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**Magyars, Mongols, Romanians and Saxons: population mix  
and density in Moldavia, from 1230 to 1365**

Although the topic of this paper may at first blush appear obscure, I submit that what occurred in Moldavia in the period between 1230 and 1365 is of significance for the general history of Europe as it represents the final chapter in the prolonged, often tragic, undoubtedly disruptive and destructive process which from its beginnings in the fourth century frequently threatened the centres of Christian Europe and certainly played the major role in ushering in the Dark Ages of Western Christendom. I refer of course to the waves of invasions of nomadic tribes from Asia into Europe via the Southern Russian steppes. The territory between the lower Danube, the Carpathians and the river Prut offered, almost from the foundation of Constantinople, a passage or temporary home to these invaders. It is from precisely this territory that Moldavia and Wallachia, the two Romanian principalities, emerged when the final wave, that of the Mongols, receded toward the middle of the fourteenth century. Moldavia, being the westernmost province of the Mongols in Southern Europe, was the battleground on which the Golden Horde was finally vanquished as a political power in the Balkans. From then on the eastern threat to Christendom in Europe came no more from the steppes of Southern Russia via the Northern Balkans but from the uplands of Anatolia across the Southern Balkans.

The second claim I want to make for the subject of this paper is certainly less sweeping but from a Balkan perspective perhaps no less important: it covers a decisive phase in the history of the Romanian people, of Romania, and, to a much lesser extent, of Hungary. The beginning of the period sees the Apostolic Kingdom of Hungary under its Arpadian rulers strong and engaged in a rigorous process of expansion to the south and east. This expansion was abruptly ended by the devastating invasion of the Mongols in 1241 whose sway over Moldavia

continued for a century. Hungarian ambitions toward the territory east of the Carpathians, though briefly revived in the mid-fourteenth century, were frustrated finally with the creation of an independent Moldavian Principality in approximately 1365 under the incorrigible foe of Hungary, Bogdan.

This brief outline of what happened in the area that was to become the Principality at the end of the period is accepted by the majority of historians. However the details of what happened in the 135 years in question and how Moldavia emerged in the form and with the ethnic composition it did are shrouded in mystery. The aim of this paper is to cast some light on these questions. The paucity of documentary evidence and archaeological data means my conclusions for the present can only be speculative. I have restricted the geographical scope of this discussion to the area between the Carpathians and the Prut. I shall not therefore treat the lands between the Prut and the Dniester which remained under Mongol control for much longer. I shall also steer clear of the notorious question whether Magyars, i.e. Hungarians, settled in Moldavia before Romanians or vice versa. For the period in question this is irrelevant since there is irrefutable documentary evidence, which we shall refer to later, that both groups must have been present in the territory by 1230.

To set the background to the period we need to refer briefly to the arrival of the last significant group of eastern nomads before the Mongol invasion, the Cumans, who occupied the area of the later Principalities in the 1070s. The Cumans, who were a Turkic-speaking nation from present-day China, dispersed or assimilated the other Turkic tribes—the Petchenegs and Ghuzz—in the region and began their 150-year occupation. By the early thirteenth century it appears that the Cumans recognised the suzerainty of the Hungarian Crown, and their land, Cumania, attracted the attention of Hungarian and Saxon settlers. The boundaries of Cumania are still the subject of controversy, but it is reasonably sure that they contained north-eastern Wallachia and south-western Moldavia. Certain documents however indicate that Cumania included most of the later Moldavian Principality<sup>1</sup>. The desire of the Cumans to strengthen their relations with Hungary received fresh and urgent impetus in 1223 when at Kalkha near the Sea of Azov the

1. See Victor Spinei, *Moldavia in the 11th-14th Centuries*, Bucharest 1986, p. 206.

combined army of the Cumans and the Russian Principalities was broken by the Golden Horde. The Cumans were in need of *realpolitik* and the Kingdom of Hungary must have seemed an attractive potential ally against the forces of Genghis Khan.

An expression of this desire was the request by one of the Cuman chieftains, Borz Membrok, to become a Christian. The Papacy and the Hungarian Crown reacted positively and a Papal Legate, Robert, accompanied by the Hungarian Crown Prince Béla (the later Béla IV), some bishops, a crowd of priests and lay people and a few soldiers, set off for Cumania in 1227. They encountered Borz Membrok at the town of Milcov where he and 15,000 of his compatriots received baptism. Concerned to ensure that their spiritual labours were not in vain, Robert established a new bishopric, the Cuman diocese, and encouraged those Christians who accompanied him to remain to nurture the still half-pagan Cumans in the Catholic faith<sup>2</sup>. One can imagine that the Hungarian Kingdom took full advantage of the openness of the Cumans to the West to extend its influence beyond the Carpathians, and that the missionaries were accompanied by administrators, craftsmen, traders and soldiers. By 1234 we find in the letter from Pope Gregory to Béla IV mentioned earlier that in Cumania, which he refers to as “your land” (“terra sua”) there were Romanians, Hungarians and Saxons (Germans). The number of the former must have been sufficiently great to have had a radical effect on the religious beliefs of the Hungarians and Saxons, since the Pope complains to Béla that some of these immigrants from Hungary (in all likelihood they were mainly drawn from Transylvania) had so mixed with the Romanians as to be one people (“cum eis populus unus facti”), and were being led astray into accepting Orthodoxy<sup>3</sup>. It is interesting to note that although Constantinople was at this time under Latin control, the Orthodox Church was also engaged in missionary activity in the Cuman diocese. Béla is admonished on the strength of the oath he swore to force these people to obey Rome. The Apostolic

2. P. P. Domokos, “Moldvai csángó magyarok”, in Gergely Csoma, *Moldvai csángó magyarok*, Budapest 1988, p. 136; András Pálóczi Horváth, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians*, Budapest 1989, p. 48.

3. Eudoxiu De Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, vol. I, part 1, 1139-1345, Bucharest 1887, p. 132; E. Lukinich and L. Gáldi, *Documenta historiam valachorum in Hungaria illustratia*, Budapest 1941, pp. 17-18.

Kingdom of Hungary, which already on papal instruction was combating heretics in Bosnia, thus extended the battle against “the Schism” to the south east in the name of Catholicism<sup>4</sup>. We can assume that to enforce this, as well as to shore up the defences of Cumania which had, after all, become Hungary’s buffer state against attacks from the east, considerable numbers of Hungarian troops were brought into the area. It may be that the line of fortresses that extends north between the Siret and the Carpathians dates from this time. Hungary’s efforts, both spiritual and temporal, were doomed to failure however. The impending storm of a massive Mongol invasion led, in 1239, to the leader of the Cumans, Kuthen, asking for and being granted asylum in Hungary for himself and 40,000 of his people. A further 10,000 Cumans headed south into the Balkans<sup>5</sup>. The Mongol attack, when it came two years later, destroyed all trace of Milcov, the Cuman bishopric, and the Cumans of Cumania.

The Mongols took Moldavia in a two-pronged attack. One force under Kadan crossed Northern Moldavia in the direction of the Transylvanian silver-mining, largely Saxon, town of Rodna. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Mongols dealt with any settlements they found en route with their customary thoroughness: all traces of human habitation in Northern Bukovina ceased in the mid-thirteenth century. A small stronghold at Piatra Neamț suffered the same fate, presumably from a detachment of Kadan’s men who chose the Bistrița valley as their route to Transylvania. Another army swept southwards through the rest of Moldavia crossing the Siret to plunder and destroy the Cuman diocese<sup>6</sup>. According to the *Commentariolum* 90 Dominicans were martyred in this attack<sup>7</sup>. Thus, in a single wave the Mongols obliterated everything the combined force of the Roman Church and the Kingdom of Hungary had created in the east Carpathian space in the previous few decades.

What happened in Moldavia during the next century or so is obscure. Documentary evidence is very sparse and no coherent picture

4. László Makkai, *A milkói kun püspökség és népei*, Debrecen 1936, p. 43.

5. Bernát Munkácsi, “A moldvai csángók eredete”, *Ethnographia* XIII, 10, 1902, p. 440.

6. Spinei, pp. 112-13.

7. Makkai, p. 44.

emerges from it. By the time the mist clears toward the end of the fourteenth century, we find the territory inhabited by a mixed population of Romanians, Magyars and Saxons with isolated groups of Mongols. Towns have either been re-established or founded, and trade is flourishing. Among the questions that continue to provoke debate are:

- i) how absolute was the destruction wrought by the Mongols on the population of Moldavia in 1241/42?
- ii) when did resettlement begin?
- iii) at what point did the Hungarian Kingdom re-assert its authority over the Moldavian lands?

I shall devote the remainder of this paper to attempting to give answers to these questions.

Various scholars —Munkácsi, Domokos, Weczerka, Gorovei, Spinei, Gunda, Zsupos— have favoured some form of continuity theory. By this I mean that although accepting that the Mongol invasion depleted the population of Moldavia, life continued. For Munkácsi among those who remained were Cumans<sup>8</sup>, for Domokos, Gunda and Zsupos, Hungarians<sup>9</sup>, the forebears of the Csángó Magyars who today live in communities in the vicinity of Roman and Bacău, for Spinei and Gorovei, Romanians<sup>10</sup>, and for Weczerka, some Saxons<sup>11</sup>. To quote Gunda “in the tempests of history the Hungarians of the Bacău and Roman areas managed to survive, albeit in reduced numbers”. Weczerka, although accepting that if there were any Saxon towns in existence in Moldavia in 1241 they would have suffered at the hands of the Mongols, states “On no account however can we assume a general *tabula rasa* after the Tatar (i.e. Mongol) invasion”. Unlike the Hungarian scholars cited above however, he accepts that in Cumania proper, that is, in terms of Moldavia, the south-west portion of the later Principality, Catholic settlements completely died out, since documents of 1279 and 1332 attest the

8. Munkácsi, pp. 433-40.

9. Domokos, p. 136; Béla Gunda, “A moldvai magyarok eredete”, *Magyar Nyelv* LXXXIV, 1988, p. 22; Zoltán Zsupos, “A moldvai csángó-magyarok eredetéről”, *Néprajzi Látóhatár* III/1-2, 1994, pp. 53-59.

10. Spinei, pp. 167, 203; Ștefan S. Gorovei, “L’Etat roumain de l’est des Carpatés”, *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* XVIII, 3, 1979, p. 473.

11. Hugo Weczerka, *Das mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche Deutschtum im Fürstentum Moldau*, Munich 1960, p. 98.

Mongols' destruction of all Catholic lives<sup>12</sup>.

A related position is that of Mikecs who argued that although the Catholic settlers of Moldavia were annihilated in 1241, they were quickly replaced by Hungarian soldiers. He suggested that Cumania was re-populated in this way in 1247 with cover provided by the German Knights of St John. This rapid resettlement was motivated by Béla IV's policy of defending the Carpathian passes. Mikecs contended that he did this by deploying a military guard along the Siret backed by a series of fortresses in the valleys of its western tributaries, the Trotuş, Bistriţa and Moldova<sup>13</sup>.

This proposal is not persuasive because, apart from the other arguments we shall examine below in favour of a considerably later immigration, it fails to take account of the letter written in 1250, that is three years after the putative settlement, by that vociferous correspondent Béla IV to the Pope lamenting that the regions formerly under his suzerainty—and he lists *Ruscia*, *Cumania*, *Brodnic* and *Bulgaria*—were now in Mongol control<sup>14</sup>. Despite this Weczerka clearly has some sympathy for the immediate resettlement theory because he advances the idea that following the invasion the Hungarian king began restoring his eastern frontiers by building castles and establishing fortified towns. He claims that to carry out this work he invited Western craftsmen, particularly Germans<sup>15</sup>.

Other scholars take the view that the combined effect of the slaughter of the military, clerical and civilian population of the area by the Mongols, and their own occupation of it rendered the later Moldavia virtually uninhabited by Magyars, Saxons and Romanians until the early part of the fourteenth century. There is much to support this position. First we have a near contemporary report by John of Küküllő, the official chronicler of the Hungarian Court, who states that when Bogdan “secretly withdrew” into Moldavia, it was “a land subject to the Hungarian Crown but for a long time empty of inhabitants owing to the proximity of the Tatars”<sup>16</sup>. We do not know precisely the year of

12. *Ibid.*

13. László Mikecs, *Csángók*, Cluj 1941, pp. 52-53.

14. Spinei, p. 164; cf. Makkai, p. 44.

15. Weczerka, pp. 98-99.

16. See Dennis Deletant, *Studies in Romanian History*, Bucharest 1991, p. 55.

Bogdan's arrival beyond the Carpathians but it occurred some time in the early 1360s. Although Spinei questions this account and suggests that John was merely playing down the significance of the loss of Moldavia to Hungary<sup>17</sup>, he himself acknowledges that this territory was directly controlled by the Mongols<sup>18</sup>. By the early fourteenth century Tartaria or *terra Tartorum* replaced Cumania as its designation. Documents from the time reveal the existence of Tatar settlements throughout Moldavia, even reaching such westerly areas as Baia and Neamț. The picture that emerges is that Moldavia had become a wasteland with sparse settlements of marauding groups of Tatars<sup>19</sup>. In these circumstances it begs belief that settlers from Hungary, be they Magyar, Saxon or Romanian, would move willingly in appreciable numbers to such an environment. Cantemir, writing in 1714-16, reported that the inhabitants of Lower Moldavia still suffered plundering raids from Tatars whose lands they bordered<sup>20</sup>. He also, incidentally, mentioned that when Dragoș arrived in Moldavia, i.e. in the mid- to late 1340s or perhaps later, to establish the Principality under Hungarian suzerainty, he found the land depopulated<sup>21</sup>.

If it is scarcely credible that immigrants from Hungary would come to *terra Tartorum* in significant numbers, it is even less believable that Béla IV or his successors would commit men and resources to re-establishing the defensive line at the Siret, in an area occupied by a hostile force with vastly superior military capability, until the balance of power shifted in the Eastern Carpathian space. It is thus unsurprising that there are no records of Hungarian action against the Mongols in Moldavia until 1324. This attack, which was launched from Transylvania, was in any case pre-emptive: the Hungarian king had reason to fear a fresh Mongol invasion. Béla IV would much more likely deploy his forces on the Carpathian rim, a position eminently more defensible than the comparatively flat terrain of the Siret valley; and there is evidence of

17. Spinei, p. 206.

18. Spinei, pp. 28-29.

19. Bertold Spuler, *Die goldener Horde: die Mongolen in Russland 1223-1502*, Wiesbaden 1965, pp. 278-79; Weczerka, p. 126; Makkai, p. 45.

20. D. Cantemir, *Opisanie Moldavii*, Kishinev 1973, pp. 151, 157.

21. *Op.cit.*, p. 149. Gorovei however disputes that the area was largely uninhabited (Gorovei, p. 473).

a quick recovery of the Transylvanian towns after 1242<sup>22</sup>. There is nothing to suggest comparable developments to the east. The ecclesiastical records reveal a similar picture. Thus, for example, in 1279 Adorján, the leader of the Hungarian Franciscans, appealed to the Pope to send a bishop to support the monks preaching among the Tatars, for, he lamented, there has been neither a bishop nor a Christian congregation in the area for 40 years, that is since the destruction of Milcov<sup>23</sup>.

It is clear from the testimony of contemporary chronicles that while Hungary attempted to wrest control of Moldavia from the Mongols in the early part of the fourteenth century, it was not until Lajos I came to the throne in 1342 that its efforts met with significant success. We know that the campaign led by Lackfy in 1345 with a combined force of Székely and a few Magyars, presumably launched from Transylvania, resulted in a punishing defeat for the Mongols<sup>24</sup>. The Golden Horde was at this time suffering internal strife and could not maintain its hold on Moldavia<sup>25</sup>. The last recorded reference to clashes between Lajos and the Mongols dates from 1352-1354, and in 1357 the Hungarian king is congratulated by the Pope for vanquishing them. Thus by 1357 the Tatars, if not driven out of the east Carpathian space, apparently had been completely subdued there<sup>26</sup>. The documents show that Lajos, in the manner of his Arpadian predecessors, prosecuted his eastward expansion on the military and religious fronts<sup>27</sup>. In addition however he made a daring political move: he promoted the initiative of the Romanian, Dragoş, from Maramureş to establish a principality under Hungarian suzerainty. His aim in this was presumably to create a buffer against aggression from the East, while gaining preferential access for Hungary to the trade routes beyond the Carpathians.

This answers the third of the questions I posed earlier, i.e. at what point did the Hungarian Kingdom re-assert its authority over the Moldavian lands? It is only under Lajos that we find it again playing a

22. Spinei, p. 98.

23. Hurmuzaki I, p. 249.

24. Deletant, pp. 51-53.

25. Spinei, pp. 129, 177.

26. Lukinich and Gáldi, p. 102; Deletant, p. 54.

27. Şerban Papacostea, "La fondation de la Valachie et de la Moldavie et les roumains de Transylvanie", *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* XVII, 3, 1978, p. 406.

significant role east of the Carpathians. The idea that this territory had become a foreign policy priority for the Hungarian Crown in the mid-fourteenth century is underlined by the agreement that Lajos signed with the Saxon merchants of Braşov in 1353. It bound them to provide him with all available forces in the case of the King launching an expedition to the east of the kingdom, while if the expedition was in the west their obligation was limited to sending 50 men, a token gesture<sup>28</sup>. Moreover we are a considerable way to answering the first of the questions I raised, viz. how absolute was the destruction wrought by the Mongols on the population of Moldavia in 1241/42? The evidence we have suggests it was widespread, and that the settlers on the Moldavian plains and even in the foothills of the Carpathians were either annihilated or driven from the main settlements. This is a generalisation however that will be modified somewhat as we consider the second, and possibly most contentious question —when did resettlement begin?

A number of scholars tend to place the beginnings of significant resettlement of the east Carpathian space by Hungarians, Saxons and Romanians in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. This view is based largely on two factors. The first is that from the time Bogdan was in control, which as mentioned above was approximately 1365, there is much evidence of a Hungarian and Saxon as well as, obviously, a Romanian presence in the Moldavian Principality. Moreover, it appears some of the Hungarian settlers supported Bogdan in his struggle with their king. For Mikecs this indicates that the Hungarians must have been established in Moldavia for several generations for their ties to their Motherland to have grown so weak<sup>29</sup>. The second factor is linguistic evidence. Benkő, for example, who firmly rejects the continuity theory, argues that the Hungarian settlement names in Moldavia, and the appearance of Hungarian loan-words in Moldavian chancery documents suggest notable Magyar immigration from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century<sup>30</sup>. Although I have focused on the arrival of the Hungarians east of the Carpathians, we can assume Weczerka is correct to think that Saxon immigration always occurred in

28. Spinei, p. 184.

29. Mikecs, pp. 52-53.

30. Loránd Benkő, *A csángók eredete és települése a nyelvtudomány szemszögéből*, Budapest 1990, p. 18.

tandem with that of the Magyars<sup>31</sup>.

Mikecs's argument is unconvincing. In the Middle Ages the idea of national identity was not well developed. Immigrants to Moldavia would have been motivated in their journey by the prospect of greater economic prosperity and/or personal freedom. If the extension of Hungarian power did indeed threaten its realisation, many of the settlers, whatever their linguistic or cultural background, in all likelihood would have resisted it.

The linguistic argument is worth examining closely. A number of scholars have pointed to the abundance of Hungarian settlement names in Moldavia. This obviously implies a considerable colonisation at an early stage by Magyars. The key question however is "how early?". While it is perhaps tempting to date these toponyms to the period of the original Hungarian arrival in the region, i.e. the ninth century, the evidence of the names does not support this. Each era tends to display a different fashion in settlement designations. Thus the earliest Hungarian village names were formed from simple personal names, e.g. Tass, Jutas. The oldest Moldavian village names of Hungarian origin are quite different: they contain the suffixal element *-falva*, or *-vására*, denoting "village" and "market" respectively. Some commentators (Benda, Adám T. Szabó) have suggested that this trend in toponyms dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century<sup>32</sup>. On this basis we should place the origin of these Hungarian settlements to the period before the Mongol invasion, and this therefore carries the implication that Magyars remained in them throughout the period of Mongol control. However it appears that this fashion may have been of somewhat later origin. The dominant trend from the end of the twelfth century and throughout the thirteenth century among the Hungarians seems to have been to name villages after the patron saint of the local church, and there are examples of this, according to Benkő, in almost every district in Transylvania. In Moldavia though there are none<sup>33</sup>. It seems that the *-falva/-vására* type of

31. Weczerka, pp. 26, 261.

32. Kálmán Benda, "A moldvai csángó magyarok története", in *Megfog vala apóm szokcor kezemtől: Tanulmányok Domokos Pál Péter emlékére*, Budapest 1993, p. 40; Adám T. Szabó, "Die Katholiken in der Moldau", *Eurasian Studies Yearbook* 65, 1993, p. 30.

33. Benkő, pp. 18-19.

toponym only began in the thirteenth century and was at its peak in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This suggests that the original Hungarian villages in Moldavia were destroyed in the disaster of 1241, and Magyar settlements were re-established or founded in Moldavia only considerably later, when the memory of their original designations was lost. We cannot therefore look earlier than the fourteenth century for the resettlement of the area east of the Carpathians by the Hungarians.

When we turn to loan-word data a similar picture emerges. The first examples of borrowings from Hungarian appearing in Moldavian chancery documents occur in 1392 and 1393<sup>34</sup>. Thus it was only at the end of the fourteenth century that the Magyar presence in the Principality was sufficiently established to impact on the language of the Court. Far from buttressing the case for a late thirteenth/early fourteenth century Hungarian immigration to Moldavia, the linguistic data suggest a somewhat later arrival.

The evidence of Saxon settlement leads to very similar conclusions. Although an early Russian chronicle —the *Voskresen'skaya letopis'*— mentions the existence of the towns of Siret, Suceava, and Jași in the twelfth century, there is no reference to these or any other Moldavian towns west of the Siret for a century after the Mongol invasion. Indeed, although we encounter a mention of Franciscan activity in Siret and Baia in the mid-fourteenth century<sup>35</sup>, the first references to a significant Saxon presence in these and other Moldavian towns date from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Thus, in the oldest Civic Register of Lvov, dated 1382-89, the names of Germans from Siret and Baia are recorded, and in later numbers of the same register, from 1405 onwards, we find mention of Germans from Siret, Baia and Suceava. In 1369 the Moldavian Prince Lațco appealed successfully to the Pope to establish a bishopric in Siret<sup>36</sup>. This move perhaps indicates an already sizeable Catholic (Saxon and Magyar) population in the town by that date. In any case the bishopric's foundation a year or two later<sup>37</sup> would definitely

34. *Ibid.*

35. G. I. Moiescu, *Catholicismul in Moldova până la sfârșitul veacului XV*, Bucharest 1942, p. 87.

36. Deletant, pp. 68-70.

37. Weczerka (p. 60) gives 1371 as the date of the foundation while Moiescu (pp. 67-78) places it a year earlier.

have stimulated an influx of Hungarian and German Catholics to the town. By 1408 Bacău (which was almost certainly founded by Hungarians)<sup>38</sup>, Roman and Neamţ, in addition to Siret, Baia and Suceava were definitely established as centres of trade. In all of them except Bacău we can assume a Saxon presence before 1500, although the first documentary evidence for a Saxon community in Roman and Neamţ comes from the seventeenth century<sup>39</sup>.

Additional support for the proposition that the resettlement of Moldavia by Catholic populations occurred no earlier than the mid-fourteenth century is provided by buildings in these main centres. Among the oldest and most important were the churches. In Siret we know the foundation date of one of the two medieval Catholic churches: 1377. In Baia of the three Catholic stone churches one was built in 1413, the second in 1420, and the date of the third is unknown. Baia also boasted a Catholic monastery which was established some time in the fourteenth century. The Catholic church in Suceava was built in the latter part of the fifteenth century<sup>40</sup>.

Returning to our question when did resettlement begin, the information we have considered in my view suggests that in the case of the Magyars and Saxons at least, it commenced on a significant scale only when Lajos came to the throne, 1342. It was from this time that the serious military campaigns were launched against the Mongols, it was from this time that we learn of a resurgence of Catholic activity in the area (bishoprics established at Siret and Baia and an attempt by Lajos, unsuccessful it seems, to revive the Milcov diocese)<sup>41</sup>, and it was from this time that Lajos' political move of sending Dragoş to Moldavia must have been planned. These ventures would have resulted in large numbers of Hungarians and Romanians from west of the Carpathians moving east to occupy the lands vacated by the Mongols and to protect these marches from further incursions from the East. New access to the trade routes from the North to the Balkans and the Black Sea would have encouraged merchants to immigrate. The growth of trading settlements

38. Weczerka, pp. 83, 85, 156; Cantemir, pp. 24, 215.

39. Weczerka, p. 65.

40. Weczerka, pp. 121-23.

41. Makkai, pp. 45-53; Weczerka, p. 60; Spinei, pp. 179-80.

would have drawn craftsmen and clergy<sup>42</sup>. The establishment of the Principality created a demand for administrators. The Saxons who appear to have led the entrepreneurial influx concentrated on the towns that were developing. It appears that Baia very rapidly became a largely German enclave. These Saxons were drawn from two sources: the established Saxon communities in Transylvania —and the pattern of development of the urban settlements suggests that Bistrița may have been the original home of many of these settlers— and from Poland. This latter group merely followed the trade route from Krakow via Lvov to Moldavia<sup>43</sup>. Many of the Magyars probably moved east along the Bistrița and Moldova valleys, and toponymic evidence indicates that some may have settled in the middle reaches of these rivers<sup>44</sup>. It is likely however that the majority continued until they reached the bank of the Siret and there ceased their wanderings. Hungarian settlement of the territory east of the river was by all accounts a later development once the threat of the Tatars in that part of the region receded<sup>45</sup>. On the strength of the foregoing facts and arguments I endorse the view that Lükő advanced in 1935 that the existence today of Hungarian-speaking communities around Bacău and Roman originates from this migration<sup>46</sup>. In any case, it appears that unlike the Saxons, the Magyars were as at home in a rural as in an urban environment.

What I have just outlined I believe represents the main trends in the re-population of the east Carpathian space. I suggest however that some non-Mongol groups may have remained in the east Carpathian uplands throughout the entire period. The mountainous and densely forested terrain would have given some security against Mongol pillage and destruction. For the reasons given earlier however it is unlikely that these communities were individually large although there may have been many of them. While not discounting that some of them may have been Magyar, it is probable that they were chiefly Romanian. Although it is

42. N. Iorga, *A History of Romania. Land, People and Civilisation*, London 1925, pp. 65-67.

43. Weczerka, pp. 103-104.

44. Benkő, pp. 16-17.

45. Míkcs, pp. 79-80.

46. Gábor Lükő, "Havaselve és moldva népei a X-XII szá zadban", *Ethnographia* 46, 1935, p. 96.

unknown where Dragoş established his court, it is generally accepted that it was in north-western Moldavia, close to Maramureş, i.e. in exactly the type of area where isolated communities may have survived the Mongol invasion, or if not, at least been re-established quickly afterwards. Spinei contends that Romanian settlements continued in north and west Moldavia throughout the period of the Golden Horde domination<sup>47</sup>. Benda makes the interesting point that the Magyars tended to settle on the plains, on the banks of rivers, while the Romanians preferred the mountains<sup>48</sup>. Obviously in 1241 villages on the plains would have been much more vulnerable than those concealed in the mountains.

There is powerful circumstantial evidence for a sizeable Romanian population in north-west Moldavia in the mid-fourteenth century. The only conceivable reason for Lajos to agree a Romanian voievode over a region that he was colonising with Hungarians and Germans was that a significant Romanian population already existed there. We can assume that members of this community would have spread east and south in response to the new opportunities, their numbers swelled of course by a fresh influx of Romanians from Transylvania and Maramureş, of which Dragoş and Bogdan are representatives<sup>49</sup>.

Within a few years of Dragoş' arrival it was clear that Lajos' concession to local sentiments did not work. We read that in 1360 the Romanians revolted and Moldavia was temporarily lost to Hungarian control. As we have seen, the rupture became permanent some five years later under Bogdan. The question may well be asked why Lajos the Great with the might of the Apostolic Kingdom of Hungary at his disposal did not crush Bogdan and the fledgling Moldavian Principality. The answer is clear: from 1361 Lajos was preoccupied with a much more ominous threat —the expansion of the Turks into the Balkans.

47. Spinei, pp. 167, 203.

48. Benda, p. 42. It seems that the Magyars' predilection for riverside settlements goes back at least as far as the ninth century and their sojourn in the Etelköz. In his chronicle Ibn Rusta provides a detailed account of the daily life of the Etelköz Magyars: "They have tents and they move with the fodder, or the green vegetation... When the winter days arrive each one of them retires to the river to which he is nearest and there he remains for the winter fishing. It is more convenient for them to spend the winter here". (See István Fodor, *In search of a new homeland*, Budapest 1982, p. 249).

49. Lükő, p. 96.