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# The Lost Romans: History And Controversy On The Origin Of The Romanians



## Synopsis

In AD 101 the Roman Empire undertook the largest military campaign in its history: Trajan's Dacian Wars. It was followed by the Roman colonization of Dacia, the greatest colonization effort in antiquity, and what would be the first step in the making of the Romanian people. Yet, less than 200 years later, Rome would have to abandon Dacia, along with its hundreds of thousands of colonists, due to an unprecedented onslaught of barbarian invasions. This book covers the fate of those left behind, how they survived the fall of the empire and adapted to barbarian rule. How these Roman colonists, the ancestors of the Romanians, survived and persevered in a land that was host to a "Who's Who" list of barbarian tribes is both fascinating and mysterious. The Lost Romans seeks to set the record straight and answer how the Romanians became the island of Latin culture they are today. With an armory of historical and archaeological evidence, and a dash of good humor, this book takes the reader on a ride through over two thousand years of civilization (and a bit of barbarity). Mircea's comedic and critical view of history spares no one: barbarian kings, Roman emperors, and outlandish historical theories are all given an equal roasting in the book. A quest to uncover the truth about what happened in this little-known part of Europe. This book provides an entertaining and illuminating read for those wishing to learn more about late antiquity in Southeastern Europe, and how the Roman Empire acted as a force for cultural change on the barbarians at its borders. It also focuses on an aspect oft-forgotten, namely the cultural contributions of the wandering "barbarian" tribes on the local Romanized people. Both the history of the Romanians, and the controversies that have surrounded it, are thoroughly investigated. Helpful illustrations and an accessible bibliography containing hundreds of sources provide for a highly informative overview of late Roman and early Romanian history, and give a firm launching pad for those wishing to delve deeper into Roman, Romanian, and Eastern European history in general.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Born with the Romanian revolution of 1989 and having lived in Romania through its transformative re-discovery, Mircea Davidescu became dedicated to uncovering the profound mysteries of Romanian history. Through his extensive travels Mircea came to understand Romanian history in terms of its connection to the major events of world history. In this book he shares with you his reconciling perspectives. He is currently a graduate student in ecology and evolutionary biology at Princeton University.

The first part of the book is a history of the Romanian people, arguing that they have been a continuous ethnic group since their formation by the amalgamation of the Dacians and Roman colonists (mostly retiring soldiers who were granted land in Dacia) at and after the time of the Emperor Trajan's conquest of Dacia around 105CE. The author argues that Dacia remained at least partially Romanized after the evacuation by the Empire in 275CE. Using archeological, linguistic, and literary sources various other theories are considered and rejected. After the Romans, Romania was overrun by nomadic invaders from the east and north more than most: Alans, Avars, Cumens, Khazars, Magyars, Huns, Goths, and even the Mongols overran the place, but the Vlachs (old name for Romanians) persevered if often as subject peoples. The story is both tragic and noble. Overall, Part I was a quite interesting illumination of a rather opaque and little known corner of European history. Part II of the book I found less interesting. It is a historiography of the various claims, mostly between the Romanians and Hungarians of who settled where, when. With special attention to building "claims" to Transylvania on behalf of the Hungarians, which the Romanians reject. From context it seems "history" has been a method of "politics by other means" in the region. The history of tendentious tribalism, which still shapes the modern world in that region to some degree, is hard for most of us European-Americans to understand, though I expect our Native Americans have a strong sense of it. The one curious omission from the book is the lack of much DNA evidence. The author is an evolutionary biologist, so one would have thought it natural to look to modern DNA evidence to help sort thru the various necessarily inexact literary, linguistic, and archeological claims. Overall a quite worthwhile read, whether one is interested mostly in the history of the Romanian people or like me someone interested in broadening their knowledge of an obscure bit of Roman and post-Roman history. The book is extensively footnoted in the scholarly fashion, but

fortunately the writer has chosen to write in a more popular and accessible style.

This is a good book as a start for learning about Romanian history. It is unabashedly told from the Romanian point of view disproving Hungarian opinions, so for a balanced view it may be good to read Hungarian opinions. Overall though, the author does give very good facts and reasoning for his statements. This is also a very good read, even for a non-historian, while for a historian, this is an engrossing read

As a first exposure to Romanian history, this is well-written and engaging. It answered most of my questions about Romanian history and makes good use of sources, citing them when needed. An extensive bibliography allows the reader to do further reading on the subject. While the book is well-written, but is very poorly copy-edited. It is riddled with spelling and grammar mistakes. Hopefully a new edition will polish out these flaws.

Clearly a political book in that it seeks to silence Hungarian claims to Romania. But probably honest and mostly accurate. Good information.

While written with humor, this is a well done work that offers an insight into the origins of the Romanian people. This is a book written for the general public, in order to make light into the great history of the Romanians. I enjoyed reading it.

Rasvan Davidescu has written a well-research essay on a most controversial topic. It made me understand WHY the topic is so controversial and what is the archaeological and "common sense" evidence of how and where the Romanian language and culture was formed. A wonderful book, that could be used by anyone interested in the history of Romance languages or the ancient history of eastern Europe.

very well documented

Great book about the history of the Romanians in English and a modern way to go. Good read if you want to know more about Romanians and their ancestors

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