

retreat of the Tartars, who had occupied the country for a century (1241-1345). They were driven out by an expedition organized by the King of Hungary, in which the Rumanians from the province of Maramuresh also took part. It was the latter who then founded the Principality of Moldavia under the suzerainty of Hungary, the chroniclers mentioning as its first ruler the Voivod Dragosh.¹

The rudimentary political formations which already existed before the foundation of the principalities were swept away by the invasion of the Tartars, who destroyed all trace of constituted authority in the plains below the Carpathians. In consequence the immigrants from Transylvania did not encounter any resistance, and were even able to impose obedience upon the native population, though coming rather as refugees than as conquerors. These newcomers were mostly nobles (*boyards*). Their emigration deprived the masses of the Rumanian population of Transylvania of all moral and political support especially as a part of the nobility had already been won over by their Hungarian masters and with time the masses fell into servitude. On the other hand the immigrating nobles strengthened and secured the predominance of their class in the States which were to be founded. In both cases the situation of the peasantry became worse.

¹ The legend as to the foundation of Moldavia tells us that Dragosh, when hunting one day in the mountains, was pursuing a bison through the dense forest. Towards sunset, just when a successful shot from his bow had struck and killed the animal, he emerged at a point from which the whole panorama of Moldavia was unfolding before his astonished eyes. Deeply moved by the beauty of this fair country, he resolved to found a State there. It is in commemoration of this event that Moldavia bears the head of a wild bison in her coat of arms.