

= Basarab I of Wallachia =

Basarab I (Romanian pronunciation : [basaˈrab]) , also known as Basarab the Founder (Romanian : Basarab Întemeietorul) , was a voivode , and later the first independent ruler of Wallachia who lived in the first half of the 14th century . Many details of his life are uncertain . Although his name is of Turkic origin , 14th @-@ century sources unanimously state that he was a Vlach . Basarab came into power before 1324 , but the circumstances of his ascension are unknown . According to two popular theories , he succeeded either his father , Thocomerius , or the legendary founder of Wallachia , Radu Negru .

A royal charter issued on 26 July 1324 is the first document to reference Basarab . According to the charter , he was subject to Charles I of Hungary as the voivode of Wallachia . Basarab became " disloyal to the Holy Crown of Hungary " in 1325 . He seized the Banate of Severin and raided the southern regions of the Kingdom of Hungary . Basarab supported Michael Shishman of Bulgaria 's attack against the Kingdom of Serbia , but their united armies were defeated in the Battle of Velbazhd on 28 July 1330 . Soon after , Charles I of Hungary invaded Wallachia , but the Wallachians ambushed and almost annihilated the royal troops in the Battle of Posada , which occurred between 9 and 12 November 1330 .

The Battle of Posada ended Hungarian suzerainty in Wallachia , and the first independent Romanian principality was consequently founded . Basarab 's descendants ruled Wallachia for at least two centuries . The region of Bessarabia , situated between the rivers Dniester and Prut , was named for the Basarab dynasty .

= = Origins = =

Basarab was the son of Thocomerius , according to a charter written by Charles I of Hungary in 1332 . Thocomerius ' social position cannot be determined . A scholarly hypothesis states that he was descended from Seneslau , a mid @-@ 13th @-@ century Vlach lord . Historian Vlad Georgescu writes that Thocomerius was the probable successor to Bȕbat , the late 13th @-@ century ruler of Oltenia . Historian Tudor Sȕlȕgean says that Thocomerius was " a local potentate . "

Basarab 's name is of Turkic origin . Its first part is the present participle for the verb bas- (" press , rule , govern ") ; the second part matches the Turkic honorific title aba or oba (" father , elder kinsman ") , which can be recognized in Cuman names , such as Terteroba , Arslanapa and Ursoba . Basarab 's name implies that he was of Cuman or Pecheneg ancestry , but this hypothesis has not been proven . At least four royal charters from the 14th century refer to Basarab as a Vlach . Charles I of Hungary referred to him as " Basarab , our disloyal Vlach " in 1332 .

Pope John XXII addressed Basarab as a " devout Catholic prince " in a letter written on 1 February 1327 . On the same day , the pope sent similar letters to Charles I of Hungary and his high officials , including Thomas Szȕcsȕnyi , the Voivode of Transylvania , and Mikcs Ȃkos , the Ban of Slavonia , asking them to support the Dominicans ' actions against the " heretics " . According to scholar Neagu Djuvara , this correspondence with the Holy See proves that Basarab was a Catholic , which also testifies to Basarab 's Cuman origin , because the Cumans had been baptized according to Catholic rite . Historians Matei Cazacu and Dan Mureȕan reject Djuvara 's theory , saying that all other sources prove that Basarab was an Eastern Orthodox . For instance , the Illuminated Chronicle , completed in the late 1350s , referred to Basarab as a " perfidious schismatic . "

= = Reign = =

= = = Charles I 's voivode = = =

The details of Basarab 's accession are obscure . Early Romanian chronicles attribute the establishment of Wallachia to the legendary Radu Negru . According to 17th @-@ century Wallachian chronicles , Negru , after departing from Fȕgȕraȕ , arrived in Wallachia in either 1290 or

1292 , accompanied by " many peoples " . One of those chronicles , Istoria ?rri Române?ti , states that " Basarab " was the surname of an Oltenian boyar family , who accepted Radu Negru 's suzerainty following his " dismounting " . Historian Neagu Djuvara tentatively associates Basarab (or , alternatively , Basarab 's father) with Radu Negru ; Lauren?iu R?dvan writes that Basarab either dethroned or peacefully succeeded Radu Negru between 1304 and 1324 . Other historians , such as Vlad Georgescu , state that Basarab succeeded his father , Thocomerius , around 1310 .

Basarab was first mentioned in a royal charter issued by Charles I of Hungary on 26 July 1324 , in which he was described as " our voivode of Wallachia " . This shows that Charles I regarded Basarab as a loyal vassal at that time . Historian István Vásáry states that Basarab only accepted Charles ' suzerainty after the king restored royal authority in the Banate of Severin , a Hungarian border province , in 1321 . In exchange for his loyalty , Basarab 's possession of Severin Fort was confirmed , according to historians Tudor S?l?gean and Attila Bárány .

= = = Towards independence = = =

A royal charter dated 18 June 1325 records that a person named Stephen , who was the son of a Cuman ispán in Hungary , stated that the king was weaker than Basarab and " did not even reach up to [his] ankle " . The same charter describes Basarab as " disloyal to the Holy Crown of Hungary " , showing that Basarab had betrayed the crown . A royal charter from 1329 listed Basarab , along with the Bulgarians , Serbs and Tatars , as an enemy who " [made] hostile inroads " around Mehadia . Basarab seems to have entirely controlled the Banate of Severin between 1324 and 1330 , since royal charters did not mention a Ban of Severin during this period . In a letter written in 1327 , Pope John XXII alluded to " territories of the Kingdom of Hungary which were subjected " to Basarab .

Michael III Shishman , Tsar of Bulgaria , attacked Serbia in 1330 . He was accompanied by " the ruler of the Yas " , along with Vlach and " black Tatar " auxiliary troops . According to Serbian sources and a letter written by Stephen Du?an , who became King of Serbia in 1331 , Basarab personally led his army to Serbia to assist Shishman . The Serbs routed the united army of Michael Shishman and his allies at the Battle of Velbazhd on 28 July 1330 . Shishman was killed while fleeing from the battlefield .

Taking advantage of the weakened state of Basarab 's allies , Charles I of Hungary decided to restore his suzerainty in Wallachia . According to a royal charter issued two years after the events , Charles wanted to recapture " marginal lands " that Basarab " illegally " held in Wallachia . He invaded Oltenia , captured Severin Fort and appointed Denis Szécsi Ban of Severin in September 1330 . According to the Illuminated Chronicle , Basarab offered 7 @,@ 000 " marks of silver " as compensation , along with a yearly tribute to the king . He also promised to send one of his sons to the royal court in Visegrád .

However , Charles I refused Basarab 's offer , saying that " [h] e is the shepherd of my sheep , and I will drag him by his beard from his lair " . Charles continued his campaign , but he and his soldiers suffered from hunger while marching to Curtea de Arge? through a sparsely populated region . Charles was compelled to sign an armistice with Basarab , and the royal army started retreating from Wallachia . On 9 November , however , the Wallachians ambushed the king and his soldiers at a narrow pass in the Southern Carpathians . Standing on the cliffs above the valley , the Wallachians shot arrows and threw rocks upon the army . The battle lasted until 12 November . The royal army was decimated , and King Charles narrowly escaped . Historian S?l?gean writes that Basarab repelled Charles ' invasion without assistance from his allies . A charter written in 1351 by Louis I , Charles ' son and successor , states that pagan " neighbors and a troop formed of other subjects unfaithful " to Charles supported Basarab during the war , suggesting that Tatar auxiliaries fought for Basarab . However , the credibility of the report , written decades after the events , is uncertain .

= = = Independent ruler = = =

Archaeological research shows that after his capital of Curtea de Argeş was destroyed during Charles I 's campaign , Basarab moved his seat to Câmpulung . Basarab 's victory in the Battle of Posada enabled the introduction of an active foreign policy . He supported the efforts of his son @-@ in @-@ law , Ivan Alexander , to seize the Bulgarian crown , which he did in February 1331 . With Basarab 's support , Ivan Alexander successfully campaigned against the Byzantine Empire in 1331 and 1332 . According to Sîlîgean , Basarab allegedly took possession of Severin Fort in the early 1330s .

The reconstruction of Curtea de Argeş started after 1340 , with the erection of new fortifications and a new palace . The construction of the Princely Church of St. Nicholas also commenced during Basarab 's rule , but it was completed after his death . Basarab seems to have made his son , Nicholas Alexander , his co @-@ ruler around 1344 . Louis I of Hungary , who had succeeded Charles I in 1342 , marched to southeastern Transylvania in the summer of 1344 . To prevent a campaign against Wallachia , Nicholas Alexander visited Louis I and swore loyalty to him , according to the nearly contemporaneous John of Küküllö 's chronicle . Wallachian troops supported Andrew Lackfi 's attack against the Mongols in 1345 , according to a Wallachian chronicle , but historian Victor Spinei rejects this report . According to a charter of his grandson , Vladislav I Vlaicu , Basarab died in the year 6860 of the Byzantine calendar , which is AD 1351 or 1352 .

= = Family = =

In his letter concerning the Battle of Velbazhd , Stephen Duşan mentioned that Basarab was " the father @-@ in @-@ law of Tsar Alexander of Bulgaria " , showing that Basarab 's daughter , Theodora , was Ivan Alexander of Bulgaria 's wife . Historian Vászary states that Basarab married her to Ivan Alexander around 1323 to strengthen his alliance with Bulgaria . She gave birth to children , but Ivan Alexander abandoned her and married a converted Jew , Sarah @-@ Theodora , in the 1350s . Basarab 's son and successor , Nicholas Alexander , discontinued Basarab 's alliance with Bulgaria .

= = Legacy = =

Basarab 's victory at the Battle of Posada was a turning point in the history of Wallachia . Sîlîgean writes that the victory " sanctioned the independence of Wallachia from the Hungarian crown " and altered its international status . Georgescu describes Wallachia as the " first independent Romanian principality . " Although the kings of Hungary continued to demand loyalty from the voivodes of Wallachia , Basarab and his successors yielded to them only temporarily in the 14th century .

The descendants of Basarab ruled Wallachia for at least two centuries . Examples of his descendants include Mircea the Old and Vlad Dracula . Neagoe Basarab , a member of the Craioveşti boyar family , forged a genealogy to prove that he was a descendant of Basarab , and adopted " Basarab " as his family name after his accession in 1512 .

From the middle of the 14th century , Bulgarian , Hungarian , Moldavian and Serbian chronicles used the name " Basarab " when referring to Wallachia . From the next century onward , the southern region of the land between the Dniester and Prut rivers was named Basarabia . After the Russian Empire annexed Basarabia in 1812 , the region was renamed to Bessarabia . The region is now part of the Republic of Moldova .