Romania

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Article begins on next page
LAND AND PEOPLE
Romania’s 237,500 square kilometers make it the second largest country in the area between Germany and the former Soviet Union. Bodies of water constitute more than half of the Romanian frontier. The River Prut and the Danube Delta form the border with Moldova and Ukraine to the northeast, and there is Black Sea coast to the east for 245 kilometers. The Danube separates the country from Serbia, then Bulgaria to the south before flowing northward across the country to the Ukrainian border. The Danube accounts for more than half of the water frontier, and it is navigable for riverine shipping throughout its Romanian course.

Mountains constitute one-third of Romania’s territory. The principal mountain chain consists of the Eastern and Southern Carpathians, which form an arc that is more than 750 kilometers in length, open toward the northwest and with its point close to the country’s center, extending south-eastward from near the Ukrainian border, then west to the Iron Gate that frames the Danube’s entry into Romania. The Eastern Carpathians extend into Romania from the Ukrainian Carpathians to the north, with a spur westward into Transylvania called the Rodna Mountains. Where the Eastern Carpathians extend southward between Transylvania and Moldavia, their western side features Alpine meadows and lakes of volcanic origin, notably Red (Roșu) and St. Ana Lakes. Two major passes pierce them. The first, the Bârgău Pass, connects Bistrița in northern Transylvania with the valley of the Moldavian river also named Bistrița and is immortalized in the opening scenes of Bram Stoker’s Dracula. The second, the Predeal Pass, provides the rail route for most travelers from central Transylvania to Bucharest with dramatic views of the Bucegi Mountains. Smaller passes between these, through the Bicaz Gorge near Red Lake and the valleys of the Oituz and Buzău, connect the Székely region of eastern Transylvania with central Moldova. The Southern Carpathians (or Transylvanian Alps) are less accessible to travelers because they have fewer passes and are bypassed by major thoroughfares. West of Bucegi, the Făgăraș massif (including Moldoveanu, the country’s highest peak at 2,543 meters) presents an almost impenetrable barrier, of which air travelers between Sibiu and Bucharest may gain an uncomfortably close view. Equally hair-raising is the Trans-Făgăraș Highway, built in the 1960s south of Sibiu, which rises up and through the range near its highest point. Further west, the Olt River Gorge provides the only passage of a major Transylvanian river through the Carpathians at Red Tower Pass. The Făgăraș, Paring, and especially the Retezat massif and its national park, west of the Olt, attract hardy mountaineers to their glaciers, lakes, and wildlife: brown bears, chamois, and lynx.

After the Carpathians, lower, older mountain ranges present less substantial
obstacles within the historic provinces: the Moldavian and Getic Subcarpathians to the east and south, and the Western Mountains (Munții Apuseni, sometimes called the Western Carpathians) in several ranges from north to south, to the east of the present Hungarian border. Only the highest of the Western Mountains, the Bihor range, reach heights above 2,000 meters. Unlike these other mountains, for most of recorded history the Eastern and Southern Carpathians constituted a political and cultural frontier between Hungarian lands and the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, where Romanian statehood first arose.

Wallachia (Țara Românească) arose from the historical regions of Oltenia and Muntenia, to the west and east of the Olt, formerly seats of viceroyos but for many centuries no longer distinct administrative units. The northern part of Wallachia is mountainous country populated seasonally by shepherds and their flocks, by occasional hermitages or larger monastic establishments, and the first capital towns of the medieval and early modern era. The Alpine country gives way to hills and tableland, conducive to fruit (especially plums and apples) and viticulture, punctuated by a series of rivers that broaden as they flow south or east into the low, fertile (Romania’s maize and wheat are grown here) plain of the Danube: the Motru, Jiu, Olteț, Olt, Vedea, Teleorman, Arges, Dâmbovița, and Ialomița Rivers. Ancient and medieval accounts reveal that the Danube plain was previously covered with forests, as are the foothills today. The draining and rerouting of river backwaters has also made the Danube plain less productive for fishing than it once was.

Oltenia’s principal city, Craiova, rose to prominence as the seat of a viceroy when he moved down from the hills to the newer town on the middle Jiu that was better situated for east–west communications. Its major industries in recent decades have been automobiles, aircraft, and thermal power. Târgu Jiu, in the northwestern mountains, is the country’s main mining center. After heavy development under the communists, it is now environmentally blighted and has been the site of industrial unrest in recent decades. Drobeta-Turnu Severin, whose name refers to its ancient origins (remnants of its Roman bridge across the Danube are still visible), is a transport center east of the Iron Gates and known for the rose gardens in its city center. Muntenia constitutes two-thirds of Wallachia’s territory. Bucharest (București), the capital, is the cultural and industrial center. Other urban and industrial centers are Ploiești (long one of the major oil-extracting centers of Europe) and Pitești (auto manufacturing and textiles) to the north and west. Giurgiu is a smaller industrial center (chemicals) and port on the Danube that was heavily polluted under the communists. Several of Romania’s largest lakes are backwaters of the Danube in southern Wallachia.

North of Wallachia and facing the Carpathians from the east, Moldova bears the same name in Romanian— Moldova—and the same historical origin as the independent state to its northeast on the other side of the Prut. As in Wallachia, Moldavia’s Carpathian borders slope irregularly to lower mountains, hills, and the plains. Relatively few rivers (the Bistrița, Oituz, Trotuș, and Buzău) flow down from these mountains, and the principal rivers, the Siret and Prut, run parallel to them and form a maize-growing plain before emptying into the Danube. Romania’s largest Danubian ports are in Moldavia, Galați, and Brăila. Galați is also an iron and steelmaking center, and its deep harbor enables it to service oceangoing vessels. The hill country of Moldavia boasts two of Romania’s most important wine regions, Vrancea in the south and Cotnari northwest of Iași. Iași, the historical capital of the province, is the country’s second largest city and, like Bucharest, a center of diverse branches of industry. The independent nation of Moldova, largely but not completely synonymous with Bessarabia, is a lowland between the Prut and the Dniester. Modest hills in its center are home to major winegrowing regions, but Moldova’s principal crops are maize and sugar beets. The capital city is Chișinău (Slavic: Kishinev). The Transdniester (primarily Slavic) and Gagauzi regions of Moldova, near its southeastern border with Ukraine, are virtually though not de jure independent. The area across the border, which was ceded to Ukraine in 1940, has a Romanian minority.

A third major region is Dobrogea (Slavic: Dobrudja) in the southeast, bounded by the Danube, the Bulgarian border, and the Black Sea. The two major coastal towns were founded by the ancient Greeks and contain extensive archeological remains: Mangalia (Greek: Kallatis) near the Bulgarian border and Constanța (originally Tomis) further north, Romania’s largest Black Sea port and near the mouth of the Danube–Black Sea Canal, completed in 1984. The inland of Dobrogea is dry, with a few ranges of hills and a restored Roman monument at Adamclisi to the conquest of the area from the Dacians by Emperor Trajan. Further north, Histria was a Greek port at the mouth of the Danube before it silted up in the seventh century. For most of the modern era this region was ruled directly by the Ottoman Empire, as evidenced by the presence of mosques and Turkish place-names such as Techirghiol and Medgidia, the latter founded under Sultan Abdul Mejid in 1840. Still further north, the Danube Delta is not a part of Dobrogea either historically or geographically but is commonly included with it. East of the port town of Tulcea on the Ukrainian border, the Danube divides into three arms before it reaches the sea. The Chilia arm forms the border and is the longest, frequently branching arm; the Sulina arm, artificially straightened, is favored by shippers but requires periodic dredging, while the St. George arm is furthest south. This is a sparsely populated region of reedy marshes with more than three hundred species of birds. South of St. George, Lakes Razim and Sinoie are salt-water lagoons. After excessive harvesting of the reeds, overfishing, and an ill-conceived project to gain cropland through draining the area, UNESCO inspired the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority in the 1990s that controls development and tourist access.

Bucovina, historically part of Moldavia, was created in 1775 through the cession of this territory northwest of Iași to Austria. While it came to united Romania in 1918, its northern part, with a large Romanian population, was ceded to Soviet Ukraine in 1940. Southern Bucovina is in the northernmost part of current Romania, in the upper reaches of the Siret, Suceava, and Moldova Rivers. Due to
isolation near the frontier and the Carpathian barrier to the west, the region is relatively undeveloped. This, along with UNESCO designation as artistic treasures, has helped preserve Bucovina’s painted monasteries, founded by Moldavian Prince Stephen the Great in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The influence of 143 years of Austrian rule may be detected in a residual German element of the population and in the appearance of some of the towns.

The mountains extending into Ukraine from Romanian Bucovina separate it from the region of Maramureș, known in Hungarian as Máramaros. Maramureș and three other regions formed part of Hungary from the high Middle Ages until 1918: Crișana, Banat, and Transylvania. All four regions already contained a predominant Romanian element at that time. With the assimilating impact of the Romanian educational system and economic development, their adherence to Romania is secure today, but the influence of their earlier history is evident in the religion, work ethic, political preferences, and customs of all groups of society, as well as in the appearance of the towns. Superior rates of economic development benefited the Romanians and the non-Romanian populations, there were superior educational opportunities, and the legal and administrative framework favored the development of civic awareness.

In Maramureș, as in Bucovina, geographic isolation because of the mountains and the proximity of the frontier has limited the development of industry in recent decades and enabled rural communities to maintain their character. The Gâuți, Țibleș, and Rodna Mountains separate the province from Transylvania to the south, and administratively it formed part of Hungary proper rather than the relatively autonomous Transylvania. The earlier self-governing villages of free peasants and minor nobility have retained their separate consciousness, folk customs, and traditional garb to a surprising extent. These villages populate the valleys of the Iza and Vișeu Rivers, while to their north the upper Tisa (Hungarian: Tisza) River forms part of the Ukrainian border before flowing into the Hungarian plain. The major town, Baia Mare (Hungarian: Nagybanya), is a mining center whose population suffered severely through the construction under the communists of metallurgical plants upwind of the city center. The second city, Sighet (Hungarian: Maramaroszigtet), on the Ukrainian border, was the site of the country’s main detention center for political prisoners in the 1950s.

Crișana (Hungarian: Körösvidék), further south, unlike Maramureș and Transylvania, was not a historical region but a term of convenience for parts of several counties separated from Hungary in 1918 around the Someș (Hungarian: Szamos) and the three branches of the Criș (Hungarian: Körös) Rivers. This region is geographically indistinguishable from the great Hungarian plain. It is a maize-, wheat-, and rye-growing area. Its major towns, Satu Mare (Hungarian: Szatmar) and Oradea (Hungarian: Nagyvárad) on the Criul Repede are seats of Roman Catholic bishoprics, hard on the Hungarian border, that bear the imprint of Baroque and fin de siècle architecture.

The Banat (Hungarian: Bánság or Bánság) originated as a regional governorship that emerged in the Hungarian Mid-

Religious freedom, 1991: The local bishop of the legalized Greek Catholic Church celebrates a liturgy on the central square in Cluj to remind onlookers that his former cathedral is still in the hands of the Orthodox Church. In the background are the 1903 statue of a medieval king of Hungary and the Gothic St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Church (1432). (Courtesy of James P Niessen)
Alba Iulia and the Mureș River Valley in Transylvania: The towers of the Orthodox and Catholic cathedrals are visible within the citadel of the former Transylvanian capital, partially obscured by the housing developments of the communist era. (Courtesy of James P. Niessen)

The geographic unity of the province greatly contributed to the separate identity it enjoyed over the centuries, and to some extent still does today. The Eastern and Southern Carpathians formed a natural frontier toward Wallachia and Moldavia, while the Western Mountains performed this function to a much lesser extent toward Hungary proper. North of the Bihor Mountains, the hills do not pose much of a barrier. The Someș flows through a wide valley to Satu Mare, while south of these mountains the Mureș, the longest river of Transylvania, flows through an even wider valley before entering today’s Hungary near Arad. Central Transylvania is a well-watered plateau with several major river basins, north to south the Bistrița, two branches of the Someș, two branches of the Mureș, two branches of the Târnava (Hungarian: Küküllő), and the Olt, that helped, along with the defense needs of Hungarian kings, to define administrative and cultural units in this extremely diverse region. In the north, the headwaters of the Someș and Bistrița became the seat of a Saxon district, while further east the headwaters of the Mureș and Olt formed the core of the Székely or Szekler district, the middle expanse of the Olt formed the bulk of the Saxon zone, and border regiments of Székely and Romanians guarded the Carpathians to the east and south. Central Transylvania too has its characteristic administrative and ethnographic regions. The major towns, Cluj-Napoca (Hungarian: Kolozsvár), Sibiu (German: Hermannstadt), Târgu Mureș (Hungarian: Marosvásárhely), and Brașov (German: Kronstadt; Hungarian: Brassó) are largely Romanian today but with significant remnants of the ethnic groups associated with much of their older Gothic, baroque, and art nouveau architecture.

Gold, salt, iron, and copper mining are significant in various parts of Transylvania. Partly in consequence, some of the most polluted towns are in the metallurgical centers Zlatna and Hunedoara and the carbon works at Copșa Mică. Transylvania’s relatively high altitude means it has shorter growing seasons than the rest of the country does, but it is well watered and hence well suited for livestock as well as rye, maize, plums, and vineyards. Plum brandy (țuica) is the Romanian national beverage, and it is produced in every region.

PEOPLES
The differing history and date of integration into Romania of its regions has contributed in large part to its ethnographic variety. According to the 1930 census, minorities made up 28 percent of the population. Much of the minor-
Modern and ultramodern in Bucharest: The CEC building (Romanian Savings Bank, 1894–1900) with the incongruous Bancorex building behind it. (Courtesy of James P. Niessen)

ity population was permanently lost in 1940 with the secession of Bessarabia, but powerful assimilationist trends have also been at work. Ethnic self-identification, language, and religion must all be considered in describing the population of Romania. In March 2002 Romania held its twelfth census since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In terms of ethnicity, mother tongue, and religious identification, the census showed the following:

**Romanians** Romansians are the predominant ethnic and linguistic group in every region of the country. While there is no consensus among scholars about the length of their residence in the country's territories, their presence is documented since the thirteenth century.

Most Romansians belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church, which is contiguous with the territory of the country, led by a patriarch in Bucharest, and divided into thirteen archbishoprics and bishoprics. Romanian Orthodoxy, with its Byzantine rite liturgy chanted in Romanian, rich tradition of icon painting and architecture, and association with dynastic and military history, is closely associated with national identity. The church, having collaborated with communist authorities after 1945, was the beneficiary of the suppression of the Romanian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church in 1948. It enjoyed an expansion of Orthodox seminaries and publishing, but it also meekly accepted the destruction of many historic churches in the 1980s. This attitude damaged the prestige of the church among many Romansians, and consequently it has not been in a position to aid in the restoration of Romanian morale in the face of social and economic stagnation since the fall of communism.

Greek Catholics, whose church was organized in 1700 in Transylvania, live overwhelmingly in that province and are mostly Romanian. Their liturgy and artistic traditions resemble those of the Orthodox, but they recognize the authority of the pope. They numbered roughly 1.4 million, about half the Romanian population in the lands formerly part of Hungary, at the time of the suppression of the church in 1948. Although the church was restored to legality in 1990 and its previously clandestine bishops returned to public life, it has failed to regain possession of most church buildings expropriated in 1948. Doubts raised by the Orthodox about the loyalty of the church to the nation (ecclesiastical ties to the Roman Catholics made it relatively open to Hungarian cultural influence, although Uniate schools and writers were generally bulwarks of Romanian culture under Hungarian rule) and stubborn defense of Orthodox Church property have kept the Uniates on the defensive. To some degree neo-Protestant churches have filled the void, attracting members from the traditional but embattled Romanian churches: the more than half million strong Pentecostal, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Evangelical Churches have grown rapidly since 1990 and are primarily Romanian. Roman Catholic Church members are mostly Hungarian but include growing Romanian minorities in Moldavia and to a lesser extent in Wallachia, where Latin rite parishes and bishoprics function in the Romanian language.

There are many Romanian ethnographic regions with distinctive folk arts that have inspired writers, painters, and composers. To mention only a few, Vrancea in southwestern Moldavia is known for its folk music, Gorj in Oltenia for its architecture, Tara moților in the Western Carpathians for its carved wooden objects and annual mating fair, and Maramureș for its carved wooden gates. The monasteries and villages of the Carpathians and especially their shepherds (ciobani, păunari, mocani) are powerful images in Romanian culture.

**Hungarians** The large Hungarian minority is a legacy of the lands ceded from Hungary after World War I, where Hungarians had settled in medieval times. Though Romansians have predominated in these lands throughout the modern period and into the present, there is a Hungarian majority in two counties of the Székely region of Transylvania and substantial minorities in most other counties that formerly belonged to Hungary. Miercurea Ciuc (Hungarian: Csíkszereda) and Sfântu Gheorghe (Septsiészegyörgy) are the largest towns with Hungarian majorities, but Târgu Mureș (Marosvásárhely) and Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár) have large Hungarian minority populations. The decline of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,698,181</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>19,409,400</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>1,434,377</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>535,250</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>60,088</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>61,091</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>22,518</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>32,596</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatars</td>
<td>24,137</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovaks</td>
<td>17,199</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Russians/        | 36,397        | 0.2      |
| Lipovans        | 8,092         |          |
| Bulgarians      | 6,786         |          |
| Croats          | 6,513         |          |
| Greeks          | 3,938         |          |

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
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<td>Croatian</td>
<td>6,355</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>4,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>3,339</td>
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</table>

The Hungarian population below 1.5 million in the 2002 census is attributed by both Hungarians and Romanians to emigration, especially to Hungary, but economic stagnation and emigration have caused an absolute decline in the Romanian majority as well. The Hungarian political party, the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Romania, provides Hungarians with a large degree of political unity, and their cultural institutions enjoy the support of the Hungarian government, in which the Romanian government increasingly acquiesces. Hungarian churches and bishops have served as protectors of minority culture. Most members of the Roman Catholic, Reformed (Calvinist), Unitarian, and Synodal Lutheran Churches are Hungarians. There are small Hungarian minorities in Moldavia and Wallachia.

Two special ethnographic groups of the Hungarians are the Székely (or Székler) people and the Csángós. The Székely owe their origins to a Turkic people that was once distinct from the bulk of the Hungarians, but in modern times it has spoken a form of standard Hungarian and expressed Hungarian political consciousness. Székely towns and rural communities are prized by Hungarians for the traditions of their schools and churches as well as (like the Maramureș Romanians) their carved wooden gates. The Csángós (Romanian: Ciangăi) are a Roman Catholic people living in the valley of the Trotuș River and around the towns of Bacău (Hungarian: Bákó) and Târgu Ocna (Aknavásár) in south central Moldavia. The Csángós are probably of Hungarian origin, though today most speak a local variant of Romanian and are distinguished primarily by their strong Roman Catholic faith. A subgroup of Csángós lives in southeastern Transylvania near the town of Brașov.

The Stavropoleos Church (1724), Bucharest: Monument of the Brâncovenean style and the Phanariot era in Wallachia. (Courtesy of James P. Niessen)
Romanian Language

Romanian is a Romance language spoken in Romania, as well as by 65 percent of the population of the Republic of Moldova and much smaller portions of the population of Hungary, Serbia, and other parts of the Balkans. Romanian or Daco-Romanian is the largest variety of the Balkan Romance languages. The others, spoken by small minorities to the south, are Aromanian or Macedo-Romanian, spoken in parts of Albania, Macedonia, and northern Greece; Megleno-Romanian, spoken near Thessaloniki in northern Greece; and Istro-Romanian, spoken in some villages in the Istrian peninsula. Traditionally there have been regional variations of pronunciation (rarely a barrier to comprehension) in the Romanian spoken within Romania, which may be placed into three groups, associated with Moldavia and northern Transylvania, southern Transylvania and Wallachia, and Banat. Among these variants, the Oltenian one became painfully well known through the stuttering, interminable speeches of Nicolae Ceaușescu. The Romanian spoken in the Republic of Moldova, and especially in the separatist region of Transnistria, is strongly influenced by Russian and Ukrainian, with the soft vowels characteristic of those languages. The constitution of the Republic of Moldova designates the state language as “Moldovan” rather than Romanian.

Romania has a greater grammatical similarity to Latin than do Latin-based Western languages such as French and Spanish, thereby buttressing the theory that the ancestors of the modern Romanians resided continuously on their present territory from Roman times. The earliest surviving Romanian text dates from 1521. Statistical analysis of Romanian dictionaries and usage indicates a majority of the words are of Latin origin (this includes modern French imports), but a large minority is not. Many older words that are associated with agriculture and nature have Slavic, Turkish, Albanian, or Hungarian origins and may be paired with Neolatin forms that were preferred by linguistic reformers. The postpositional direct article (as in Lucășelul, The Evening Star, a poem by Eminescu) does not exist in other Romance languages.

The spelling of contemporary Romanian is nearly phonetic. The partial exception is due to the application of linguistic reforms in 1934 and prior to 1945, which sought to emphasize the Latin etymology of Romanian words. While the Roman origin of Romanian is not in doubt, until the nineteenth century it was usually written in Cyrillic. The Danubian Principalities introduced the Latin alphabet in 1860. The use of Cyrillic continued longer in Bessarabia, and it was restored there during the period of Soviet rule between 1940 and 1990. Today, Romanian uses a Latin alphabet containing thirty-three characters. Politically motivated changes in orthography during the twentieth century principally affected the vowels a and i, as in the word Roman, later Român (Romanian). The first form has been standard for most of the twentieth century, but the second, emphasizing the possible Slavic origin of the sound, was introduced in 1954. Since 1965 Romania has replaced Român as the preferred English form of the country’s name. New Romanian spelling rules were instituted in 1994 concerning additional uses of the vowels ă and ă: și, șt (are) once again became sunt, as in Latin.

Roma (Gypsies) The enumeration of Romania’s Roma, or Gypsies, is difficult. The Budapest-based European Human Rights Foundation estimates the Roma population at 1.9 million, the largest in any country. Official census figures are much lower, but it is likely that anti-Roma sentiment in the general population discourages many Roma from declaring this identity to census-takers. Market conditions after 1990 have enabled some Roma to do quite well in business or music and to build gaudy “palaces” in the Roma quarters of some towns, but even larger numbers of Roma have failed to establish a firm footing in the Romanian economy. They suffer from poverty, homelessness, and inadequate education. Tens of thousands of Roma from Romania died in the camps in Auschwitz and Transnistria in World War II. Discrimination against Roma today, including mistreatment by the Romanian police, has been documented by Amnesty International.

The variety of ethnic groupings among the Roma also weakens Roma identity. The 2002 census reveals that only half the self-identified half million Roma indicated Romanies as their mother tongue. Most of the others are speakers of Romanian and, in Transylvania, Romanian or Hungarian. The Roma are politically disunited, with at least four Roma political parties in the country and a rival “king” and “emperor” in the Transylvanian town of Sibiu. Roma are distributed among the churches dominated by the Romanians and Hungarians in their respective regions. “King” Florin Cioaba is a Pentecostal minister. The majority of Roma live in settled urban or rural communities, and only a minority still follow a migratory lifestyle.

Ukrainians and Russians The 100,000 eastern Slavs in the country are concentrated in two regions, the Ukrainians in Maramureș and adjoining parts of Bucovina, and the
Russians (Lipovani) in the Danube Delta. The political importance of these minorities is heightened, and their status either worsened or improved, according to the nature of Romania’s relations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, where Ukrainians and Russians exercise strong influence over the fortunes of the Romanians living in those countries. The Ukrainians in Romania’s northwest adhere primarily to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, but a minority are Greek Catholics. The Lipovani are Russian Orthodox Old Believers, who came to the delta at the time of Peter the Great to escape religious persecution.

Germans At its height, during the interwar period, Romania’s German minority was ten times larger than its current size. The ancestors of some Germans were brought to Transylvania by Hungarian kings in the thirteenth century to settle and defend the southern borderland of the province, while others came in the eighteenth century to help revive the economy of southeastern Hungary after its liberation from the Turks. Today perhaps two-thirds of the Germans are Roman Catholic Swabians (Schwaben) residing in the Banat, while less than 20,000 Lutheran Saxons (Sachsen) remain in southern Transylvania. Many Germans fled westward at the end of World War II, and a large portion of those who remained were deported to the Soviet Union. Most deportees returned to Romania in the 1950s but began to emigrate in the 1970s with the collusion of the Romanian and West German governments, which paid a ransom (nominally in remuneration for their education in Romania) for each person. Although the ransom system ended with the fall of communism, German emigration became a flood in 1990. Many abandoned Saxon villages have been occupied by Roma, while their historic churches are preserved by foundations based in Germany or have been purchased by Romanian congregations.

Turks and Tatars Turks and Tatars are remnants of larger settlements in Dobrogea and the Lower Danube that arose during the period of Ottoman domination in Wallachia and Moldavia. Their Muslim religion has proven more tenacious than their language and ethnic identity. Two mosques in Constanța were built in 1868 and 1910; there are older mosques in Mangalia and Babadag. Romania’s growing economic relations with Turkey have helped ensure the preservation of these monuments and modest support for Turkish and Tatar cultural organizations.

Jews Romania’s Jewish population, like that of the Germans, was once much larger. Jews were a majority of the population of Iași in the late nineteenth century, and they accounted for much of the commercial activity in Moldavia. Romanian anti-Semitism was correspondingly strongest there. It gained powerful influence in Romanian political life during the interwar period, although Jewish-Christian relations had been relatively peaceful in Bucharest. Jews east and south of the Carpathians were Sephardim, while those in the formerly Habsburg lands were Ashkenazim. The Holocaust took a heavy toll on both these groups, the former being deported by Romanian troops to Transnistria and the latter by the Hungarians to Auschwitz. Still, more Jews survived the Holocaust in Romania than in any other country in the region. As with the Germans, a ransom system (financed by Israel) facilitated the emigration of most survivors by the 1980s. Fewer than 10,000 Jews remain in Romania, but the country’s ultranationalists still find anti-Semitism (often paired with anti-Hungarianism) a useful tool.

HISTORY The territories that now compose Romania came together between 1859 and 1918. Although there were intermittent attempts and one brief early success at uniting these lands because of their geopolitical position, the idea that they constituted a Romanian nation arose only in recent centuries. The first published reference to this “Romania” occurred in the early nineteenth century. If we nonetheless project the history of the country further back in time, it is with the understanding that these territories’ association with each other was most of the time no stronger than their association with lands that are now outside the borders of Romania. A two-thousand-year history of Romania in this
sense is still not totally anachronistic because the cultures in today's country owe much to earlier history. Historians simply disagree about how.

**ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL TIMES**

The Thracians, an Indo-European people, lived in much of the area as far south as Homeric Greece in the Iron Age. Greeks established trading colonies along the Black Sea coast of Dobrogea at the end of this period, and reported the presence in the hinterland of Getae and Dacians. They spoke the same language; hence writers today use the term “Geto-Dacians” for this Thracic people that lived in an area resembling modern Romania. Herodotus and other Greek writers have left descriptions of their monotheistic religion and social organization. Small Geto-Dacian kingdoms coalesced into a Dacian “empire” under Burebista in the first century B.C.E., which extended far into modern Hungary and Slovakia. Burebista’s capital for a while was Aređava in Wallachia south of today’s Bucharest, then later at Sarmizegetusa in southern Transylvania. This empire fell apart after Burebista sided with Pompey in the Roman civil war and was assassinated. The Roman poet Ovid was exiled to the Greek town of Tomis on the Black Sea, at the beginning of the first century. We know he was not happy to be there. A collection of his poems from the years in Tomis is entitled *Tristia* (Poems of Sadness).

Hostilities between Rome and the Dacians increased, in part over control of the rich deposits of gold in Transylvania. Rome annexed Dobrogea to its province of Moesia in 46 C.E. Later in the century, the Dacian kingdoms reunited and fought a series of wars against the Romans before suffering final defeat by the Roman Emperor Trajan in 106, when the Dacian ruler Decebalus (Decibal in Romanian) committed suicide while in flight. In the course of these campaigns, the Romans erected two structures whose ruins have survived to the present: a bridge across the Danube at Drobeta-Turnu Severin in the west, and a monument to the Roman victory in Dobrogea at Tropaeum Traiani, today’s Adamclisi. Tropaeum Traiani and the narrative history of the campaign on Trajan’s Column in the Roman Forum give us an idea of how the Dacians may have looked. Sources disagree as to whether the Dacian population of the province survived the conquest.

The period of Roman rule over Dacia varied by region: six centuries for Dobrogea, four and a half centuries for southern Oltenia and Banat, 160 years for most of Oltenia, Banat, and Transylvania. Roman rule in Muntenia and southern Moldavia lasted barely a decade. Northern Moldavia and two-thirds of Bessarabia were never occupied, the Romans settling only for military outposts near the mouth of the Danube and nearby Greek colonies, and today’s Maramureș was not occupied either. “Free Dacians” in the unoccupied area, Costoboci and Carps, and Germans attacked the Romans repeatedly. Roman Dacia had one of the longest borders of any province facing the barbaricum—the Free Dacians and Sarmatians to the north and east and the Sarmatians west of the gold mines in central Transylvania that were the source of the province’s wealth.

Given the importance of its mineral treasure and exposed position, Roman Dacia required a substantial military presence. The contested eastern frontier followed the Carpathians, then the line of the Olt River south to the Danube. After the loss of Muntenia, a defensive line was built to the east of the Olt, the *lines transalutanus*, fortified by fourteen military camps from Cumidava, inside the Bran Pass in Transylvania, to Flămândă on the Danube. The frontier of Moesia was similarly defended along the line of the lower Danube, and there were large camps on the Danube south of the Banat and the Mureș, Criș, and Someș in Transylvania. In the interior of Transylvania, Apulum (now Alba Iulia) and Napoca (now Cluj-Napoca) were regional capitals, Apulum housing one legion, while further south Sarmizegetusa, then Berzobis in the Banat housed another. There were up to 55,000 Roman soldiers in Dacia in the late second century, and 10,000–15,000 in Dobrogea.

Most of the estimated 600,000 to 1 million inhabitants of Roman Dacia were civilians, many of them officials brought in from other parts of the empire. After a century of Roman rule, five cities had an estimated population over 10,000, plus three more in Dobrogea. There was extensive construction: aqueducts to supply the major cities, baths, and mineral baths in places like Băile Herculane and Ger­misara that possessed this resource. The Romans connected their major camps with roads paved in stone, one of which an Austrian map of 1722 suggests was still in use at that time. Inscriptions that have survived on funerary monuments and elsewhere suggest the principal language of the cities in Dacia was Latin and a mixture of Greek and Latin in the towns of Dobrogea, whereas in the rural communities people must have continued to speak Dacian. The objects of religious worship were generally Greco-Roman deities.

During an invasion of western Transylvania in 167, workers in a gold mine at Alburnus Maior (now Roșia Montana) hid a number of wax tablets documenting the accounts of the mine. The special conditions in the mine shaft enabled these tablets to survive intact until their celebrated discovery in 1786 and later. The inscriptions, dating between 131 and 167 (mostly in Latin with some in Greek), are often signed by persons who identify themselves as scribes, but other inscriptions are unsigned, suggesting that Latin literacy characterized more than just a narrow segment of the population. The exploitation of gold, begun under the Dacians, was expanded under the control of the imperial treasury with skilled Illyrian miners. Stone, salt, grain, vegetables, and fruit were also produced in Dacia, some on major farms, and exported to other provinces.

Much of the construction and economic growth of Roman Dacia took place in spurts during isolated decades of peace between periods of invasion and war. Disorder at the heart of the empire compounded the impact of the invasions, with new emperors, often imposed by the army, succeeding one another in quick succession. At times, they withdrew troops from Dacia to meet incursions elsewhere. After winning a military victory on another front, Aurelian used the ensuing respite to organize an orderly retreat of his troops and administration from Roman Dacia by the end of
his reign in 275. It appears likely that the bulk of the wealthy city dwellers and colonists withdrew with the troops, while there is disagreement as to whether many of the peasantry and common people stayed behind. The central portion of Moesia south of the Danube accommodated many of the refugees.

Roman Dacia survived longest in the south. The bridge-heads on the northern shore of the Danube were maintained and even expanded in the fourth through sixth centuries, and Emperor Justinian built major Christian basilicas in Sucidava (Celci) in the west and Tomis in Dobrogea. Latin remained the language of the Eastern Roman Empire until the late sixth century, or shortly before the Byzantines finally abandoned Dobrogea after a rule of six centuries.

Compared to the extensive written and archaeological remains of Roman Dacia, far less is known about the rulers, and even less about the population, of the non-Roman area Romania in the following centuries. Funerary practices have given rise to varied conclusions based on the idea that the Romans or Romanized peoples buried their dead, while the Dacians and others cremated them. The ethnic origin of ceramic finds is difficult to establish. Major hoards of fine jewels and weapons from the post-Roman era are more easily identified with the temporary Germanic and Turkic rulers of the day.

Six dominant peoples succeeded each other in much of the region, on either or both sides of the Carpathians, before the arrival of the Hungarians in the ninth century: Goths, Huns, Gepids, Avars, Slavs, and Bulgars. The first successors were the Visigoths, a Germanic people under whom a shadow of Roman urban civilization continued in the area. Many of the Goths adopted Christianity, and their martyr, St. Sava, is venerated throughout the region. Next came the Huns, a Turkic people from Asia who destroyed much of the remaining urban life and exacted tribute as they moved their power center with time from Wallachia to Pannonia in the west. After the defeat of the Huns in 454, the Gepids, another Germanic people who had been their vassals, succeeded them in Wallachia and Transylvania. A century later, they were overthrown by the Avars, another Turkic people. The Avars dominated the areas formerly known as Pannonia and Dacia for two centuries, until their defeat in the West by the Franks in 827.

These peoples left virtually no written records, though Ulfila the Goth, an Arian bishop, created the first vernacular translation of the Christian Bible. They kept no archives, had no stable administrative seat on Romanian territory, and erected no buildings that have survived. The Daco-Roman population left little evidence of its continued existence here. Coin hoards show that Roman coins circulated after the Romans left, as they did in regions the Romans had never occupied. Archaeologists have found graves from the fourth and fifth centuries that followed Roman burial ritual. There is little evidence of the practice of Christianity in Roman Dacia, though subsequently a degree of Christianization of the common people took place after Christianity became the state religion of Rome, thirty years after the legions departed. Altars of Roman origin were recarved with Christian symbols, and a candelabrum with a Latin votive inscription suggests some of these Christians spoke Latin. Such evidence is lacking for the following centuries. In a Roman envoy's account of his journey through the Banat in 448, he writes that he was given a beverage called "in the local language" medos, which might indicate the Latin medus, mead. A chronicle reports that a native soldier south of the Danube in 587 was heard to utter a Latin phrase "in the local language," torna, torna, fiater (turn around, turn around, brother).

The Slavs settled in the Balkans, for the most part peacefully, as farmers. Place-names in Moldavia and Wallachia suggest Romanians and Slavs may have coexisted, as the name of the region Vlașca (referring to Vlachs) and of the River Dâmbovița, on which Bucharest is situated, appeared to be of Slavic origin. The large number of words of Slavic origin among Romanian agricultural terms also supports this possibility. In 679 a horde of Turkic Bulgars occupied the Byzantine province of Moesia (with Dobrogea) and subjugated the Slavs who lived there but became assimilated in turn by the Slavic majority. In the ninth century the Bulgars occupied most of the Avar lands, refortifying and renaming Belegrad (Bâlgrad in old Romanian), the former Apulum. By the 870s, the Bulgarian rulers accepted Christianity and a Cyrillic alphabet from the Byzantine Greeks.

The adherence of the Romanians to the Eastern Church, and use of the Slavonic language in their liturgy, may date from this period of Bulgarian influence. We are not yet on firm documentary ground, however, because the Romanians lacked a state of their own while the lands between the Danube and the Carpathians were under the domination of the Pechenegs, another preliterate Turkic people. This was the state of affairs when the more stable Hungarian rule began to assert itself in Hungary, then by stages and from the west, in Transylvania. Hungarians gave Transylvania this name because it was beyond the wooded hills that formed a modest barrier to their penetration.

Were the Romanians in these lands when the Pechenegs and Hungarians imposed their rule? Modern Romanian historians assert that a Latin-speaking population developed in Dacia under Roman rule and their descendants have occupied the same territory more or less continuously. In support of this thesis are the unquestionably Latin character of the Romanian language, the archaeological evidence of continued Latinate population for a few centuries, and references in Armenian, Byzantine, Hungarian, Norman, and Russian chronicles, beginning in the ninth century, to Vlachs (probably meaning Romance speakers) in the northern Balkans and Romania. Others, however, above all Hungarians, maintain that the thesis of Daco-Roman continuity on Romanian territory is not proven by available evidence. In support of a countervailing thesis that Romanian-speaking Vlachs came to Romania from the south, they cite linguistic evidence, the substantial absence of German and Turkic elements in modern Romanian that would have resulted from living under the domination of Visigoths, Huns, Gepids, and Avars, and certain similarities to Albanian that would suggest they lived an extended period in the south. In addition, they cite references in Hun-
garian documents to Romanian immigration from the south after the establishment of Hungarian rule in Central Europe.

THE LATE MEDIEVAL STATES AND OTTOMAN CONQUEST

There can be no doubt of the presence of substantial numbers of Hungarians and Romanians on the current territory of Romania no later than the twelfth century. Fleeing attacks from the Turkic Pechenegs, the Hungarians entered the central Carpathian basin from the north at the end of the ninth century. The chronicle of the anonymous notary of King Béla III, Gestas Hungarorum, presents a version of the Hungarian conquest of Transylvania, written in the last decade of the twelfth century and widely accepted by Romanian historians today, in which the Hungarians had to overcome Romanian military resistance to establish control. Hungarian historians question this account, noting that Anonymus wrote more than two centuries after the event he describes and the purported presence of Romanians at the time of the conquest is not corroborated elsewhere. It appears more likely that occupation by the Hungarian king took place over a period of two centuries, overcoming Bulgarian military outposts and local Hungarian leaders of mixed ethnicity. Writing in the late 1190s, Anonymus likely had some contemporary knowledge of the substantial presence of Romanians in Transylvania. The Hungarian documents mention Romanian military servitors on the royal estates in Transylvania, and they were also reported in Hungarian retinues that fought the Bulgarians in the Balkans. These Romanians may have settled in the recent past or their ancestors may have inhabited the region already. From this time on, for most of eight centuries, the Carpathians would constitute a political frontier between the main concentrations of Romanians.

In establishing their control over Transylvania, the Hungarian kings ratified several characteristics of the province that would evolve and survive into the nineteenth century and distinguish it from the lands across the mountains. First, Transylvania was a voivodate (Crown land) with its own voivode (viceroy). Second, it was ethnically diverse, with Hungarians, Székelys (a Turkic people that soon adopted the Hungarian language), Saxons (Germans who came originally not from Saxony but from the Low Countries), and Romanians. Third, conditioned by geography and the local needs of military defense and economic development, these peoples developed distinctive social structures and administrative autonomies within their regions: Hungarian landed nobility dominated the peasantry in the counties, the gentry and free peasantry had self-government in the Székely region, and the Saxons enjoyed autonomy and substantial mercantile privileges in theirs. Romanian regions in the north (Maramureș) and south (Hâțeg and Făgăraș) had a more contested constitutional status.

Contention over the Romanians arose from the Catholic policy of the Hungarian kings. The Hungarian kingdom prized the prestige accorded it by papal recognition in the year 1000. The Catholic clergy and faith allied with royal power, demanding religious as well as political fealty from the king's subjects. Participation in the social status and political privileges of the nobility required adherence to Catholicism, prompting the resistance of pre-Christian Hungarians and Cumans in Hungary, then increasingly of the Orthodox Romanians after the East-West church schism of 1054. Romanians participated as one of the four estates in the Transylvanian diet between 1291 and 1355, then they were excluded thereafter. A peasant revolt in 1437-1438, while not exclusively ethnic in character, drew sufficient Romanian support that the three privileged nations responded after its defeat by concluding a unio trium nationum that explicitly excluded a Romanian nation from the Transylvanian constitution. But nation should not be understood in the modern ethnic sense. Romanian notables could join the Hungarian nobility (primarily through conversion to Catholicism) without assimilating linguistically.

Contemporary sources support the substantial presence of Romanians between the Carpathians and the Danube after the tenth century. The Byzantine Empire experienced a final resurgence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, defeating the First Bulgarian Empire, regaining the Danube frontier, and recapturing Dobrogea. Their adversaries to the north were the Turkic Cumans and Pechenegs, who occupied most of the land between the Dniester, the Carpathians, and the Danube. The evidence of place-names and archaeological remains indicates there was a mixed population of Slavs, Romanians, and Turkish rulers. In 1185-1186 an anti-Byzantine rebellion established the Second Bulgarian Empire under a Romanian-Slavic dynasty. These circumstances may explain the increased documentary evidence of a Romanian presence north of the Danube.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, the Hungarian king established the Banat (or military province of Severin) and the voivodes of Litovoi and Seneslau as outposts of his power south of the Carpathians. Mongol invasions prevented the Hungarians from consolidating their position and led to decades of disorder in Hungary. Meanwhile, the voivodes in Wallachia sought to increase their autonomy. In 1277 Litovoi refused to pay tribute to the king of Hungary and was killed in battle.

The suppression of the autonomy of Făgăraș and assertion of royal power in southern Transylvania led indirectly to the foundation of the Wallachian state. According to Romanian tradition, a leader in Făgăraș, rather than submit, traveled across the Carpathians with his retinue and established a new authority in the town of Căpâlna. Wallachia was called in Hungarian Havaselve (Across the Mountains) and in Romanian Ungrovlahia or Țara Românească (the Romanian Land). Wallachia under Prince Basarab (ca. 1310-1352), the founder of the dynasty, recognized Hungarian suzerainty for the first half century of its existence. The Hungarian king sought to suppress the principality's growing autonomy, launching an attack in 1330 on Basarab's second capital, Curtea de Argeș. The Hungarian king failed to capture Basarab and barely escaped with his life after a devastating Wallachian ambush of the retreating Hungarian troops at the battle of Posada, which is recorded in the Illustrated Chronicle of Vienna. Basarab united the Wallachian voivodate and the
Banat of Severin, and then asserted independence from Hungary in 1359. Basarab briefly extended Wallachian territory as far as the port cities of the Danube mouth. Hence the territory that would be annexed by Russia in 1812 from Moldavia drew its name from a Wallachian prince.

The foundation of the Moldavian state proceeded like that of Wallachia, but later. Having defeated the Tartars east of the Carpathians in the early fourteenth century, the Hungarians made use of Romanian leaders from Maramuraș. According to legend, the founder of the state, Dragos, came here in pursuit of an aurochs (a European bison), later depicted in the seal of Moldavia. For several decades the region was under Hungarian suzerainty. In 1359 Bogdan, the leader of the Romanians who opposed Hungarian authority, deposed the descendants of Dragos and established Moldavian independence. Moldavia drew its name from a minor river in the region but was also called Moldovâlia and, by the Turks, the Land of Bogdan. Like Wallachia, the new state created an effective military force with remarkable speed. The first capitals of Moldavia, Siret, Baia, and Suceava, like those of Wallachia, were not far from the mountain frontier. By the end of the fourteenth century, Moldavia controlled the mouth of the Danube.

It is anachronistic to label the three Carpathian provinces “Romanian lands,” in anticipation of the later unification of Romania. The ethnic composition of the Transylvanian population in the Middle Ages is hotly contested, whereas the rulers of the province were clearly Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons. The term is problematic in the case of Wallachia and Moldavia. Under Basarab and Bogdan, these states established a status close to independence, and Romanians were almost certainly the dominant element in their societies and government. Yet contemporaries did not refer to them as Romanian states. The language of the princely chanceries, reflected in surviving documents from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, was Slavonic (the language of medieval Bulgaria and of the Orthodox liturgy) written with Cyrillic characters. Anlăș and Făgăraș, Romanian regions in Transylvania, were held by the princes of Wallachia until 1476, and two years later Stephen the Great of Moldavia referred to Wallachia as “the other Romanian country.” But a preferable collective term for Wallachia and Moldavia, which reflects their similar geopolitical situation, is Danubian Principalities.

The political model of the Danubian Principalities was Byzantine autocracy. In styling themselves sovereign ruler and by the grace of God (somoderzhavni, bozhiiu milostiu), the prince (voinod or hospodar) asserted independence from erstwhile suzerain powers, but also the native nobility that claimed the right to elect him and his successors. The ruler asserted eminent domain over all the land in the principality and ultimate judicial power as well. The main officials, who all served at his personal pleasure, derived their names and functions from Byzantium and Bulgaria: the chief secretary or chancellor (logofat), treasurer (vistier), head of the judiciary (vornic), chief diplomat or master of ceremonies (postelnic, portar, ușar), and various household functions (paharnic, stilnic, comis, clucer, sluget, pitar). The chief military adjunct of the prince was named spătar in Wallachia, while in Moldavia his title probably came from the Polish realm, hatman. The prince called occasionally on a princely council, made up of major landowners and, increasingly, officials. Unlike in Transylvania, there were occasional noble assemblies but no periodic diets in the Danubian Principalities or constitutionally established regional autonomies. The only important regional subdivision was Oltenia, whose ban, residing in Craiova on the Jiu River, was the successor of the bans of Severin and a leading member of the princely council who for many decades challenged the Basarab family for the Wallachian throne.

The Principalities also emulated Byzantium in the role assigned to the Orthodox Church. In 1359 the emperor recognized the creation at Curtea de Argeș of an Orthodox metropolitanate for Wallachia, which until the twentieth century was called Mitropolia Ungrovlahia. Similarly a metropolitanate was established by the Moldavian prince in Suceava in the late fourteenth century with Byzantine sanction. The princes built many churches and monasteries where Greek and Slavonic religious texts were transcribed, and they encouraged their nobility to emulate them. The many Moldavian church foundations of Prince Stephen the Great in the second half of the fifteenth century included the now UNESCO-protected “painted monasteries” of Bucovina, with colorful external murals depicting biblical scenes and the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The church in Wallachia, and to a lesser extent in Moldavia, ordained or consecrated many Orthodox clergy and bishops for the Romanians in Transylvania. The Wallachian princes also became patrons of one of the monasteries on Mount Athos in Greece.

The international position of the fledgling Danubian Principalities was determined in large part by their role in riverine trade. Transit of ships through the Iron Gates of the Danube in the west was not yet feasible, so that an overland connection to the Principalities’ entrepôts was crucial for Central Europe. For Wallachia the key port was Brașil, at the point in the river closest to the bend in the Carpathians and the Transylvanian Saxon town of Brașov (German: Kronstadt), while for Moldavia Cetatea Alba (Akkerman), near the mouth of the Dniester and Chiba in the Danube Delta, were the outlets for trade toward Lviv and Poland. The princes’ concessions to the merchants of Brașov and Lviv conditioned in large degree the relationship of Wallachia and Moldavia with Hungary and Poland respectively. At times the Principalities recognized the suzerainty of the larger state explicitly; at other times they acted as allies or outright adversaries. These client relationships with the great powers of East Central Europe helped solidify and perpetuate the existence of the principalities as distinct states with their own interests despite their similar Romanian population and Byzantine system of church and state.

The rising Ottoman power confronted Catholic Hungary and Poland and, more directly, their Orthodox client states. A series of princes filled the role of crusader against the Turks on behalf of Christian Europe. Mircea the Old, prince of Wallachia (1386–1395; 1397–1418), fought the Turks at the battle of Rovine in 1395; during the interregnum he joined the Christian forces at the battle of Nicopolis in
1396, and then later he intervened in the Ottoman succession struggles after 1402 to support the less expansionist candidate against the later Mehmed I. After Mehmed’s succession to the throne, however, Mircea was forced in 1415 to recognize Ottoman suzerainty and pay an annual tribute. Wallachian princes would contest this suzerainty repeatedly in the coming centuries, often paying for their resistance with their thrones or their lives. The act of 1415, emulated later in Moldavia, guaranteed the Principalities’ internal autonomy and statehood, in contrast to the former Christian states to the south, now reduced to pashaliks.

The union of Christian forces was the byword at the meeting at Florence in 1437 that declared a union of the Eastern and Western Churches under the pope, with the retention for the Eastern Churches of the Byzantine liturgy. The bishops from Wallachia and Moldavia, like those from Byzantium, subscribed to the church union. The ensuing Christian military assault, however, led to disaster at the battle of Varna, on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, in 1444. The Hungarian military leader, a South Transylvanian of Romanian origin known in English as John Hunyadi, won a series of stirring Christian victories over the Turks at mid-century despite the fall of Constantinople, most notably at the battle of Belgrade in 1456, at which he was killed. The brutal Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Țepeș), Vlad III Dracula, prince of Wallachia (1448, 1456–1462, 1476), continued the principality’s crusading tradition with intermittent Hungarian support but against increasing odds, twice forced from the throne by domestic partisans of the Turks but dying in battle. Moldavian Prince Stephen the Great (1457–1504) won a brilliant victory over the Turks at Vaslui in 1475 and was proclaimed Athlete of Christ by the pope. Even so he had to fight the Hungarians and Poles to maintain his position, and in 1485 he recognized Ottoman control over Cetatea de Alba and Chilia.

The successors of Hunyadi, Vlad, and Stephen were forced to recognize Ottoman superiority. Hungarian society was weakened by social conflict. A projected new crusade in 1514 ended in bloody repression when the peasant host turned against the landlords. The suppression of the revolt led to a strengthening of serfdom. A minor Székely nobleman, György Dózsa, led the rebels and the heaviest fighting was in Transylvania. An Ottoman assault on Vienna in 1521 was turned back, but the king of Hungary died fleeing the battlefield after defeat at the hands of the Turks in Mohács, Hungary, in 1526. These events enabled the Turks to formally establish suzerainty over Moldavia in 1535 and establish a pashalik in Hungary and a client relationship with Transylvania in 1541. The role of the Principalities as commercial connectors between the Balkans and Central Europe was at an end. To ensure better control from Constantinople, the Wallachian and Moldavian capitals moved to the lowland towns of Bucharest and Iași.

**OTTOMAN DOMINATION AT ITS HEIGHT (SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES)**

For over 250 years in the case of Hungary and Transylvania, and more than four centuries in the Danubian Principalities, the Ottoman sultans exercised ultimate authority over these lands, directing their trade toward the southeast and draining their resources through financial levies. Unlike Hungary proper and the lands south of the Danube, however, Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia were governed by their own Christian princes rather than Ottoman pashas and local elites. Though the Turks often exercised decisive influence on the selection of the princes, these princes maintained their own armed forces and more or less independent foreign policies. Only relatively small contingents of Ottoman troops were stationed in the principalities, and they were not subject to Islamic law or the child levy (devshirme) for the supply of the Ottoman armed forces. Foreign exploitation was more extreme in the case of the Danubian Principalities than in Transylvania, but even there Romanian culture made important advances. The relatively light Ottoman yoke in Transylvania permitted the Hungarian and Saxon rulers to avoid both Habsburg and direct Ottoman rule, which caused Hungary proper to be divided between the two rival empires.

The outstanding Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga, in one of his most influential writings, characterized the system of rule in the Danubian Principalities during these centuries as Byzantium after Byzantium (Byzance après Byzance). The phrase signifies the remarkable survival of Byzantine tradition in the Principalities after the demise of the Byzantine state as well as the other Balkan Orthodox states that, like the principalities, had been modeled on it, Serbia and Bulgaria. The Orthodox Church continued as before under the authority of Danubian princes, rather than the Greek patriarch in Constantinople, but the ties between the Romanian church and the monasteries on Athos survived and prospered. Greek scholars, noblemen, and merchants as well as churchmen found refuge in the Principalities, and the princes saw themselves as the protectors of Byzantine imperial tradition.

Nomination of the prince originated formally in the noble assembly but was normally contingent on Turkish approval, which required the payment of a fee to the Porte, at times hundreds of thousands of gold ducats, as well as the assumption of the previous ruler’s debts. New rulers went into debt to acquire their throne, then sought to recover their investment through the taxation of their subjects. An increasing variety of other payments (pescărești) accentuated the tendency toward corruption. The annual tribute to the Porte or hanai, principal symbol of Ottoman suzerainty, rose from 10,000 ducats in the fifteenth century to 65,000 ducats in Moldavia and 155,000 ducats in Wallachia by the end of the next. The principalities were required to supply a percentage of their produce in wheat and livestock to the Porte, a payment that led in time to farmers instead planting American corn or maize, not subject to the levy. The principalities no longer enjoyed the right to their own coinage as earlier. Polenta (mamaliga) became the staple of the Romanian commoner’s diet during these years.

The princes’ tenure in office tended to be short, both because the Porte sought to collect additional payments and because the princes’ repeated involvement in anti-Ottoman alliances led to their execution or death in battle. Despite
Vlad III Dracula, or Vlad the Impaler (ca. 1429–1476)

This medieval ruler of Wallachia is remembered primarily for his role in the bloody struggle against Turkish domination in the fifteenth century and for a fictitious character with whom he had no connection in fact. His era was a period of extreme political instability due to the lack of a clear law of succession and the interference of outside forces. Between 1418 and 1476, eleven princes had twenty-nine separate reigns, for an average of only two years. Vlad III Dracula was the son of Wallachian Prince Vlad II Dracul (ruled 1436–1442, 1443–1447), whom Emperor Sigismund inducted into the Order of the Dragon; Dracula meant the "son of the dragon" (or "devil"). The son lived four years as a hostage in Ottoman captivity and became the Turkish favorite for the throne after his father was assassinated at the instigation of the Hungarian commander János (John) Hunyadi. He had three periods as Prince of Wallachia: (1448, 1456–1462, 1476). The first period was brief, while Prince Vladislav II was away on campaign; he seized power with the support of the Turks. Paradoxically, Vlad chose to take refuge in the Kingdom of Hungary, the great adversary of the Turks, when Vladislav ousted him from the throne. Hunyadi then helped him regain the throne eight years later. During this second reign Vlad achieved a bad reputation for his brutal treatment of internal bojar opponents. Transylvanian Saxon commercial rivals, and Turkish invaders. Impalement was not unique to him; it was practiced elsewhere in the contemporary Balkans. In 1461–1462 Vlad refused to pay tribute to the Porte and attacked Ottoman positions along the Danube and in Bulgaria, winning stunning victories that made him famous in Christian Europe. A massive Ottoman counterattack ousted Vlad a second time and forced him to retreat to the Carpathians, where the Hungarians captured and imprisoned him on suspicion of collusion with the Turks. The Hungarian king helped him regain the throne a third time. Once again his reign was short, and he died in battle during the Turkish counterattack.

For many, Vlad's afterlife is more interesting, and it is certainly better documented, than his confusing political career. German, Russian, and Romanian legends emphasized his cruelty or his sense of justice, while modern Romanian historians seeking national heroes highlighted his military brilliance and political leadership. Vampire beliefs existed in the region too, but it was the British writer Bram Stoker who united them in his novel Dracula in 1897. Among the many celebrated dramatic portrayals of Dracula were F.W. Murnau's silent film Nosferatu (1922), Tod Browning's talking film Dracula starring Bela Lugosi (1931), Carl Dreyer's Vampyr (1932), Terence Fisher's The Horror of Dracula starring Christopher Lee (1958), John Badham's Dracula starring Frank Langella (1979), and Francis Ford Coppola's Dracula starring Gary Oldman (1992). Scores of fiction writers have reworked the story as well. Dracula tourism has un tapped economic potential for Romania. A businessman formerly employed by the Ministry of Tourism has been marketing "Dracula tours" since 1993. Plans to build a theme park near the picturesque Transylvanian Saxon town of Sighișoara, Vlad's birthplace, were set aside in 2003 after protests by Britain's Prince Charles and other preservationists. However, the government has approved a backup plan to build it in Snagov, where an Orthodox monastery outside Bucharest contains Vlad's grave. An Austrian brewery and a Greek subsidiary of Coca-Cola have signed on in exchange for ten-year concessions.

overwhelming Turkish military superiority and Turkish control of important military installations on the Danube at Giurgiu and Brăila to the south and the former Black Sea outlets of Moldavia to the north, the two states participated in military actions on the side of the less vulnerable, wealthier Transylvania and Poland. In small recompense for these alliances, the central Transylvanian estate and fortress of Cetatea de Baltă (Hungarian: Küküllővár) was deeded to the principalities for extended periods. From 1508 to 1593, twenty-three princes of Wallachia had thirty-four separate periods of rule, while from 1504 to 1606 twenty-one princes of Moldavia had twenty-eight periods of rule. Children of leading politicians were frequently held hostage as a guarantee of political reliability: thus Gabriel Bethlen, prince of Transylvania from 1613 to 1629, and Dimitrie Cantemir, prince of Moldavia (1693; 1710–1711), both acceded to the throne after many years lived in Constantinople. Still, the principalities' military success and international agreements enabled them to ward off Ottoman plans to annex them, causing the sultan instead to withdraw most occupying troops and recognize the ruling princes.

To the north, Transylvania evolved from an autonomous territory of the Hungarian kingdom to a virtually independent principality. An interregnum in Hungary followed the destruction of the royal army and death of the king at Mohács in 1526. Two claimants to the throne arose: Ferdinand of Habsburg on the basis of an inheritance treaty concluded in 1515, and János Szapolyai, a major Hungarian landowner and military leader, as the choice of home-rule advocates in the Hungarian diet. To prevent a Habsburg occupation of
Hungary, the Turks occupied central Hungary and in 1541 established direct rule over the region with a pasha in control in Buda. To the north and west, in current day Slovakia and Transdanubia, the Habsburgs established control in so-called royal Hungary. Szapolyai's forces were left with the remainder, out of the reach of the Habsburgs and a strategic backwater for the Turks, who had a negligible military presence in the principalities and could scarcely penetrate the well-defended Carpathian passes, while their main forces faced the Habsburgs to the west. Szapolyai's successors, selected by the Transylvanian diet and confirmed in office by the Porte, thereby achieved considerable freedom of movement, indeed added to their territory parts of Maramureș and Crișana (the Partium) that were part of Hungary proper. A semblance of dynastic succession was achieved among several Transylvanian Hungarian families, a strong princely authority was established, as well as a regularly convoked Transylvanian diet with substantial legislative power. The annual tribute paid to the Porte was a relatively modest 10,000–15,000 ducats.

The Protestant Reformation had a decisive impact on Transylvanian society and the emerging political system. First among the Saxons, then among the Hungarians, Lutherans gained control of many Catholic parishes and their properties. Later, the Reformed or Calvinist faith, then Unitarianism established themselves among the Hungarians. In 1568 the Transylvanian diet at Torda (Hungarian: Torda) proclaimed religious freedom for the four Christian churches of the Saxons and Hungarians: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Unitarian. Protestant liturgies in the vernacular inspired early Bible translations, as well as religious and secular literature in the Hungarian, German, and Romanian languages, which were printed by new Transylvanian printing presses. The Lutheran Church became something like a national church for the Saxons, since church membership and the Saxon population were essentially the same. The situation of the Reformed and Unitarian Churches was similar in that nearly all their adherents were Hungarians. The churches and regional administrative autonomy became fundamental elements of Transylvanian political life. The tolerance edict of the Torda diet established an important international precedent but arose less from an abstract ideal of religious toleration than from a practical need for political equilibrium. The Romanian Orthodox population of Transylvania stood outside the religious as well as the political system. Transylvania was arguably the center of Hungarian culture in the sixteenth century, but it was not the center of Romanian culture.

International cooperation against the Turks increased after the Spanish naval victory at Lepanto in 1571. Following an appeal by Pope Clement VIII, various Christian states with Spain and the Holy Roman Empire led by the Habsburgs concluded a Holy League, and in 1594–1595 they secured the adherence of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia. Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul), the prince of Wallachia (1593–1601), as the most exposed ally, became the key protagonist in the first phase of the struggle. In the anti-Ottoman revolt led by Michael beginning in November 1595, he captured Ottoman fortresses on the lower Danube and defeated the Turks and their Tatar vassals in Bulgaria. Facing an Ottoman counterattack against Bucharest, Michael won his greatest victory at Calugăreni south of the city, a battle in which, alongside Moldavian and Wallachian forces, many of the troops were Székelys under the command of Sigismund Báthory, prince of Transylvania. Strengthened by these victories and a renewed campaign south of the Danube that was welcomed by the Christians there, Michael concluded a peace treaty with the Porte in 1598 and another with the Habsburgs, in which he recognized Habsburg suzerainty but no new obligations.

The victories were endangered, however, by changes on the Transylvanian and Moldavian thrones. In both lands, the new prince supported Poland and a more conciliatory policy. With the support of his Habsburg and Székler allies, Michael marched into Transylvania and, after defeating the Transylvanian prince in October 1599, secured the homage of the Transylvanian diet. In May 1600 he ousted the Polonophile prince of Moldavia and secured the throne there as well. Although the Habsburgs reserved the Transylvanian throne for themselves and their descendants, for now Michael was its occupant, and so in the summer of 1600 he styled himself "sovereign of Wallachia, Transylvania, and the whole of Moldavia." Thus for the first time the three lands had a single ruler, and he was a Romanian.

The union was short-lived. Michael increased the authority of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania;
but, as he had in Wallachia, he protected the interests of the large landowners by strengthening the serfs' bondage to the soil and their masters. In occupying his Transylvanian throne Michael appointed members of his Wallachian boiar retinue to his council and made them grants from the princely estates. This action and Michael's reliance on the Székely element, rather than any support for the Romanian masses and in the absence of any rhetoric about Romanian national unity, prompted the mass of Hungarian nobility to turn against him and, this time supported by the Habsburgs as well as the Poles, to turn him out of power in Transylvania and Moldavia. After a brief change of heart by the Habsburgs in which they again supported Michael, he defeated his opponents in Transylvania and again claimed the throne in Alba Iulia. However, the Habsburg commander had him assassinated in August 1601.

Michael's military exploits prompted considerable contemporary interest in Europe. Some Romanian historians have celebrated him anachronistically as a champion of national unity. Despite the brevity of his Balkan victories and his rule, however, the following decades did bring an amelioration in the status of the principalities. In 1606 the Porte for the first time recognized the Holy Roman Empire in concluding the Peace of Zsitvatorok. The next forty years were ones of relative stability for Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia with longer reigns in each state. The annual tribute paid by Transylvania declined to 10,000 ducats, and the levies on the Danubian Principalities became less onerous than they had been prior to Michael the Brave. Several rulers entertained the thought of uniting the three states under their rule, although none could achieve it. The motivation, as in Michael's case, was the concentration of forces to resist foreign intervention, and this is why the powers opposed it. Transylvania, as the least vulnerable and wealthiest of the three states, was recognized as the most powerful by the Porte, which granted its emissary in Constantinople the right to treat on behalf of all three. Gabriel Bethlen aspired to lead a union of the states called the Kingdom of Dacia. Vasile Lupu, the prince of Moldavia from 1634 to 1653, hoped to gain the Wallachian and Transylvanian thrones, fighting an unsuccessful campaign against Wallachia. He wrote in 1642 that a conquest of Transylvania by Wallachian and Moldavian troops would be possible because “in Transylvania more than a third [of the population] are Romanian, and once they are freed we will incite them against the Hungarians.”

Transylvania attained the height of its wealth and independence under Gabriel Bethlen and the two Rákóczi princes, George I (1630–1648) and George II (1648–1657). They strengthened princely power by increasing the amount of land under their own control but also favored urban crafts, economic development, and education. The Transylvanian coinage of the seventeenth century, silver talers and gold ducats minted for the payment of Ottoman tribute and foreign mercenaries, featured striking portraits of the ruling princes. The Protestant character of the principalities became more pronounced, the Roman Catholic Hungarian bishop being banished from Transylvania and efforts made through the translation of religious literature into Romanian to convert the Romanians to the Reformed religion. The Orthodox metropolitan resisted these efforts with the help of churchmen on the other side of the mountains. Transylvania participated intermittently on the Protestant side in the Thirty Years' War, gaining territory in northern Hungary from the Habsburgs and recognition, at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, of Transylvanian independence.

Moldavia under Vasile Lupu and Wallachia under Matei Basarab (1632–1654) experienced their most peaceful and prosperous period of the century. The entry of Greek merchants into the principalities and their acquisition of land and ecclesiastical and political office were facilitated by the Porte, prompting the resistance of native boiars. Basarab came to power as the result of an anti-Greek movement of the boiars. Like Michael the Brave before him, Matei increased the dependence and fiscal obligations of the peasantry. Lupu, an ambitious politician of Albanian origin and Greek education, also came to power as the result of an anti-Greek action of the boiars. He fought several short wars against his Wallachian counterpart but in other respects followed similar internal policies.

The Romanian language, still written in the Cyrillic alphabet, became the standard in the princely chanceries first, then later in the Orthodox liturgy and religious publications. The princes and several boiars were patrons of ecclesiastic and civic architecture, publishing, and schools. The seventeenth century saw the evolution of Romanian historiography from simple chronicle literature to more sophisticated historical accounts. The outstanding innovators were Moldavians who profited from that land's traditional ties to Poland to study in Polish schools and familiarize themselves with the Polish constitution and humanistic scholarship.

The wars of the 1650s brought an end to this period of stability and progress. Vasile Lupu joined a Polish alliance against the Turks but was punished by Tatar and Cossack raids, forced to abdicate by Transylvanian and Wallachian forces and take refuge in Constantinople. The second Rákóczi invaded Poland in a rash attempt to mount the Polish throne; not only was he repulsed but he was then punished by an invasion of Transylvania by the Porte's Tatar vassals and the replacement of Rákóczi by a more subservient leader. Transylvania was also hemmed in by the Turkish annexation of Oradea (Hungarian: Nagyvárad) and the creation of a new pashalic in 1660. Only the more prudent Matei Basarab died while still on the throne, being succeeded in Wallachia by his illegitimate son.

The succeeding decades were a period of aggressive Ottoman military activity on the Polish frontier north of Moldavia and in Hungary to the west. Troops of Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia joined as Ottoman vassals in the siege of Vienna in 1683. The repulse of the siege led to the formation of a new Holy League and an assault on several fronts that achieved notable successes. The liberation of Buda in 1686 led to the establishment of Habsburg rule in central Hungary and an allied advance into Transylvania, where the diet recognized Habsburg rule already in 1687. After changing military fortunes in southern Hungary for several years, by the Peace of Karlowitz in 1699 the Turks
were forced to recognize Habsburg control of Hungary and Transylvania.

The Habsburg dynasty secured the adherence of the Transylvanian diet by agreeing to observe its constitution, legislation, and regional autonomies. Habsburg rule in Hungary meant full state support for Catholic restoration, however. The reestablishment of the Roman Catholic bishopric in Transylvania was one aspect of this policy, and the sponsorship in 1697 of a union of the Romanian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church recognizing the primacy of the pope, on the model of the Union of Florence, was another. While many Saxons welcomed Habsburg rule because it was German and most Romanian churchmen adhered to the union because of the promise of schools and social advancement, these measures were resisted by Hungarian Protestants, the Hungarian and Romanian nobility, and Orthodox believers who rejected the union. The Rákóczi Rebellion, led by the grandson of George II and fought in the Partium and many parts of Transylvania as a civil war, lasted until the conclusion of a compromise peace in 1711.

Russia under Peter the Great joined the alliance against the Turks but had less success. The alliance of Peter's Russia and Dimitrie Cantemir's Moldavia suffered an overwhelming defeat in 1711 at Stânișoara on the Prut and Cantemir's removal from the throne. The long-ruling Constantin Brâncoveanu in Wallachia was more cautious, promising his support for the allies but then witholding it. This enabled him to hold onto his throne for a few more years, but in 1714 he was called to Constantinople to witness the beheading of his four sons before experiencing the same fate himself. The Turks had had enough of patriotic Romanian tendencies, choosing to install loyal subjects (mostly Greeks) from the Phanar district of Constantinople on the princely throne of Moldavia and Wallachia for the next hundred years. Renewed Habsburg attacks were meanwhile crowned with further success: by the Peace of Passarowitz the Habsburgs annexed the Banat of Timișoara and the Wallachian province of Oltenia. A demarcation line between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires now divided the lands of the Principalities against Austrian and Russian invasions, enemies. Ottoman forces themselves undertook the defense of the Principalities against Austrian and Russian invasions, fighting no less than seven wars on their territory between 1711 and 1829 and expropriating military supplies from the population each time.

Partial Westernization to the north of the mountains contrasted with an opposite trend to the south. In the Principalities, the pressure to conform with Constantinople was so powerful that the elites for several generations abandoned Western styles of dress, donning instead oriental caftans and robes. Although the Romanian language was supplanting Slavonic in the Orthodox liturgy, educational institutions founded by the Phanariots helped establish for more than a century the primacy of the Greek language in the Principalities' secular culture. Exorbitant payments, as much as attitude and loyalty, and not election by the boiars were now required to attain the Wallachian and Moldavian thrones. In 110 years, the throne changed hands forty times in Wallachia and thirty-six times in Moldavia. Once in office, the princes distributed dignities among their family members and plundered the country to recover their investment. While the annual tributary payments to the Porte stabilized, annual and triennial payments by the successful bidders for the throne skyrocketed. Additional contributions (peşeşurile) and shipments of grain, cattle, and lumber increased dramatically. The export of cattle and animal products was prohibited except to the Ottoman Empire. The widespread cultivation of maize (corn) among the Romanians arose at this time due to the Turks' lack of interest in this food. Peasant flight to escape exploitation occurred here too, less than from Transylvania and primarily across the Danube to the south.

The Phanariot princes abolished the separate military organizations that had permitted the principalities to follow independent foreign policies and even ally with the sultan's enemies. Ottoman forces themselves undertook the defense of the Principalities against Austrian and Russian invasions, fighting no less than seven wars on their territory between 1711 and 1829 and expropriating military supplies from the population each time.

As elsewhere in eighteenth-century Europe, the enhancement of state revenue to support military expenditures was the initial motive for absolutist reform measures. The onset of social unrest and peasant flight prompted further reforms of an ameliorative nature, regularizing monetary exactions and labor services for the common people.
These measures are associated in the Principalities primarily with the name of Constantin Mavrocordat, who alternated on the Wallachian and Moldavian throne between 1730 and 1769. In 1746–1749 serfdom was abolished, though the effect was to stabilize rather than liberate the peasant population. Modest reforms in Transylvania under Maria Theresa and Joseph II could not prevent the violent peasant revolt in 1784 led by a Romanian named Horia. The brutal suppression of the revolt was followed by the abolition of personal servitude, once again not a decisive liberation but a measure that succeeded in stabilizing the rural population. Economic and educational reforms led to an increase in production and well-being in Transylvania, which was spared the frequent military incursions suffered by the Principalities.

The turbulent eighteenth century, while full of hardship for the bulk of Romanian commoners, gave birth to the ideological roots of Romanian unification two centuries later. It is not easy to determine which side of the mountains contributed more to this development. Many historians give the nod to Transylvania, whose vibrant churches and schools provided access to Western education and produced a group of highly influential historians and linguists now known as the Transylvanian School. Phanariot rule and military depredations offered a less promising arena. Yet the Greek schools and culture were conduits for Enlightenment thought, and the declining Ottoman power presented an opportunity for genuine political assertion that was lacking within a Habsburg realm at the height of its power and in provinces dominated by socially advantaged Hungarians and Germans.

One of the intellectual giants of the era was Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723), the erstwhile ally of Peter the Great on the Moldavian throne. In Russian exile, he gained international renown and induction into the Prussian Academy for a series of important historical works. Best known of these was his history of the Ottoman Empire (1716, also translated into English), which argued correctly that the Ottoman state was in decline. Cantemir's works on Moldavia and on Romanian origins provided an erudite analysis of current society and the strongest statement yet of the Romanians' descent from the Romans. Works by scholars in the principalities later in the century were less original.

The members of the Transylvanian School, in contrast to earlier historians in the principalities, were not statesmen or associated with the princely court but churchmen. The ecclesiastical connection gave them the opportunity to study in Vienna and Rome, where they gained a strong impression of Roman civilization and the importance of Romanians' connection to it and, even more important, the intellectual arsenal with which to argue the political implications. They would argue that in light of their historical priority Romanians deserved the status of a constituent nation within Transylvania, a status that was denied them. The first modern census of the Hungarian lands that would later join Romania, conducted by the Austrians in 1784–1787, found that more than three-fifths were Romanians. Thus a demand for political emancipation, albeit merely proposing admission to status as an additional feudal nation and equal status for the Orthodox and Uniate Churches rather than democracy, had radical implications for the established order. The demand was raised in two lengthy Romanian petitions of 1791–1792 entitled Supplex Libellus Valachorum, rejected promptly by the authorities. The Hungarian nobility's resistance had already prompted Joseph II to withdraw most of his reforms, and it also sealed the fate of the Supplex. The French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars produced a political reaction in the Habsburg monarchy that made it even less hospitable to political change.

Indigenous Romanian and long-settled Greek boiars represented the alien regime of the Phanariot princes, organizing several abortive revolts and petitioning repeatedly for the restoration of the Principalities' independence. During extended periods of military strife when the Phanariot rulers took refuge in Ottoman fortresses, political authority was exercised by a deputized divan of boiar leaders who repeatedly took the opportunity to issue declarations couched in terms of sovereignty derived from the writers of the French Enlightenment. The demand for the restoration of the Principalities' independence was increasingly supported by the Turks' chief enemy, the Russian Empire. The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji in 1774 granted Russia the right to intervene on behalf of the Christians in the Principalities. In ensuing years as Russia, Austria, and France established consulates in the Danubian capitals, boiar activists were emboldened to issue a growing stream of manifestoes demanding independence and, from 1772 on, the unification of the two Principalities.

Austria and Russia took advantage of the weakening Ottoman control over the principalities, respectively annexing Bucovina in 1775 and Bessarabia in 1812 and depriving Moldavia of more than half its territory. The real prospect of a complete partition, such as had taken place in Poland, increased the daring of Romanian militants. A conspiracy with the Greek revolutionary movement Hetairia Philiki placed Tudor Vladimirescu, a nobleman possessing military experience fighting the Turks with the Russian forces, at the head of an uprising in Oltenia in 1821. The plan relied on Russian support, but Tsar Alexander I shied away from supporting an antidynastic movement, even one against the Ottoman Empire. After this debacle, Vladimirescu's Greek allies turned on him and killed him. It was the end of the revolt but also the end of the Phanariot regime as the Porte returned to native princes for rulers. Meanwhile the Greek revolt, having founded in the Principalities, raged on to the south. When it finally ended, the Russian protectors were in a position to fashion a new system in the Principalities.

**CREATING THE NATIONAL STATE**

The Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, signed after the successful conclusion of Russia's latest Balkan campaign, contained territorial, political, and commercial stipulations. Russia gained a part of the Danube Delta, and the Principalities gained control over Turkish fortresses on their territory as well as administrative autonomy. During an extended occupation, Russian authorities formulated what would become
the first Romanian constitution, the Organic Statutes. Finally the commercial clauses reversed the closure of central Europe trade with the principalities by the Turks three centuries earlier. Ottoman suzerainty would remain for another half century. But a new era had begun that made possible the eventual establishment of the rule of law, autonomous political life, and full participation in European developments. The commercial opening led in time to a dramatic social transformation. Landowners and peasantry streamed into the newly secure Danubian plains, and grain production supplanted livestock and corn as the country’s chief economic products. By the end of the century, Romania would become the fourth leading wheat exporter in the world.

The Organic Statutes were an imperfect constitution in the eyes of liberals. A narrow base of landowners elected a legislative assembly and an even more restricted body was to elect the two princes—but the Russians simply ignored this clause and appointed two Romanians of leading boiar families in whom they had full confidence. Boiar activists, many of them Greek-educated but now increasingly gravitating toward the French cultural sphere and studies in Paris, demanded the end of political interference by the Russian consuls and the unification of the two principalities. Admirers of everything French were ridiculed with the nickname honjuriștii.

North and west of the mountains there was also a liberal challenge to the authorities. The leading liberals here were members of the Hungarian nobility, which clamored in the Hungarian and Transylvanian diets for the observation of existing Hungarian laws, the primacy of Hungarian culture, and the emancipation of the serfs. The Hungarian movement prompted Transylvania’s Romanians and Germans to organize their own movements, which under the influence of the Hungarian example increasingly emancipated themselves from conservative ecclesiastical leadership. Hungarians accused them of subservience to Habsburg reactionaries, but in fact many Romanian and German activists supported and stood to gain from proposed Hungarian social reforms.

One of the new features of politics on either side of the mountains was that it was carried out in public, through daily and weekly newspapers in the national languages. Patriots became more aware of events in neighboring countries and their implications for their own. The idea of unifying all Romanians in a single state was now heard occasionally.

The French Revolution of 1848 triggered similar outbreaks across the continent. The liberal opposition in the Hungarian diet, skillfully playing on fears of social upheaval, secured royal sanction for a series of constitutional reforms. Most of these attracted broad support also in Transylvania. In Moldavia, boiar leaders presented a series of liberal demands to the Russian-appointed prince, but they were rejected and the leaders imprisoned or exiled. In Wallachia, the liberal program gained the sanction of the ruler as in Hungary, but he then fled to Transylvania. Increasingly threatened by the Porte and Russia, the Wallachian revolutionary government barely survived the summer of 1848. Events were more dramatic in the Hungarian lands. The proposed union of Hungary and Transylvania caused the brief-lived solidarity among the nationalities in Transylvania to break down. Romanian leaders called, in three popular assemblies in Blaj, for resistance to the union. In October 1848 armed conflict broke out between the Hungarian government on one side and the Austrian authorities and various nationalities on the other. A civil war ensued in Transylvania, with serious atrocities and destruction of property on both sides. The Austrians had to request Russian military intervention to defeat the Hungarians. No upheavals took place in Russian-ruled Bessarabia.

The Russian and Austrian victories were costly and temporary. Defeated in the Crimean War (1853—1856), Russia had to return three counties of southern Bessarabia to Moldavia; then, in 1858, St. Petersburg saw its protectorate over the Principalities replaced by an international one. The powers provided for the coordination of the Principalities but not for their full unification under a single ruler. Romanian leaders took advantage of the opportunity presented by international disunity and French support to gain their optimal demands against Russian and Austrian opposition. Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the Moldavian military commander, was elected in turn prince of Moldavia, then...
Carol I (1839–1914, r. 1866–1914)

Romania's second prince and first king was born Karl Eitel Friedrich von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a member of the Catholic branch of the Prussian ruling family. The Prussian army officer came to the throne under adventurous circumstances. The deposition of Prince Cuza in 1866 made it urgent to find a replacement before the Austrians or the Turks could reverse the unification of the principalities. Ion C. Brătianu secured on behalf of the interim authorities the tacit assent of the prospective prince, whose candidacy was then approved overwhelmingly in a plebiscite. Karl traveled incognito through Austrian territory on the eve of the Austro-Prussian war. According to his memoirs, when he hurriedly debarked from a Danube ship at the first Romanian port with Brătianu, someone angrily called out after him: “By God, that must be the prince of Hohenzollern.”

Carol I took charge of a totally unfamiliar country, whose domestic and diplomatic situation was very uncertain, and did a remarkable job. He was a strong ruler, but through his tact and circumspection he fostered the development of a stable parliamentary system in which the Liberal and Conservative Parties alternated in power without violence. Through his successful military leadership, Romania secured its independence from the Ottoman Empire after the war against the Turks, and he was proclaimed king in 1881. Carol’s good relationship with the Central Powers served the country well both economically and diplomatically, although nationalists increasingly opposed him in his later years. In September 1914 a Crown Council rejected his proposal that Romania enter World War I on the side of the Central Powers. It was a hard defeat for him, but he accepted the decision of the council for neutrality.

Despite his achievements, the king did not establish a warm relationship with his subjects due to his disciplined, formal character. In an intensely Orthodox country, he remained devoted to his Catholic religion, and among his best friends in the country was a Swiss Benedictine, Raymond Nettherm, who served as Catholic archbishop of Bucharest from 1905 until 1924. Carol’s wife, the former Elisabeth von Wied, gained popularity through her fondness for Romanian folk costume and the poetry and collections of Romanian folktales she published under the pseudonym Carmen Sylva. The couple’s relationship was strained, however. Because they had no surviving children, Carol adopted his nephew Ferdinand, who became king upon his death. Carol built the beautiful Peles Castle in Gothic revival style at Sinaia in the Carpathians, which is now a museum.

also of Wallachia, in 1859. During the seven years of his rule, he completed the long-demanded administrative unification of the Principalities with the sole capital now in Bucharest, the secularization of monastic lands, and a land reform that was opposed by the boyars and introduced by decree after the dissolution of parliament. After he was overthrown in a coup, Romanians achieved another major objective, a foreign prince who would stand above the parties and enhance Romania’s international standing, by the enthronement of Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen as Prince Carol of Romania in 1866. In the same year a liberal constitution was proclaimed, modeled on that of Belgium.

In the Habsburg Empire, the Hungarians rather than the Romanians were to profit from Austrian weakness. Austria abandoned a ten-year attempt at centralized rule in 1859, then reluctantly restored Hungarian autonomy. After years of political silence under the centralist regime, Transylvanian Hungarians resumed their political activity and demanded the restoration of the laws of 1848, including the union with Hungary. Austria embarked on a risky game, enfranchising for the first time the Romanian majority of Transylvania to secure its support in the Transylvanian diet against the Hungarian opposition. The experiment was briefly successful, as the diet sent deputies, mostly Romanians and Germans, to the central parliament in Vienna. But it was impossible to rule the Habsburg monarchy without the support of the Hungarians, especially after the Prussian military victory over Austria in 1866. Therefore the dynasty concluded the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (Ausgleich) in 1867. Transylvania became an integral part of Hungary, and after having tasted political empowerment, Romanians now found themselves a minority in the larger state rather than a majority in Transylvania.

Renewed hostilities between Russia and the Porte in 1877–1878 provided another opportunity for Romania to enhance its international standing. Prince Carol provided Romanian support for the passage of Russian troops to the Balkan front. When the Russian siege of the fortress of Plevna was stalled, Carol answered a call for military assistance on the condition of assuming overall command of the front. After the ensuing allied victory, Romania annexed northern Dobrogea, and was recognized as an independent kingdom. Despite its indebtedness to Romania for its military contribution, Russia insisted on the return of the three south Bessarabian counties it had ceded to Moldavia in 1856. Within Bessarabia, Russification (the promotion of Russian culture) was harsher than anything Romanians had experienced under the Habsburgs. Romania turned now to
Austria–Hungary for an alliance, later increased by the ad­herence of Germany and Italy, that would be renewed re­peatedly until World War I. This alliance was diplomatically and economically advantageous to Romania. Though its precise terms were kept a secret from the public, its existence was not.

Carol I proved effective in a long rule lasting until his death in 1914. The government was the most stable in the Balkans, with Liberal and Conservative ministries succeeding each other at five- to ten-year intervals. Governments ran elections after their appointment and the electoral law was restrictive, but the press was uncensored and the system did provide for some responsiveness to public opinion. Ro­manian education and culture made steady progress. The Brătianu family provided continuity to the Liberal Party and the country through a series of able leaders. A public system of education, decreed by Prince Cuza, began to be­come a reality late in the century after an energetic school­building program. A Mining Law in 1895 opened Romanian oilfields to foreign investment, as the result of which American, British, and especially German capital be­came influential in their production and exports. There was a vigorous debate about the proper balance between Weste­rnization and traditional culture. Taking a more conserva­tive position, but not rejecting modernization per se, was the highly influential Junimea literary movement, which warned against superficial Westernization or “forms without content.” The greatest Romanian writer, Mihai Eminescu, was associated with this movement.

Romanians also made cultural progress in Hungary. The government took energetic steps after the Austro-Hun­garian Compromise to support Hungarian culture in minority areas, founding a Hungarian university in Cluj in 1872 and subsidizing Hungarian education generally. But although national minorities had little political power, they were on average economically better off and enjoyed a higher rate of literacy than in Romania. Their own churches, schools, press, and banks enabled the Romanian minority to main­tain and even enhance national identity. The Romanian Na­tional Party enjoyed the support of a growing Romanian middle class and produced a number of impressive leaders. While the few Romanians elected to the Hungarian parlia­ment were generally in opposition, they were publicly loyal to Austria–Hungary and not vocal advocates of secession. Romanians were only one-third of the population in Aus­trian Bucovina, but they participated in the provincial diet and imperial parliament and enjoyed higher education in their own language at the trilingual university in the capital city, Cernăuți. Romanian culture and political expression was weakest in Russian Bessarabia. Steady Russification re­duced the Romanians by 1897 to less than half of the pop­ulation. They were almost totally absent from political life until after the Revolution of 1905.

The Kingdom of Romania had its darker side, namely the treatment of its peasantry and Jewish minority. The land reform of 1864 gave peasants outright possession of their land, but its amount proved insufficient and had to be sup­plemented through sharecropping and arrangements that left peasants increasingly dependent and in debt. A peasant revolt in 1888 was a foretaste of a much more serious one in 1907, the worst on the European continent before the Russian Revolution. Thousands of peasants were executed in its brutal suppression. Jewish immigration to the prin­cipalities was welcomed during the first half of the century under the Russian protectorate, and this population made a substantial contribution to economic development. For many social conservatives like Eminescu, however, Jewish capitalists seemed to threaten national culture and exploit the poorest Romanians. Jewish farm tenants were a partic­ular target of peasant violence during the outbreak of the revolt in 1907. In Bessarabia, Chișinău was the site of major pogroms in 1903 and 1905; as a result, thousands of Jews emigrated from Chișinău to the United States afterward.

Romania’s alliance with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria–Hungary, and Italy) was supported by most politi­cians of the Conservative Party, but criticized by the Libe­rals and especially by nationalists who deplored Hungary’s minorities policy and even demanded the liberation of Ro­manians across the Carpathians. On the eve of World War I, rising political tensions in both countries brought the na­tional question to a head. Romania proved itself the strongest of the post-Ottoman states in the Second Balkan War, hosting the Peace of Bucharest in 1913 that awarded it southern Dobrogea (the Quadrilateral), a territory with few Romanians. The Liberal government declined to support the Central Powers when the European war broke out. This decision was a difficult blow for the native German King Carol, who died in the war’s first months. His nephew Fer­dinand, who succeeded him as king, was more amenable to change.

Romania negotiated an agreement with the Entente in 1916, by which in return for an invasion of Transylvania it was promised protection of its flanks by simultaneous Rus­sian and French attacks and cession of the province after the war. The attacks by the allies did not take place; instead Ro­mania was flanked by the Germans and Bulgarians. Ro­manian forces had to evacuate Bucharest in November. The court and government retreated to Iași, and although it won notable military victories over the Germans in 1917, Ro­mania was forced to conclude a separate peace with the Central Powers in May 1918. The collapse of the Russian tsardom and then of Austria–Hungary created an optimal situation for Romania. The Central Powers recognized Bessarabia’s decision to join Romania in March 1918; then in November Romanian troops marched into Transylvania after the collapse of the Austro–Hungarian front. The union of the formerly Hungarian lands with Romania was pro­claimed at a mass assembly in Alba Iulia on 1 December, whose anniversary would become Romania’s National Day. The longed-for Greater Romania arose suddenly, through a remarkable coincidence of events.

GREATER ROMANIA

Through the demise of Austria–Hungary and the Russian Empire, Romania doubled its territory and its population. While in the prewar census of Romania the population was more than 90 percent Romanian and Orthodox Christian,
Greater Romania was a multinational state with nearly 30 percent minorities, including large numbers of Catholics and Protestants. The urban centers of the new provinces were dominated by the national minorities, who generally enjoyed a higher level of education and wealth than the Romanians and resented the sudden reversal in their political status.

The peasant revolt of 1907 had ushered in an era of social and political reform in the old Romania that was interrupted by the outbreak of war. With the upheaval of the Russian Revolution in his rear in 1917, King Ferdinand promised radical land and electoral reform after the war. Such was to be the case: after the introduction of virtually universal manhood suffrage, the most far-reaching land reform in Eastern Europe was enacted and the Conservative Party disappeared as a political force. More than 2 million peasants received land. Large landholding almost disappeared in all parts of the country, especially in the new territories where Russian and Hungarian aristocrats were targeted. Thus the land reform had its roots before the war but was also applied to the detriment of national minorities and of their cultural institutions.

Alien legal and administrative systems as well as ethnic minorities and their economic power increased the difficulty of integrating the newly acquired territories. Russian, Austrian, and Hungarian laws, civil servants, and currencies were adapted, or accommodated, or eliminated. The government expropriated the schools of the Romanian Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches of the former Hungarian lands, which had served to preserve minority culture but now had no place in a state where schools were administered by the government. The constitution of 1923, built in large measure on the constitution of 1866, stated explicitly that Romania was a unitary national state. This was a decisive rejection of any notion that Romania's historical regions could best be accommodated by a federal system, which in any case would have been a departure from previous Romanian practice.

The political beneficiary of these reforms was the Liberal Party. It no longer had to alternate power with its Conservative rivals and enjoyed enormous prestige as the original proponent of the electoral and land reforms and the wartime alliance with the Entente that achieved such brilliant success in 1918, and as experienced political partner of the royal house. The Liberal Party and its government officials rapidly and effectively expanded their political organization and membership into the newly acquired territories where they had never existed before. In terms of economic policy, the Liberals were advocates of the urban, industrial, and financial interests of the Old Kingdom and their expansion into the new territories. In support of these interests, they enforced protectionist commercial policies that developed Romanian industries and served to rupture the politically suspect ties of the new territories with their former homelands. Industrial imports declined steadily throughout the interwar period, while the rate of growth in industrial production, at over 5 percent, was one of the highest in Europe.

The hegemony of the Liberal Party began to crumble after the death of its leader, Ion I.C. Brătianu, and King Ferdinand in 1927. As important as their deaths was the emergence of a strong political alternative, the National Peasant Party. It arose in 1926 through the union of two parties, the Romanian National Party, founded in 1881 in Hungary, and the Peasant Party, founded by Ion Mihalache in 1918 on a platform of radical land reform. Throughout the decade, the National Party had attacked the Liberal regime for corruption and excessive centralization that violated the terms under which Transylvania and the new provinces had joined Romania. Transylvanian Romanians never for a moment regretted the unification of 1918 or favored Transylvanian independence, but some proposed that the capital of the country be moved to their province. The Peasant Party, the heir of earlier populist and pro-peasant movements in the Old Kingdom, contested the Liberals' claim as sole architect of the land reform and insisted that commercial and administrative policies take the rural majority of Romania into account. The regency that took office after Ferdinand's death saw no alternative to asking Iuliu Maniu, the Transylvanian president of the new party, to form a government. He accepted on condition that he be permitted to hold truly free elections, which were held in 1928 and returned parliamentary majorities for the National Peasants.

The National Peasant government held office for most of the period between 1928 and 1933. It was genuinely popular at its inception, especially due to the undeniable rectitude of its leadership, the measures it took to facilitate agricultural exports and credit, and a law providing for a modest degree of decentralization. It was difficult for the new party to master a state apparatus that had been created by its ousted rivals or to deal with the world economic crisis that lowered prices for Romanian agricultural exports and made industrial credit scarce. Many historians have faulted Maniu for excessive rectitude in his dealing with the controversy that arose over the eldest of Ferdinand's sons, known in office as Carol II. In contrast to his uncle and father, Carol was an undisciplined individual who liked racing cars and racy women. Twice, in 1918 and 1925, he renounced his succession to the throne after choosing to live with women considered unsuitable for him. Maniu, however, felt Carol had been abused by the Liberals and hence did not oppose his return to Romania after 1928. Once home, Carol ignored a promise to Maniu that he would stay out of politics, and reclaimed his throne amidst considerable popular sympathy for his cause. In protest against Carol's corrupting influence, Maniu resigned three times as prime minister, in 1930 and 1933. Party comrades who succeeded him enjoyed less authority and were no more effective in power. It is impossible to detect any consistent rationale for Carol's political actions, but in effect he undermined the institution of parliamentary democracy and progressively eliminated alternatives to his own personal rule.

As the experience of other Eastern European countries during the 1930s suggests, the weaknesses of Romanian democracy went far beyond the failings of Maniu and King Carol. The land reform of 1918–1921, like that of 1864, failed to permanently satisfy the peasants' hunger for land. The practice of dividing land among sons of the family meant that originally adequate landholdings quickly be-
came less satisfactory. Interwar Romanian governments of all parties sought to assuage rural overpopulation by policies favoring industrialization to create urban workplaces. Industry grew. In the towns, Romanian schools and higher education expanded dramatically, especially in the new provinces where existing institutions were Romanianized and Romanians gained preferential employment in management and the civil service. As the economic motor sputtered, traditionalist voices, questioning the desirability of Western and urban civilization, became more audible. As before 1914, they often associated alien Western civilization with the Jews. Urban, middle class Romania was also strongly committed to defending the country's newly won borders against threats posed by aggrieved Hungarians and Bulgarians abroad and within, and anti-Semitism was also widespread in the urban population. Some followed the corporatist model popular in Central Europe, according to which state and economic production should be reorganized according to occupational groups. What contrasted national Romanians from most surrounding countries was the degree to which the rural, traditionalist ideal prevailed.

Interwar Romanian literary movements, like those before 1914, included liberal, progressive, as well as traditionalist tendencies. As in the case of Junimea earlier, traditionalists produced more striking and influential writers, notably Nae Ionescu, Lucian Blaga, and Mircea Eliade. Unlike the personalities of Junimea, however, many traditionalists questioned the parliamentary system itself and were sympathetic to an outright break with Western models. Many also sympathized with the most distinctive Romanian extremist movement, whose political potential dominated the scene after Iuliu Maniu's second premiership ended in 1933: the Legion of the Archangel Michael, founded in 1927, and its offshoot founded in 1930, the Iron Guard. The leader of the Legionaries was the charismatic "Captain" Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (1899–1938), the former student of an anti-Semitic law professor at the University of Iași. Codreanu's student and peasant adherents fascinated contemporaries with their mystical rhetoric drawing on Orthodox Christianity and their rural volunteer work, but horrified them with daring acts of violence against Jews and political opponents.

The Iron Guard's political wing reached its high point in electoral politics (16 percent of the vote) in 1937. The Liberals and National Peasants could provide no strong political alternative to the Guard, in large degree because Carol II excelled in encouraging factions by offering power to secondary figures. The electoral gains of the Guard seemed to indicate that its real popular support was even greater since they were achieved despite the preference of the king (scorned by the Legionaries, among other reasons, because of his Jewish mistress) and his appointed government that ran the election. After this result, Carol proclaimed a new constitution and a royal dictatorship in 1938, with a weak legislature, the judiciary and executive under his own authority, and a National Renaissance Front that superficially resembled the Nazi and fascist parties but lacked any power or social base. Codreanu and 265 followers were arrested and murdered while in prison. Whatever pleasure Romanians and Jews may have taken from this act, their own parties had been declared illegal.

Romania's international position had become precarious. As a beneficiary of the peace settlement, it favored strong relations with France, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Out of ideological sympathy and in violation of the pro-French dogma of Romanian foreign policy, Corneliu Codreanu declared his support for an orientation toward Germany. This was not the position of King Carol, who declared Romanian neutrality after Germany attacked Poland in 1939. This took considerable courage because Romania had failed to mitigate Soviet hostility over Bessarabia, although it could not know that the secret protocol of the German-Soviet pact placed Bessarabia in the Soviet sphere. The partition that Romanian diplomats had feared ensued even as France was going down to defeat in 1940. In response to a Soviet ultimatum, Romania relinquished Bessarabia and southern Bukovina in June, and after threats from Bulgaria surrendered southern Dobrogea (Dobrudja for Bulgarians) to that country in September. More devastating than either of these events was the Second Vienna Award (known by Romanian historians as the Diktat of Vienna) returning northern Transylvania to Hungary. Facing a likely Hungarian attack and a disinclination by Germany to intervene, the divided Romanian Crown Council agreed to surrender the territory without knowing its exact extent. "Northern Transylvania" was a largely historical creation that included a land bridge for Hungary to its strongest irredenta within Romania, the heavily Hungarian Székely region. Of the 2.5 million people in northern Transylvania, roughly half were Hungarians, half Romanians. Many Romanians and Hungarians fled across the hastily drawn borders. In all, Romania lost close to half of the territory gained since 1913.

Faced with widespread dissatisfaction over Romanian concessions and an Iron Guard uprising, Carol turned to a war hero and former minister of defense to form a government: General Ion Antonescu. The new prime minister was no admiral of Germany or of the Iron Guard, but he was a realist and he despised Carol. Antonescu quickly demanded Carol's abdication and exile, and announced a National Legionary State with various ministries assigned to Legionaries, but himself in charge. Carol's son Mihai, who had ascended the throne temporarily during the regency of 1927–1930, again became king. He announced the new government, but Antonescu excluded him from real power.

Hitler and Antonescu knew that, in Romania's weakened and vulnerable state, it was dependent on German good favor for any possible border rectification in Transylvania. When they met, Hitler made no promise about rectification but suggested it might be possible after the war. The German interest in keeping Romania in thrall was twofold: access to Romanian grain and oil, and Romanian hostility toward the Soviet Union. Given these priorities, Hitler listened sympathetically when Antonescu reported at the beginning of 1941 on the harmful effects on the Romanian economy of the Iron Guard's mismanagement and use of power to settle scores with Jews and political opponents. Antonescu disarmed his erstwhile allies in short order, with
the tacit support of the Germans. After a brief Legionary uprising in Bucharest and some other areas, official reports cited 416 casualties, including 120 Jews.

It is doubtful the Germans were disturbed by a series of decrees by the Romanian government to deprive Jews in Romania of their rural (in the fall of 1940) and urban (after the expulsion of the Legionaries from the government in March 1941) property. Official statistics, perhaps intended primarily for German consumption, appear to have exaggerated the scale of the decline in the number of Jewish employees. Romania joined the attack on the Soviet Union with genuine popular enthusiasm. By August 1941, it had reoccupied Bessarabia (with an estimated 130,000 Jews fleeing before the Romanian and German troops into the Soviet Union) but did not stop there, participating in the Axis conquest of Odessa and the advance toward Stalingrad and the Caucasus. In addition to Bessarabia, with Hitler's acquiescence, Antonescu established a Romanian civil administration over a large territory between the Dniester and Dnieper rivers dubbed "Transnistria." Over 100,000 Romanian Jews were deported to Transnistria in 1941-1943, many thousands of whom died from the terrible conditions there. The majority, it appears, survived to be repatriated at the end of the war.

Some historians have engaged in a debate over whether Hungary or Romania treated its Jews more poorly. Contemporaries reported the Germans were horrified by the anti-Semitic violence of local officials in both Transnistria and Hungary during the deportations there in 1941–1943 and 1944, respectively. The mass deportation to Auschwitz of Hungary's rural Jews after the German occupation in March 1944 included those of northern Transylvania. Antonescu's government, on the other hand, was not subjected to military occupation and declined to participate in the deportations to the death camps. It appears likely that he prevented these deportations because, as early as the battle of Stalingrad at the end of 1942, he no longer believed in the prospect of Axis military victory. While Romanian troops continued to fight in great numbers on the retreating eastern front and Antonescu remained a respected collaborator.
of Hitler, he unofficially sanctioned peace feelers to the Western allies by his foreign minister and Ion Antonescu. Negotiations intensified as Soviet troops approached prewar Romanian territory. At a point of crisis in the military campaign, on 23 August 1944, King Mihai had Antonescu and his closest associates arrested and declared a unilateral end of hostilities against the Soviet Union. The conspiracy, supported by the parties Antonescu had excluded from power (National Peasants, Liberals, Social Democrats, and Communists), was remarkably successful. Within weeks German forces were forced to vacate Romanian territory.

Romanian troops suffered over 300,000 casualties in three years of fighting on the side of the Axis, then 170,000 more up to May 1945 after changing sides to assist the Soviets in the capture of Transylvania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Just as Antonescu hoped the Romanian contribution would strengthen postwar claims to northern Transylvania, Romania now sought to gain Soviet sympathy for the restoration of the prewar frontier with Hungary, which fought with Germany to the last. There was no question of Romania retaining Bessarabia, which quickly became a Soviet republic (Moldova) once again. The Soviet Union would also exact heavy Romanian war reparations in materiel, demand the extradition of Bessarabian refugees in Romania, and require the forced labor service, for several years, of 80,000 Germans who were Romanian citizens. It turned out that all these contributions were insufficient payment for the return of northern Transylvania; it was also necessary that the government be communized.

After August 1944, Mihai entrusted the government to a succession of coalitions led by nonparty generals and composed, in rough numerical equality, by communist and noncommunist ministers. The popular support of the Communist Party was probably the weakest of any such party in Eastern Europe. In August party membership was no more than a thousand; the leaders had long been tightly controlled by the Comintern and drawn primarily from Romania's ethnic minorities. The party platform, rejecting Romanian control of Bessarabia and characterizing the peace treaties after World War I as imperialist in nature, had severely limited the party's appeal among ethnic Romanians. Now, the presence of the Red Army gave a tremendous boost to the Communist Party. Agitators supported by the communists and radical socialists created stoppages in factories, Communist Minister of Justice Lucrețiu Pătrușcanu engineered the exclusion of "reactionaries" who were political opponents, and the Allied Control Commission, dominated by the Soviet Union, demanded a leftward reconfiguration of the government. This happened in March 1945 with the appointment of the leftist Transylvanian Petru Groza as prime minister. A radical land reform and the beginning of the transformation of the economy began shortly thereafter. Minor members of the historical parties gave the government a small semblance of legitimacy, leading to its recognition by the Western allies in 1946. Archival records have now confirmed contemporary suspicion that the results of the elections of November 1946, awarding leftist parties 80 percent of the vote, were falsified. In February 1947 the Paris Peace Treaty recognized the return of territories to the Soviet Union but also Romanian sovereignty over northern Transylvania.

King Mihai opposed the communist takeover but was powerless to resist it. On 30 December 1947, he accepted an ultimatum to abdicate the Romanian throne, and left the newly declared Romanian People's Republic a few days later.

**COMMUNIST ROMANIA**

High on the agenda of the new regime were the elimination of opposition politicians and centers of power. Antonescu, his foreign minister, and the wartime governor of Transnistria were declared "war criminals" and subjected to a show trial and death by firing squad. Maniu, Mihalache, and many other former government ministers were arrested and concentrated in a special prison in Sighet, in the northwestern corner of the country. Just as the Soviet Union forcibly united the Greek Catholics with the Orthodox Church in its newly annexed western territories, the Romanian government did the same with the Uniates in 1948. The 1.4-million-strong Romanian Greek Catholic Church, which had contributed substantially to the definition and defense of national identity before 1918, found itself forcibly integrated into the Orthodox Church by the decision of a manipulated church synod. By this act and modest state support for its seminaries and publications, the Orthodox Church became an accomplice of the regime. Any social institution recognizing a supreme authority outside the country was unacceptable to the Communists. The Roman Catholic Church, however, enjoyed too much prestige and diplomatic support in the West, and its celibate clergy was relatively immune to blackmail through the intimidation of family members, to suffer the fate of the Uniates. Furthermore, in Romania this church was primarily Hungarian and German in its membership; therefore its outright suppression would have constituted a blatant violation of communist nationality policy. Thus, this church was neither suppressed nor coordinated like the others but survived in a semilegal state. Most Catholic bishops, of both the Latin and Greek rites, joined the former government ministers at the prison in Sighet.

Imprisonment and hard labor was also the fate of social categories such as Serbs and Germans deported from the western Banat to the camps in the Bărăgan Steppe during the crisis in relations with Tito's Yugoslavia, peasants resisting collectivization who were put to work on the massive project to create a canal eastward from the lower Danube to the Black Sea, and ordinary citizens now arrested on trumped up charges to pull reeds in the Danube Delta for cellulose production. Many died or returned home with shattered health.

Terror affected the communists themselves. From a mere thousand in 1944, recruitment among former Legionaries, workers, and other social groups and a fusion with leftist Social Democrats swelled the ranks of the ruling party, renamed Romanian Workers Party in 1948, to over a million in that year. Lucrețiu Pătrușcanu, the party's first liaison between King Mihai and the Soviets in 1944, was among the
first to be purged. Then, following the Soviet-enforced model observable throughout the emerging bloc, broader purges within party ranks were ordained in order to cull undesirable “opportunistic” elements. If many recent recruits were undesirables, it followed logically that the party officials responsible for the recruitment were culpable. This meant for Romania first of all Ana Pauker, the leader of the “Muscovite” (former exile) wing of the party, a visible leader since her return to the country, the most powerful Jewish woman in the bloc, and foreign minister in 1947–1952 before being purged. Was Pauker a victim of an anti-Semitic campaign like the crackdown on the “Doctors Plot” in the Soviet Union? It is likely that being a rival for power of party leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and not a veteran of the same in-country prison clique as the leader, was more important than her ethnic origin. The same is true for purged “Muscovite” communist minister of agriculture Vasile Luca, a Hungarian, and former minister of the interior Teohari Georgescu, a Romanian. The arrest of these leaders occasioned also the arrest and imprisonment of many party members and officials associated with them.

The Stalinist Party leader Gheorghiu-Dej managed to maintain and further concentrate his power after the death of Stalin in 1953 and the onset of de-Stalinization. The execution of Pătrășcanu in 1954 eliminated the most plausible rival for party leadership; then two potential supporters of Khrushchev were ousted in 1958. Defying the Soviet leader’s call for the separation of party and state leadership functions, Gheorghiu-Dej concentrated power in his own hands. Like Romanian leaders during the era of national unification, he adeptly exploited opportunities in the international arena to increase Romanian diplomatic independence. Unlike earlier leaders, he also used national independence to enhance his personal power. The successor chosen after his death in 1965, Nicolae Ceaușescu, learned from and further developed this technique.

In the first years of the communist regime it depended on its Soviet patrons and was totally subservient in its foreign policy. Ana Pauker was foreign minister; Gheorghiu-Dej was chosen above all East European leaders to deliver a speech formally condemning Marshall Tito, and Bucharest was chosen as the headquarters of Cominform, the successor to the Comintern, when Yugoslavia was expelled from this organization. Emil Bodnăraș, a Ukrainian and former Soviet agent, presided as minister of defense over the political coordination of the army. This closeness to the Soviets explains why it was Bodnăraș who first suggested on behalf of the Romanian leadership that Soviet troops were no longer needed in Romania after the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty in 1955. Romania strongly condemned the Hungarian “counterrevolution” in 1956, and hosted the interrogation of former Hungarian leader Imre Nagy before his execution in 1958. The withdrawal of Soviet troops the same year was to a large degree a recognition of Romanian loyalty and reliability.

Gheorghiu-Dej insisted that the Romanian leadership reject Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization initiatives. The crucial opportunity for the expansion of Romanian independence was the Sino-Soviet dispute. Gheorghiu-Dej took a mediating position when the Chinese leadership presented its theses on independent paths to socialism. Romania chose an ideologically impeccable sally, the publication of a collection of research notes by Karl Marx denouncing nineteenth-century Russian imperialism in Bessarabia. The country dissented from a Soviet proposal for a differentiation of economic roles within the East European bloc, whereby Romania would remain a primarily agricultural country, and went public with its opposition to the secret Valev Plan for cross-border economic cooperation that seemed to threaten Romanian sovereignty over Transylvania. Cultural and economic agreements with Western countries further compromised Romania’s position within the bloc.

The new party leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, continued and intensified these policies. During the Prague Spring, the period of liberalization and reform in Czechoslovakia, he declared in public speeches that the party leadership in that country was entitled to pursue its own path without Soviet
Neo-Stalinism: Ceaușescu and the Personality Cult

According to a thesis of the historian Nicolae Iorga, the culture of the Byzantine Empire survived in the Danubian Principalities after the fall of Constantinople, constituting a Byzance après la Byzance (Byzantium after Byzantium). The cult of the leader in the era of Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965–1989) constituted what Iorga might have called Stalinisme après le stalinisme (Stalinism after Stalinism). Another historian and political observer, Karl Marx, might have commented on this regime by recalling his witicism about the coup that brought Louis Napoleon to power: All great historical phenomena occur twice; the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

This was a time when market reforms, collective leadership, and party pluralism emerged in other East European countries. In Romania, a policy of rotation of cadres was introduced to prevent the emergence of rivals. An English collection entitled Romania on the Way of Completing Socialist Construction: Reports, Speeches, Articles records the dictator's speeches in twenty-nine volumes. Beginning in 1973, several books compiled poetry and prose in praise of the leader and his wife. Two were published in 1981: The Country with One Voice: Homage to Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu and From the Depth of the Heart: Homage to Comrade Elena Ceaușescu. Among the most fervent poets was Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the future leader of the Greater Romania Party. The sound track of the Epoque de sur (Golden Age) was the hymn, customarily performed with a large chorus, from which the following is an excerpt:

Paradisul, Ceaușescu, România

We have in our lead a son of the country
The most loved and most obeyed
Who in the world, to the horizon
Is prized and honored by the people.
And these three wonderful words,

Words worthy like a tricolor,
We carry them engraved in our hearts
Towards Communism, in the coming years
The people, Ceaușescu, Romania.
The party, Ceaușescu, Romania.

(Received translation by James P. Niessen)

Ceaușescu's visit to the Chinese and North Korean capitals in 1971, followed by the disastrous Bucharest earthquake of 1977, helped inspire the idea of building a new city center. Its centerpiece would be a public palace, the House of the People, at the end of a new Avenue of the Victory of Socialism. The twenty-five-year-old architect Anea Petrescu won a contest to plan it, proposing a building that would be the second largest in the world after the Pentagon. Bulldozers began to clear away buildings from an increasingly lunar landscape beginning in 1984. Forty thousand people were evicted, some on six hours' notice; many committed suicide. Four hundred architects and twenty thousand workers built the outside of the palace in five years; one of their dead bodies was discovered by accident. Considering the victims, some found the spectacular project reminiscent of the construction myth Megalnd Manus. There was a call to destroy the palace after the revolution, but since it incorporated high-quality materials and workmanship, it became the Palace of Parliament in 1994. The interior, thirteen stories above ground and four below containing 1,100 rooms and 4,500 chandeliers, was finally completed in 1996. The total estimated cost was $1–3 billion.

interference. The threat that the Soviet Union would intervene militarily in Romania as well as Czechoslovakia in 1968 was apparently genuine. Ceaușescu's defiance of this threat at a mass rally in Bucharest won him enormous prestige among Romanian intellectuals and in the West. Romania established friendly diplomatic relations with West Germany, France, and the United States. Romania never became a true threat to the integrity of the Warsaw Pact, but as with France within NATO, its rhetorical neutralism annoyed the dominant power.

Defiance of the Soviets in 1968 opened for Ceaușescu the prospect of not only asserting domestic autonomy (in order to reduce Soviet interference with his control over the party) but also attaining a degree of popular support outside the party. This option was in marked contrast to the party's disregard for territorial integrity before 1944, as well
as to its arrests of prewar political and cultural leaders in subsequent years. After 1948, the party stipulated an official version of history that exaggerated every instance of Romanian indebtedness to the Russian people, enforced socialist realism in literature, established museums, stores, and publishing houses to propagate Russian culture, and made the study of Russian mandatory in Romanian schools. An orthographic reform in 1954 changed the spelling of the Romanian ă to ă, thereby emphasizing its possible Slavic origin. The new Romanian foreign policy after 1960 found its domestic counterpart in the elimination of the Russian language requirement, the closing of many Romanian–Russian cultural institutions, and the reform of 1965 that restored the letter ă and the name of the country from România to România. More significantly, many noncommunist cultural figures were released from prison, and scholars regained the possibility of teaching and publishing. Strict ideological controls and censorship of the media remained in effect but were eased. More nuanced works of history began to appear, and literature dared to touch lightly on taboo subjects such as the worst abuses of Stalinism. After 1965, the party posthumously rehabilitated Pătrașcanu and restored to the leadership some politicians previously purged. The second half of the 1960s was a hopeful period of relaxed control on public and cultural expression.

After 1971, ideological and political controls were restored and the brief period of liberalization came to an end. Ceaușescu had never been a true proponent of liberalization or pluralism but only accommodated it during a short-lived period of collective leadership. Returning from a visit to China and North Korea, he engineered a series of party resolutions, Romania’s “little cultural revolution,” modeled on what he had seen there. A less violent version of Stalinism was introduced, with fewer arrests and forced labor than the earlier period. Work on the Danube–Black Sea Canal, however, having been halted, was recommenced and completed in 1984. The party program approved in 1974 made mandatory the themes of the continuity of Romanian territory since ancient times and the unity of the Romanian people.

The revival of national traditions during the period of liberalization survived as an outlet for cultural activity and as a political tool. Some right-wing Romanian writers of the interwar period were republished, and national traditions were celebrated in history works, public speeches, and folklore festivals. The instrumentalization of nationalism was nowhere more evident than in the policy toward Romania’s national minorities. The imposition of an anational communist regime had been a precondition for the Soviet authorities agreeing to restore Romanian sovereignty over northern Transylvania in 1945. There was no true national autonomy under these political circumstances, but Hungarian language education and publishing attained a quantitative level not seen in the interwar period. Hungarian was the primary language of administration in a newly established Hungarian Autonomous Region encompassing the bulk of the Szekler Region. Authorities merged the Hungarian university in Cluj with the Romanian one in 1959. The administrative reform of 1967, by which the precommunist era counties replaced the regions, was the pretext for eliminating the autonomous region. A new push to industrialize areas inhabited by national minorities, presented as an initiative to share the benefits of socialism, also worked against the Hungarians: newly established industries attracted large numbers of Romanian workers. Emigration policy also served to further the domination of the Romanian ethnic element. The majority of Romania’s remaining Jews and Germans, nearly a million, were allowed to emigrate to Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany in exchange for the payment of a fee in compensation for the cost of their education, usually by both the emigré and the receiving country. Thereby the government rid itself of two minorities and also generated substantial revenue in hard currency.

Emigration to communist Hungary was not an option for the Hungarian minority. This minority still continued to enjoy the use of its language in media and education, but the sphere of this linguistic autonomy was progressively reduced. Hungarian citizens visiting relatives and friends in Transylvania learned firsthand about these changes, and contributed to a growing concern within Hungary about Romanian nationality policy. Beginning in 1978, writers of the two countries and occasionally the party leaders themselves engaged in polemics. A subtext of these exchanges was that the Soviet Union, in its anxiety over Romania’s independent foreign policy, was using loyal Hungary as its surrogate. The comparative economic well-being of Hungary, and the historical legacy of the superior educational level of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, served to exacerbate sensitivities in the Hungarian–Romanian relationship.

The heightening of national tensions in the 1980s occurred at a low point in Romania’s economic standing. The nationalized economy and collectivized agriculture served, with only occasional periods of relaxation in the 1950s and 1960s, to progressively impoverish the countryside and attract population to the increasingly industrialized, often environmentally polluted urban centers. Economic policy aimed to decrease reliance on neighboring socialist countries by establishing a strong Romanian industrial base and exports for hard currency. During the early years of Ceaușescu’s rule, thanks to substantial Western credits, Romania attained some of the highest rates of economic growth in the industrial world. The development plan relied excessively on the petrochemical industry, however. After Romania’s domestic oil production peaked and then declined, it was necessary to import oil at a time when the international price of oil was rising. The result was a rising indebtedness. In 1981 Romania nearly defaulted on its loans from the International Monetary Fund. In an act of national pride and spitefulness, Ceaușescu determined that, rather than accept any controls associated with a rescheduling of the debt, he would establish a harsh austerity regime of rationing and export for hard currency to pay off the debt in the shortest possible time. His last decade in power was one of shortages for the population of food, heat, light, and most necessities. It was also a period of increased scapegoating of national minorities and strained relations with Hungary and the Soviet Union.
The harshest expression of this dark period was the dictator's systematization plan. In blatant contradiction to the public celebration of Romanian village culture and folk music, the plan sought a drastic reduction in the number of rural communities and the concentration of the population in agro-industrial complexes. A frontal attack on the historic core of the capital city took place, demolishing fully one-third of the territory of the city center, destroying old monasteries and reminders of the nineteenth-century city in order to make way for the huge Palace of the People and the grand Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism. Bulldozers and a startling empty expanse dominated the affected area by 1988. Hungarians suspected the plan was directed against their villages, but the proposed impact on Romanian villages was devastating, and the destruction in Bucharest really happened. Abroad, the Romanian Villages movement raised awareness of rural systematization by pairing threatened villages with sister villages in Western countries.

DEMOCRATIZING ROMANIA
The fall of the regime in Romania on 22 December 1989, when Nicolae Ceaușescu escaped the Central Committee building by helicopter as crowds were entering it, was the only violent overthrow in the former Soviet bloc. The relative weakness of dissident activity and popular resistance gave rise to the witticism "mamaliga [a cornmeal porridge] does not explode," meant to contrast the Romanians with the Hungarians, Poles, and Czechs. The courageous resistance of demonstrators to armed repression, in Timișoara beginning on 17 December and then later in other cities and the capital, gave the lie to this thesis. According to official figures, 689 people died in these events around the country. It is therefore ironic that the political transition has been the most ambiguous and prolonged one in the region.

Romanians saw the new leadership emerge on national television with startling rapidity after the station fell into the control of the insurgents and successfully resisted armed assaults by adherents of Ceaușescu. Alongside a number of military figures and former dissidents, two individuals were more important than the rest: Ion Iliescu, a former communist official who had fallen out with Ceaușescu in the 1970s, and his prime minister, Petre Roman, a professor at the technical university in the capital and son of a prominent communist. They called their umbrella organization, successor to the Communist Party but initially including many noncommunists, the National Salvation Front to capitalize on the resurgence of religious feeling accompanying the fall of the regime. The capture of the Ceaușescus and their execution on Christmas day seemed superficially to
also feed into this religious feeling. In fact the trial and execution were hasty and seemed to have been motivated in large part by a desire to obscure the connections between the old and new leadership. There were other trials of leading figures, but the common interest of the leaders and officialdom in self-preservation became increasingly evident. The Timisoara Declaration of March 1990, demanding full application of democratic liberties in the country, came in large degree into effect, but its demand that communists be excluded from the presidency was rejected by the National Salvation Front and, in the first open elections since 1947 in June, by the majority of voters who elected Ion Iliescu as president.

Political history since 1990 may be divided into three periods: the presidency of Ion Iliescu until 1996, that of the anticommunist Emil Constantinescu (1996—2000), and a second administration of Iliescu since then. During the first period, a large degree of freedom in elections and the press was established, but progress in economic reform was slow. Labor unrest was endemic throughout the decade. Iliescu and his allies frustrated reforms through two appeals to the miners of the Jiu Valley (whose two violent incursions into Bucharest in 1990—1991 have been ironically labeled as mineridades), reliance on the self-interest of civil servants, and an appeal to Romanian nationalism that branded calls for ethnic tolerance as support for Hungarian separatism. In the elections of 1992 there was a partial return to the interwar electoral pattern, whereby support for the Christian and Democratic National Peasant Party (the descendant of the National Peasant Party) was strongest in the formerly Hungarian regions. Many democrats, ironically, were monarchists who believed that the reestablishment of a constitutional monarchy under King Mihai would enable Romanian's to follow the example of post-Franco Spain. After 1992, Iliescu's government relied on the parliamentary support of nationalist parties.

The 1996 elections brought victory for the Romanian Democratic Convention, a coalition of several anticommunist parties. The new government declared as its main goals economic reform and accession to the European Union (EU) but made more progress on the former than the latter. Disunity in the coalition and continued labor unrest (including three threatened marches of the miners on Bucharest) stymied reforms. The participation of the Hungarian Party in the government signified a breakthrough in interethnic relations, making possible improved diplomatic relations with Hungary and satisfying human rights concerns of the European Union. King Mihai's Romanian citizenship was restored, and after a peaceful visit to the country in 1997 he lobbyed NATO member countries for Romanian membership. In 1999 Pope John Paul II visited Romania, the first visit of any pope to a primarily Orthodox country. The Yugoslav conflict inversely affected the economy by interrupting trade with Yugoslavia and along the middle Danube, and there was negative economic growth in 1997—1999. Romania's improved international standing and foreign loans could not prevent rising unemployment, repeated reshuffling of the government, and the collapse of its popularity by the time of the elections in 2000.

The second Iliescu presidency has been a period of greater political and social stability than the first. The threat of ultranationalist Corneliu Vadim Tudor's election in the presidential runoff prompted a pragmatic coalescence around Iliescu by most democratic parties. The new government, while a minority one, dominated the strengthened nationalist opposition with the support of the Hungarian Party. The pro-Western commitments of the Constantinescu presidency have continued. Romania has joined NATO, contributed forces to international peacekeeping efforts, appears likely to host American military bases, and is working steadily toward accession to the European Union.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS
The communist legacy left Romania comparatively ill-prepared for multiparty democracy and economic reform. Extreme centralism in economic policy and political administration, and even in the affairs of the ruling party, prevented the evolution of autonomous interest groups, decision making, and civic awareness. The Communist Party of Romania constituted the relatively largest of any country
in the region. In 1988 official membership was 3.7 million or 15.8 percent of the population. The Communist Youth of Romania, pioneers for younger children, women’s groups, trade unions, and workers councils of national minorities integrated large numbers of the population into the process of conveying the leadership’s directives. The Securitate (secret police) may have included as much as a quarter of the population in the rolls of its employees and informants. The personality cult during the last fifteen years of Nicolae Ceaușescu meant not only that the leader’s face and interminable speeches dominated the mass media, but that large numbers of cultural as well as political figures were forced into humiliating expressions of admiration for the “genius of the Carpathians” and the members of his family.

This experience left a deep impact on the Romanian psyche. Scapegoating, the shaping of opinion through rumor and informants, and direction from above were more familiar political techniques than tolerance and open debate. Thus it is not surprising that for the first half of the 1990s Freedom House ranked Romania substantially below other East European countries in terms of democracy and the rule of law. The Freedom House ranking improved dramatically in 1996 with the electoral victory of Emil Constantinescu and his allies. In 2004 Romania was ranked “free,” which was good in a worldwide comparison.

Among its “Nations in Transit” ranking of twenty-seven former communist states, Freedom House ranked Romania as intermediate.

Ceaușescu’s legacy lends plausibility to the theory that what took place in 1989 was a skillfully engineered coup d’état rather than a revolution. How, given Romania’s recent history, could the people have overthrown the regime on their own? The term “revolution” remains fitting because crowds of ordinary people spontaneously braved the danger of armed repression, and genuine dissidents greeted the overthrow of the dictator on national television. It is also true that the only genuinely oppositional voice within the Communist Party during 1989 was that of Silviu Brucan, a former ambassador to the United States and coordinator of official mass media who was demoted after 1965. Brucan was the author of the “Letter of the Six,” an open letter released signed by six former communist leaders in the spring of 1989 that called for the replacement of Ceaușescu as party leader. The letter’s authors were effectively isolated and not in a position to engineer the events of December, but the document would undermine efforts of anticommunists to tar all participants in the former regime with the same brush. Ion Iliescu was not one of the six, and after his demotion from the top leadership in 1984 he was director of the Technical Publishing House in Bucharest. Its construction began under Ceaușescu, but its current name and function were adopted in 1994. (Corel Corporation)
Bucharest. His many connections within the establishment and his reputation as a moderate who had studied with Soviet leader Gorbachev enabled Iliescu to gain the support in December of party and military leaders who distanced themselves from Ceaușescu after his fall.

The transitional leadership, called the National Salvation Front (NSF), included Brucan, literary dissidents Ana Blandiana and Mircea Dinescu, and less-known individuals who gained sudden prominence during the revolution. Iliescu's inner circle made key decisions, excluding these others who in turn were dismissed or resigned. Forgetting earlier promises of nonpartisanship, the NSF transformed itself into a political party that coopted much of the former communist apparatus, and Iliescu emerged as its presidential candidate. Denied equal access to the broadcast media, the revived historical parties and the party of the Hungarian minority could garner only limited support against them in the elections of May 1990, which brought the NSF 65 percent of the votes cast. The new assembly drafted a constitution that was approved in a national referendum in December 1991.

The constitution resembles in many ways the precommunist constitutions of 1866 and 1923. Like these it provides for an elected Chamber of Deputies, a Senate, and a centralized administration with heads of the 41 counties appointed by the minister of interior. The constitution protects private property and the freedom of political parties and established churches. The head of state is an elected president who must not be a member of a political party, and there is no place for the former royal dynasty. A significant change was in the role of elections. Romanian kings had since 1866 appointed new governments that then managed elections so that they would provide the needed parliamentary support, and communist elections were a complete sham. The new constitution provides that the president appoints the prime minister and government only after elections have been held. Governments must secure the support of parliament for their confirmation and continued service. The president is elected for a renewable four-year term, chairs a security council, after an amendment in 2003 can call referenda, and can call for new elections if the government loses parliamentary support, but he cannot initiate legislative proposals or veto bills passed by both houses.

The three central bodies of the judiciary branch are the Constitutional Court, the Superior Council of Magistrates, and the Supreme Court of Justice. The Constitutional Court, which may review the constitutionality of all laws of parliament, consists of nine judges who serve nine-year nonrenewable terms; the president, Chamber of Deputies, and Senate each appoint three of its members. The two houses in joint session elect the members of the Superior Council of Magistrates to four-year terms, and the Council in turn proposes members of the Supreme Court of Justice for appointment by the president to renewable six-year terms. The Supreme Court is not only the final court of appeal but must also study and coordinate the activity of all other courts throughout the country.

The Romanian Parliament is today housed in the massive edifice begun before 1989 in a newly cleared area in southern Bucharest, formerly called the Palace of the People and now the Palace of Parliament. Deputies are elected to parliament for four-year terms by universal adult (age eighteen) suffrage based on proportional representation rather than personal mandates. The Chamber of Deputies has 343 members, of whom fifteen are guaranteed seats for recognized ethnic minorities, and the Senate has 143 members. The government or one or another chamber may initiate legislation, and the chambers sitting in joint session may initiate votes of no confidence against individual members of the government, the government as a whole, or the president. The number, names, and popular support of political parties represented in parliament have repeatedly shifted.

The principal socialist party, which formed the government during the first and second Iliescu administrations in 1990–1996 and since 2000, emerged in 1990 under the name of National Salvation Front. After dissociating itself from the former Stalinist regime and supporting the new constitution, the party now favors gradual economic reform. This is the party of Ion Iliescu, although the constitution stipulates that the president not be a member of a political party. Petre Roman, the son of a leading figure in the Communist Party, headed the government in 1990–1991. In September 1991 miners who had descended on Bucharest forced his resignation. His successors were two economists who had not been politically active, Teodor Stolojan and, after the elections of 1992, Nicolae Văcăroiu. The NSF divided in 1992, with Văcăroiu's faction becoming the Democratic National Salvation Front (DNSF) and a faction chaired by Petre Roman retaining the original name. The opposition NSF renamed itself Democratic Party–National Salvation Front (DP–NSF) a year later, and the DNSF became the Party of Social Democracy of Romania (PSDR). There is a small Stalinist party associated more explicitly with the legacy of the Communist Party, called the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) and led by Ceaușescu's one-time foreign minister, Ilie Verdep. After the 1992 elections, the government relied on parliamentary support from the SLP and the Romanian nationalists, described below. Later the DP–NSF simply became the DP.

The free market democratic parties originally centered on the historical parties that dominated Romanian politics before 1938, the National Liberal Party (NLP) and the National Peasant Party (NPP). The NLP leadership proved ineffective and it split into many groups, however, so the NPP, which later added Christian Democratic to its name (NPPCD) quickly became the standard-bearer of the opposition. The two principal leaders were Corneliu Coposu, a former secretary of Iuliu Maniu who spent seventeen years in communist prisons, and Ion Rațiu, member of a distinguished Transylvanian political family who had been a leader of the emigration and boasted ties to Western financial and political circles. The government sometimes played on popular xenophobia in emphasizing the NPPCD's foreign connections, support for the restoration of the monarchy, and advocacy for the restoration of its former churches to the Greek Catholic Church. Urban intellectuals not sharing either of these vulnerabilities formed a separate group
of the free-market democrats, including the Party of the Civic Alliance (PCA). The NPPCD, NLP, and PCA, along with several smaller parties, formed the coalition Democratic Convention of Romania (DCR) on a platform of anticomunism and support for the principles of the Timișoara Declaration. The DCR’s presidential candidate Emil Constantinescu, former rector of the University of Bucharest, lost the presidential elections in 1992 but won in 1996. Two members of the NPPCD served as prime ministers under President Constantinescu, Victor Ciorbea (1996–1998) and Radu Vasile (1998–1999), then were succeeded by the nonparty National Bank Governor, Mugur Isărescu. The DP and the Hungarian Party also participated in these governments.

A week before the overthrow of Nicolae Ceaușescu on 22 December 1989, the spark for this result was given by demonstrations in Timișoara by citizens of various nationalities on behalf of a Hungarian Reformed cleric, László Tőkés. The clergyman’s courageous but not chauvinistic defense of human rights in Romania, in particular those of the Hungarian minority, attracted the support of Hungarian congregants, then of Romanian and German residents of this multiethnic city when he was threatened with demo-

There have been three main tendencies of Romanian ultranationalism since 1990: the Legionaries, chauvinists in Transylvania, and Bucharest-based xenophobes. The revived Legionary movement emerged in 1990 under the initial leadership of Marian Munteanu, a charismatic student leader. This movement claims to continue the traditions and platform of the interwar Legionaries and has eschewed collaboration with the other nationalist groups, but it has fragmented into various groups and failed to gain sufficient votes to take a seat in parliament. The Transylvanian group had its origins in the so-called cultural organization Romanian Hearth and civil servants eager to rally Romanians against a supposed Hungarian threat. After Romanian Hearth took a role in the bloody Hungarian-Romanian clashes in Târgu Mureș (Hungarian: Marosvásárhely) in March 1990, the group organized into the Party of Romanian National Unity (PRNU) with the chief goal of opposing Hungarian interests. The PRNU entered parliament in 1992 but gained its greatest notoriety through the flag-waving and Hungarian-bating of former engineer Gheorghe Funar as mayor of Cluj, Transylvania’s largest city, since 1992. The party subsequently elected him party leader but replaced him after disappointing results in the 1996 national elections.

The larger Bucharest-based organization is the Greater Romania Party (GRP). Its founder and still dominant personality is Corneliu Vadim Tudor, a poet and journalist who used the newspaper he founded, România Mare (Greater Romania), to build his base before establishing the party in 1991. The GRP mirrors the rhetoric of the PRNU equating Hungarian demands for cultural autonomy with territorial separatism but
is anti-Semitic and glorifies wartime leader Marshal Ion Antonescu and Nicolae Ceaușescu. The party included several military officers among its leaders, and for much of the 1990s enjoyed special access to official documents on its political enemies that Tudor used to smear them in the party newspaper. More than the SLP of Ilie Verdeț, the GRP perpetuates the goals of the last years of Nicolae Ceaușescu to concentrate state authority against all purported enemies in the name of national security and territorial integrity. The PRNU and GRP provided support for the minority government of Nicolae Văcăroiu after the elections of 1992.

After the failure of the NPPCD in its leadership of the coalition government in 1996–2000, in the elections of 2000 the party individually and the DCR as a coalition did not even meet the threshold for representation in parliament. The NLP successfully regrouped and emerged stronger in these elections, but the chief victors were the resurgent PDSR and GRP. Tudor won a surprising second place in the presidential election with his advocacy of radical measures against corruption and separatism, prompting alternative forces to throw their support to Iliescu in the second round. Under the second Iliescu administration the GRP is the strongest opposition party by far but is isolated from the others, with whom it rarely collaborates. The PRNU also failed to enter the new parliament. With the initial tacit support of the fragmented free market democrats and the DAHR, the PSDR under Prime Minister Adrian Năstase has moved further to the center. In 2001 the PSDR merged with the successor of the prewar socialist party and took its name, becoming the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Two features distinguished Romanian politics from other postcommunist states after 1990: street violence and the Hungarian question. The politics of the street signified the perception of many Romanians, Hungarians, and Roma that, having played a key role in the toppling of the dictator, they were unable to bring their concerns to bear through the press and formal political structure. In March 1990 Hungarians in Târgu Mureș, the largest city of the Szekler region, were assaulted by Romanians who had been brought into the city in chartered buses to suppress demands for Hungarian cultural autonomy. Several persons were killed in the riots, and the leading Hungarian playwright lost an eye, but official investigations blamed the Hungarians. Demonstrators in University Square in Bucharest established a “Communist-free zone,” disrupted traffic in the city center for several weeks during the period of the elections, and attacked a government building on 13
June. In a tactic reminiscent of the communists' assumption of power, after his resounding victory at the polls Iliescu called on the miners to restore order against the "hoodlums." Seven thousand miners and others (some were identified as policemen) descended on the capital, capturing the streets, trashing the headquarters of the NPP, killing several, and wounding thousands. More than a thousand were detained by authorities, most of them the aforementioned hooligans. Iliescu thanked the miners for giving the country a "lesson in democracy."

The efforts of Prime Minister Roman to enact economic reform prompted a second assault by the miners on Bucharest in September 1991, this time against the government. The miners demanded that Iliescu and Roman resign, and they ransacked the parliament building. After four deaths and hundreds of injuries in clashes with security forces, however, the miners settled for the resignation of Roman's government and withdrew. After this second lesson in democracy, Iliescu did not call on the miners again. Strikes, marches, and demonstrations were a regular feature of the subsequent years of declining popularity for the Iliescu administration before its electoral defeat in 1996.

Three times during the Constantinescu administration the miners threatened again to march on Bucharest. Privatization and the closure of unprofitable mines were a prominent feature of the coalition's announced program of reforms. An estimated 20,000 workers participated in nationwide strikes in 1997, and miners struck to demand pay raises. In response, the government increased the miners' pay and reversed the decision to close several enterprises. In 1998 and again in 1999, thousands of miners sought to march on Bucharest to protest proposed mine closures and judicial measures against their leader, Miron Cosma. The authorities succeeded in halting both marches, however, and successfully prosecuted Cosma. Labor unrest contributed significantly to the failure of the Constantinescu administration. The reviving economy and the concern of the Iliescu administration for Romania's image have served to reduce street actions and their abuse by the authorities in recent years.

The Hungarian problem is the other enduring, distinguishing feature of politics in Romania. There are also large Hungarian minorities in neighboring Slovakia, Ukraine, and Serbia, but the minority in Romania is by far the largest. As in the neighboring countries, the Hungarians' history of dominance and their sense of cultural superiority have inspired claims for cultural and regional autonomy. The distinctiveness of the Hungarians in Romania is that they live mostly concentrated in a region, Transylvania, with a long tradition of political autonomy that contrasts with the centralism of the Romanian state. During the interwar period, Transylvanianism had been a literary movement of the Hungarian minority that claimed opportunistically (in view of the impossibility of reunion with Hungary) that Transylvania's distinctive history and multiethnic population merited an independent or at least autonomous status. After the wartime division of Transylvania between Hungary and Romania, which prompted the flight of many Hungarians and Romanians across the new border, northern Transylvania returned to Romanian rule but on the understanding that nationality policy be revised in the Hungarians' favor. A Hungarian university was established in Cluj, and a so-called autonomous Hungarian region was established in the Székely district to the east. These measures were later reversed and there was no true ethnic autonomy in the communist era, but Hungarian language education and media enjoyed considerable latitude within the limits of party ideology.

Since 1990 there have been recurrent demands for enhanced Hungarian cultural autonomy and the devolution of state power to respect local particularities. The DAHR argues that Western European countries offer numerous examples of federalism, territorial autonomy, and the constitutional and institutional protection of ethnic minorities that would be more fitting for Romania than the current centralized and unitary model. The PRNU and GRP are quick to brand these demands territorial separatism, implying that they are a prelude to annexation of part of the country by Hungary. Ion Iliescu's party has repeated these false claims for its own political benefit. Federalism is a sensitive point in Romanian politics, but there has been some movement toward local self-government since 1990.

Ethnic relations improved after 1996 when a bilateral treaty with Hungary was concluded. Since 1996, the DAHR has actively or passively supported the government. Even so, cultural and administrative autonomy remains a sensitive issue. In response to outrages by Romanian nationalists and even moderates, the government backed away from commitments to create a Hungarian university in Cluj. On the other hand, the second Iliescu administration has reluctantly acquiesced in forms of sponsorship for the Hungarian minority by the government of Hungary. Subsidies are distributed to various educational and cultural organizations, and the Hungarian Status Law of 2002 provides for access by Hungarians from Romania and other successor states to education and other services in Hungary. As it did in the interwar period, the idea of Transylvanian regional autonomy even attracts a small amount of Romanian support in the associations and foundations established for this cause. Potentially more explosive are two Hungarian autonomist initiatives that are associated with the nationalist wing of the DAHR led by László Tőkés. They led to the first formal rupture in the organization after they were rejected by the leadership of the alliance.

Romania's foreign policy has been oriented toward the West. In his early years as national leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu asserted a prominent diplomatic role for the country as intermediary between the blocs with the Israelis and Palestinians and the beneficiary of a special trade relationship with some Western countries. But the collapse of the economy in the 1980s brought an end to this role. The Soviet Union again became Romania's leading trade partner. In fact, Romania had never left Comecon, the Soviet trading network, or the Warsaw Pact and attended meetings of these organizations, though participation was limited in some areas. In 1975 the United States granted Romania Most Favored Nation status in recognition of the country's special opposition. After rising criticism of Romania's human rights record at the time of the annual renewal of MFN in Con-
gress, Ceausescu renounced it in 1988 in order to preempt its revocation.

Well-publicized human rights problems and delays in economic reform impeded Romania's desire to improve relations with the European Union after 1990. When President Iliescu traveled to Western countries, he was sometimes denied reception by other heads of state. The United States finally restored MFN in 1993 and made it permanent in 1996. Romania pursued an ambiguous policy toward Yugoslavia during its internal conflicts, mostly respecting but sometimes circumventing trade sanctions against that country. Treaties with Ukraine and Russia as well as Hungary have improved trade relations and clarified territorial issues with these countries. The relationship with Russia remains strained by Russia's retention of Romanian state reserves of gold, jewels, and art valued at $5 billion, which were sent to allied Russia during World War I for safekeeping.

Romania has acceded to the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Central European Free Trade Association with the Visegrad countries. The country was formally invited to join NATO in 2002, and is engaged in the protracted process of accession to the European Union with a target date of 2007. The United States is currently considering a move of its military bases from Germany to Romania and Bulgaria that would establish a special strategic relationship with these countries. Romania's two major ongoing issues in foreign relations however remain contentious: EU accession and the Moldovan question.

**CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The twin foundations of popular and high culture in Romania are the traditions associated on the one hand with the peasantry and rural life, and on the other with Romania's religious communities. The artistic expressions that grew from these foundations are evident in the work of the leading artists and writers of modern Romania. A third foundation, national ideology, arose in the eighteenth century and has accentuated the distinctiveness of national cultures while undermining their commonalities. In addition to these three, external cultural influences have proven increasingly important with the onset of modern communications. Paradoxically, proponents of national integrity have enlisted French, German, and Russian political thought for their purposes.

The secular origins of Romanian folk culture should be sought in migratory shepherds (ciobani) in the Danubian Principalities before the rise of large-scale field agriculture beginning in the eighteenth century. The portrayals of ancient Dacians in Trajan's Column and the Roman monument at Adamclisi suggest they wore the same woolen breeches and fur caps as shepherds do today. It is much more difficult to establish other continuities with the Dacians. It is known that the unsettled military and political conditions south and east of the Carpathians, and the domination of Hungarians and Germans on the other side, left the development of an autonomous Romanian folk culture in the hands of migratory shepherds astride the mountains. Centuries of transhumance probably account for the lack of dialectal variation in the Romanian language. The archetypical Romanian ballad, *Miorita* (The Little Sheep), has been documented in different versions in many regions. *Mesele Manole*, on the other hand, is the Romanian variant of a construction myth (walling-in sacrifice) that is well-documented in Southeastern Europe, also among the Hungarians. Landlords are absent from *Miorita*, as they were in the lives of free peasants in the foothill villages who helped preserve the *cioban* culture.

Settled village communities proliferated after the eighteenth century and multiplied the local styles of peasant dress, fabrics, woodcarving, and ceramics. The Hungarian, German, and Slavic communities were more sedentary and concentrated, but also developed variations in their designs as well as some interethnic influence in the use of colors or floral, vegetal, and geometric motifs. Peasant homes and their interiors became more ornate if an agricultural surplus permitted it. Well-off homes would feature little-used rooms heaped with embroidered pillows and bedspreads. Unless sumptuary laws forbade it, wealthier peasants might imitate the clothing and home decoration of the nobility or burghers. In ethnically mixed areas, social climbing prefigured and often motivated linguistic assimilation.

Religious communities were an important marker of ethnic identity in villages of mixed population. First, their ecclesiastical calendars determine the times of major fasts and feasts that set one community apart from the others. Aside from saints and observances particular to one church, the difference of more than a week between the Gregorian and Julian calendars meant that even the major feasts that the Christian churches shared were usually celebrated at different times. Therefore the religious difference between the Orthodox Christians (Romanians, but also Serbs, Ukrainians, and Russians) and the other Christians was particularly strong. Religious differences were at least as important as linguistic ones as an obstacle to intermarriage among ethnic groups in traditional communities. Differences of calendar and diet separated the Christians even more strongly from the Jews.

Liturgy and theology were also important elements in religious differentiation. The Orthodox liturgy is an intensely aesthetic creation several hours in duration, mostly chanted by the priest and congregation without musical instruments, in an environment of icons, murals, and incense. In all churches the clergy preached in the vernacular, but the Western Christian (Hungarian and German) liturgies were progressively less ritualistic and more textual in nature: those of the Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed, and Unitarians. Romanian Greek Catholics lived in two worlds, mostly in that of the Romanians with whom they shared the liturgy and most customs as well as language. They also lived in the Catholic world because of the shared recognition of papal primacy and, in some regions, study in shared seminaries, and the veneration of religious statuary that was atypical of Eastern Christianity. Each church participated through its clergy and bishops in an international communion, cen-
Folk dancers perform on a stage at a folk festival in the Maramureș region in the northwestern corner of the country. (Owen Franken/Corbis)

tered in the case of the Orthodox in the Balkans and Russia, in Rome in the case of the Catholics, in Germany in the case of the Lutherans, in Germany and the Netherlands in the case of the Reformed, and in the Anglo-Saxon countries in the case of the Unitarians. Gregorian chants among the Catholics, organs among the Lutherans, and varied canons of hymnody developed distinctive musical cultures. More than their doctrinal significance, these associations were important for the development of cultural influence in a broader sense. Until modern times the patriarchs of Constantinople consecrated the Orthodox bishops, and the monasteries of Mount Athos were influential in their spirituality and artistic traditions. Western Christian bishops were often educated abroad, and the Saxon Lutheran church of Transylvania even required a university degree from Germany for election to an ordinary pastorate.

Romanian popular religion included pre-Christian as well as Christian elements. The belief in vampires (muroi or strigoi) was native to Romania as well as many other countries, though widely deplored by Romanian clergymen and others well before Bram Stoker's Dracula appeared in 1897. There was a variety of other non-Christian customs. Shepherds celebrated a milking festival before leading the sheep into the mountains in the spring, played tunes called șireaguri during cheese making, and called to each other on the bucium (alphorn) or shepherd's horn. Whereas Western Christian villages knew the sound of church bells, in the Romanian ones worshipers were summoned by the drumming of a wooden sounding board called the toacă. Christmas, New Year, funeral, and wedding customs contain a mixture of Christian and non-Christian elements. Traditional Romanian funerals may include the procession with open coffin, a colorful ritual called the Wedding of the Dead, and public memorial feasts called pomana. Romanian Christmas carols (colinde) feature tonalities common to the Orthodox liturgy but, unlike the liturgy, address different occupational groups with distinctive verses. The rituals for the invocation of rain and at the time of the harvest are pre-Christian. Among Transylvanian Hungarians, the counterpart to caroling is the performance of vignettes from the Nativity by groups of young people called bethlehenesek. In many Hungarian villages even today, the wearing of elaborate traditional costume on Easter Sunday makes the religious feast an opportunity to celebrate ethnic identity.

There is also a wealth of folk music whose character is not religious. The doina is a slow and sad Romanian melody. Its style is different from the Hungarian military recruit's lament or verbunk; the word's origin from Werbung hints at the Habsburg German authorities who did the recruiting. Many Romanian regions have their characteristic styles of
slow and fast melodies and song, which also owe much to styles elsewhere in the Balkans, showing the influence of the Serbs, Jewish klezmer, or Islamic music. The ring dance (or hora) is commonly practiced in many regions, as are lively dances such as the sîbă (its name reflects a Serbian origin) and the învățății or spinning dance for couples. Dancers may shout out humorous, rhythmic verses called strigături. In southern Romania and parts of Bulgaria, a ritual involving dance and dramatic plays was called căluș, though it is dying out. Gypsy (Roma) music observes many of the same styles practiced by non-Roma but is often more energetic and the singing more high-pitched. The most renowned folk singers in twentieth-century Romania were the female Romanian Maria Tănase and the male Gypsy Fanica Luca. The village of Clejani near the Danube south of Bucharest is the home of some five hundred Gypsy musicians. The best-known ensemble here, the twelve-piece Taraf de Haiducii or Taraf de Haidouks (Band of Outlaws), has made several acclaimed recordings.

The similarities of Romanian folk music to that of the Middle East owe much to the period of several centuries of the Danubian Principalities association with the Ottoman Empire. There are various forms of flute, bagpipe, and cembalom. The tekerő lant (hurdy-gurdy) is peculiar to the Hungarians, while the best-known Romanian folk instrument is the panflute, or panpipe. Ancient depictions, including a passage in Ovid’s Tristia, indicate the panflute was played by shepherds on the territory of the country already in Dacian and Roman times, though the Romanian term commonly used today for panflute, nai, may have come from Persia via the Turks. The earliest professional panflute association was registered in Bucharest in 1843. Fanica Luca was the first internationally known panflutist from Romania. He performed at the world fairs in Paris and New York in 1937–1939 and taught the instrument at the Music Lyceum in Bucharest for fifteen years before his death in 1968. His most famous student was Gheorghe Zamfir, whose recordings and performances are well known in North America. Damian Drăghici-Luca, a grand-grand nephew of Fanica Luca, has performed and recorded since the age of ten.

The documentation of folk customs and songs began in the nineteenth century. Authorities founded the Romanian Folklore Institute in 1949, and ethnography gained a respected place in scholarship. The institute sponsored the excellent folk music orchestra Barbu Lăutaru. The careful collection and study of folk music helped preserve it despite the rapid urbanization and industrialization of the communist era, but the genre also became an instrument of political manipulation. Doinei of questionable origin lamented the plight of communists in Romanian prisons before 1945. Trade unions and houses of culture had organized a reported 44,000 music, dance, and dramatic ensembles by 1959. In 1975 the government established the cycle of organized music festivals called Cîntarea României (Song of Romania) that performed an amalgam of genuine folk music and paens to the dictator. The more traditional performances were carefully shorn of any religious or otherwise politically objectionable content and recorded in the most spectacular costumes and scenery with dubbed audio.

Because of the fakery associated with Cîntarea României and an excess of Tezaurul folcloric (The Folkloric Treasure) broadcasts on television during that era, many educated Romanians feel distaste for folk music despite the undeniable beauty and originality of the genre.

Formal or higher music owes a debt to ecclesiastical, folk, and Western formal influences. Valentin Bakfark (1507–1576) was a German/Hungarian lutenist from southern Transylvania whose compositions and performances were renowned during his time. Renaissance and baroque music was known in the courts of the Danubian Principalities as well as independent Transylvania. Baron Samuel Brukenthal invited the leading members of eighteenth-century Transylvania and Wallachia to performances of the works of contemporary German composers in his palaces in and near Sibiu. Transylvania’s towns became provincial centers of the musical culture of the Habsburg monarchy in the nineteenth century, and philharmonic societies were founded in the principalities as well. In the mid-nineteenth century, Ciprian Porumbescu was the first distinguished modern Romanian composer. His few compositions were influenced by folk music. The foreign visitors Johannes Brahms and Franz Liszt toured the region and became aware of Romanian folk music, but its influence on the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók was even greater. He was born west of Arad and helped establish the folk music archives in the mixed Hungarian-Romanian region of Kecksméret in modern-day Hungary.

The master composer of the Romanians was George Enescu. A composer impressed by his precocity convinced his parents to enroll him in the Vienna conservatory at the age of seven; then upon his graduation he studied in the conservatory in Paris under the tutelage of Jules Massenet and Gabriel Fauré. Enescu composed his best-known works, Romanian Poem and the first two Romanian rhapsodies, with their strong folkloric elements, between 1898 and 1901. In addition to composing, Enescu was a distinguished conductor (including at the New York Philharmonic in 1937–1938), violinist, and tutor to Yehudi Menuhin. Other well-known musical performers of twentieth-century Romania have been the pianists Dinu Lipatti and Radu Lupu and the opera singers Ileana Cotrubas and Angela Gheorghiu. Several Romanian cities feature philharmonic orchestras and opera houses.

The key architectural monuments of the country are its churches and monasteries. The monasteries set the tone for Orthodox spirituality, with a clergy that (unlike that of the parishes) is unmarried, renowned for its otherworldliness, and attracts the faithful for festive liturgies in venerable, even grand surroundings. The oldest, fourteenth-century churches in Wallachia at Tîmîșoara, Cozia, and Curtea de Argeș are of Serbian and Byzantine inspiration, formed around a square Greek cross. The bishop’s church in Curtea de Argeș dates from the early sixteenth century. The ballad Măiestrel Manole concerns the construction of this church, whose fascinating decoration has Caucasian, Arabic, and Persian elements. The churches of Moldavia also follow the Byzantine model but are longer and higher with pitched shingle roofs and towers with cones at their top, showing a
The Trei Ierarhi Church (1639), Iasi: Architectural masterpiece of the old Moldavian capital, with its ornately decorated façade and conical towers.

Gothic influence in their shape that is unusual in the Orthodox world. This Gothic influence is much more pronounced across the Carpathians. The wooden churches of formerly Greek Catholic Romanian villages in Maramureș share not only the internal plan of other Orthodox churches but also high steeples found elsewhere only in Western Christian churches. Among the oldest surviving such churches is the one in Sârdești built in 1724 with a disproportionately high tower of forty-five meters that long made it the highest wooden structure in Europe. Lacking government patronage and even suffering destruction during the religious strife of the eighteenth century, Romanian monasteries were fewer and less influential in Transylvania than in the Principalities.

The elements of an Orthodox church floor plan have Greek names. The pronoas, or exonarthes, is the first chamber encountered on entry, which was in earlier times the part of the church to which female worshipers were restricted. The naos corresponds to the nave in Western churches, and is where the priest, choir, and most worshipers stand to chant the liturgy. At the end of the naos is the icon screen that separates the people from the altar sanctuary. Within each chamber there are standard iconographic elements, from the dedication of the church to scriptural personages and events. The humble wooden churches raised by poorer Romanian communities in Transylvania often contain charmingly naïve and apocryphal scriptural elements in their frescoes and icons. Monasteries produced for worshipers’ domestic shrines in workshops for the painting of icons on wood and especially glass. Painting on glass was less expensive and also permitted brighter colors. Glass icons are the most distinctive element of religious folk art among the Transylvanian Romanians. The monastery at Nicula in northern Transylvania, which became a pilgrimage site in the seventeenth century because of a weeping Madonna, later housed one of the most important glass icon workshops.

Western Christian architecture in Transylvania followed the romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and baroque models of Catholic Europe. The Catholic cathedral of Alba Iulia has a romanesque tower dating to 1247–1256, a Gothic choir, and two Renaissance chapels. The second Gothic church in Transylvania is St. Michael’s in Cluj, completed in 1432 with an impressive buttressed nave that dominates the main square of the city. These and the major Gothic churches of the south Transylvanian towns were actually built by the Saxons. Many Saxon churches, though abandoned by most of their congregants who have emigrated to Germany, still boast impressive winged altar paintings and Turkish carpets on the walls that recall the centuries when Saxon towns were outposts against Ottoman assaults. Saxons, and to a lesser extent Szeklers, fortified their rural churches with thick walls whose apartments could accommodate most villagers and their livestock in case of attack. The most impressive Saxon citadel churches are in Prejmer and Biertan. The focal point of small Hungarian towns in western Romania is often a Reformed church decorated with an ornate wooden cassette ceiling and a carved stone pulpit created by the Renaissance artist Dániel Sipos.

The reign of Stephen the Great in Moldavia (1457–1504) was one of the high points for Romanian ecclesiastical architecture. He built more than thirty churches and monasteries, many of which were in southern Bucovina and subsequently painted on their exterior as well as interior walls. The “painted monasteries” of Moldovița, Sucevița, and Voroneț are renowned for the brilliant colors and striking images of their exterior frescoes portraying Genesis, the Tree of Jesse, the Last Judgment, and the siege of Constantinople. Moldavian church architecture experienced another great period in the seventeenth century with the construction of the monasteries of Dragomirna (1609) and Trei Ierarhi (1639), notable for their ornate lacework façades. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the closer relations between the two Danubian Principalities were reflected in greater similarity of their church architecture.

Due to the unsettled conditions in the Danubian Principalities, more important secular buildings survived from earlier times in Transylvania. In the Gothic style, these include the town hall in Sibiu and the castles in Hunedoara (of which a partial replica exists in the Budapest city park since
The Painted Monasteries

All Romanian monasteries have paintings on the inside. The term "painted monasteries" refers to the monastery churches of northern Moldavia that were painted on the outside during the sixteenth century. Moldavia benefited from greater stability than Wallachia, partly because it was not on the direct line between the belligerent Ottoman and Hungarian forces but also because it possessed two remarkable princes during whose long reigns the painted monasteries were created: Stephen the Great (1457–1504) and his son Petru Rareș (1527–1538, 1541–1546). Stephen was a more cautious and savvy politician than his contemporary Vlad III Dracula, navigating successfully between the more powerful Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Poland but winning battles against all three of them. He founded one church for each of his thirty-eight victories over the Turks. The largest of these was the monastery of Putna where he is buried, but those in Pătrași, Voroneț, St. Elijah near Suceava, and Bârsana anticipated the style and themes of the later external murals through their style and themes. The influence of fifteenth-century Byzantine painting is evident, but there is also a greater realism and liveliness in the figures and harmony of colors and crisp painting that distinguishes the external murals even more. A distinctive architectural style also developed, with pitched roofs and octagonal towers.

Stephen's first two successors were less able rulers and far less energetic patrons of the arts. Petru Rareș was a more worthy successor, an astute diplomat and military leader, and a well-traveled scholar and art lover. There is some evidence that his reign saw the first external murals at Putna and Voroneț, although the walls were later painted over. The most remarkable of the painted monasteries are at Humor, Moldovița, Arbore, Voroneț, and Sucevița. Several of the frescoes depict the siege of Constantinople by the Persians in 626. Although this successful Byzantine defense rather than the disaster of 1453 was the theme, the artists depicted the besieging troops as Turks and Tatars. At Humor the artist signed his name below a Moldavian horseman attacking the Turks. Another striking motif is the Last Judgment, which features Turks and Tatars in their distinctive garb among the sinners. The Tree of Jesse appears several times, with a fascinating variety of figures and costumes. The church at Voroneț is known for the striking blue of its murals and their large size, made possible by wide unobstructed spaces. The most remarkable of the painted monasteries are at Voroneț and Sucevița; the latter was the last of the painted monasteries, completed in 1601. Austrian graffiti have marred the impressive Siege at Moldovița since the eighteenth century. In the 1950s UNESCO declared seven of the painted monasteries to be protected cultural sites.

Notable examples are the Mogosoaia Palace (1702) north of the capital and the Stavropoleos Church (1724) in central Bucharest. The arrival of the Habsburgs brought the baroque style to Hungary and Transylvania in numerous churches and the large city palaces of the Barons Bănffy in Cluj and Brukenthal in Sibiu, and on a larger scale the Vaubain-style fortresses in Alba Iulia and Arad. Neoclassicism made its appearance in the Principalities under Russian and French influence. The major buildings of the emerging national capital were built in the neoclassical style: the National Theater (1846–1852), the University (1869), and the Romanian Athenaeum concert hall (1888).

There were regional styles in the domestic architecture of the common people. Vernacular architecture became the dominant form in the eighteenth century, Wallachian prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688–1714) was a great builder and introduced a new style that is named after him, marked by decoration using statuary, columns, arcades, and floral ornamentation.
The "painted" monasteries of Moldavia were built in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and present brightly colored biblical and historical scenes. (Gianni Baldizzone/Corbis)

in Bucharest and restored the Stavropoleos Church in 1906. The Transylvania Hungarian Károly Kós studied in Budapest, where he became an advocate of a style that resembled Mincu's in its objectives but sought to revive Hungarian regional styles. His most notable building is the Székely National Museum in Sfântu Gheorghe. The Palace of Culture in Târgu Mureș is another example of Hungarian folk revival architecture, whereas the National Theater in Cluj is an example of Habsburg art nouveau. The Palace of Culture in Târgu Mureș is an example of Hungarian folk revival architecture, whereas the National Theater in Cluj is an example of Habsburg art nouveau. Many Bucharest houses and even apartment buildings of the interwar period are examples of these styles. After 1920, Kós and the Bucharest sociologist Dimitrie Gusti worked independently for the preservation of folk architecture. Kós published a highly regarded collection of meticulous drawings of Transylvanian village architecture in 1929, while in 1936 Gusti founded the remarkable Village Museum in Bucharest that is a collection of village houses and wooden churches from all over the country. It was the third open air museum of its type in Europe. The Museum of the Romanian Peasant arose from earlier institutions founded in 1875 and 1906–1912. It was associated with the Village Museum after 1978 but became an independent institution once more in 1990.

The dominant trend in Romanian architecture since 1918 has been an international style that is largely functional. The communist era brought the great expansion of most cities, with prefabricated apartment houses accommodating a great influx of population from the countryside. The provision of modern housing and conveniences was a significant benefit to large numbers of people. There was a wide range of quality in these new buildings, both aesthetically and in their building materials and durability. The Scinteia House, the center of Romanian publishing built in the wedding-cake style of the Lomonosov University in Moscow, became the most characteristic monument to communist architecture until the construction of the Palace of the People during the 1980s. The Palace of the People, having been built with the best materials and for the ages, now houses the Romanian Parliament.

Sculpture is a less prominent art form than in many countries because Orthodox Christianity provided no place for religious statuary alongside icons and frescoes. Consequently for most centuries we find sculpted human figures in stone and wood only in association with the Western Christians of the former Habsburg and Hungarian lands. On the other hand, there was a strong tradition of stone carving for external decoration on church and secular architecture across the Carpathians. As previously noted, there was great regional variation in folk ceramics among the Romanians and other peoples. Objects for use were also carved from wood in the mountainous regions. The ornately carved wooden gates of traditional homes are a famous feature of Székler communities in eastern Transylvania and Romanian ones in Maramureș. Equestrian statues and busts of historical personages arose on the streets of Romanian as well as Hungarian cities in the nineteenth century.

One name stands out among modern Romanian sculptors, Constantin Brâncuși. Born in a three-room house with a wooden gate in a village in the Jiu Valley in 1876, he gained his first experience of carving in wood while tending the family's flocks. He attended crafts and arts schools in Craiova and Bucharest, winning awards for some of his busts of historical and contemporary personages. After a year in Munich, in 1904 he made a famous walking trip to Paris to study. Sculptures from this period show the strong influence of Auguste Rodin. After 1908, Brâncuși moved from figurative art to abstract depictions of lovers kissing, birds in flight, and other themes. His most famous works are installed in a public garden in Târgu Jiu: the Endless Column, the Table of Silence, and the Gate of the Kiss. Continuing to live in France after World War II, the sculptor was declared persona non grata by the communist authorities. They tried unsuccessfully to pull down the 27.5-meter-high column, embedded in concrete, with an armored tank. After sixty years in the open air, the installations enjoyed a $3.7 million restoration project in 1999–2000. The studio of the artist, and many of his smaller works, are preserved today in Paris.

Modern secular painting in Romania has closely followed Western models. Romantic and realistic painters of
the first half of the nineteenth century favored historical themes but increasingly devoted their attention to the life of the peasantry. Theodor Aman was the founder of modern Romanian painting and director of the art academy in Bucharest. His most famous successor, still known as the greatest Romanian painter of the nineteenth century, was Nicolae Grigorescu. After earning a living briefly as a self-taught painter of icons and then studying in Aman’s academy, he spent several months in France where he learned to paint in the style of the Impressionists. Many of his works are pastoral landscapes, but he also painted realistic portraits of the Romanian peasantry and scenes from the War for Independence of 1877–1878, in which he participated as a war artist. Under the influence of the later Impressionists were Ștefan Luchian, Theodor Pallady, and the more abstract Iosif Iser.

Constantin Brâncuși was the most famous Romanian contributor to the international avant-garde, but others included the painter and architect Marcel Iancu and the poets Tristan Tzara and Ion Vinea. Iancu, Tzara, and Vinea helped found the Dada movement in Zürich in 1916. Iancu returned to Bucharest in 1922 and created a sensation with an exhibition of his post-Cubist paintings. He founded the modernist journal Contimporanul (The Contemporary) and organized a notable modernist exhibition in 1924 featuring Brâncuși, the surrealist Victor Brauner (who lived in Paris after 1930), and the Transylvanian Saxon Hans Mattise-Teutsch, a graphic artist influenced by the German expressionists. Iancu moved to Palestine in 1941 and lived out his days in Israel.

The tank assault on the works of Brâncuși was inspired by the communist rejection of modernist art in general, many of whose exponents had already left for more congenial environments. The proletarian themes of socialist realism became the standard material of Romanian painters until complemented, beginning in the 1970s, with scenes of national greatness and tasteless images of the dictator with scepter in hand. Since 1990, there has been a modest revival of the interwar Romanian avant-garde.

As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, literary life has played a stronger role than the fine arts in the definition of Romania’s ethnic and national cultures. The standardization of literary languages and the presentation of national ideals for popular consumption were necessary components of the process of definition. As with other art forms in Romania, however, the national literatures had their pre-Christian folk elements and Christian forms before they became national. They included sermons, saints’ lives, and other religious texts.

The Protestant Reformation in the Hungarian lands inspired an expansion of vernacular publishing among the Hungarians and Germans that also affected the Romanians. Scripture and the liturgy were translated into Hungarian and German, and writings addressing controversial religious issues appeared in these languages. The Saxon scholar and Lutheran preacher Johannes Honterus (1498–1549) became the leading figure in Transylvanian German publishing, while with the patronage of the Transylvanian princes the Reformed preacher Gáspár Karoli translated and published the first complete Hungarian Bible in 1590. Under the influence of these initiatives, Transylvanians also published the first books in Romanian. In the seventeenth century the princes of Transylvania inspired the creation of a Romanian Reformed church, which failed to make lasting converts but further stimulated the use of the vernacular. Vasile Lupu, the prince of Moldavia, founded a printing press to counteract the influence of Protestant propaganda through the dissemination of Orthodox texts. Lupu was not yet printing in Romanian, however; the first publication in this language was a textbook printed in Transylvania in 1699.

The seventeenth century also brought the rise of the first important secular genre, historical chronicles and memoirs. The most important Romanian authors of these chronicles, not yet histories in the modern sense, were Moldavians: Miron Costin and Ion Neculce, while Dimitrie Cantemir, who also briefly ruled as prince of Moldavia, deserves the title of historian because of his much more sophisticated use of sources. His Description of Moldavia broke new ground not only in describing the country but in examining its early history. His History of the Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire was translated into many languages. Notable historians of the Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians included Johann Troester, Lorenz Töppelt, István Szamoskőzy, and János Bethlen, often still writing in Latin rather than the vernacular and recording imaginative genealogies and contemporary reports rather than formal history.

French literary models of memoir literature were dominant in the early eighteenth century, mediated in the Principalities by the Greek ruling elite. Later in Transylvania, the influence of the Austrian Catholic Enlightenment was more important, giving rise to a more critical awareness of religious and ethnic identity. Historians give the name Transylvanian School to the group of Romanian linguists and historians active at this time. Its leading figures, Samuel Micu, Gheorghe Șincai, and Petru Maior, presented important findings concerning the Latin origins of the Romanian language and the history of the Romanians in Transylvania. The Transylvanian School had a lasting impact on Romanian national consciousness. The debate between Romanian and Hungarian writers about the theory of Daco-Romanian continuity has raged since this time. The implicit threat in the Romanian arguments to Hungarian cultural predominance in Transylvania contributed in large degree to the vigor of the response.

The center of Hungarian and Romanian literature moved from Transylvania, however, to Hungary proper and the Danubian Principalities. Romanian writers, many themselves graduates of Greek schools, rejected Greek and Russian influence and turned instead to France. Contemporary engravings of notables in the 1830s show an interesting mixture in costume that was emblematic of the culture’s reorientation: some men wore Ottoman-style caps and trousers, while others wore frock coats in the French style. Gheorghe Asachi in Moldavia and Ion Eliade Rădulescu in Wallachia were leading proponents of a national Romanian literature in the era of the Revolution of 1848. Later, but of more lasting influence, was Vasile Alecsandri, the author of popular patriotic verses at key points in the struggle for unification and a major playwright.
A debate about Romania's cultural roots and relationship with the West has enlivened Romanian cultural life since this era. The rejection of Ottoman costumes occurred within a generation, but the new debate lasted longer and was more ambiguous. Some polemics oversimplified the contest as one between Westernizers, who believed Romania must follow liberal, industrial Europe in order to prosper, and traditionalists who wanted to protect indigenous Romanian culture. The opposing camps had their cultural journals, Alecsandri's *Romania literară* ( Literary Romania) on the liberal side and *Convorbiri literare* ( Literary Conversations) on the side of the traditionalist Junimea (Youth) literary society, which was based originally in the Moldavian capital but then moved to Bucharest. The debate about language reform added an ambiguous note, with patriots in Transylvania favoring an unnatural spelling of the language to emphasize Latin origins, and the no less patriotic Junimea opposing it. The liberal Alecsandri was a notable collector of folklore, though Junimea placed more emphasis on village traditions. The greatest Romanian writers of the late nineteenth century were associated with Junimea: Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă, Ion Luca Caragiale, and Ioan Slavici.

These four classics of Romania's greatest literary era made distinctive contributions. Eminescu is known as the national poet. Influenced equally by his collecting of folk poetry in Moldavia and his study of German philosophy in Vienna, he is best characterized as a late romantic. Creangă recorded his childhood memories of his native village in northern Moldavia. Caragiale was a Bucharest writer of Greek origin who wrote popular plays satirizing the Romanian middle class, living his last years in Berlin when a wealthy inheritance permitted it. Slavici was born in the Banat and studied in Budapest and Vienna, then became a journalist, a leader of the Romanian National Party in Iași and Craiova. Theater was especially popular among the Romanians literati. Every ethnic minority had its theater; communist Romania even boasted the only Yiddish theater in Eastern Europe.

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These four classics of Romania's greatest literary era made distinctive contributions. Eminescu is known as the national poet. Influenced equally by his collecting of folk poetry in Moldavia and his study of German philosophy in Vienna, he is best characterized as a late romantic. Creangă recorded his childhood memories of his native village in northern Moldavia. Caragiale was a Bucharest writer of Greek origin who wrote popular plays satirizing the Romanian middle class, living his last years in Berlin when a wealthy inheritance permitted it. Slavici was born in the Banat and studied in Budapest and Vienna, then became a journalist, a leader of the Romanian National Party in Hungary, and author of stories of village life. All four lived tempestuous lives, and only Caragiale died in comfort. Slavici was persecuted by the Hungarian authorities for his political activity but sided with the Central Powers in World War I and documented his year of captivity in Greater Romania in his study of German philosophy in Vienna, he is best characterized as a late romantic. Creangă recorded his childhood memories of his native village in northern Moldavia. Caragiale was a Bucharest writer of Greek origin who wrote popular plays satirizing the Romanian middle class, living his last years in Berlin when a wealthy inheritance permitted it. Slavici was born in the Banat and studied in Budapest and Vienna, then became a journalist, a leader of the Romanian National Party in Hungary, and author of stories of village life. All four lived tempestuous lives, and only Caragiale died in comfort. Slavici was persecuted by the Hungarian authorities for his political activity but sided with the Central Powers in World War I and documented his year of captivity in Greater Romania in the biting work *My Prisons*. As diverse as the traditionalist camp was among Romanian writers, within Hungary it found itself in ethnopolitical as well as philosophical opposition to the modernist and urban Hungarian writers. The Transylvanian poets of rural opposition to the Hungarian city were George Coșbuc and Octavian Goga. In contrast to Slavici, Goga took his opposition to the Hungarian government into exile in Bucharest in 1913 and lived twenty years in Greater Romania.

The two-sided struggle over Romania's cultural model took new forms after 1918. At one extreme were the modernists, sparked by the Dada movement in Zürich and the journal *Contimporanul* ( The Contemporary). Tristan Tzara's irreligious Dada manifesto ( 1918) set the modernist agenda in Romania in its defiance of conventional ideas, but the author himself stayed in Paris after the war. The journal *Viața românească* ( Romanian Life) and its leading literary critic, Eugen Lovinescu, represented the Europeanist mainstream of Romanian writers. This mainstream treated urban themes but was also comfortable with rural ones, as evidenced by the novelists who did their greatest work in this period, Liviu Rebreanu and Mihail Sadoveanu. Rebreanu's depiction of the peasant revolt in 1907, *The Uprising* ( 1932), is arguably the greatest Romanian novel.

The literary journal *Gândirea* ( Thought) had modernist tendencies at first but increasingly served as the focal point for the traditionalists. Among its youngest adherents was Lucian Blaga, the graduate of a Transylvanian Saxon high school who wrote a notable treatise on Romanian culture that idealized Romanian shepherd culture. Other *Gândiristis*, including Octavian Goga and the writer and historian of religion Mircea Eliade, were sympathetic to the fascist Iron Guard. Writers of the Hungarian and German minority in Greater Romania moved uneasily between these extremes. Rather than engage in one or another broad tendency, they aimed to preserve their ethnic communities as socially cohesive blocs. Many Hungarian and German writers, but few Romanians, favored the Transylvanian movement's vision of ethnic coexistence as an alternative to the national state. The leading writer of the movement was Aron Tamás, whose portrayals of Szekely village life are charming and good-natured.

The communist regime put an end to the creative explosion of the interwar years. Many writers of liberal and traditionalist persuasion were imprisoned, while others moved abroad. A handful of prominent interwar writers, including Sadoveanu and the modernist poet Tudor Arghezi, decided to accept the framework of party orthodoxy and flourished. In contrast to the monotony of socialist realism in Romania, the most important Romanian writing took place abroad. Leading writers of the Romanian exile were Mircea Eliade, the absurdist playwright Eugène Ionesco, and the German Jewish symbolist poet Paul Celan ( pseudonym for Paul Antschel). Despite harsh ideological and political controls, the Ceaușescu regime allowed some worthwhile Romanian and Hungarian writers to flourish. The novelists Marin Preda and Augustin Buzura managed to convey implicit criticism of their society in the novels *Most Beloved of Humans* and *Refuges*; the poet Ana Blandiana shocked the censors and the reading public in 1984 with the publication in a literary magazine of her poem "Everything," revealing the banality of everyday totalitarianism. Transylvanian Hungarians for their part used the Hungarian progressive tradition and Marxist principles as a shield for the minority-language publishing house, Kriterion. Chaufvinistic writing also survived, in the emigration and increasingly with regime sponsorship, to complicate the revival of cultural life since 1990.

The development of Romanian theater is closely linked to that of literature. Theater provides the opportunity for spontaneous expression in oppressive societies. Traveling troupes of the Romanian minority in Hungary before 1918, and of the Hungarians and Germans after this, served this purpose. Vâsile Alecsandri was the first director of the National Theater in Bucharest, and others were founded in Iași and Craiova. Theater was especially popular among the urban upper classes, although the comedies of Caragiale pilloried them. Every ethnic minority had its theater; communist Romania even boasted the only Yiddish theater in Eastern Europe.
Mihai (or Mihail) Eminescu (1850–1889)

Romania’s national poet was born Mihai Eminovici in Botoșani, in northern Moldavia. His father was a tax collector who sent him for five years to schools in Czernowitz (Romanian: Cernăuți) in Austrian Bukovina, where he acquired his excellent facility in German. He adopted the name Eminescu at this time in order to sound more Roman, as he said. His first published poem, in 1866, was an ode to his teacher in Czernowitz, Aron Pav Raml. Then a Romanian-language newspaper in Hungary, Familia (The Family), published several more of his poems. In 1868–1869, Eminescu traveled with an itinerant theatrical troupe under the direction of the dramatist Caragiale, making the acquaintance of many regions of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania. Then in 1869–1874 he studied at the Universities of Vienna and Berlin, meanwhile publishing poems to growing acclaim in Convorbiri literare (Literary Conversations), the journal of the Jumneia literary society. After his return from Berlin, for three years he held positions as a librarian, a school inspector, and a newspaper editor. During his longest period of employment, 1877–1883, he worked as an editor for the conservative newspaper Timpul (Time) in Bucharest.

Eminescu was a successful conservative journalist, some of whose pieces showed an anti-Semitism and xenophobia that were often part of Romanian nationalism when it was conceived of in terms of race. He also wrote short prose, notably a work of fantasy based on Greek mythology and a romantic love story. His greatest fame and most lasting contribution to world literature came from his poetry. It can be classified into philosophical verse, romantic nature poetry, and poetry that was political and social in character. “Doina” (1883) is his most nationalistic poem, including the central stanza:

He who loves the foes about
May his heart the dogs rip out,
May desert his home efface,
May his sons live in disgrace!

(Translated by Kurt W. Reptow and Irina Andone, Reptow 237)

Lucifer (Hyperion, or Evening Star, 1883) is acclaimed as his masterpiece. Hyperion, the evening star, falls in love with a beautiful princess, but his nature does not permit him to descend to her. Elements of romantic literature, folklore, and Greek mythology are present in ninety-eight perfectly formed four-line stanzas.

Eminescu’s travels, work experience, and especially his fluency in German and familiarity with German philosophy, all contributed to his unique literary voice. Also important, and celebrated in Romanian literary lore, was his ill-fated love affair with the poet Veronica Micle (1850–1889). The two became lovers while Micle was married, but after her husband died in 1879 they did not marry for reasons that have never been adequately explained. Eminescu’s health deteriorated in 1883 from a combination of work and relationships with women, causing him to resign his position with Timpul. Not long after the publication of Lucifer, the poet suffered a nervous breakdown. During his last six years, he experienced alternating periods of insanity and relative health, but he never returned to productivity. Thus ended romantically, and tragically, the hero of Romanian literature.

Cinema developed slowly in Romania. The first notable feature film appeared already in 1912, Grigore Brezeanu’s War for Independence. Domestic production remained at a modest level however, and filmgoers preferred foreign productions. The communist regime set about creating a substantial film industry, building the Buftea Studios for this purpose outside Bucharest in 1950–1957. Liviu Ciulei won a prize at the 1966 Cannes Festival for his most famous film, The Forest of the Hanged, based on the World War I novel by Rebreanu. Sergiu Nicolaescu helped promote Romanian national themes with the epic The Dacians and the Oscar-nominated Michael the Brave. The darker, visually interesting films of Dan Pița were notable achievements of the next two decades. One of the most promising producers of the 1960s generation, Lucian Pintilie, was denied the opportunity to direct major films and went into exile. He returned to prominence in 1992 with the French–Romanian production The Oak, depicting the moral and physical decay of the country in the last years of Ceausescu.

The development of Romanian culture and Romanian identity was also tied to education. The earliest schools and colleges in Romania were ecclesiastical institutions, along-
side the medieval cathedrals and monasteries. The Hungarian princes of independent Transylvania founded colleges under Reformed and Catholic auspices. The Romanian Orthodox Church established a Romanian school in Brașov in 1559, but it failed to reach the level of the better-endowed Lutheran schools. The Greek Catholic high school founded at the bishopric's new seat in Blaj, Transylvania, after 1754 made a lasting impact on the national sentiment of generations of Transylvanian Romanians, but Romanians also studied in significant numbers in the ecclesiastical schools of the Hungarians and Saxons. The Hungarian state founded the first modern university in Transylvania in 1872, the Hungarian-language University of Cluj. Because it was the policy of the Hungarian state to use its resources for the promotion of Hungarian culture, the government progressively took the place of the Hungarian churches in the administration of elementary schools. The Romanian churches maintained control of Romanian village schools. In defending ecclesiastical autonomy they also helped minority culture to survive.

The first high schools in the Danubian Principalities operated in the Greek language. A Transylvanian Romanian, Gheorghe Lazăr, founded the first Romanian language academy in Bucharest after settling there in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Prince Cuza founded the first Romanian universities, in Iași in 1860 and Bucharest in 1864. He introduced compulsory primary education in 1864, but illiteracy remained higher than in Transylvania. The role of the government in education increased further after 1918. The university at Cluj became a Romanian institution, and the government took control of Romanian primary education in the former Habsburg lands that had been run by the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches. The position of Romanian and Hungarian education in these lands now reversed, as the Hungarian churches provided institutional support for schools in the vernacular.

The expansion of Romanian education at all levels greatly accelerated in the communist era. There was a great need for training in new branches of the economy, but authorities enforced rigid controls and instituted ideological indoctrination as well. The state schools also took over almost all education in the minority languages, with the exception of a number of seminaries still managed by the churches. There has been continuous reform of the Romanian educational system since 1990. There are more than one hundred institutions of higher education in Romania today. Half of them are private ones founded since 1990, including some for the Hungarian minority, but the majority of students are still enrolled in the state-run universities.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Romanian economy experienced rapid growth and transformation during the communist period. Industrial output grew at an annual rate of 12.9 percent from 1950 to 1977, thanks largely to heavy reinvestment of capital gained by the central control of prices and consumption. The agricultural sector declined from 74.1 percent of the working population in 1950 to 28.6 percent in 1982, while that of industry grew from 12 percent to 36.5 percent in the same period. There was a corresponding shift of population to the cities, the largest of which multiplied in size. The arduous process of collectivizing agricultural land was 90 percent completed by 1962. Collectivization favored the mechanization of agriculture, but it still lagged behind the West because of low productivity and the disproportionate investment in the industrial sector. There was a downturn in the economy after 1976. A massive foreign debt led to rationing in 1981 and a dramatic decline in the standard of living in the following years that made it possible to retire the debt by 1989.

Economic development has been fitful since the revolution of 1989. Overall growth was negative in all sectors until recently, with high inflation and with unemployment hovering around 10 percent. The average retirement age, fifty for women and fifty-four for men, is one of the lowest in the world and serves to distort unemployment figures. Labor unrest, especially in the mining and heavy industry sector that stymied efforts to close unprofitable mines, produced on foreign television screens the horrifying sight of rioting miners on the streets of Bucharest, and helped, along with an unfavorable legal and political environment, to discourage foreign investment. Only during a few years in the middle of the 1990s, then again beginning in 2000, did the economy show positive economic growth. The privatization of land ownership was 75 percent completed by 1995—97 percent by 1999. There has been some privatization in the services sector, but privatization of industrial firms has proceeded much more slowly.

Government sources attributed the recession after 1996 to the democratic coalition's efforts at economic restructuring. Corruption and the mismanagement of state enterprises was a continuing problem in the Democratic Convention as well as socialist administrations. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and European Union (EU) signaled their dissatisfaction with reform efforts by repeatedly suspending financial support packages. By the turn of the century, the level of marketization, foreign investment, and standard of living compared unfavorably with almost all other East European countries. Incomplete reforms due to the successful resistance of many vested interests produced economic imbalances and negative growth in 1997—1999. Reforms became more serious in response to demands arising from the accession to the European Union and caused unemployment to reach 10—11 percent (by various indices) in 2002. The new socialist administration has been more successful in prosecuting balanced structural reform, leading to positive growth after it took office.

The privatization of agriculture, pursued by the socialist governments of the first Iliescu administration, was a popular demand of the opposition National Peasant Party, which completed it once in power, but it failed to achieve the desired improvement in productivity. Agricultural employment rose by varying indices to 34 percent of the labor force (masking industrial unemployment) thanks to privatization but contributed only 13 percent of the gross domestic product in 2000. Many new landowners were unprepared for independent farming, and landholdings were often too small.
The inadequacy of agricultural investment and agricultural markets, including agricultural protectionism in the EU, contributed to the problem. Crops fluctuated wildly due to serious droughts in 2000, 2002, and 2003. Corn (maize) accounts for 40 percent of crop output in metric tons, and potatoes and wheat are each about 20 percent. The leader in meat production is pork, but its percentage of tonnage declined to below half of meat production in 2002 while poultry rose to 30 percent. Despite its large endowment of fertile black earth soil, Romania is a net importer of agricultural goods, and this trade imbalance has increased in recent years.

Mining of coal, salt, iron, and other metals in Transylvania, and the exploitation of petroleum in Wallachia, have historically been sources of wealth. Oil was exploited heavily in support of Nazi Germany during World War II, then subjected to a joint Soviet-Romanian company for a few years afterward. Petrochemical industries were a centerpiece of Ceau§escu's development strategy; but production peaked in 1976 and has declined since then as Romania became a net importer. Production rose slightly after 1990, buttressed by increased exploitation offshore in the Black Sea. Romania remains the largest producer in Eastern Europe and has substantial proven reserves. The largest producer is the state-run SNP Petrom SA. The company has an annual turnover of $2 billion and is the largest taxpayer in Romania. Many domestic and foreign interests are involved in reports of corruption at the company. Discussions about the company's privatization had reached a critical point as this article was completed in 2003. An Austro-Romanian company was privatized in 1998 under the name Rompetrol-OMV group and has a growing number of distribution points and two refineries. The Russian company LukOil is increasingly active in Romania, having acquired a refinery in Ploie§ti and many distribution points of its own. In response to price increases and reforms there has been some increase in investment in this sector, the reopening of shut wells, and exploration of new sectors in the Black Sea. Most refineries built under the communists are now considered obsolete, however. Natural gas reserves are also substantial, but production peaked in the 1980s and has declined by two-thirds since then.

Coal mining, concentrated in the Jiu Valley on the border between Transylvania and Wallachia, has provided another major energy source but is plagued by hazardous work conditions that prompt labor unrest that is compensated by wage increases that then endanger the financial viability of enterprises. In 1977 and then again in the miners' marches on Bucharest in 1990–1999, these structural problems produced major social unrest that endangered the political establishment, although miners were less than 2 percent of the civilian labor force in 1999. The government did succeed in closing 209 mines and quarries in 1997–1999, assisted in part by loans from the World Bank. Romanian coal is mostly not of export quality.

More than half of Romania's electrical production (down from over 80 percent in the 1980s) is served by petroleum, gas, and coal, both domestic and imported. There are thermal power plants in many parts of the country, but many are not operational due to damage caused by the declining quality of lignite fuel. The development of hydroelectric power began in the 1960s, with major stations at the Iron Gates on the Danube, Arge§, and elsewhere in the Carpathians supplying 35 percent of electrical production in 1998. The construction of Romania's first and to date only nuclear power plant began at Cernavod§ on the Danube with Canadian partnership in 1979. Due to repeated delays the plant was not finally inaugurated until 1996, but by 1998 it accounted for an estimated 10 percent of Romania's energy production. A nuclear plant begun in Pitra Neam§ in 1986 has never been completed. Overall energy production and consumption in Romania has stagnated along with the economy. The country is a net importer of primary energy but has become a net exporter of electrical energy in recent years.

Industry (manufacturing, mining, construction, and power) accounted for 36 percent of gross domestic product in 1998. Bucharest was the leader of the ten most industrialized counties, but half of them were in the lands formerly belonging to Hungary. The largest portion of industry, accounting for 20 percent of the civilian labor force in 1999, was manufacturing in the metallurgical, mechanical engineering, chemical, and timber-processing industries. Industrial production declined by an annual rate of 2 percent in the 1990s, hampered by energy shortages as well as mismanagement and labor unrest. Importation of machinery for engineering industries is a particular source of the current trade imbalance. Most of the progress toward privatization in the industrial section has come after 2000.

Among the better-known industrial firms are Dacia, which has produced cars in Pite§ti (Arge§ County) with a license from Renault; Oltcit, which has produced cars in Craiova in a joint venture with Citroen since 1977 (the company was renamed Oltena in 1989); and the truck company in Bra§ov known since 1990 as Roman S.A. It had its origin as a manufacturer of railway rolling stock beginning in 1921, branched out to armaments, machine tools, and mining equipment, and produced its first trucks in 1954. Beginning in 1971, it produced trucks with a diesel engine licensed by the Man Company of Germany; then it became a joint stock company under its new name in 1990. Railroad cars and diesel locomotives have been a major industrial product and export item for decades, with plants in Arad, Bucharest, Caracal, and Craiova. They were heavily exported to the Soviet Union before the revolution but have found fewer buyers since then. Romanian chemical, especially petrochemical, industries were heavily favored but heavy polluters during the communist era but have scaled back due to unprofitability and environmental concerns.

There has been more privatization in the services sector, which accounted for slightly over half of gross domestic product in 2000 and 31 percent of the civilian workforce in 1999. Romanian tourism has failed to flourish despite the splendor of the natural environment and controversial attempts to exploit the interest of visitors in places associated with Dracula, Vlad the Impaler. One-fifth of foreign visitors during the 1990s were from neighboring Moldova. Economic activity in the service sector declined during the 1990s.
Transportation and communications are important factors in economic reform. The Romanian constitution stipulates that the transport infrastructure is the property of the state. This is not an unusual situation in Europe, but it does place limits on the flexibility of reforms and the infusion of market forces. A more unique constraint is the Carpathians, whose passes impose substantial detours on long-distance rail and road travelers. The Romanian Railways (Căile Ferate Române, CFR) control the fourth-largest railway network in Europe. The company was reorganized in 1998, with the freight services now open to private companies and denied subsidies but passenger services still subsidized. Ten private operators had gained a 20 percent market share of rail traffic by 2003. Several major routes with international connections are electrified, but most of the network is not. Even the major interurban highways are below international standards. The determination of the railbed through Transylvania to Romania in the nineteenth century had major implications for the development of cities, and the same may be the case with decisions made in 2003-2004 concerning highway construction. Despite the plans of the European Union for a southern route between Arad and Timișoara that would circumvent Transylvania, the Romanian government reached agreement with the party of the Hungarian minority for a highway to be built by the Bechtel Corporation through northern Transylvania. The intention to thereby better connect Transylvania with Bucharest and also with Hungary signified a new level of cooperation between the Romanian and Hungarian governments.

The completion of the Danube–Black Sea Canal in 1984, followed by the fall of the Iron Curtain, buttressed hopes for increased revenue for Romanian ports. Trade sanctions against Yugoslavia, then the closure of transport by American bombing, frustrated these hopes. The subsequent reopening of the Danube has yet to secure dramatic benefits for Romania. Most oil tankers are too large for the main channel of the Danube, let alone for the Danube–Black Sea Canal. The idea of a pipeline through Romania for crude oil shipped from the former Soviet Union to European markets had the double attraction of providing transit fees and even an opportunity for refining within Romania itself. The Romanian plan envisioned a pipeline from the port of Constanța, which has a refinery and can receive four tankers at the same time, to Trieste on the Adriatic, where it would link to existing pipelines connecting Austria, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Romanian officials expressed optimism about the plan after talks with counterparts in Kazakhstan, Croatia, and other countries, but many diplomatic and financial details still required resolution.

Press and communications have changed dramatically since 1989. The telecommunication infrastructure, as in
other countries of the region, is in need of substantial modernization. Not atypically, the total number and per capita telephone lines have risen rather slowly, whereas the number of personal mobile phone subscribers has skyrocketed, but the market is still far from saturated. Personal and institutional Internet use lags far behind Central European countries.

The freedom of the Romanian press has progressed unevenly. In dramatic contrast to the monotonous political press and more interesting but heavily censored cultural press of the communist period, private newspapers soon proliferated, some affiliated with political parties and others not. Censorship was a thing of the past, but the government attempted to limit access to supplies of newsprint for the opposition press. Soon this problem abated, and newspaper journalism critical of the government was important in the turning of public opinion against the socialists before the elections of 1996. Today the daily newspapers with the largest circulation, an estimated 200,000, are Adevarul (Truth) and Evenimentul zilei (Event of the Day). Adevarul, formerly the organ of the NSF and its successors, is a sober independent paper while Evenimentul zilei is a tabloid known for investigative journalism of official abuses. Despite the apparent freedom of print journalism, there are serious allegations of violence against journalists who reported corrupt activities of socialist officials. In August 2003 a Romanian reporter won second place in Columbia University’s Kurt Schork Awards for investigative journalism for his reports on government corruption.

Broadcast journalism has freed itself with greater difficulty, as licenses and technical facilities were more subject to government control. A National Audiovisual Council, established in 1992, is the sole issuer of licenses and reportedly uses its authority in conjunction with government revenue offices to create difficulty for opposition broadcasters. Private radio stations appeared first, then later in the decade private television stations as well. The emancipation of book publishing has had mixed benefits. Publishing suffered from censorship under the communists but benefited from subsidies that supported literary authors and accepted scholarship. The end of subsidies and the establishment of many new private publishing houses, most notably Humanitas, has opened Romania to precommunist and Western intellectual currents but also made the publication of many specialized scholarly works more difficult.

Romania’s principal trading partners throughout the communist period were members of the Eastern Bloc, or Comecon. Their percentage share declined with the onset of a more independent foreign policy, from two-thirds in 1960, to under half in 1970, and 34 percent in 1980. Trade with advanced capitalist countries grew in the same period from 22 percent to 36 percent, then declined by 1980 with the onset of harder economic times to 33 percent. Trade with developing countries grew from 8 percent in 1970 to 25 percent in 1980. The Romanian plan to leverage differentiation from the Eastern Bloc for special access to Western technology and markets failed to make progress after 1976. Diplomatic efforts then shifted to the Third World and non-aligned movement, with corresponding commercial agreements. A trade surplus in machinery and industrial consumer goods during the 1980s made it possible to retire the foreign debt in 1989, at the cost of severe domestic austerity.

Trade shifted toward the European Union after 1990. Romania formally associated with the EU and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1993, then the Central European Free Trade Association in 1997. Germany and Italy vied for the status of leading commercial partner for most of the 1990s, with the latter taking the lead in later years. France supplanted Russia as the third leading source of imports and was consistently the third leading export country. Among the more interesting trends in foreign trade were Hungary’s rise to fifth leading country for imports and Turkey to fourth for exports. Romania is pursuing improved diplomatic and commercial relations with these aspirants to EU membership as a complement to its own accession efforts. In contrast to the last years of communism, however, Romania had a serious foreign trade deficit. The country imported machinery and mineral fuels and exported clothing, transport equipment, and chemical products. Substantial remittances from Romanian nationals working abroad redressed the deficit somewhat.

Credits from the IMF and World Bank, along with the creation of joint trading companies with Western companies in the 1970s, fueled Ceauşescu’s industrial ambitions but generated foreign debt and austerity later on. After the retirement of the foreign debt in 1989, Romania passed a law prohibiting the incurrence of foreign debt. This law was overturned after the revolution. Romania now also saw foreign direct investment, but its success paled by comparison with former bloc members to the west. Western fast food outlets made their appearance, but the slowness of privatization for larger firms and labor unrest discouraged major investments. Support packages of the IMF, intended to support the ambitious privatization program of the democratic coalition after 1996, were suspended due to failure to reach the agreed targets. In consultation with the World Bank, in 2001 the socialist prime minister announced a plan to privatize sixty-three state-owned enterprises. The second Iliescu administration has proven much more aggressive than the first one in pursuing privatization.

The Romanian economy operated before 1990 without a convertible currency or true market. Domestically, prices were set by administrative fiat and served to subsidize favored goods or accumulate capital for other ends. Foreign trade relied for the most part on bilateral agreements between states. A number of private banks arose after 1990, some of them engaging in pyramid schemes. The most infamous of these was the Caritas Bank. During the time of heavy inflation and unemployment in 1992–1994, an estimated 7 million Romanians and foreigners invested as much as $5 billion in Caritas and were guaranteed an 8-to-1 return as long as they brought new investors into the scheme. As in postcommunist Albania and Russia, the scheme fed on people’s ignorance of capitalist finance and eagerness to improve their difficult situation. The survival of Caritas for two years raises questions about the connivance of the socialist government of the time; Caritas arose in Cluj and was allegedly connected to the nationalist Party of Ro-
Romanian National Unity that was collaborating with the government.

The Romanian currency (singular lei, plural lei) has been freely traded since 1990, but due to poor budget balances it has fallen steadily against the U.S. dollar until recently. The National Bank of Romania controls the currency. Its governor is a member of the cabinet and served simultaneously as prime minister in 1999–2000. An agreement with the World Bank in 1997 slated six other state-owned banks for privatization. In 2003 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Finance Corp (IFC) acquired a 25 percent interest in the largest remaining one, the Romanian Commercial Bank, which controls one-third of the country’s banking sector.

Has the economic well-being of Romanians improved since the revolution? The severe rationing that preceded it is a thing of the past. Wages in many sectors remain low, and powerful trade unions in de facto collusion with state firms’ officials looking out for their interests long delayed privatization.

Women’s health has improved. Ceausescu’s Romania had enacted draconian sanctions against abortion and contraception, including regular, mandatory gynecological examinations, to encourage population growth. The impact on the birthrate was only moderate and temporary; apparently Romanian doctors violated the law. International and Romanian women’s groups were relieved to see the legalization of birth control after the revolution. One consequence of pronatalist policies was that many unwanted children were deposited in orphanages. Their number (650 orphanages, with 98,872 children in 1998) and the poor conditions in these institutions attracted foreign investigative journalists, whose television documentaries gained unwelcome notoriety for Romania. Some unscrupulous adoption agencies took advantage of compassionate foreigners eager to adopt unwanted Romanian children despite the cost and in ignorance of illnesses such as AIDS and hepatitis. In response, a strict prohibition on foreign adoptions was enacted, and measures were taken to improve conditions. Romania’s high infant mortality rate was reduced by 16 percent from 1996 to 2000.

There has been improvement in the state of the environment. Legislation or government initiative shut down or rehabilitated some of the most serious industrial polluters, notably the chemical and metallurgical plants in Copaș Mica, Zlatna, and Hunedoara in Transylvania. Concerns remain about the state of the fragile Danube Delta, where overharvesting of reeds for cellulose endangered wildlife habitats, and about the quality of water along the Black Sea coast. Concern for tourism, as well as standards imposed by the European Union, have served to encourage remedial measures. As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, emissions into the air per unit of energy produced remain above levels in the European Union. The EBRD is supporting efforts to increase energy efficiency and improve municipal water supplies. Emissions of greenhouse gases have declined significantly, and at the end of 2003 Romania joined other countries of the region in making commitments under the Kyoto Accords to further reduce them.

Romania and especially neighboring Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Ukraine experienced an environmental disaster in January-February 2000. On 30 January, Aurul, a Romanian-Australian joint venture extracting nonferrous metals from mining scrap, permitted cyanide- and metal-laced water to leach from a holding dam to a tributary of the Someș and Tisa (Hungarian: Tisza) Rivers near Baia Mare. From there the plume of water, estimated at close to 100,000 cubic meters, crossed the border into Hungary on 1 February. More than 100,000 kilograms of fish and many birds and other animals were killed in the more heavily populated Hungarian portion of the affected area, and the water supply of the Hungarian city of Szolnok was endangered. Melted snow and heavy rains led to three more spills in the same region later during the same winter and spring. Romanian and Hungarian environmental groups publicized events on their websites and organized demonstrations. This raised the awareness of the international and Romanian press to later cases.

Difficulties with the water supply have caused outbreaks of hepatitis and malaria. There is comprehensive health insurance provided by the state, but serious corruption mars health care delivery. The 2002 census revealed a decline in the country’s population of 4.2 percent or one million to 21,680,974 since the census of 1992, due to an excess of deaths over births and to emigration. The emigration of the Hungarian and especially German minority peaked in the years before and after the revolution. Hungarian emigration is ongoing, and according to the census the decline in the Hungarian population exceeded the growth in the Romanian population.

The per capita gross national income of Romania in 2003 was half that of Hungary but triple that of Moldova. The World Bank ranks Romania a lower-middle-income country based on this figure, above low-income Moldova but below upper-middle Hungary. The UN Technology Achievement Index ranks Hungary 22nd, Romania 35th, and does not rank Moldova. The same UN agency’s Human Development Index, based on a correlation of life expectancy, literacy, and educational enrollment, ranked Romania 72nd out of 175 countries as a Medium Human Development country in 2001, below Hungary at 38th (high human development) but above Moldova (108th) in the same category. Romania’s international ranking remained below that of 1985 but had improved slightly over 1990.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

One of the most prominent contemporary issues for Romania is its accession to the European Union (EU). The country had concluded textile and steel agreements with the European Economic Community in 1978 and a broader trade agreement in 1980. However, the country’s steadily worsening economic and human rights situation led to its international isolation. Consequently the idea of a return to Europe attained powerful symbolic importance for Romanian democrats. Romania, the reasoning went, had been a normal, capitalistic European country before, and it should
become one again. Presumably economic well-being would follow. A trade and cooperation agreement with the EU was signed in 1990 and an association agreement in 1993. Romania also applied to the Council of Europe (a separate organization) and was initially rejected but then accepted after Hungary abstained in the vote. The socialist government submitted a formal application for accession to the EU in 1995.

The EU response to the Romanian application identified areas in which it expected improvement: harmonization of legislation with the EU in the areas of the economy and improvements in the treatment of ethnic minorities and relations with neighboring countries. The poor performance of the first Iliescu administration in these areas was not promising for Romanian accession hopes. In the elections of 1996, the Democratic Convention of Romania announced its intention to work hard for accession to the EU by addressing its concerns. The conclusion of a basic treaty with Hungary before the elections and of a treaty with Ukraine a year later, and improvements in minority policy enacted with the participation of the Hungarian Party in the government, were helpful but insufficient in the eyes of the EU. The organization finally issued a formal response to the application in 1997, which cited various Romanian failings in justification for deferring the start of negotiations. It found that the development of internal market relations and policy with regard to the environment, justice, and agriculture met a minimum threshold (the Copenhagen criteria) but were still inadequate. Romania lobbied hard to be included in some fashion in the accession process and achieved the establishment of an accession partnership in 1998. This agreement enumerated short-term objectives for the necessary reforms. The government then announced a National Program for Accession to the European Union that committed it to these reforms. Again, however, the annual EU assessment of Romania was critical. It cited government corruption, justice, individual liberties, and the rights of the Roma minority as special problem areas. In the next year's report, the EU asserted that Romania (along with Slovakia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria) was not yet a functioning market economy.

It was a success of the Constantinescu administration that, despite these repeated negative reports, Romania somehow remained on track for accession. His governments failed to deliver on the promised reforms due to internal discord and ineffectiveness. But, fortified by opinion polls indicating strong support for European integration, they created a new Ministry for European Integration and secured a commitment from the EU at the end of 1999 to begin formal accession talks in February 2000. It was a measure of the widespread consensus about accession that it was not a divisive issue in the 2000 elections. The new Iliescu
administration, in contrast to the 1992–1996 governments, has taken its commitment to the European Union seriously. This commitment is signified by annual payments by the EU to Romania, for reforms in targeted areas, of no less than 600 million euros. The energetic measures of the second Iliescu administration with regard to privatization can only be explained by EU pressure.

Romania was invited to join NATO in 2002. Despite the temporary annoyance of some West European leaders at Romania’s staunch support for American policy in Iraq, membership in NATO appears to add to the inevitability of EU accession. In its annual report for 2003 the EU once again chided Romania for its failure to eliminate corruption and enact administrative reforms and stated that Romania was approaching but had still not achieved a functioning market economy. The European Parliament’s special rapporteur for Romania, Baroness Nicholson, repeated earlier criticisms in early 2004. She added new, graver details about corruption and adoptions that went counter to the official legal ban on adoptions demanded by the EU and promised by the current government. The response of EU officials seemed to ensure that the country’s path to accession could not be derailed. The only uncertainty was whether the parties would adhere to the announced calendar, which called for the finalization of negotiations in 2004 and accession in 2007.

Moldova, and Romania’s relations with the newly independent republic, is also a major contemporary issue. This country is constituted of two parts. The largest area, sometimes known as Bessarabia, is between the Prut and the Dniestr (Romanian: Nistru) Rivers. It formed part of the Principality of Moldavia (Romanian: Moldova) until its cession to Russia in 1812; it then was united with Romania in 1918–1940 and 1941–1944. The independent state also includes a strip on the side of the Dniester facing Ukraine that formed part of the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) between 1924 and 1940 and was then attached to Bessarabia when the Soviet Union annexed Bessarabia. The united area was known until 1991 as the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR). The state began to call itself simply the Republic of Moldova in English language documents. The name has a half-century tradition in its favor but is identical with the name Romanians give to the historical province, half of which is in today’s Romania.

The time of domination by imperial Russia, the Romanian kingdom based in Bucharest, and then the Soviet Union contributed to the creation of Moldova’s identity. While Romania experienced the union of the Danubian Principalities and the creation of national institutions in the nineteenth century, Bessarabia was a neglected province on the periphery of an alien autocratic state. Local Romanian elites gained little experience in self-governance or access to publications from across the Prut, whose importation was prohibited. Russian was the language of official business and public instruction. Figures from the Russian censuses in 1858 and 1897 indicated Romanians declined from two-thirds to less than half of the population, while East Slavs doubled to one-third. The other major ethnic group, at around 10 percent but much higher in Chișinău (Russian: Kishinev), were the Jews. The Russian anti-Semitic Black Hundreds precipitated pogroms in Chișinău in 1903 and 1905. After the Russian Revolution of 1905, Bessarabian Romanians entered the State Duma in St. Petersburg. In the turmoil of the 1917 revolutions, Bessarabian Romanians formed a provincial council and a year later voted for unification with Romania.

Bessarabian Romanians benefited from Greater Romania's land reform at the expense of local landholders as well as from energetic promotion of local infrastructure and Romanian schools. The region remained relatively undeveloped, however, and subject to administrative abuses by officials from Bucharest and the infiltration of Soviet agitators. The corruption and highhandedness of the Romanian administration in Bessarabia lent some plausibility to the Soviet demand for the liberation of the province, especially within its substantial Slavic minority. In 1924 the Soviet Union created the MASSR in an area of the Ukraine extending from the Dniester to the Bug River that included a large Romanian minority. MASSR would become a showcase of Soviet-style industrialization and also a laboratory for the promotion of a new Moldovan–Romanian language and national identity that was different from the Romanian one. Soviet scholars conceded that the Moldovan Romanian language was virtually identical with Romanian, although within the MASSR it continued the use of the Cyrillic alphabet that had been abandoned south of the Prut during the nineteenth century.

After the humiliating Soviet annexation of Bessarabia and the execution or deportation of many Romanians in 1940–1941, Romania began its invasion of the Soviet Union alongside the Germans with the appeal by Ion Antonescu: “Soldiers, cross the Prut!” But the soldiers did not stop when they had liberated the province; they crossed the Dniester and even participated in the siege of Stalingrad. Romanian authorities headquartered in Odessa administered a zone between the Bug and the Dniester that was called Transnistria (Romanian: Transnistria) and liquidated at least 100,000 Jews there. Many Jews were deported to Transnistria from south of the Prut, and only a portion of them survived to be repatriated after 1945. After Stalingrad, the Soviets reoccupied Transnistria and Bessarabia, first exacting reprisals on the population once again, then forcing through Soviet-style collectivization. Economic development in the MSSR proceeded differently on either side of the Dniester. Most of the heavy industrial development took place to the east, attracting Ukrainian and Russian in-migration, while the Bessarabian economy was based on agriculture and light industry and the population was ethnically Romanian. The spoken and written Moldovan Romanian language largely converged with Romanian south of the Prut, despite Soviet ideological controls and the continued use of the Cyrillic alphabet. The MSSR constitution of 1978 made Russian the official language of the republic.

In the years of Soviet glasnost and perestroika (openness and restructuring), Moldovan Romanian activists agitated for a national revival in parallel to the more advanced movements in the Baltic republics. They protested against alleged
Russification and demanded the restoration of the Roman alphabet for Romanian, and the increased use of Romanian in the schools. The Slavic minority opposed this movement, voting in a referendum in 1990 for autonomy in the area beyond the river, or Transdniestria. The Gagauz (Turkish Christian) minority in the southeastern corner of the republic also demanded autonomy. At the time of the coup in Moscow in August 1991, the leadership of Moldova sided with Russian President Yeltsin. On 27 August, the Moldovan parliament declared the republic's independence from the Soviet Union, and four months later the republic joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). But in the interim, Transdniestria and Gagauzia declared their secession from the republic, proclaiming themselves separate republics within the Soviet Union.

The domestic and international travails of the Republic of Moldova have been a political topic in Romania since 1991. Many in Romania (roughly half in polls taken in 1991 and 1992), and not only supporters of the Greater Romania Party, expected the Moldovan Romanian majority of the new state to demand unification with Romania as it had in 1918. When this did not happen, it was easy to attribute it to the resistance of the minorities within Moldova in collusion with Russia and the post-Soviet military forces in Transdniestria—although opinion was divided among the Moldovan Romanians themselves. Thus Romanian nationalists, always on the lookout for foreign enemies of the nation, had new evidence of machinations by these elements. The situation was also opportune for Hungarian advocates of ethnic autonomy, who praised the autonomist tendencies in Moldova as an alternative to the centralist model in Romania. Various polls taken in Moldova indicate most Moldovan Romanians consider themselves Moldovans rather than Romanians.

The question of unification with Romania was settled fairly early in the decade. The Romanian-dominated Popular Front, later Christian Democratic Popular Front (CDPF), formed the first government of independent Moldova. The CDPF strongly advocated unification and formed a parliamentarian Moldovan-Romanian National Council for Reintegration. Transdniestria opposed reunification and launched militia attacks on Moldovan government outposts in order to back its claim to independence. Following counterattack by the weak Moldovan army, it was repulsed with the support of the heavily armed Soviet Fourteenth Army that was stationed in Transdniestria. Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, for a while Romania, and eventually Transdniestria all participated in the ensuing peace negotiations. The Moldovan government resigned in June 1992, in part because of the unpopularity of its unification stance. The Agrarian Democratic Party (ADP), a group of former collective farm managers, formed a government. The ADP declared its rejection of unification with Romania and support for ties with the CIS. In July 1992 Moldova concluded a peace agreement with Russia that accorded Transdniestria "special status."

The ADP won Moldova's first free elections in 1994. In March 1994 75 percent of eligible voters participated in a national referendum on Moldovan statehood, and 95 percent voted for continued independence. The one-sidedness of the result caused some suspicion that it had been falsified but was sufficient to discourage further referenda. Parliament adopted a new constitution in the summer of the same year. It granted "special autonomous status" for Transdniestria and Gagauzia, without precisely defining this status. The constitution also designated "Moldovan" as the state language. The CDPF protested, and students and faculty organized rallies in 1995 demanding the state language be changed. The CDPF reunited in 1999. Iliașcu was finally released in 2001 and promptly went to Bucharest to take his parliamentary seat. An agreement for the federalization of Moldova was concluded in 2003 that would provide, according to a statement of Moldovan President Voronin, for "an asymmetric federation with one center and two federal units." Half of Moldovans opposed federalization, however, and the communist Voronin backed away from the agreement. The government hoped the EU would participate in a lasting solution.

Finally there is the contemporary issue of history and public memory. In a region where history writing tends to be highly politicized, this is especially true in Romania. The Moldavian aristocrat Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891) founded the first historical journal in Romania and was a leading liberal politician advocating the union of the Danubian Principalities. He served twice as prime minister during the decade of the unification and as foreign minister during the War for Independence in 1877–1878. Nicolae Bălcescu (1819–1852) had a much briefer career but was an
even more militant advocate of unification. He was a member of the provisional government during the brief Wallachian Revolution in 1848 and worked unsuccessfully to bring peace between Hungarians and Romanians in Transylvania. In exile, he prepared an important work on the Wallachian prince Michael the Brave, who temporarily united the Danubian Principalities and Transylvania in 1600. This work is the strongest statement in Romanian historiography of the view, contested by more moderate historians, that Michael prepared the way for the unification of all Romanians through his actions in 1600.

Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940) and Constantin C. Giurescu (1901–1977) were much more prolific historians but also exemplified the continuing strong connection between historical scholarship and political engagement in the twentieth century. Iorga became a professor of history at the University of Bucharest at the age of twenty-three, attaining national and international acclaim for his original research and publication of sources. Incredibly, he authored 1,000 books and over 12,000 articles. Much of this output was serious scholarship, but his boundless energy did not permit him to stand aside from contemporary cultural and political debates. Iorga founded a literary school that glorified traditional peasant culture and a political-cultural journal entitled Neamul românesc (Romanian Nation), for which he wrote much of the content himself, directed the irredentist Cultural League beginning in 1908, and in 1910 cofounded the anti-Semitic National Democratic Party. Because of these activities, Iorga is considered one of the founders of Greater Romania. In 1931–1932 Iorga served a brief term as prime minister. To his lasting credit, he put aside his anti-Semitism after 1919 to condemn the Iron Guard and even play a role in the arrest and trial of its leaders in 1938. In retaliation, he was brutally murdered by Legionaries after they came to power in 1940.

Constantin C. Giurescu contested Iorga's leadership of the Romanian historical profession in the 1930s during a celebrated public controversy about errors in Iorga's works. The so-called “New School” associated with Giurescu's revolt against the master of Romanian history was distinguished primarily by its membership from a younger generation rather than substantial differences in philosophy, but its leaders were also active in politics. One member, Gheorghe Brătianu, founded a dissident wing of the Liberal Party, while another, P. P. Panaitescu, was briefly associated with the Iron Guard. Giurescu himself, joined Brătianu's party, was an adviser of Carol II along with Iorga during the period of the royal dictatorship, and briefly occupied a cabinet post in 1940. Both Giurescu and Brătianu were imprisoned in Sighet after the communists came to power, and Brătianu died there.

The release of Giurescu from prison in 1955 and his gradual rehabilitation was a barometer of the restoration of national traditions in historiography. While he continued his earlier meticulous studies on medieval Romanian social history, two new works published in 1965–1967 were a marked departure: The Life and Work of Prince Cuza and Transylvania in the History of the Romanian People. The first was an original work of scholarship on an important but neglected ruler, while the second was a more modest synthesis on a politically charged topic. In each case, Giurescu lent his scholarly authority (and the regime lent its imprimatur) to the restoration of national unity as a legitimate topic of scholarly research.

Giurescu was not responsible for the exaggerations of national communist historiography in the following decades. Other professional historians did contribute to the increasing excursions of Nicolae Ceaușescu into Romanian history in his speeches. A highly selective treatment of Dacian history was prepared for the celebration in 1980 of the “2050th anniversary of the establishment of the first centralized unitary state on Romanian territory.” The dictator's brother, Lieutenant General Ilie Ceaușescu, was the putative author of Transylvania: An Ancient Romanian Land, a unique compilation of anachronistic statements and maps. The publication in Budapest of a three-volume History of Transylvania (1986) provoked (some would say intentionally) an intemperate Romanian response. This response characterized the Hungarian work, which competently synthesized the new research of the best contemporary Hungarian historians, as an instrument of territorial revisionism and “the dangerous game of the falsification of history.”

Romanians have struggled since 1990 to achieve an adequate understanding of their recent and more distant past. Former political prisoners stimulated the public debate by the publication of their memoirs and especially by their political engagement. Three of the senior leaders of the revived National Peasant Party had spent long years in prison. Their experience added to the moral authority of the leading opposition party in the early 1990s but also provoked a defensive reaction among former communist officials and ordinary Romanians who had not acted courageously in the face of the many pressures to conform. It is emblematic of the difficulty of assessing recent history that historical museums have little to say about the communist period.

The most notable exception is the Sighet Memorial in Sighetul Marmăcăi, in the northwestern corner of the country near the former Soviet border. It opened in 1997 in the former “prison of the ministers” where various politicians, generals, scholars, and bishops spent years in detention, and where many died. The Civic Academy Foundation, led by former dissident poet Ana Blandiana, founded and maintains the museum. In addition to documenting life in this prison, the museum contains exhibits about agricultural collectivization, hard labor on the Danube–Black Sea Canal, and deportation to the Soviet Union and the Bărăgan Plain within Romania. Giurescu’s son, Dinu C. Giurescu, emigrated to the United States in 1988 but returned to Bucharest after 1990 and switched his teaching focus to the history of the communist years in Romania. His new specialty is weakly represented in Romanian university curricula.

Lustration, the identification and elimination from power of former informers of the Securitate and even members of the Communist Party, is perhaps more difficult in Romania than in any other East European country. How can it stop at President Iliescu himself, a former high party official who has three times been popularly elected? The insistence of
the Democratic Convention of Romania on lustration in some form certainly made its relationship with the civil service more difficult after it came to power in 1996. Legislation in 1999 created the National Council for the Study of Securitate Records (NCSSR). The NCSSR does not have direct access to the archives of the Securitate, but it has been supplied with voluminous documentation and has identified as informers or agents many prominent public figures. Public dissent among the members of the NCSSR has undermined its work and its authority.

Serious historical research on the communist era is becoming possible, especially for the period prior to the thirty-year limit on access to government archives. The National Archives Law of 1996 improved public access to government records, although the National Archives remain under the supervision of the minister of the interior. This subordination has its advantages for historical preservation because the ministry and its prefects work closely with the county archival inspectors to ensure the proper disposition of the records of enterprises and organizations undergoing privatization or reassignment.

There is continuing, and more focused, controversy about the history of World War II, Marshal Antonescu, and the Holocaust. A partial rehabilitation of Antonescu, who was shot after a show trial in 1946, took place even before 1989. Marin Preda's novel Delirium (1975) presented a sympathetic view of the dictator, and in later years documents placing him in a more positive light became available to privileged researchers. Calls for the rehabilitation of Antonescu arose beginning in 1990. The newspaper of the National Salvation Front denied Romanian responsibility for the extermination of the Jews and designated Antonescu a tragic hero in 1991; the parliament dedicated a moment of silence to his memory. In 1993–1994 two cities, Sălăbozia and Piatra Neamţ, erected monuments to Antonescu, and many other cities named streets after him. Audiences acclaimed a laudatory film about Antonescu by veteran director Sergiu Nicolaescu, The Miroş, after it was released in 1994. A public opinion poll in 1995 indicated 62 percent of respondents viewed the dictator positively, and in 1997–2000 the Romanian government rehabilitated several ministers of the wartime era.

The tide turned against Antonescu after 1999. In 1995 members of the U.S. Congress protested against the Antonescu cult in an open letter to President Iliescu, and in 2000 Social Democratic politicians in Germany warned Romania that its glorification of the wartime dictator might make admission to the EU more difficult. Schools introduced the Holocaust into the curriculum in 1999. The Greater Romania Party, as leader of the opposition, increased its campaign on behalf of Antonescu, proposing that military academies be named after him and he be declared a saint. At the end of 2001, Prime Minister Adrian Năstase declared during a visit to the United States his government's intention to have all monuments to Antonescu taken down and to punish “fascist, racist, and xenophobic” symbols. This was done in special government decrees of March and April 2002. Members of parliament, the government, and President Iliescu continued to make controversial statements about the Holocaust, however. A government declaration in June 2003 denied Romanian responsibility for the Holocaust on Romanian territory but then qualified its statement in response to international protests.

In July 2003 the president prompted protests by stating to an Israeli reporter: “There was no Romanian Holocaust, no German or Polish one. It was a general process, and this European phenomenon also had a Romanian complement.” In October of the same year he became honorary chairman of an international commission led by Elie Wiesel that was to present a report by June 2005 on the Romanian Holocaust that would provide guidelines for Romanian textbooks. Even the chairman of the Greater Romania Party, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, retreated from his earlier statements. In a public letter in February 2004, he stated that his denial of the Romanian Holocaust had been “a mistake,” and that the Romanian government was responsible for an estimated 400,000 Jewish deaths during World War II.

Controversies over the content of history textbooks underlie the sensitive nature of public memory. Schools are required by law to teach from textbooks licensed by the Ministry of Education, but it took years to revise those of the previous regime and then distribute them in adequate numbers. New versions distributed in 1994 assessed Marshal Antonescu more positively, however. There were textbook controversies in the Republic of Moldova as well. The Ministry of Education ordained a course on the history of Romania in 1990, but when it wanted to replace it with a course on the history of Moldova in 1995 student demonstrators burned copies of the new textbook and forced the ministry to reverse its decision. In Romania, a competition to approve more democratic textbooks sparked angry debates in the press and parliament in 1999. One of the approved texts, edited by a Jewish Romanian historian in Cluj named Sorin Mitu, attracted most of the ire of the nationalists because it gave minimal attention to the famed princes Vlad the Impaler, Stephen the Great, and Michael the Brave, and highlighted persistent questions about the events of 1989. The attractively illustrated book was printed in 10,000 copies. Opponents, led by Nicolaescu, a senator for the opposition PSDR, demanded that Mitu's textbook be withdrawn. Waving a copy of the book, Nicolaescu declared: “This book deserves to be publicly burned.” The minister of education, himself from the University of Cluj, refused to withdraw the book.

Reformers took heavy blows in the textbook controversy of 1999, but historians presenting a more critical view of national history have been gaining a growing audience. The Humanitas Publishing House published many foreign historical works in Romanian translation as well as fresh research by the younger generation of Romanian historians. Lucian Boia wrote a series of well-received revisionist works, including History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness, The Game with the Past: History between Truth and Fiction, The Scientific Myth of Romanian Communism, and Two Centuries of Historical Mythology, all published by Humanitas. Centers for Jewish Studies exist at three different Romanian universities, and since 1999 the government has required increased attention to the Romanian Holocaust in the schools.
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CHRONOLOGY

106 B.C.E. Dacia becomes a Roman province.
271–273 Emperor Aurelian withdraws troops, administration; rule of the Visigoths.
376 Rule of the Huns begins.
454 Rule of the Gepids begins.
567 Rule of the Avars begins.
ca. 602 Byzantines abandon Dobrudja.
9th century Rule of the Bulgarians begins.
10th–13th centuries Hungarian conquest of Transylvania.
1054 East-West Church schism.
12th–13th centuries Rule of the Cumans and Pechenegs south of the Carpathians begins.
1227–1247 Establishment of Banat of Severin and Vovodesates of Litovoi and Seneslau.
1241–1242 Mongol invasions.
ca. 1310 Founding of Wallachia.
1330 Battle of Posada: Wallachian victory over Hungary.
1359 Founding of Moldavia.
1415 Wallachia recognizes Ottoman suzerainty.
1437–1438 Peasant revolt in Transylvania.
1526 Ottoman victory over Hungary at Battle of Mohács.
1538 Moldavia recognizes Ottoman suzerainty.
1541 Transylvania recognizes Ottoman suzerainty.
1571 Michael the Brave rules Wallachia, Transylvania, and Moldavia.
1600 Romanian church union in Transylvania.
1669 Ottoman Empire recognizes Habsburg rule in Transylvania.
1711–1715 Establishment of Phanariot rule in Moldavia and Wallachia.
1718 Establishment of Habsburg rule in Banat and Oltenia.
1859–1862 End of Habsburg rule in Oltenia.
1866 Peasant revolt in Transylvania.
1880–1881 Annexation of Bessarabia by Russia.
1897 Anti-Ottoman revolt in Wallachia led by Tudor Vladimirescu.
1907 Revolutions in Hungary and the Danubian Principalities.
1913 Union of the Principalities under Prince Cuza.
1918–1920 Abdication of Prince Cuza, accession of Prince Carol I.
1920 Recognition of independent Romanian kingdom.
1921 Peasant revolt in the Kingdom of Romania.
1930 Annexation of Dobrudja after Second Balkan War.
1931 Romania enters World War I.
1935 Annexation of lands from Hungary, Austria, Russia, and Bulgaria.
1937 Land reform.
1940 Lands ceded to Soviet Union, Hungary, and Bulgaria under pressure.
1941–1945 Romania in World War II; lands regained from Hungary.
1947 Abdication of King Michael; Romanian People's Republic.
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2000 President Emil Constantinescu and conservative government.
2004 Second presidency of Ion Iliescu and socialist government.
2004 Romania joins the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).