

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE

Romania has its unique culture, which is the product of its geography and of its distinct historical evolution.

Like Romanians themselves, it is fundamentally defined as the meeting point of three regions: Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, but cannot be truly included in any of them. The Romanian identity formed on a substratum of mixed Roman and quite possibly Dacian elements, with many other influences.

During late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the major influences came from the Slavic peoples who migrated and settled in near Romania; from medieval Greeks, and the Byzantine Empire; from a long domination by the Ottoman Empire; from the Hungarians; and from the Germans living in Transylvania. Modern Romanian culture emerged and developed over roughly the last 250 years under a strong influence from Western culture, particularly French, and German culture.

The Romanian literature began to truly evolve with the revolutions of 1848 and the union of the two Danubian Principalities in 1859.

The Origin of the Romanians began to be discussed and in Transylvania and Romanian scholars began studying in France, Italy and Germany. The German philosophy and French culture were integrated into modern Romanian literature and a new elite of artists led to the appearance of some of the classics of the Romanian literature such as Mihai Eminescu, George Coșbuc, Ioan Slavici.

Although they remain little known outside Romania, they are very appreciated within Romania for giving birth to a true Romanian literature by creating modern lyrics with inspiration from the old folklore tales.

Of them, Eminescu is considered the most important and influential Romanian poet, and is still very much loved for his creations, and especially the poem *Luceafărul – The Evening Star* – the longest love poem in the world.

Among other writers that made large contributions around the second half of 19th century are Mihail Kogălniceanu (also the first prime minister of Romania), Vasile Alecsandri, Nicolae Bălcescu, Ion Luca Caragiale, and Ion Creangă.

Andrei Pavel and Claudiu Vasilache
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