

THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE RUMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES

The first attempt to organize itself into a political entity was made by the Rumanian nation in the thirteenth century, when, under the impulse of the disaffected nobles coming from Hungary, the two principalities of 'Munteuia' (Mountain Land), commonly known as Wallachia and 'Moldavia', came into being. The existence of Rumanians on both sides of the Carpathians long before Wallachia was founded is corroborated by many contemporary chroniclers. We find evidence of it in as distant a source as the *History of the Mongols* of the Persian chronicler, Rashid Al-Din, who, describing the invasion of the Tartars, says: 'In the middle of spring (1240) the princes (Mongols or Tartars) crossed the mountains in order to enter the country of the Bulares (Bulgarians) and of the Bashgirds (Hungarians). Orda, who was marching to the right, passed through the country of the Ilante (Olt), where Bazarambam met him with an army, but was beaten. Boudgek crossed the mountains to enter the Kara Ulak, and defeated the Ulak (Wlach) people.'¹ Kara Ulak means Black Wallachia; Bazarambam is certainly the corrupted name of the Ban Bassarab, who ruled as vassal of Hungary over the province of Oltenia, and whose dynasty founded the Principality of Wallachia. The early history of this principality was marked by efforts to free it from Hungarian domination, a natural development of the desire for emancipation, which impelled the Rumanians to migrate from the subdued provinces in Hungary.

The foundation of Moldavia dates from after the

¹ Xenopol, *Histoire des Roumains*, Paris, 1896, i. 168.