

GHEORGHE DUCA AND THE DETHRONEMENT OF ANTONIE RUSET, PRINCE OF MOLDAVIA (1675 – 1678)

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to prove the fact that the dethronement of Antonie Ruset was prepared step by step, during almost three years, by the Wallachian prince Gheorghe Duca. Through great ability and perfidy, the later succeeded in attracting part of Moldavia's boyars such as the great chancellor Miron Costin, the hetman Alexandru Buhuș, who was his brother-in-law and others as well. Wallachia's ruler also used every opportunity he could in order to create Antonie Ruset an unfavourable image in the eyes of the Ottoman dignitaries, which brought his dethronement.

Keywords: Gheorghe Duca, Antonie Ruset, Wallachia, Moldavia, Axinte Uricariul, Miron Costin, Ion Neculce, Alexandru Buhuș, Cara Mustafa.

Antonie Ruset's rule does not abound in events; this explains the parsimony of historical information on this period, since throughout their history the Romanians have also seen short but quite dense reigns, so rich in events with deep implications on international level that it is rather difficult to exhaust the sources. See, for instance, the epoch of Dimitrie Cantemir.

As concerns Antonie Ruset's rule on Moldavia, the most disputed and still not entirely clarified aspect refers to the persons who organized this voivode's dethronement, as well as their reasons. Without exception historical sources characterize Antonie Ruset as a "good and forgiving"¹ ruler, "just", "Christian" and "merciful with the common people"². Axinte Uricariul even asserts that during his reign "Boyars were spoilt with voyages and entertainments"³, as if the chronicler himself admits the contradiction between the pleasures of prince Antonie's reign and the causes which led to his removal from Moldavia's throne.

Actually, what puzzles is the contradiction between the chroniclers' positive recordings concerning Antonie Ruset's epoch and his brutal dethronement after

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¹ Ion Neculce, *Opere. Letopisetul Țării Moldovei and O samă de cuvinte*. Study and critical edition by Gabriel Ștrempel, 1982, p. 247.

² *Cronica anonimă a Moldovei. 1661 – 1729 (Pseudo – Amiras)*, Study and critical edition by Dan Simionescu, București, 1975, p. 50, further referred to as *Cronica anonimă a Moldovei*.

³ Axinte Uricariul *Cronica paralelă a Țării Românești și a Moldovei II*, critical edition by Gabriel Ștrempel, București, 1994, p. 142.