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Roumanian Journey (Bloomsbury Reader)

Sacheverell Sitwell

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'At the first mention of going to Roumania, a great many people, as I did myself, would take down their atlas and open the map. For Roumania, there can be no question, is among the lesser known lands of Europe.'

So begins Sir Sacheverell Sitwell's account of his Roumanian journey, made in the 1930s, when Bucharest was still eight days overland from London.

His four-week trip brings him into contact with longhaired gypsies at country fairs as well as the aristocracy in their medieval castles. The natural richness and variety of the landscape-from Transylvania to the Wallachian plains, the Carpathian peaks to the Danube Delta-delight him, as does the diversity of humanity he encounters, while his deep knowledge of European art and architecture makes him the ideal guide to the paintings, frescos, and buildings of Roumania.

It is impossible, of course, to read of Roumania in the 1930s without thinking of what lay ahead for that country, but the abiding impression left by the book is of the freshness of Sitwell's perceptions and his unquenchable curiosity in everything he saw.

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