

**„ALEXANDRU-IOAN CUZA”  
UNIVERSITY OF IAȘI  
FACULTY OF HISTORY**

**MOLDAVIA DURING THE THIRD REIGN  
OF GHEORGHE DUCA (1678-1683)**

**ABSTRACT**

**COORDINATOR:  
Prof. univ. dr. Laurențiu Rădvan**

**PhD student:  
Celestin Ignat**

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## SUMMARY

SUMMARY .....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	3
I. The family and the rise of Gheorghe Duca.....	10
I.1. The origin and the family of Gheorghe Duca .....	10
I.2. Gheorghe Duca before the reign .....	12
II. Gheorghe Duca, ruler of Moldavia - first two reigns (1665-1666, 1668-1672) .....	15
III. The height of power - Gheorghe Duca's third reign in Moldavia (1678-1683) .....	36
III.1. The date and circumstances of the taking of the third reign .....	36
III.2. Internal policy .....	43
III.2.1. Officials and princely servants .....	43
III.2.2. The Church .....	132
III.2.3. Cetățuia Monastery .....	164
III.2.4. Tax policy .....	170
III.3. Foreign policy .....	179
III.4. The decline of Gheorghe Duca.....	194
III.4.1. Background to the loss of the reign .....	194
III.4.2. Loss of reign .....	201
III.4.3. Captivity and the end of Gheorghe Duca	210
Conclusion .....	214

Bibliography .....	216
List of illustrations .....	239

Starting from Metropolitan bishop Dosoftei, as a beginning phase in our research, we sought to find an answer to the "symphony" of reign-ierarchy, i.e. Gheorghe Duca - Dosoftei, especially since the Metropolitan published most of his work in the third reign of Gheorghe Duca. At the same time, as a theology student, I was impressed by the position of the Cetățuia monastery. Then, approaching Dosoftei, as a history student, and familiarizing myself with the era, I discovered the same monastery from a different perspective. It seemed impressive everything that was built inside it, but especially the fact that there was also a Greek typography. Not satisfied with what I had achieved in my desire to discover Dosoftei, moved by the architecture of the Cetățuia monastery, by the fact that Duca was Dosoftei's contemporary, I turned my attention to the ruler. Later, other reasons were to be added: the contradiction between Ion Neculce's words, in which he portrayed the ruler as a "man not too tall and thick, fat and old. He only dizzle his beard. That's how he was known

to have no mind or fear of God"<sup>1</sup>. Then, the words of Metropolitan Dosoftei, who compare him to King David, Emperor Constantine the Great or others<sup>2</sup>, as well as those of Nicolae Costin who said that in their house they could sing the Holy Liturgy<sup>3</sup>, or his appearance in the votive painting from the Cetățuia seemed contradictory. The chronicle describes him as a gentleman of harsh fiscality, and this image remains in the memory of contemporaries and historiography. Later we learn that he also ruled part of Ukraine. All these aspects have prompted us to take a closer look at Moldavia in Gheorghe Duca's time.

For this purpose, we have gone ahead and structured the paper in three parts: the first two parts being smaller in length, and the third, which is in fact the subject of this research, the largest, structured as well in four chapters and several sub-chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> Ion Neculce, *Opere. Letopisețul Țării Moldovei și O samă de cuvinte*, by Gabriel Ștrempel, București, Ed. Minerva, 1982, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> Dosoftei, *Dumnezeiasca Liturghie, 1679*, by N. A. Ursu, Iași, 1980, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolae Costin, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei (1662-1711)*, in Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Cronicile României sau Letopisețele Moldovei și Valahiei*, second editon, tom. II, București, 1872, p. 19.

In the first part of the paper, we have focused our attention to the origin, family and life of Gheorghe Duca in Moldavia until the moment of his ascension to the throne. We have paid attention to his relations with the rulers of the country during which he held various offices such as that of grand moneylender under Vasile Lupu, second treasurer under Ștefăniță Lupu and grand seneschal, then grand treasurer in the reign of Eustratie Dabija. It was also during the latter reign that he married Anastasia, the daughter of Lady Dafina, wife of Dabija Vodă. At the same time, we also followed his remarkable ability to gather money and property during these years.

The second part of the text moves on to the third reign, subjecting to a brief analysis, especially from the perspective of the officials (*dregători*), the first two reigns in Moldavia, the debts placed on the country, the construction of the Cetățuia monastery, the rebellion from 1671-1672 and, finally, Duca's conflict with the treasurer Ursachi.

In the third part, we stopped on the moment of Duca's return for the third time on the throne of Moldavia. For this we turned our attention to his relations with the

two powerful parties in Wallachia. Coming to a disagreement with the Cantacuzino family, their representative, Șerban Cantacuzino, taking advantage of Duca's absence from the country, tried to dethrone him, especially as the vizier was his friend. The opposition of the Wallachian boyars united around Șerban Cantacuzino, who would eventually become ruler of Wallachia, led Duca to turn his attention to the throne of Moldavia. Being gone to Cehrin with the Ottoman army and receiving the news that Șerban Cantacuzino was seeking to seize the throne, Duca "caught up" with the Moldavian boyars, first contacting the *hatman* Gavriliță Costachi. Alexandru Buhuș, Duca's brother-in-law, and Miron Costin were going to help in the removal of Antonie Ruset. They were joined by Tudosie Dubău, Constantin Ciobanul and Vasile Gheuca, who are not confirmed by documents, but whom we find in important dregs shortly after Duca's return to Moldavia. The detention of the *hatman* Gavriliță, regarding Duca's return to Moldavia, would bring him back to the ranks of the dregs with some delay. The intrigues woven by Duca, who was appreciated by the Porte in a different way, were to tip the balance decisively

in the removal of Antonie Ruset from the throne, and Duca to become again ruler of Moldavia. However, there were other pretenders to the throne, such as Vasile Gheuca, one of the scheming boyars who tried in 1680 to remove Duca from the throne.

The internal policy chapter is the most extensive and forms the core of the work. We have tried to compile a 'list' of as many officials and princely servants as possible, both at the court and in the territories. We have embarked on this foray and subjected to analysis all the great and small rulers who occupied positions in the administrative apparatus of the country from the chancellor to the gate *vornici*, as well as country officials, *pârcălabi* and starostas. Gheorghe Duca removes Neculai Racoviță from office and entrusts the chancellery to Miron Costin. He remained at the head of the chancellery of the prince until the end of Duca's reign, being one of the most devoted of the lord's boyars, going with him to Vienna, he was captured in Domnești, then taken captive to Poland with his lord. For an overview of the chancellery, we have looked at the second and third chancellors, but also at the scribes and clerks or some of



the *grămățici* such as Enache, the stepfather of the chronicler Ion Neculce.

Although he was not one of Gheorghe Duca's most devoted supporters, Gavriliță Costachi was the only great *vornic* of the Low Country during the years of his reign. The conspiracy of 1680 led by Vasile Gheuca, the grand treasurer (*vistier*), Gheorghe Bogdan, the grand *jitnicer*, and Lupu, the grand *sluger*, brought the great *vornic* to the attention of the prince as one who would have known of this plan. Even if he did not lose his position, relations between the lord and the grand *vornic* were rather frosty, and at the end of his reign, Gavriliță being one of the boyars who openly opposed the lord, after which he moved to Wallachia. We have considered it appropriate to focus our attention also on some former *vornici*, such as Ionașco Balș, or the *vornic* of Bârlad, Botoșani and Iași.

The hetman was going to be entrusted to Alexandru Buhuș, Duca's brother-in-law. Also, here we have included a list of the most frequently mentioned captains, *vătafi*, *iuzbași*, *hotnogi* and stewards.

For all the other positions under analysis, we also considered the journey of the boyars up to the time of their

appointment to a position, as well as after their removal or leaving the dignity. The lower, second or third rank officials, or former officials, as far as the documents allow us, also occupy a significant place in our exposition in order to have as complete a picture as possible of Moldavia in the years of this reign. In our analysis we were interested in the relations between the boyars and the groups they formed, such as the 1680 plot, or the relations between the prince and the boyars. At the same time, from the *postelnic* official the number of boyars who rotate through these positions is increasing, three or even four boyars in a position in five years of rule.

Because of their discontent, some of them, such as Tudosie Dubău the great commander (grand *spătar*) of the country's army, Gavril Neaniul *stolnicul*, Ilie Moțoc the great *medelnicer*, Savin Zmucilă *medelnicer*, Ilie Drăguțescul the great *armaș*, Neculai Murguleț the second chancellor, considered it appropriate to go to Poland, while others, even if they were subjected to torments, preferred to stay with Duca until the end, such as Toader Palade. Towards the end of the reign, when Duca was in Vienna or on his way back, other rulers began to leave the

prince, such as Neculai Racoviță, former chancellor, Toderășco Cantacuzino, grand treasurer, left as replacements in office in the spring of 1683 when Duca left for Vienna, or Constantin Cantemir, grand *serdar*, also suspected of having been part of the group of conspiratorial boyars.

From this part of the work, the chapter devoted to the Church in Moldavia during these years could not be missing, because it was said, is being said, and we like to hear that the "Byzantine symphony" also worked in the Romanian countries. In the time of the Duca Vodă, from the ruler to the common people of the country, they all went to a place of prayer with various gifts. For this reason, we have analyzed, in particular, Duca's links with the dioceses and monasteries of Moldavia, especially since the time of Metropolitan bishop Dosoftei which is one of reference until today. Having in mind the work of the hierarch scholar printed in these years and the Greek printing press of Cetățuia, we saw that Gheorghe Duca was able to link his name to that of Metropolitan Dosoftei and be known to posterity as the one who financially supported these cultural movements of his time. We paid

more attention to the White Church, the future metropolitan cathedral, built during this reign, and to the Church of St. John Zlataust in Iași, since they were built or rebuilt during this reign. Apart from the usual judgments, exemptions, or reinforcements of donations, as well as those mentioned, Duca never made any significant donations to any bishopric or monastery. Some monasteries, such as Galata or Barnovschi, have received more attention and have been granted several exemptions or won in court cases during these years. Likewise, monasteries dedicated to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, such as Probota or Cașin, had certain villages exempted, most certainly at the insistence of Patriarch Dositei. At the same time, we have tried to enrich the news on the bishops and hegumens of the country's monasteries, trying, as far as the documents allowed us, to reconstruct their lives and the institutions they governed.

A separate sub-chapter is devoted to the Cetățuia monastery. We have taken into account the domains granted to it by the founder or by other benefactors, as well as the Greek printing press installed there in 1682, from under whose roofs came out in these years the

*Inquisition against the primacy of the Pope and Against heresies.*

As Gheorghe Duca is known to us as a ruler of harsh taxation, a merchant who had reached the throne of Moldavia, a sub-chapter dedicated to fiscal policy was considered very appropriate. We sought to see what the duties were imposed on the country for all social categories and the harsh measures applied by the prince when it came to collecting revenues for the country's treasury. The repercussions of this policy were not to be expected, as the officials in charge of collecting the taxes had to supplement from their own incomes the amounts they could not collect from the lands, as the inhabitants fled from the tax collectors. For this reason, some collectors fell "to a hard time and to a great need" for the job in the land, such as Andrei Mihuleț *uricar* and *pârcălab* of Orhei, or Ilie Pleșca the second *jitnicer*. Others went to Poland, but also took some income from the country's treasury, such as Neculai Murgulet the second chancellor. This strictness of the prince in ensuring the revenues of the treasury is a characteristic of

the last reign of the Duca, transformed "into a veritable economic tyranny".

We have dedicated a chapter to foreign policy without which we would not have a clear picture of Moldavia in Gheorghe Duca's time. As the Porte was preparing for a final assault on Europe, the conquest of Vienna, Moldavia could not be left out of international political games. To do this, the Ottomans had to ensure that the eastern part of the empire was quiet. Under these circumstances, Duca was delegated by the Porte to conduct peace negotiations between the two eastern powers. His relations with the other neighboring powers during these years, as well as the reserved attitude of the Moldavian prince in Vienna, reveal a prudence and loyalty towards the Turks, to whom he turned whenever he was maimed. The hetman of Ukraine, entrusted to Duca in the summer of 1681, we have also analyzed in this chapter, following the measures taken by Duca in the organization of the territory between the Dnieper and the Dniester, as well as his relations with the Hatchman Samoilovich of the Ukraine beyond the Dnieper.

Gheorghe Duca's decline is covered in the last part of this paper. We have traced the wider context of Gheorghe Duca's relations with the boyars, the unsuccessful attempt by the boyars to overthrow the lord in 1680 and its consequences, the grievances accumulated by the boyars during the five years of his reign, the hardships they or their ladies suffered as a result of the harsh taxation during this reign, and the behavior and ties between the boyars after the prince's departure for Vienna. The defeat of the Ottomans under the walls of Vienna represented the beginning of the end for Gheorghe Duca. The road back was winding for the Moldavian lord, and the news coming from the country was not the best. As he approached Moldavia, Duca was moving further away from his rule. The boyars who accompanied him to Vienna or those who remained in the country, sensing that the prince was losing power, began to leave him one by one, so that in the end only those "close to his house" remained with him. The latter, also lacking a practical spirit, urged the prince to cross over to Moldavia, where he was to be captured at Domnești on Christmas Day. Stefan Petriceicu's descent into Moldavia with the

wandering boyars and the Polish-Czech troops who had entered the country also contributed to destabilize the internal situation. Under these conditions Duca was to be taken captive to Poland, from where he tried to redeem his freedom. The circumstances, however, were not on his side this time and at the end of March 1685 the former ruler of Moldavia met his end in Lviv. His body was brought back to the country by his son Constantin Duca in 1694 and placed in his Cetățuia monastery.

We can conclude that Gheorghe Duca, "clever by nature" as he was, mastered the country well. Although he was always contested, cursed, that he created discontent among all social classes, either through dynasties, or through the caress of the boyars, he showed such skill and balance that the boyars were unable to coalesce around a nucleus or a leader and succeed in removing him from the throne. If he had not participated in the Siege of Vienna and the Porte had not been defeated, Gheorghe Duca would most certainly have remained ruler of Moldavia.



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