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THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION  
IN ROUMANIA

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*The*  
AGRARIAN REVOLUTION  
IN ROUMANIA

*By*

IFOR L. EVANS

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## P R E F A C E

**O**F all the far-reaching changes which the World War has precipitated in the political and social structure of European society, not the least in its importance is the wave of Agrarian Reform which has swept over the Eastern half of the continent since the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. This affects intimately the daily lives of scores of millions of people, and modern history provides many examples to show that change in the agrarian sphere, when it operates in favour of the mass of the rural population, is almost always permanent in its results.

In Russia, the overthrow of the Tsarist regime was followed almost immediately by the wholesale confiscation of the large estates; and, for a number of reasons, of which not the least was the need for self-preservation, legislation designed to improve the lot of the rural population, and to guarantee the social order by the establishment of peasant proprietorship on a large scale, was introduced soon after in all the border States. The estates of the large landowners, who had formerly predominated in the political and economic organization of East European society, were expropriated wholesale on terms which virtually amounted to confiscation. The centre of social gravity was changed in consequence in so drastic a fashion that it is no exaggeration to regard this latest of agrarian reforms as a 'veritable Agrarian Revolution. The movement, however, though revolutionary in its means was ultra-conservative in its aims; and the reinforcement of respect for property among the peasantry, effected as it was by a violation of the very principle itself, nevertheless provided a successful dam to the Bolshevik flood which, at one moment, threatened to engulf the whole of Eastern and Central Europe.

To Western eyes this sudden emergence of the peasant triumphant may well seem startling and unexpected, for the stage setting added enormously to the revolutionary appearance of the movement. In reality, however, the question

is by no means of recent origin, and one may perhaps be pardoned for saying of this peasant revolution what one of the greatest of French historians said of the French Revolution of 1789,

qu'il n'y eut jamais d'événements plus grands, conduits de plus loin, mieux préparés et moins prévus<sup>1</sup>.

The coming of the peasant to his own has destroyed for ever the very basis of the old social order in Eastern Europe; yet prior to the World War but few members of the former governing classes realized how near they stood to the final *dénouement*. In the light of the ultimate sequel, however, it appears to us that the inevitability of the whole process should have been apparent for generations. The war indeed hastened, but it did not cause the Agrarian Revolution.

From the economic point of view a study of the movement is of the greatest interest, for Eastern Europe was formerly one of the great granaries of the world. In the last five years before the war Russia alone contributed no less than 4½ million metric tons of wheat and wheat-flour annually to international trade, while Roumanian exports averaged nearly 1·4 million tons. Russia, indeed, was the greatest wheat-exporting country in the world and furnished a total not far short of that of the United States of America and Canada combined<sup>2</sup>. Roumania occupied the fifth place for wheat, and came third as a maize-exporting country with an average of nearly one million tons—a total within measurable distance of that of the United States<sup>3</sup>. Since the war, however, exports from these countries have been almost negligible in comparison. In these circumstances the future of agricultural production is of more than merely local interest, and the probable consequences of the far-reaching changes that have taken place in the rural life of Eastern Europe

<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville: *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately 4½, as against 4¼ million metric tons.

<sup>3</sup> The Argentine exported nearly 3 million tons of maize: the U.S.A. just over, and Roumania just under, one million tons.



merit the closest attention from the economic no less than from the social point of view.

It must, of course, be admitted that it is as yet too early to formulate any very definite conclusions as to the influence of this particular factor, as Agrarian Reform has coincided with a vast political upheaval which is in part the cause and in part the consequence of an almost complete collapse in political and economic organization. In the case of Russia in particular, fairly reliable information has only recently begun to come to hand, and some years must yet pass before it will be possible to view the problem in proper perspective. This fact, however, only adds to the importance of an investigation into the general trend of affairs in Roumania. At the same time it cannot be denied that, although great progress has already been made in that country in the direction of a return to more normal conditions, the period of time which has elapsed since the first application of the new agrarian legislation is too short to enable us to dogmatize as to the final results of the reform itself. It might, however, be argued that the analysis of an economic problem would be of no practical value if sufficient time were allowed for all the contributory factors to work themselves out to the full; for, in that unlikely event, the problem itself would long since have been relegated to the misty background of a distant past.

The modern Kingdom of Roumania, with an area of 114,343 square miles and a population of nearly sixteen millions, is perhaps worth some attention for its own sake; while its geographical position is one of considerable importance in the economics and politics of Eastern Europe. In a country where the rural inhabitants form from 80 to 90 per cent. of the total population, no question is quite so prominent as that of agricultural organization and production, while the Old Kingdom of Roumania, as we have already seen, was one of the great corn-exporting countries of the world. A study of the agrarian question in Roumania gains

still further in interest from the light which it may be expected to throw on somewhat similar developments in Russia. Although the time has not yet come for a comprehensive survey of the agrarian revolution in Eastern Europe as a whole, an investigation such as this may nevertheless be of service in the meantime as a preliminary study of a not unimportant side of one of the greatest social upheavals of modern times.

That the roots of the present lie deep in the past is fortunately by now a commonplace; and no excuse is needed for devoting a considerable amount of attention to the historical evolution of the agrarian problem in the territories which are now united in the modern Kingdom of Roumania. This is all the more the case in that it is believed that the subject has not yet been treated in any form in English; nor has an attempt as yet been made, in any language, to compare the development of events in all the Roumanian lands, which were so long divided among different sovereignties of widely different political and social structure.

It is not, however, enough to place the subject in its proper historical setting; for not only is the historical evolution of a people largely determined by its geographical *milieu*, but, in addition, changes in economic structure will themselves produce widely different results in different physical settings. An attempt has, therefore, been made to place this agrarian problem in space, as it were, as well as in time. A short account of the people, the land and the general economic technique—of the subject of economic activities, the object and the connecting link between the two—may be of use in the analysis of this, as in that of most other economic problems. It may be possible thus to make clear that legal and economic changes in the agrarian sphere which would almost certainly be disastrous in their effects if applied to the developed rural economy of the West, may be not only not harmful but positively beneficial in the totally different circumstances of Eastern Europe. In other words it is im-

perative that the Agrarian Revolution in Roumania should be judged in terms of the history and the geography of Roumania itself.

The statistical material upon which much of this work is based is for the most part collected together in a special statistical appendix. The excuse for the relatively large amount of space devoted to this side of the question is that it seemed not unimportant to discover, so far as possible, what the actual facts were. Indeed, an attempt has been made throughout to place this particular problem in its appropriate setting rather than to indulge in somewhat uncertain speculation, *in vacuo*, as it were, on agrarian reform in the abstract.

My debt to the works on general Roumanian history by the late Professor Xenopol of Jassy and by the distinguished Professor at the University of Bucarest, M. N. Jorga, is particularly apparent in the historical chapters which follow. Special thanks are due to the present Finance Minister of Roumania, M. Vintila J. C. Brătianu, and to the Roumanian Minister in London, M. Neculae Titulescu, for the great help they have given me in collecting much of the statistical information which is contained in this volume. While it is highly improbable that they will both agree with all my conclusions, I have to thank them very heartily for many most interesting conversations on the agrarian question in Roumania and for their unfailing kindness at all times. It is also a particularly pleasant task for me to express my gratitude to my friend, Mr D. N. Ciotori, for much invaluable assistance in preparing this book for the press, though for its many defects I alone am responsible.

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CAMBRIDGE,  
December, 1923

## ROUMANIAN NAMES

A FEW indications as to the pronunciation of the Roumanian names and terms given in the text may not be out of place here.

ă is not unlike the *u* in *but*.

â has no exact equivalent in English, but is not unlike the *er* in *butter*.

au is pronounced as *ow*.

c is pronounced like *ch* in *church* when it precedes *e* and *i*.  
Otherwise it has the sound of *k*.

g when followed by *e* or *i* is pronounced as in *general*.  
Otherwise as in *great*.

î as *d*.

j as in English.

ș has the sound of *sh* in *shall*.

ț has the sound of *ts*.

u has the sound of *oo* in *too*.

The Roumanian form of place-names is given throughout in the absence of any definite English form. The following table gives some equivalents for the most important of these.

Brașov	Kronstadt.
Bucovina	Bukowina.
Cernauti	Czernowitz.
Cetatea Alba	Akermann.
Chișinău	Khishineff.
Constanța	Constantza; Kustendje.
Dobrogea	Dobruja; Dobrudja.
Hotin	Khotin.
Nistru	Dniestr.
Oradea Mare	Grosswardein.
Satmar	Szatmar.
Sibiu	Hermannstadt.
Tighina	Bender.
Tisa	Theiss; Tisza.

## GEOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

THE KINGDOM OF ROUMANIA, as established by the Treaty Settlement of 1919, is almost as large as the British Isles. Situated, roughly speaking, between latitudes  $48\frac{1}{2}$  and  $43\frac{1}{2}$  North; and between the 20th and 30th meridians East of Greenwich, it forms one of the most compact of all modern States, for its frontier is but 1783 miles long, as compared with an area of 114,343 square miles. For about two-thirds of its length the new frontier is formed by clearly-defined natural features. The river Nistru separates Roumania from Russia (or rather from the Ukraine) on the North-East, while the Danube provides a boundary with Jugoslavia and Bulgaria on the South. Between the latter country and the Province of the Dobrogea, however, a line of hills forms a rather less satisfactory frontier on the South-East. To the North the highlands of Maramureş and a tributary of the Prut mark the boundary with Czechoslovakia and Poland (Eastern Galicia) respectively; while the line separating Roumania from Hungary and Jugoslavia on the West runs through the Tisa plains a few miles away from the western ridge of the Transylvanian highlands. On the East the Black Sea coast extends for  $277\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the mouth of the Nistru to the south-eastern corner of the Dobrogea.

Greater Roumania lies East and West of the main chain of the Carpathians, which forms, as it were, the spinal column of the new State. This mountain range, however, is far from being so formidable a barrier as, for example, the Alps; for hardly anywhere do the highest peaks exceed 8000 feet in height, while the Olt, which is one of the principal rivers of the country, rises many miles on the Transylvanian side of the old frontier and cuts through the Southern Carpathians at the Turnu Rosu (Red Tower) pass to join the Danube near Turnu Magurele in the Old Kingdom. The Roumanian rivers, almost without exception, flow into the Danube. For the most part, however, the Transylvanian tributaries, the most important of which is the Mureş, flow westwards to

join the Tisa, while the chief rivers of the Old Kingdom, like the Olt, the Ialomița, the Siret and the Prut, flow down direct to the main artery from the North.

The physical structure of the country is much the same on both sides of the Carpathian highlands; and the rough division into mountain, hill and plain, which has so greatly determined the historical evolution of the Roumanian people, provides a useful guide to the main physical regions of the country.

The central mountain zone is known as the Moldavian Carpathians in the North, and as the Transylvanian Alps in the South. The northern peaks seldom reach 7000 feet, while the region as a whole is characterized by rolling uplands rather than by rugged peaks of truly Alpine grandeur. The same features characterize the Bihar massive, which formerly formed part of the main Carpathian highlands, but which has been separated from these in the course of ages by the depression of the great Transylvanian basin, drained by the river Mureș and, in the South-West, by the Olt. Protected on all sides by mountains, this central region of Transylvania provided an admirable refuge for the Roumanian people during the more troubled epochs of its history. The Transylvanian basin is composed of rolling country with dainty hills and fertile slopes and, despite the rigours of the winter and the great heat of the summer, offers a most favourable field for human activities.

The hill region of Wallachia, and of Moldavia West of the Siret, is in many respects very similar in structure to the Transylvanian basin; while between the Siret and the Prut, and even more between the Prut and the Nistru, the vast rolling country to the North gradually merges into the silent steppe-like plains of the South.

The great Danubian plains occupy the greater part of the old Principality of Wallachia and stretch away Eastwards, through the Bugeac zone of Southern Bessarabia, to join the vast steppes of the Ukraine.

The zones both of rainfall and of vegetation coincide in the main with these physical divisions. In the Carpathians, where there is a rainfall of over 35 inches annually, forests and rich mountain pastures of vast extent (called "poiana") limit the possibilities of agricultural production proper. In the hill region the annual rainfall is between 28 and 35 inches, and the importance of pasture makes of this a zone of mixed farming. In the Southern Steppes, on the other hand, the rainfall is in many districts less than 15 inches annually, and here again, natural characteristics largely circumscribe the direction of agricultural production.

On the western frontier of the new Kingdom there is a belt of flat country which really forms part of the "Pusta" of Eastern Hungary; while the Dobrogea, a curiosity from the geological no less than from the ethnological point of view, can perhaps best be regarded as a promontory of the Bulgarian plateau jutting northwards to the Danube delta.

Even this short summary will probably have brought out the great diversity which characterizes the geographical structure of Greater Roumania. While we reserve the detailed consideration of agricultural production for a later chapter, in order the more fully to elucidate the connection between the agrarian geography of the country and the predominant forms of land tenure, the physical basis of the national life must, of course, constantly be borne in mind if we would arrive at a proper understanding of the social history of the Roumanian people.

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## *Statistical Appendix*

## STATISTICAL APPENDIX

IN the following tables relating to Greater Roumania the pre-war figures have been taken from the Roumanian Statistical Annual (*Anuarul Statistic al României*) for the Old Kingdom of Roumania; from the Russian Statistical Annual (*Annuaire Statistique Russe*) for Bessarabia; from the Austrian Statistical Handbook (*Handbuch der Oesterreichischen Statistik*) for the Bucovina; while the returns for the districts incorporated in the modern Province of Transylvania have been calculated from the Hungarian Statistical Annual (*Annuaire Statistique Magyare*).

In the totals of domestic animals the last pre-war census returns are given. These were taken in 1916 in the Old Kingdom; in 1910 in the Bucovina; in 1911 in Transylvania; and in 1914 in Bessarabia. It was unfortunately not possible to obtain figures relating to the same year for all the Roumanian lands. Since the war, however, returns have been made annually throughout Greater Roumania.

The pre-war figures for the principal cereals relate to the average for the five-year period 1909-13 in each case, save only in that of the Bucovina, where they refer to the years 1909-12. It is worth noting that the pre-war figures for the Old Kingdom do not include the two departments of Durustor and Caliacra, which were ceded by Bulgaria in 1913. In calculating the percentage tables given in the text, however, allowance has been made for this by first deducting the post-war returns for these districts from the corresponding totals for the Old Kingdom.

The post-war figures are taken from the official Bulletin of Agriculture (*Buletinul Agriculturii*) for the respective years. The returns for 1922-3, however, are only provisional as the final results were not available at the time of going to press. They should, therefore, be treated with some caution. A consideration of the general reliability of agricultural statistics in Eastern Europe would lie outside the scope of this present work.

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DOMESTIC ANIMALS  
(In thousands)

	Last pre-war census	1919	1920	1921	1922
<b>1. Cattle:</b>					
Old Kingdom	2938	1863	2151	2580	2823
Bucovina	228	181	147	213	234
Bessarabia	526	663	657	662	765
Transylvania	2051	1927	1920	2266	2110
Greater Roumania	5743	4634	4875	5721	5932
<b>2. Horses:</b>					
Old Kingdom	1219	603	675	792	903
Bucovina	70	36	58	64	72
Bessarabia	464	403	408	428	435
Transylvania	514	339	344	402	392
Greater Roumania	2267	1381	1485	1686	1802
<b>3. Pigs:</b>					
Old Kingdom	1382	822	1010	1309	1447
Bucovina	219	88	67	104	121
Bessarabia	349	346	430	473	508
Transylvania	1521	1033	1006	1245	1070
Greater Roumania	3471	2289	2513	3131	3146
<b>4. Sheep:</b>					
Old Kingdom	7811	3306	3953	5414	6197
Bucovina	189	100	119	184	235
Bessarabia	1488	1594	1776	2180	2297
Transylvania	3532	2790	2842	3416	3591
Greater Roumania	13020	7790	8690	11194	12320

SOWINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL CEREALS  
(In thousands of hectares)

	Average 1909-13	1919-20	1920-1	1921-2	1922-3
<b>1. Wheat:</b>					
Old Kingdom	1852	782	1161	1209	1197
Bucovina	21	12	15	22	19
Bessarabia	729	571	536	575	828
Transylvania	978	658	776	844	640
Greater Roumania	3580	2023	2488	2650	2684

SOWINGS OF THE PRINCIPAL CEREALS (*continued*)

(In thousands of hectares)

	Average 1909-13	1919-20	1920-1	1921-2	1922-3
<b>2. Rye:</b>					
Old Kingdom	128	65	72	59	69
Bucovina	29	18	17	25	20
Bessarabia	209	149	99	91	113
Transylvania	125	83	138	91	61
Greater Roumania	491	315	326	266	263
<b>3. Barley:</b>					
Old Kingdom	534	495	710	873	984
Bucovina	32	30	33	32	38
Bessarabia	672	752	659	682	786
Transylvania	128	124	168	140	151
Greater Roumania	1366	1401	1570	1727	1959
<b>4. Oats:</b>					
Old Kingdom	447	517	661	752	772
Bucovina	47	28	36	35	48
Bessarabia	72	197	249	313	277
Transylvania	309	224	293	233	259
Greater Roumania	875	966	1239	1333	1356
<b>5. Maize:</b>					
Old Kingdom	2084	1888	1861	1977	1966
Bucovina	67	62	61	52	58
Bessarabia	766	714	748	653	664
Transylvania	991	631	774	722	710
Greater Roumania	3908	3295	3444	3404	3398
<b>6. Total of the five principal cereals:</b>					
Old Kingdom	5045	3747	4465	4870	4988
Bucovina	196	150	161	167	183
Bessarabia	2448	2383	2291	2313	2668
Transylvania	2531	1720	2149	2030	1821
Greater Roumania	10220	8000	9066	9380	9660
<b>7. Total arable:</b>					
Old Kingdom	5490	4050	4889	5306	—
Bucovina	313	199	239	233	—
Bessarabia	2490	2515	2447	2467	—
Transylvania	3022	—	2468	2333	—
Greater Roumania	11315	—	10043	10339	—

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

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YIELD PER HECTARE  
(In metric quintals)

	Average 1909-13	1920	1921	1922	1923
<b>1. Wheat:</b>					
Old Kingdom	12.9	8.6	10.1	10.2	11.0
Bucovina	13.4	9.5	10.8	11.3	12.2
Bessarabia	8.0	9.1	4.4	10.2	14.5
Transylvania	11.1	7.0	9.1	7.8	8.9
<b>2. Barley:</b>					
Old Kingdom	10.2	11.6	8.1	12.5	12.0
Bucovina	11.6	8.6	8.8	10.2	7.2
Bessarabia	9.3	10.3	3.9	11.7	8.9
Transylvania	13.0	7.8	7.3	8.6	7.2
<b>3. Oats:</b>					
Old Kingdom	9.4	11.5	9.0	10.3	6.5
Bucovina	14.3	9.0	9.1	10.3	5.8
Bessarabia	11.2	9.4	4.5	11.7	7.0
Transylvania	10.9	8.2	7.5	6.7	7.0
<b>4. Maize:</b>					
Old Kingdom	13.1	14.6	8.7	10.3	14.6
Bucovina	13.2	16.3	10.3	12.4	13.2
Bessarabia	11.2	14.3	7.2	9.0	12.8
Transylvania	15.8	13.2	8.2	8.8	8.9

HUNGARY

1. Domestic animals:

(In thousands)

	1911	1920
Cattle	2148	2088
Horses	895	717
Pigs	3320	3314
Sheep	2406	1476

These figures are taken from the *Annuaire Est Européen*, published by Oriens, Budapest, 1922, p. 66. The post-war returns are not quite complete, as part of the territory of modern Hungary was still occupied in the spring of 1920.

## 2. Sowings of the principal crops:

(In thousands of hectares)

	Average 1911-15	1919-20	1920-1	1921-2	1922-3
Wheat ... ..	1511	1077	1091	1155	1381
Rye ... ..	680	597	555	542	667
Barley ... ..	525	512	480	457	476
Oats ... ..	345	325	326	331	346
Maize ... ..	859	816	816	694	998
Total principal cereals	3920	3327	3268	3179	3868
Potatoes ... ..	242	254	276	189	—

The pre-war average is taken from the *Annuaire Est Européen*; the post-war totals come from tables published by the International Institute of Agriculture. The data for 1922-3 are provisional.

## 3. Crop returns:

(In quintals per hectare)

	Average 1911-15	1920	1921	1922
Wheat	13.1	9.7	11.7	10.6
Rye	11.8	8.8	10.1	10.0
Barley	13.5	9.6	9.3	9.9
Oats	12.6	10.0	9.0	9.8
Maize	17.5	15.6	8.4	11.8

The pre-war average is taken from the *Magyar Statisztikai Szemle* for 1923, where the returns are given in quintals per hold.

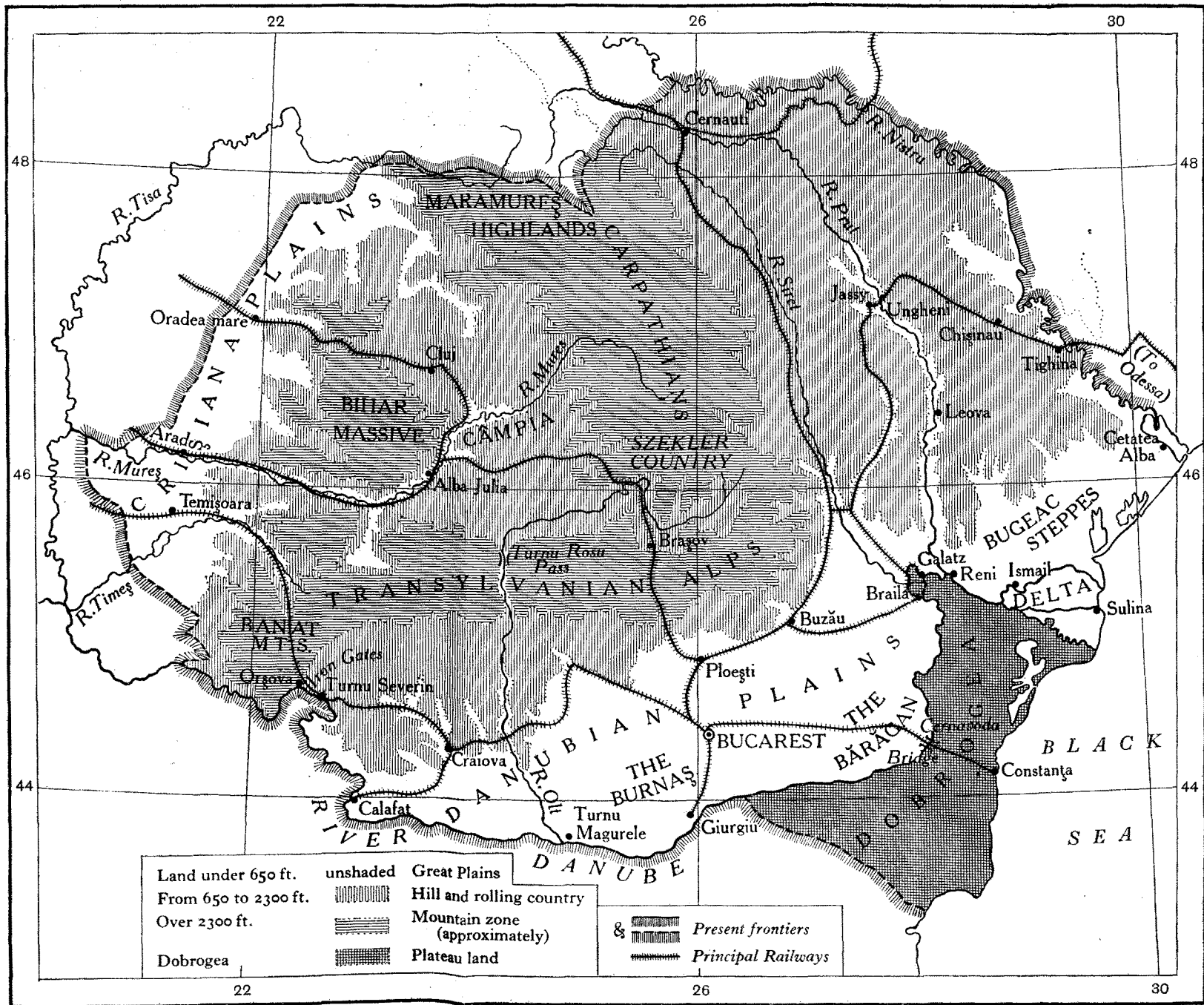
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