



*From the MixCache.com library*

SAMPLE COPY

# A History of Romania

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1** Ancient Civilizations and Prehistoric Roots
- **Chapter 2** The Dacian Kingdoms and Their Legacy
- **Chapter 3** Roman Conquest and the Province of Dacia
- **Chapter 4** The Romanization and Birth of the Romanian People
- **Chapter 5** The Age of Migrations: Goths, Huns, and Beyond
- **Chapter 6** Slavic Influences and Early Medieval Society
- **Chapter 7** The Formation of Wallachia
- **Chapter 8** The Rise of Moldavia
- **Chapter 9** Transylvania under Hungarian Rule
- **Chapter 10** Medieval Principalities: Culture and Autonomy
- **Chapter 11** Life at the Ottoman Frontier
- **Chapter 12** Phanariot Rule and Cultural Shifts
- **Chapter 13** Early Modern Society and the Seeds of National Awakening
- **Chapter 14** Revolution and Reform in the 19th Century
- **Chapter 15** The Union of Moldavia and Wallachia
- **Chapter 16** The Path to the Kingdom of Romania
- **Chapter 17** State-Building and Modernization
- **Chapter 18** World War I and The Great Union
- **Chapter 19** Greater Romania: Interwar Hopes and Challenges
- **Chapter 20** The Fires of World War II
- **Chapter 21** The Communist Seizure of Power
- **Chapter 22** Ceaușescu's Romania: Authority and Isolation
- **Chapter 23** The 1989 Revolution
- **Chapter 24** Transition to Democracy and Market Economy
- **Chapter 25** Romania and the European Dream

## Introduction

Romania's history is a vibrant tapestry, rich with stories of ancient peoples, empires, kings, and revolutionaries. One of the crossroads of Europe, the land that is now Romania has long been inhabited by a multitude of peoples whose imprints remain etched in its landscapes, cities, and traditions. From prehistory to the dynamic present, Romania's story is one of resilience, survival, and continual reinvention.

At the heart of this history are the Dacians, whose impressive fortresses and legacy still hold a place of pride in the modern Romanian consciousness. The conquest by the Romans, and the ensuing centuries of Romanization, form the bedrock of Romanian identity. In language, customs, and collective memory, the synthesis of Dacian and Roman elements marks the beginning of a cultural continuity that would weather centuries of changes.

With the departure of the Roman legions, the territory entered a period of volatility, as waves of migratory peoples swept through Central and Southeastern Europe. Despite these challenges, the people of these lands preserved their distinctiveness, gradually giving rise to the medieval principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania. These entities navigated the tides of history, caught between ambitious neighbors and mighty empires, yet maintaining cultural autonomy and a growing sense of national consciousness.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire and the centuries of suzerainty defined another era of Romania's past, marked by both adversity and subtle adaptation. It is in the crucible of foreign domination that the desire for unity and independence began to take firmer shape, propelling Romania toward the defining moments of the 19th and 20th centuries: national awakening, the hard-fought union of the principalities, and the achievement of nationhood.

The modern era brought its own transformations and upheavals—two world wars, the expansion and contraction of borders, and the dramatic imposition of communist rule. The collapse of the Ceaușescu regime in 1989 was a watershed moment, thrusting Romania into a complex post-communist transition. Today, as a member of the European Union and NATO, Romania continues to forge its place in the broader European family, drawing upon the rich inheritance of its past.

This book seeks to tell Romania's remarkable story in all its complexity—from the earliest days to the present—illuminating the enduring spirit and continuous transformation of a nation that has found unity and identity in the embrace of change.

## CHAPTER ONE: Ancient Civilizations and Prehistoric Roots

Before the rise of the formidable Dacians and the arrival of the Roman legions, the lands that would one day become Romania were already a stage for millennia of human activity and the flourishing of various prehistoric cultures. This deep past, etched in stone tools, pottery shards, and burial mounds, reveals a long and complex story that predates written records. It's a narrative pieced together by archaeologists, layer by painstaking layer, much like uncovering a forgotten manuscript buried beneath the earth.

The earliest whispers of human presence in this corner of Europe stretch back incredibly far in time. Recent discoveries have pushed the timeline back significantly, with evidence suggesting hominin activity in the region at least 1.95 million years ago. This places the area among the oldest known sites of human ancestors in Europe, predating evidence found elsewhere on the continent.

These early inhabitants, likely some form of *Homo erectus* or even earlier members of our genus, left behind tantalizing clues. Cut marks on fossilized animal bones at sites like Grăunceanu in the Olteț River Valley indicate that these ancient hominins were butchering animals, demonstrating a remarkable level of adaptability to the European environment much earlier than previously thought.

Moving forward in time, the Middle Paleolithic period, roughly spanning from 300,000 to 30,000 years ago, saw the presence of Neanderthals. While skeletal remains from this era are scarce in Romania, stone tools and artifacts found at numerous sites across Moldavia, Dobrogea, and the Carpathian Mountains attest to their existence and activities. Cave sites in the southern Carpathian foothills, such as Baia de Fier and Ohaba Ponor, have yielded important Middle Paleolithic deposits.

The transition to the Upper Paleolithic, beginning around 40,000 years ago, marks the arrival of anatomically modern humans, *Homo sapiens*. This period is evidenced by significant finds, including some of the oldest remains of *Homo sapiens* in Europe discovered in the Peștera cu Oase ("Cave with Bones"). These early modern humans brought with them more sophisticated toolmaking techniques and the beginnings of artistic expression.

Sites like Cioclovina cave in Hunedoara County have yielded important Paleolithic discoveries, contributing to our understanding of the lives of these early inhabitants. The archaeological record from the Upper Paleolithic in Romania indicates the

development of distinct cultural stages, such as the Aurignacian and Gravettian, showing connections with wider European developments of the time.

Following the Paleolithic and the end of the last Ice Age, the Mesolithic period, from roughly 10,000 to 7,000 years ago, saw humans adapting to a changing environment. Forests spread, and people relied on hunting, fishing, and gathering resources from these new landscapes. Archaeological evidence from sites along river valleys and in mountainous areas sheds light on their mobile lifestyle.

The true transformation arrived with the Neolithic Revolution, beginning in the territory of Romania around 6600 BC. This era, lasting until around 3800-3700 BC, marked a fundamental shift as communities transitioned from nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyles to settled agriculturalists. They began cultivating crops like wheat and barley and domesticating animals, leading to more stable settlements.

This period saw the emergence of distinct Neolithic cultures across the region, each leaving its unique mark. The Starčevo-Criş culture, one of the earliest Neolithic cultures in Europe, flourished in the area, bringing with it the practices of farming, pottery making, and the establishment of permanent villages.

As the Neolithic progressed, other important cultures developed, demonstrating increasing complexity and artistic skill. The Boian culture, centered in the Romanian Plain, played a significant role and contributed to the subsequent development of later cultures.

Perhaps the most visually striking of these Neolithic cultures was the Cucuteni-Trypillia culture, which flourished from around 5050 to 2950 BC. Spanning across northeastern Romania, Moldova, and parts of Ukraine, this culture is renowned for its elaborately decorated pottery, often adorned with intricate spiral patterns and vibrant colors.

The Cucuteni-Trypillia people lived in remarkably large settlements, some of the biggest in Neolithic Europe, with evidence suggesting populations that could have exceeded one million at the culture's peak. These settlements, sometimes referred to as "megasites," demonstrate advanced architectural techniques, including the construction of large, multi-story buildings.

A peculiar and still debated aspect of the Cucuteni-Trypillia culture is the practice of periodically burning their settlements, perhaps every 60 to 80 years. The reasons behind this "burned house horizon" are not fully understood, with theories ranging from ritualistic cleansing to practical reasons related to rebuilding.

Contemporaneous with or succeeding the Cucuteni-Trypillia culture in other areas was the Gumelniţa culture, another significant Chalcolithic (Copper Age) civilization dating to the 5th millennium BC. Centered on the lower Danube, the Gumelniţa culture is

known for its sophisticated copper metallurgy, as well as its rich anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and distinctive pottery.

The Gumelnița culture, part of a larger cultural complex extending into Bulgaria, exhibited advanced craftsmanship, particularly in their artwork and the use of copper. Their settlements were often tells, artificial mounds built up over generations of occupation, and some were even surrounded by defensive walls.

The Chalcolithic period, as the name suggests, saw the increasing use of copper alongside stone tools. This technological advancement marked a significant step, allowing for the creation of more durable and efficient implements and weapons.

Following the Chalcolithic, the Bronze Age in the Romanian territory began around 3500 BC, ushering in a new era defined by the widespread use of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. This period, divided into Early, Middle, and Late phases, saw further developments in metallurgy, trade networks, and social structures.

Transylvania, with its rich copper deposits, became an important metallurgical center during the Bronze Age. Various regional cultures emerged, such as the Wietenberg culture in Transylvania and the Gârla Mare culture in Oltenia, each with its own distinct pottery styles, burial customs, and artistic expressions.

Bronze Age settlements show evidence of mixed economies based on agriculture and livestock raising, with some cultures, like the Wietenberg, utilizing cattle and horses for both food and transportation. Burial practices varied, including both inhumation and cremation, which some link to the emergence of solar or Uranian cults.

The transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, around the 12th century BC, marked another technological leap. Iron, being more abundant than copper and tin, became the primary metal for tools and weaponry. This transition period saw the continuation of some Late Bronze Age traditions alongside new influences.

The Early Iron Age, also known as the Hallstatt culture in this part of Europe, witnessed the development of distinct regional groups. This was a period of increasing complexity and social stratification, laying the groundwork for the emergence of larger tribal unions.

It is within this dynamic Iron Age landscape, following millennia of human presence and cultural evolution, that the peoples who would become known as the Dacians began to coalesce and assert their identity. Their story, and the formation of their powerful kingdoms, represents the next chapter in the long and fascinating history of this land.

---

*This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.*

Visit [MixCache.com](https://MixCache.com) to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY