, alongside the Dalmatian language, which disappeared at the end of the 19th century. Some linguists even speak about an Apenino-Carpato-Balkan linguistic group. The Romanian language has striking similarities with some dialects of the centre and south of Italy, such as Pugliez or Abbruzes.

In the year 602 an event occurred, crucial for the whole south-eastern European area. The Slavic tribes took advantage of the weakness of the Byzantine empire, whose border was on the Danube at the time, and moved from the north of the Danube south of it. This movement created new demographic rapports (linguistic imbalances), which eventually led to the assimilation of the Romans from the south of the Danube by the Slavs (the more numerous ones), and the assimilation of the Slavs who had remained fewer north of the Danube by the local Romanic. The Slavic infusion probably produced also some movements in the Carpathian-Balkan Romanic population. Thus, the eastern Roman world was split into halves. Hence, the island appearance of the Romanian language in Europe. The common Romanian language has 4 dialects:

I – the Daco-Romanian, with about 25 mil. speakers (Romania, The Moldavian Republic, diaspora);

II - the Macedo-Romanian (Aromanian), dialect spoken by about 300,000 – 500,000 inhabitants of the states: Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria¹);

III – the Megleno-Romanian dialect, spoken around the gulf of Salonic;

IV – the Istro-Romanian dialect (Istria peninsula, near the Italian-Slovenian border).

The last two dialects are practically doomed, having few speakers.

In 587 *two* Byzantine chronicles mention the first Romanian phrase in written form: “*torna, torna fratre*”. It is specified that this was told in the “parents’ language” or the “country language” and not in Latin, the language of the military orders given in the Byzantine army.²

The Romanian language took a final shape as an independent language in the 9th – 10th centuries (just as the other European languages.), i.e. after having assimilated the Slavic language (the Romanians cohabited with the Slavs about 3-4 centuries).

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1. Some states from the Balkans refuse to acknowledge the status of national minority of the Romanians from the Balkans, admitting only their status of *ethnic groups*, which means less rights. Obviously, the Romanians living there feel discriminated and menaced with forced assimilation. For instance, in Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece they are forced to give up the Romanian characteristics of their names, which have to be Bulgarized, Serbized, Grecized. They are obstructed in elementary things such as building a school or a church where they could use their own language.
 2. These words were addressed by a Romanian to another group of Romanians from the army of the Byzantine general Comentiolus, in order to draw their attention to pick up a piece of luggage fallen off a beast of burden.

In conclusion, Romanian is a neolatin language, with a Dacian substratum, with a Romance stratum (“vulgar” Latin), a decisive one, and with a Slavic superstratum. All the other sister neolatin languages have a Germanic superstratum component. Also, among the neolatin peoples, the Romanian people is the only one of eastern religion (Byzantine or Orthodox).

The lexis of the Romanian language is about 70% of Latin origin, but the morphology and syntax are typically Latin.

THE DARK MILLENIUM (THE MIGRANTS OF MILLENIUM I)

In 271 – 275 emperor Aurelianus withdrew the administration, army and a small part of the population from the Romanized Dacia. Most of the Romanized population remained on the spot, just as in all similar cases when the empire had to abandon the provinces. A dark millennium followed. Different migrating populations (organized in tribes) succeeded in waves to rule the province. The first rulers of Dacia after 275 were the Germanic Goths, followed by lesser allies such as the Sarmatians and the Alans, Iranian peoples.

The Goths are defeated and pushed by the Huns to the Balkans in 376. The Huns settled in the inferior Tisa Plain, wherefrom they kept under control the surrounding territories (Dacia included), until 453. After Attila’s death, their strength collapsed and the new rulers of Dacia were the Germanic Gepidae. For a short while, in parallel with the Gepidae, the NW of present-day Romania was controlled by the Vandals¹ (also Germanic). The power of the Gepidae was crushed by a coalition formed of Longobards (Germanic) and Avars (Turkic), in 567. Immediately, the Carpatho-Danubian-Pannonian space got under Avar control. The Avars ruled in the area between 567-803. Numerous Slavic tribes were brought along with them in our country. The Slavs were intermediary between the real rulers – the Avars – and the local population, the protoromanians. Therefore, the Slavs cohabited with the latter for about 3-4 centuries. The Slaves that settled on the territory of the present-day Romania were called Antes, Venedi, Sclavines.²

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1. In the NW of Romania got mostly the Siling Vandals (a branch of theirs). The traces of the Silings could be found in the specific onomastics of some Maramureş villages, such as the names of Seling or Silinc from the villages Curtuiuş or Perii Vadului (Sălaj), where numerous families have this name.
 2. In Țara Oltului (Făgăraş) there is still an ancient village called Venetia; their name might have also given in Romanian the word “venetic”, meaning arrived from elsewhere, or person with no specific target or clear origin; the name of the sclavines has remained in the surname “Şchiau” and also in the Braşov “Şcheii”.

On the threshold between the 8th+9th centuries, the Avars were attacked by the Protobulgarians,¹ from the south-east, and by the Franks, from the west. Consequently, the Avars' power lasted between 567-803. The Protobulgarians settled south of the Danube, but from there they extended their rule over the southern Romanian territories (including Banat, southern Transylvania and southern Moldavia). Pressed by other peoples, the Ungars settled in Pannonia in 896, wherefrom they started the conquest of Transylvania, which they seized and reorganized step by step in the 10th-13th centuries. In the 11th century, the east and south of the Romanian space is invaded by the Uzi and the Pechenegs. After them, in the 12th century, the Cumanians also started their invasion. As they were border Cumanians (the Cumanian rule stretching up to the Volga), they were called Black Cumanians. Also, the Tartars from our areas will be called similarly: Black Tartars.

In 1241-42 the great Mongol (Tartar) invasion takes place, repeated on a smaller scale, though also devastating, over Transylvania in 1284-85. Unfortunately, at that time many archives were burnt, which deprives us today of much information.

The Mongols ruled (directly) over Wallachia between 1241-1300, during the reign of the famous local Khan Nogay² and over Moldavia between 1241 and the latter half of the 14th century.

This agitated, aggressive and troubled history, an extremely fluid one, forced the Romanian people to entrench themselves to ruralism and pastoralism. It was the only chance of survival at the time, under the circumstances. The cities practically disappeared from the Dacoromania, being the main target of the migrants. There were also effects on the mentality of the Romanians, who became a relatively passive and fatalist people, with a transactional mentality prone to compromises. The Romanians have become masters in the art of survival. They have never climbed up the heights of grandeur, nor have they ever descended to absolute disasters. ("There has always been somehow", says the Romanian).

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1. The Protobulgars were of Turkic origin, just as the Uzi, the Pechenegs, the Cumanians or the Avars, although the origin of the latter is subject to controversy (between Turkic and Mongol origin). Eventually, they were assimilated and slavified (by the Slavs south of the Danube).
 2. towards the end of the 13th century the Khans from the centre tried to bring Nogay "to order", under strict obedience, as he behaved as a real independent and pretentious khan. Following these fights, Nogay was killed.

Generally, they avoided the decisive confrontations and they didn't give their (even humble) existence for honour or glory. The Romanian's patience, his capacity of endurance is proverbial and his solidarity is extremely selective. As military tactics, the Romanians have preferred the war of attrition and movement, as well as the ambush. The Romanians have anchored themselves in the peasant's prudence, humour and wisdom, which were preferred to the typically aristocratic pathetic hypostases and useless gestures. This historically modelled mentality is charmingly found in old Romanian proverbs:

“The bent head will be spared by the sword”

“Flight is shameful but healthy”

“Swear the devil your brother till you are safe across the bridge”

THE SETTING UP OF THE ROMANIAN STATES THE FIGHT FOR MAINTAINING AND UNIFYING THE STATE

The names of Walli, Valones, Walach, Blach, Blassi, Vlach are of Germanic origin, subsequently borrowed by the Slavs in order to refer to a population of Romance language and origin. Thus, other peoples called them Romanians using some of these terms, but they had always called themselves “rumâni” and later in the modern epoch “români”.

At the beginnings of feudalism, in the extra Carpathian zones of the southern and eastern flank two Romanian states were formed: Wallachia¹ and Moldavia².

This was possible as the Kings of Hungary who had expansionist pretensions had grown weaker, the Mongols were fighting among themselves, the Bulgarian czardom had declined and the Byzantium was nothing anymore but a shadow. This is what the Romanians took advantage of, laying the bases of the above-mentioned states. Romanians from both sides of the Carpathians participated in this political work. The Romanians of Transylvania, used to having local autonomies being subject to pressures by the Kingdom of Hungary continued the fight against the central power in tandem with the Romanians from the extracarpathian space. Some of them crossed the mountains of Maramureş Country and Făgăraş Country³ to Moldavia and Wallachia, respectively.

The two states fought for maintaining the Romanian state organization using all their means: political compromises, tactic alliances, ambush wars. This was because, after an already consecrated expression, this type of conflicts were asymmetrical. Wars were fought against the Hungarians, the Ottomans, the Poles.

In 1599-1600 one of the princes of Wallachia Mihai the Brave, conquered through military means first Transylvania and then Moldavia. He realized a Romanian union in feudal standards. This union lasted for a very short time⁴ but it was enough to act symbolically on the Romanian intellectual thinking, which especially in the first half of the 19th century made the Union of Mihai the Brave a model to follow⁵. As a result of a favourable context⁶ the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia united on 24th January 1859, being generously supported by France.

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1. The Ottoman Turks called Walachia “Kara-Iflak” that is Black Wallachia .
 2. The same called Moldavia “Kara-Bugdan” that is Black Bogdania.
 3. The Făgăraş Country known as the Olt Country, as it is being called to this day by the local population. The Olt country (in Transylvania) must not be mistaken for Oltenia (a region in the west of Wallachia).
 4. From Nov.1599-Sept 1600.
 5. Revolutionary no.1 from 1848, N. Bălcescu, had a role in this modelatin.
 6. Russia was defeated in The War of Crimea 1853-1856 by the Franco-Anglo-Turkish coalition.

For the generation of 1848 France and its culture was the absolute model. French became a kind of second language for the pretentious Romanians from the extracarpathian area. Followed the modernising reforms¹, the constitution², obtaining the independence³. As a result of Romania's participation in World War I⁴ and following the political convention with the Antanta⁵, Romania rounded of its territory by getting provinces such as: Basarabia, Bucovina, Transylvania and Banat. Romania hanged from a population of 7.5 mil. to 16 mil. and from 137,000 km² to 295.000km². But due to its participation in the anti-Soviet war (wishing to recover Basarabia taken by Stalin in agreement with Hitler), Romania had to suffer on many levels.

On the territorial level it lost Basarabia, northern Bucovina, Cadrilater and the Serpents' Island. On the political level, the communist regime was established in the presence of the soviet troops (about 1 million soldiers). Romania had also to suffer on the moral, cultural, intellectual and economic levels. In 45 years of communism Romania, a country with closed borders for the common citizen, remained much behind and suffered very much, indeed, because of some wild, unimaginable repressions⁶, especially in the Stalinist period 1946-1960. Fear, hunger, cold and darkness came again over the Romanians in the last years of the regime of aberrant and megalomaniac dictatorship of Ceaușescu, that is mainly between 1980-89.

After the anticommunist riot in a larger favourable context Romania comes back not without pains and controversies, to the democratic regime and to the market economy. Romania joined NATO in 2004 and UE in 2007.

The states of EU especially have made a lot of investments in Romania. One such example: 70% of the capital of the banks of Romania is owned by banks of the EU, Austria being number one with 30% of the total banking capital.

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1. Al. I Cuza's reforms (1859-1866) followed by the king of German origin and catholic religion from the Suabian branch Carol I of Hohenzollern Siegmaringer.
 2. given by Carol I in 1866
 3. In 1877-1878 by participating in the antiottoman war and participating in the Congress of Berlin were the conditioned independence was obtained.
 4. between 1916-1918
 5. convention signed on 4th August 1916
 6. the experiment of "re-education" at the Pitesti prison.

THE MIGRANTS OF MILLENIUM II

The Kingdom of Hungary encourages the immigration of some important ethnic groups in Transylvania:

SEKLER (SICULES) settled successively between 11th-13th centuries in 3 locations from the west to the east of Transylvania. Now they live in quite very compact communities on the eastern side of Transylvania.

SAXONS (saxones, sassones) settled between 12th-13th centuries, especially on the southern side of Transylvania, north of the Meridional Carpathians. They came from many places but especially from the Rin-Morella region, the Franconian region and also from Brabant, Flanders. Actually, they are quite heterogenous. In fact they are not genuine Saxons.

CISTERCIANS MONKS (initially French monks coming from the French monastery Pontigny.) The monastery was founded by Ana de Chatillon, the first wife of king Bella III, close to IGRIȘ (Egresch, Hégerieux) in the north-west of Banat. At Igrîș monastery was buried the wife of Andrei II, Yolanda de Courtenay, daughter of the catholic emperor of Constantinople, Pierre d'Auxierre. Here, the first library on the territory of present-day Romania was founded. Between 1202-1205 the monastery founded a daughter-monastery at Cârța (Kertz) in Făgăraș Country. In 1206 abbots of Igrîș and Cârța participate in the General Capitlul of the Cistercian order of Cîteaux, in France. Both suffered damages caused by the Mongols and Cumanians, repeatedly, in the 13th century. Only the monastery of Cârța was rebuilt. Because of the repeated Turkish attacks, and being ruined, it was abandoned in 1474.

TEUTON KNIGHTS (TEUTONES) settled by Andrei II in Bârsei Country (BÜRZENLAND) in 1211. They were chased away in 1225 by the same king, in spite of the papal opposition. Subsequently, the order settled at the Baltic Sea, close to Poland. They were led by the great master Hermann von Salza.

SWABIANS (SUABIANS) – settled in Banat and Sătmar regions in order to strengthen Catholicism in the parts of Transylvania where the Saxons, influenced by Johannes Honterus, had turned to Lutheranism. At the same time, the settlement of the LANDLERS from upper Austria is permitted in the Sibiu area. They were Lutherans, just as the Saxons at that time. The action appears as a maneuver of purging the non-Catholic elements from Austria (a Catholic state). These immigrations occurred at the time of the emperors Karl VI and Maria Theresa, after 1700. The German population had an economic, commercial, urbanizing and military function, the regions they settled in being peripheral ones. Just as the French Cistercian monks, the Germans introduced Gothic art in the zone of Romania.

ZIPZERS, coming from the Zips region (Slovakia) settled in the Borșa – Vișeu de Sus (Oberwischau) area, as woodcutters or miners (Maramureș area), at the time of Maria Theresa.

The existence of the German community in Romania (about 800,000 in 1930) was deeply affected by the drama of World War II. The Germans of Romania fought in the anti-Soviet war in 3 armies: the Romanian army, the Hungarian army, the German Waffen SS army. When Romania signed the armistice with the USSR, on 12th Sept 1944, the German army started to withdraw the Saxons from Bistrița region (Nösnerland).

About 100,000 withdrew in front of the Red Army. But the Saxons of southern Transylvania couldn't be withdrawn, being caught by the advancing Red Army allied with the Romanian Army. Romania could not expel the Germans from its territory, as did some of the neighbouring states with the Germans on their territory, although on the territory of Romania there were about 1 million Soviet soldiers, self-proclaimed "liberators", though occupants. Nevertheless, through the secret order of USSR no.7161, 80,000 Germans will be deported to working concentration camps in USSR. The communist government, in its turn, deported an important number of Germans to Bărăgan, an area bordering on the Danube Delta. Between 1945-90, about 200,000-250,000 are appreciated to have taken refuge or been repatriated in Germany. The number of Germans decreased from 800,000 to 385,000 (in 1956), 120,000 (1992), 60,000 (2002). The Germans from Romania settled in relatively compact communities in Germany or Austria, where they try to keep their traditions, gather in numerous reunions. Almost every summer they nostalgically return to their native Transylvania, where they have reunions, help with the restoration and maintenance of the churches or the centenary organs. But in many cases the Germans that come to Romania to start businesses or small enterprises are not those who left from here.

The Saxons coming to Romania just in summer time are nicely called Sommersachsen (summer Saxons).

Without being pathetic, one might say that the Romanians regret the mass exodus of the Germans, models of earnestness, order and diligence. And it is undeniable that the Germans have left a strong print on Romania and a brilliant cultural inheritance.

In the Romanian principality of Moldavia, besides the very small communities of Saxons, Seklers, Hungarians, Poles who settled in the boroughs of the area, there also came Hussite Czecks (15th century), Armenians (14th-16th centuries), Jews (starting with 14th-16th centuries), Greeks (17th-18th centuries). The princes received them with open arms as they stimulated the economic-commercial development, raised towns or gave a content to town life and eventually increased the princes' income. Initially, in the 14th and 15th centuries the Jews came from Khazar space (present day Ukraine), from Byzantium and subsequently from the Polish and then the Russian space.

Another ethnic group was that of the GYPSIES, brought along to our areas especially by the Mongols (Tartars). Both Mongols and Gypsies were subject to acts of buying and selling as slaves. The Gypsies were emancipated from slavery only after the 1848 revolution. They lead a semi-nomadic life, with highly traditionalistic rules and a weak willingness of integration in society. They are organized in clans and trades: nomadic Gypsies, spoon makers, copper-smiths, fiddlers, butchers.

In ȚARA ROMÂNEASCĂ (Wallachia), besides the Saxons and the Hungarians settled in towns such as Târgoviște, Câmpu-Lung, Curtea de Argeș, settled Jews, Greeks and also small communities of Serbians and Bulgarians run away from the Ottoman Empire which had destroyed their vilages and administrated them directly as Ottoman provinces. For them, Țara Românească (The Romanian Country) was a kind of area offering political and cultural asylum.

In Dobrogea¹ (Dobrucha) settled Islamic communities (Turks and Tartars) as well as Lippovan Russians in the Delta between 1417 - 1878. In the mentioned period, Dobrogea was directly administrated by the Turks. After this brief review, some observations are to be made: except for the Seklers, the Muslims and the Lippovan Russians, who settle mainly in the rural areas, the others settle especially in the urban areas, which they otherwise develop and upon which they lay their print. The autochthonous Romanian majority of the three provinces (Transylvania, Moldavia, The Romanian Country) is anchored in the countryside. The Romanians' interest for the urban space rises significantly after 1800. The Jewish communities are grouped especially in the peripheral towns and boroughs, with a higher commercial and financial potential. Also, in the residential towns, the towns of the central power. The Jews were numerous, especially in Moldavia, Basarabia and N-W Transylvania.

The Romanians also moved. The first significant movement occurred in the 13th - 14th centuries, from Maramureş and Moldavia towards areas of Podolia and Galiția (N-W of present-day Ukraine), where they set up new villages with Romanian names.

The Romanians of Austro-Hungary (from Transylvania and Banat) had a temporary economic emigration, especially towards the USA, in the period 1890-1914. Peasants, most of them, they returned and, with the money they had saved, they bought land and built houses.

1. Unified with Romania in 1878 as a result of the peace Congress of Berlin.

In the 19th century, the relations between the Romanians north and south of the Danube were strengthened. The dialectal groups south of the Danube, especially the Macedoromanians (Aromanians) started to manifest interest in settling in Romania, especially as they were culturally and politically discriminated by the host states and subject to an aggressive assimilation. They gave Romania important figures in science, culture, finance and politics.

The Romanians of Great Romania (the interwar Romania) experience a wave of political emigration in the period 1944-1948. After 1948 the communist regime installed in the country between 1945-1947 closes the borders.

During the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965-1989), this one trafficked thousands of persons who were Romanian citizens of German or Jewish origin, in exchange for marks and dollars paid by the states of G.F.R. and Israel. The procedure was called „repatriation”.

Starting with 1990 (after the fall of communism) the emigration is resumed. The emigrants fall in two categories:

- definitive emigrants to:
 - the USA
 - Canada
 - Australia/New Zealand
 - E.U.
- seasonal or temporary emigrants (hard, dirty or dangerous labour for 2-3-5 years) in E.U. (especially in countries such as Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal – less in the U.K., Germany, Austria and the Scandinavian countries).

The Romanians who left abroad for work are about 3 mil. With the outburst of the present crisis, their number decreases dramatically. They have brought in the country between 5 - 7 md Euro in the recent years, contributing to the consolidation of the Romanian economy. On the other hand, they have seriously given a helping hand to the rise in profitability of the western economies.

Unfortunately, some Romanian emigrant citizens (especially from the Gypsy community) are begging and producing incidents with a criminal character as they do not integrate socially in Romania, nor in the immigrant host country. This problem remains a great challenge for all the countries members of E.U. We think that Romania is incapable of solving this problem alone. Such a problem cannot be solved through electoral manipulations, emotional reactions, or through tabloid information aimed at obtaining rating. On the other hand, it is unrealistic to expect miraculous and short time solutions.

In 1914 The Romanian Kingdom had : - 137,000 km²

- 7.5 mil. citizens

In 1918 – 1940 The Romanian Kingdom had: - 295,000 km²

- 16-18 mil.citizens

In 1945 Romania had: - 237,000 km²

- 18 mil. citizens

In 2002 Romania had: - 237,000 km²

- 22 mil. citizens.

Censuses

	1930	1992	2002
Romanians	71.9%	89.50%	89.50%
Hungarians	7.9%	7.12%	6.60%
Germans	4.1%	0.52%	0.28%
Jews	4%	under 0.10%	under 0.10%
Ruthenians+ Ukrainians	3.2%	-	0.28%
Russians+Lippovans	2.3%	-	0.17%
Bulgarians	2%	-	under 0.10%
Gypsies	1.5%	1.76%	2.50% (535,000)
Turks+Tartars	1%	-	0.15%
Italians	-	-	under 0.10%(3,300)
Poles	0.25%	-	under 0.10%
Orthodox Turks	0.60%	-	-