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978-0-521-87238-6 - A Concise History of Romania

Keith Hitchins

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A CONCISE HISTORY OF ROMANIA

Spanning a period of 2,000 years from the Roman conquest of Dacia to the present day, *A Concise History of Romania* traces the development of a unique nation situated on the border between East and West. In this illuminating new history, Keith Hitchins explores Romania's struggle to find its place amidst two diverse societies: one governed by Eastern Orthodox tradition and spirituality and peasant agriculture and the other by Western rationalism, experimentation, and capitalism. The book charts Romania's advancement through four significant phases of its history: medieval, early modern, modern, and finally the nation's "return to Europe," evaluating all the while Romania's part in European politics, economic and social change, intellectual and cultural renewals, and international entanglements. This is a fascinating history of an East European nation, one which sheds new light on the complex evolution of the Romanians and the identity they have successfully crafted from a unique synthesis of traditions.

KEITH HITCHINS is Professor of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

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KEITH HITCHINS
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign



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For

Val Martin, Ullica Segerstrale, Pompilia Burciță

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“No one is better suited than Professor Keith Hitchins to encompass within a single volume the history of the Romanians and Romania. He knows this country – its language, history, and culture – like no one else. He is also well acquainted with Southeastern and Central Europe, and thus he is able to place Romanian history in a broad European context. The present work offers the reader a full, accurate, and perfectly balanced account of a country situated at the meeting place of East and West which over time had to change direction between opposite poles: this is the idea around which the narrative is structured. For those who wish to know the essentials about this European player the book by Keith Hitchins is by far the best introduction.”

LUCIAN BOIA,

Professor, University of Bucharest

“There are two kinds of historians – those who seek to judge and those who seek to understand. Keith Hitchins has paved a path for many younger generations of historians of how to understand empathetically without giving up critical approaches to the past. The historiography on Romania is fortunate to have such an elegant, intellectually astute, and erudite master. The book before you represents the distillation of a lifetime of study, passion, and thoughtful deliberation about the complexities of a land and people at the crossroads between East and West. This book will be of great value to both specialists and a wider audience of readers with an interest in understanding the idea of Europe through this fascinating case study, often marginal to but essentially part of what Europe has evolved to become over the last two millennia.”

MARIA BUCUR-DECKARD,

*John W. Hill Professor of East European History,
Indiana University*

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“Keith Hitchens is for most of us the most reliable authority on the history of the Romanians. His erudition is amazingly broad and deep, his discourse is clear and articulate, his narrative is simple and highly objective in a field mined with suspicions and ideological or ethnic biases. We should rejoice to have now a synthesis of his numerous separate studies. It is a fitting monument to a life-long scholarly and creative endeavor.”

VIRGIL NEMOIANU,
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and Ordinary Professor of Philosophy,
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