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## **Miron Costin’s pro-Polish policy: diplomatic and military aspects**

### **Pro-polska polityka Mirona Costina: aspekty dyplomatyczne i wojskowe**

#### *Streszczenie*

Miron Costin (1633-1691) znalazł się wśród polityków wzorujących się na polskiej kulturze i systemie rządowym; był także pierwszym prawdziwym moldawskim uczonym, nie tylko kronikarzem. W niniejszym opracowaniu nakreślono kluczowe punkty jego kariery dyplomatycznej i wojskowej, wskazując na pro-polską opcję jego podwójnej działalności.

**Słowa kluczowe:** aktywność militarna, strategia polityczna, propozycja polska

Miron Costin is among the political men for whom the Polish culture and the country’s type of government constituted a model. Also concerning him, it may be stated that he was truly the first scholar and not just a chronicler of Moldavia. My aim is to outline several coordinates of his literary, diplomatic and military activity, with the purpose of bringing them to the limelight again, if applicable, to refresh the memory concerning this topic. Significant and quality material has been written about what Miron Costin means for the Romanian history. In the following lines, I endeavour to point out the prominence of the pro-Polish option in his political, diplomatic and military activity, an ascendance that also reflected in his cultural activity.

Miron Costin belonged to a family through which Polish policy in Moldavia had continuity (the family of the Costinești boyars), along with others, who were related to it: Movilă, Balica, Stroici, Ureche, Barnovschi. Among all of them, the most remarkable remains the Movilă family, which also provided princes of Moldavia<sup>1</sup>. The pro-Polish orientation of these families, however, lost its consistency in the second half of the seventeenth century, because the Ottoman Empire used a political solu-

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of the Movilă family, throughout the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and its ties with Poland, see Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Movileștii*, [in:] *Movileștii. Istorie și spiritualitate românească*, I, Sfânta Mănăstire Sucevița, 2006, p. 9-20.

tion to counteract the pro-Polish tradition. The reign of Ieremia Movilă represented for Moldavia the attempt to include the country in the political and institutional system of the Polish Nobiliary Republic<sup>2</sup>. The political solution found by the sultan was to “encourage the settling in Moldavia of the Greek «clients»”, who would take over first of all sporadically and then increasingly more often the important dignitary positions and the princely throne, mainly from the second half of the seventeenth century<sup>3</sup>. The political relations that became traditional between Moldavia and Poland naturally led to personal relationships with the Polish nobles, their world being at the borders of Moldavia. The boyars of the aforementioned families enabled – due to the personal relationships with the Polish nobles – for the Polish cultural influence to be able to enter Moldavia. Moldavian boyars – many times forced to seek exile to Poland (during Prince Aron and then after the fall of Constantin Movilă, as well as after the collapse of the plans made by princess Elisabeta) – come here, live their lives, are tried before the Polish courts. Several of them become Polish citizens; marriage ties are made with the Polish families, especially in Podolia and Galicia.

Miron Costin – whose life was suddenly and cruelly ended in 1691 (executed on the order of the Moldavian prince Constantin Cantemir) – sought through the means provided by his intellectual training and political career to maintain the political belief of the Movilești in the power of the nobiliary Republic of saving Moldavia from the Ottoman domination. However, he also showed political pragmatism when the circumstances imposed this attitude.

The direct connection with the Movilă family was set by the marriage between Miron Costin and Ileana Movilă, the daughter of Ion Movilă and granddaughter of Simion Movilă, Moldavian prince and for a while Wallachian prince. He followed the courses of the Jesuit College of Bar, in Podolia, where his family had settled. The head of the family was Iancu Costin after 1633. The circumstances of this fact are well-known and featured briefly or in details in scientific works: in October of that year, Abaza pasha invaded Poland alongside the Turks, dragging with him the two Romanian princes, Matei Basarab of Walachia and Moise Movilă of Moldavia, with their armies. However, the Moldavian prince along with hetman Iancu Costin deceive the Turks by telling them that the Cossacks were close, thus determining the first to retreat. For fear of the Turkish revenge, Moise Movilă and Iancu Costin retreat to Poland. In the year 1638, Miron – just a kid back then (born in 1633) – was made a boyar (i.e., he was made a citizen) along with his father Iancu Costin and his two brothers Alexandru and Potomir. At the college of Bar, Miron Costin learns Latin, which was the teaching language. Inevitably, he learns Polish and Ukrainian (a fact revealed by Dimitrie Cantemir and confirmed in the chronicler’s work)<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> V. Ciobanu, *Miron Costin și “modelul polonez” (schiță de portret politic)*, “Anuarul Institutului de Istorie «A. D. Xenopol» Iași” 1993/XXX., p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> Petronel Zahariuc, *Țara Moldovei în vremea lui Gheorghe Ștefan voievod*, Iași, Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> E. Ruseev, *Miron Costin – cronicarul-poet al Moldovei feudale*, [in:] Miron Costin, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei de la Aaron-vodă încoace*, introductory study by E. Ruseev, Kishinev, Editura “Cartea moldovenească”, 1972, p. 6.

After his father's death – occurred in 1650 – Miron Costin becomes the head of the family and takes over the leased estate. As a Polish nobleman, he serves at the royal court, thus confessing in the *Letopiseț* that he was “a court dignitary at the Polish prince Vladislav”. In this capacity, he participated in the battle of Beresteczko (18/28-20-/30 June 1651), between the Polish and the Cossacks, which ended with the victory of the former.

In the period 1652-1653, Miron Costin returned to Moldavia along with his family, given the precarious situation of his family, which was solved in Moldavia by the influential Moldavian boyar Iordache Cantacuzino the spatharus (*spătar*). His marriage with Ileana – the daughter of Ion Movilă who was the son of prince Simion Movilă, and the niece of Petru Movilă, who had been archbishop of Kiev – had the effect of improving the financial situation<sup>5</sup> of the Moldavian scholar. Hence, he became in the second half of the seventeenth century one of the greatest landowners in Moldavia (he held 89 villages), after possessing – due to his marriage – the huge fortune brought by his wife. In this respect, I must also add the relationships with the highest Moldavian boyars – especially the powerful Cantacuzini boyars –, the enviable culture and the undisputable skills of the young boyar.

Hardly had he managed to repatriate from Poland, when he saw himself involved in the conflict between Vasile Lupu and the claimer of the throne Gheorghe Ștefan. Consequently, in 1653, Miron Costin is sent with an envoy by Vasile Lupu to Petru Potocki, head of Kamianets, to ask for his assistance<sup>6</sup>. However, the second time Vasile Lupu tried to keep his throne – with the help of Tymofiy Khmelnytsky leading a powerful Zaporozh detachment – Miron Costin was on the other side, under the walls of the Suceava fortress, occupied by the Cossacks and besieged by the army of Gheorghe Ștefan, with assistance from significant detachments of Hungarians and Poles. There, he was an interpreter for the meeting between Gheorghe Ștefan and the Polish<sup>7</sup>. During the reign of Gheorghe Ștefan, he was one of his trusted boyars, as well as during the subsequent reigns, namely of Gheorghe Ghica, prince Ștefăniță and Eustratie Dabija. The last of them sent him with an envoy in 1661 to the Polish king John Casimir. Later, during the reign of Dumitrașco Cantacuzino, he was sent to hetman Sobieski, in the year 1674, and then to Constantinople<sup>8</sup>.

The last quarter of the seventeenth century made history in Moldavia, being marked by the bloody Turkish-Polish wars, most of them on Moldavian lands, entailing unavoidable destructions for the country. The conquest of the Polish fortress of Kamianets by the Turks – on 27 August 1672 – was the beginning of a sad peri-

<sup>5</sup> E. Ruseev, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Details regarding the attempt made by Vasile Lupu to regain the help of his Polish acquaintances during his “dethronement” by the great chancellor (*logofăt*) Gheorghe Ștefan, see: Petronel Zahariuc, op. cit., p. 125-140.

<sup>7</sup> Petronel Zahariuc, op. cit., p. 158: “Later, upon trying to justify his gesture, <Miron Costin> reminds that because of Vasile «our parents have suffered a great deal»; but this has not altered the manner he understood to write the history of those times: «for nothing is more harmful to those who write the chronicles such as cunningness, by following someone's will to the detriment of another»”.

<sup>8</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere* to Miron Costin, *Opere*, București, 1958, p. 9.

od in the history of Moldavia, as the country was in an increasing danger of becoming a pasalik. The diplomat Miron Costin was extremely present in the history of the country until his death (1691). For instance, after the conquest of Kamianets, the answer given to the Grand Vizier to his question whether he was happy of the conquest, Miron Costin replies as follows: “We, the Moldavians, wish to have our kingdom as broad as possible, in all directions, but no one should come to our country with the intention of conquering it”. Thanks to his courage, Miron Costin manages to have the Turkish troops leave Moldavia during the winter<sup>9</sup>.

Concerning the situation within the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the historians of the Romanian-Polish relations have noted regarding the policy of the Nobiliary Republic a reorientation – due to the actions of the Holy League – in the sense of subordinating the Romanian Principalities. The actions of Poland caused internal anarchy in Moldavia and the hostility of the Habsburg Empire regarding the expansionist trends of the kingdom towards the Danube, an area that the imperials also disputed. Ultimately, it has been proven that the hopes of King John Sobieski of achieving what the forefathers failed to fulfil were actually futile. Furthermore, in early eighteenth century, Poland had great problems, due to the fights with the Turks, the internal issues – caused by the “incapacity or lack of interest of the kings within the Saxon dynasty” –, as well as to the fact that Poland was at the crossroads of major interests, first of all political, of one of the great powers in Eastern and Central Europe”. All of the above were “causes that not only prevented the Polish state from playing an important political role, but they ultimately led to its collapse and elimination from the political map of the world, for almost a century and a half”<sup>10</sup>. A king who dominated the political life to a remarkable extent, mostly in the sphere of foreign affairs<sup>11</sup>, John Sobieski was also harshly criticised by another historian. The latter also started from the errors committed in the field of foreign policy, because the king would have neglected the evolution of the events in Russia, Scandinavia and Prussia and interpreted the interests of the Republic exclusively in terms of the Muslim threat. And – most importantly – he believed that steady and harsh war was the proper and main means for reasserting the integrity and honour of his state<sup>12</sup>. Moreover:

Sobieski’s great mistake, having achieved his triumph, was to commit himself in 1684 to the subsequent wars of the Holy League. The cost was enormous; and the dividend accrued almost exclusively to the Republic’s neighbours and enemies. Seventeen years of campaigning exhausted the Republic almost beyond repair, and prevented any serious attention to internal reform<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> I. Neculce, *Opere. Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei și O samă de cuvinte*, critical edition and introductory by Gabriel Ștrempel, București, Editura Minerva, 1982, p. 134-135.

<sup>10</sup> V. Ciobanu, *Istoriografia românească despre relațiile româno-polone în epoca medie*, “Revista de istorie” 1974/27, issue 5, p. 733.

<sup>11</sup> Norman Davies, *Istoria Poloniei. Terenul de joacă al lui Dumnezeu*, vol. I, *De la origini până în 1795*, translated by Carmen Bartl, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2014, p. 394, 396.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 396.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 403-404.

However, let us get back to the internal and external events, those reflecting the thoughts and actions of the political man Miron Costin. The Turkish-Polish hostilities reignite in the autumn of the year 1673. The Moldavian prince Ștefan Petriceicu was with his army within the Turkish expeditionary corps. However, once arrived under the walls of Hotin, he escaped the Ottoman camp led by Husein-pasha and joined the Polish army commanded by Marshall John Sobieski. The decisive battle takes place on 11 November 1673. In a first phase, the Turks are crushed, while the Poles occupy the city of Hotin. The death of King Michael Wiśniowiecki, on 10 November 1673, and the subsequent choice of his successor to the throne, namely of John Sobieski, prevents the Poles from exploiting the tactical success achieved and settling the war in their favour. The vacancy of the royal throne attracts the Polish noblemen to the capital, with Sobieski rushing, too – eager to put his application before the Seim. The Poles occupy Hotin, Suceava and Cetatea Neamțului. In the meanwhile, Moldavia was threatened from the south by the Turkish army, concentrated at the Danube, while from the east by the hordes of the Tatars within the steppes beyond the Dniester. The Moldavian prince Ștefan Petriceicu chooses in that context to leave to the Polish camp, luring to this “adventure”<sup>14</sup> (also according to Miron Costin in his chronicle) the boyars, too. The Romanian historians had a critical opinion on the prince’s choice, by considering it imprudent<sup>15</sup>. This is the moment when the political man Miron Costin comes to the spotlight – with his entire belief in the country’s salvation with the help of the Christian Republic – and refuses to follow the prince and, alongside him, all the accompanying boyars, by replying:

Either you may desire it or not, Your Highness, we won’t let the Tatars take our houses. And they bowed and told him: We wish your Highness all the health in the world<sup>16</sup>.

Miron Costin’s attitude concerning the extent to which the Nobiliary Republic could also represent a decision-making element in changing the political report in the Eastern and Central Europe, after the conquest of Kamianets by the Turks and the failure of the Polish king – who had just won in Hotin – of rejecting the Turks to the south of the Danube was explained by cautiousness and reserve concerning the idea of an unconditional military and political collaboration with Poland<sup>17</sup>. Consequently, indeed, after the events in Hotin, Miron Costin refused the offer of prince Ștefan Petriceicu upon considering still the Ottoman Empire as “the only real and efficient opportunity of defending the state interests of Moldavia”<sup>18</sup>. Concerning this aspect, rumours had it about personal resentments by Miron Costin, former great dignitary in the Country’s Council, towards Ștefan Petriceicu, who had obtained the dignity of great steward (*clucer*) and lord steward (*medelnicer*) before being appointed as prince. The

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<sup>14</sup> E. Ruseev, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere* to Miron Costin, *Opere*, p. 9-10.

<sup>16</sup> I. Neculce, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>17</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere* to Miron Costin, *Opere*, p. 9-10; V. Ciobanu, *Modelul politic polonez (schiță de portret politic)*, p. 389.

<sup>18</sup> V. Ciobanu, *Modelul politic polonez (schiță de portret politic)*, p. 389.

author of this opinion, Dumitru Velciu, also mentions the chronicler's defiance towards the family of Ștefan Petriceicu; his father, Toader, former great magistrate (*vorinic*) of Northern Moldavia being called in his *Letopiseț* "stupider than others in the Council"<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, to the exiled prince Gheorghe Duca, Miron Costin had been a close collaborator, which increased the aversion towards Petriceicu<sup>20</sup>. However, more than topics of a subjective nature, Dumitru Velciu believed:

the essence of the divergences between the two must be situated on the background of a principled matter, namely the totally opposed beliefs they had concerning the relations between the prince and the boyars (...), ultimately represents an episode of the fight for supremacy in the Romanian Principality between the great boyars and the prince<sup>21</sup>.

In other words, it was about defending the great boyar status before a prince, who wished to impose an increased authority<sup>22</sup>.

Instead of the wandering prince, they appointed prince Dumitrașco Cantacuzino. At the beginning of his reign, on the order of the Grand Vizier Ahmed Köprülü, we find Miron Costin in the first days of the year 1674 in Poland, involved in the Turkish-Polish negotiations to support hetman John Sobieski to occupy the Polish throne. The second envoy was sent in the spring of the same year. On 10 March, Miron Costin was in Lviv, and on 10 April, Sobieski welcomed him in an audience. On this occasion, Miron Costin asked him to support Dumitrașco Cantacuzino, to retreat the Polish garrisons from the Moldavian cities, to return the archive of the Metropolis held by the Poles, upon assuring him of the prince's support to conclude the peace with the Turks. Miron Costin obtained the promise of having his requests fulfilled if the mediation of Dumitrașco Cantacuzino would be successful. Concerning this meeting between Miron Costin and John Sobieski – still a Crown Marshall –, a letter of his was preserved, addressed to the Polish head Grabowiecki, an acquaintance of his<sup>23</sup>.

The Turkish-Polish negotiations alternated with military conflicts in the period 1674-1675. In August 1674, John Sobieski – who became king of Poland by then – had obtained under the walls of Lvov a brilliant victory against the Turkish-Tatar army. The claims of the Poles concerning Kamianets and the sultan's decision of not retroceding this fortress, as well as his firm decision of keeping under his protection Poland and Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper, kept on fuelling the military conflict and jeopardize the agreement made by the belligerents.

Thus, in the first days of 1676, Miron Costin was in Adrianople as part of a Moldavian envoy having brought the tribute for the Ottoman Porte. On this occasion, Miron Costin had meetings with the influential intendent of the Grand Vizier concerning the issue of the Turkish-Polish relations. Miron Costin recounts the details of this meeting in a comprehensive letter written in Polish, which he addressed on 3 June

<sup>19</sup> M. Costin, *Opere*, p. 122.

<sup>20</sup> D. Velciu, *Raporturile lui Miron Costin cu domnitorul Ștefan Petriceicu*, "Limbă și literatură" 1970/XXVI, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 119.

<sup>23</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere to Miron Costin, Opere*, p. 10.

1676 from Iași to his friend Marek Matczyński, a high dignitary and a close friend of the king. After detailing the Turks' attitude towards the peace with the Poles, Miron Costin makes a suggestive remark concerning the care for his country:

Should Your Majesty be so kind so as not to forget us among the pacts, let it be remembered that the Turks are far worse as close neighbours<sup>24</sup>.

Much to Miron Costin's disappointment, the Turkish-Polish military conflict continued, while the armistice signed at Zórawno in the month of October 1676, granted to king John Sobieski by the sultan, "was far from having played in favour of Poland, thus leaving Kamianets and the entire Podolia in the hands of the Turks"<sup>25</sup>. Hence, Moldavia remained in an equally burdening situation.

In the summer of 1677, the Polish king sent a great envoy to Constantinople, led by John Gniński, palatine of Kulm, with the mission of ratifying the Turkish-Polish peace, concluded not long before at Zórawno. During his stay in Moldavia, where the envoy was welcomed with great honours, the Polish messenger had the chance of meeting Miron Costin, whom he called a "friend and a brother", of leading political negotiations "for the interests of the entire Christendom", as well as of discussing scholar issues. It is well-known that Miron Costin dedicated to the Crown dignitary – Marek Matczyński – *The Polish Chronicle*.

In the meanwhile, the Polish-Turkish and Russo-Turkish conflict for Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper was in full swing. Moldavia was again close to becoming a pasalik. Under the new circumstances, the Moldavians put all of their hopes again in the Poles. In late 1680, Miron Costin along with Alexandru Buhuș – the influential boyar of Prince Gheorghe Duca – requested through direct correspondence<sup>26</sup> from King John Sobieski:

to conclude an alliance with Russia, for afterwards, with increased powers, to start the decisive battle against the Turks and to free Moldavia, which would then be under the protection of the Polish Crown. Should these plans fail, the king was asked to grant asylum to the prince, should the latter be forced to seek refuge from the sultan's punishment<sup>27</sup>.

The Turkish-Polish negotiations went on throughout the year 1681, too. The Moldavian prince, Gheorghe Duca, sent as an envoy to the king the son of Miron Costin; on this occasion, he wrote on 25 September to Sobieski using a signed letter<sup>28</sup>, assuring him of "loyal and loving submission"<sup>29</sup>.

However, the status of subject of the Ottoman Empire forced<sup>30</sup> Miron Costin to participate along with prince Duca in the Vienna siege, during the Ottoman campaign carried out in the summer of 1683. The sultan had appointed Gheorghe Duca, in the

<sup>24</sup> E. Ruseev, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> V. Ciobanu, *Miron Costin și "modelul polonez" (schiță de portret politic)*, p. 393-394.

<sup>26</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere* to Miron Costin, *Opere*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> E. Ruseev, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>28</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere* to Miron Costin, *Opere*, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> E. Ruseev, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

summer of 1681, hetman of Ukraine; with the courts over the Dniester, at Nemirov, on the Bug, and at Țigănauca, in front of the Soroca city. From that moment on, the title of prince Duca became that of “prince of the country of Moldavia and the country of Ukraine”<sup>31</sup>. Miron Costin’s option of walking alongside Gheorghe Duca in the campaign for conquering Vienna was justified – in the opinion of a historian – by the elimination in this way of any danger of losing his dignity of great chancellor (*logofăt*), due to the fact that he would have been “too strongly anchored in the space dominated by the personal interests and by those of his family, but also of the noble group for whom he was an exponent”<sup>32</sup>. This attitude would have determined – according to the same historian – an inaccurate appraisal by the scholar of the position and real possibilities of Poland at the level of foreign relations in Eastern-Central Europe<sup>33</sup>. An unfair viewpoint, we may say, justly amended a few years later given that, through anything Miron Costin endeavoured – from writing history to making it on the battlefield or at the table of negotiations – he “was animated by an ideal, to which most of his contemporaries were indifferent”<sup>34</sup>.

Starting on an expedition in late April 1683, Miron Costin was out of the country for more than five months. Using the absence of the Moldavian prince and army, the wandering Ștefan Petriceicu – with help from the Poles and from a powerful Zaporozj detachment led by hetman Ivan Kunitski – came to the country, occupied the city of Iași, then went to the steppes of Bugeac, where he destroyed with fire and sword the settlements of the Nogai.

The events following the victory obtained by the Christian armies led by the Polish king – from repelling the siege of Vienna to catching prince Gheorghe Duca and Miron Costin at Domnești during the Christmas night of the year 1683 and taking them to Poland – are widely known. The prisoners were taken before the king at Jaworów, during the spring of 1684. Prince Duca was sent to Lvov, while Miron Costin was hosted by the king in his hunting castle of Dașov, not far from Strij, where he would stay for almost two years.

During his stay at Dașov, the scholar wrote *Poema polonă*, which he dedicated to John Sobieski. He wrote it after being inspired by the king’s victory in Vienna; the scholar sought “to win the sympathy of the king for the destinies of Moldavia”<sup>35</sup>. The hopes in the liberation of Moldavia by the Poles seemed a certitude<sup>36</sup>. Along with the

<sup>31</sup> Ion Eremia, *Hătmănia domnilor Moldovei la est de Nistru (1681-1712)*, “Revista de Istorie a Moldovei”, 1994, issue 1, p. 20-29.

<sup>32</sup> V. Ciobanu, *Modelul politic polonez (schită de portret politic)*, p. 394-395.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 394. However, the author concluded that, until the end of his life – in agreement with the evolution of the military events in the area – the Moldavian political man and scholar acted in consonance with his political belief, namely of following the Polish model in the governing system for Moldavia (*ibidem*, p. 395).

<sup>34</sup> Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Miron Costin: genealogie și istorie*, “Limba română”2011/LX, issue 1, p. 81.

<sup>35</sup> E. Ruseev, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

wandering Moldavian boyars in Poland, Miron Costin drafted up on 25 July 1684 the well-known memo addressed to the king. It reads:

the Poles were asked to free Moldavia from the Turks, to guarantee the Orthodox faith and to set free the boyars, court servants and soldiers «from under the despotic regime» (of the princes), to exempt them from any taxes, «such as the Polish and the Lithuanian gang». We can see how the political and social ideas from Poland, referring to monarchy, make place among the Moldavian boyars, with support from Miron Costin<sup>37</sup>.

The “exceptional”<sup>38</sup> situation of Miron Costin at Daşov was explained in short by bringing two arguments, namely: the sovereign’s confidence and the subject’s loyalty<sup>39</sup>. Precisely these two arguments are, in my opinion, the foundation of what was the political thought and action for Miron Costin, characterised by a continuity of his political ideal of maintaining Moldavia in the sphere of influence of the great Christian power in the north. However, the times when he lived and those that came afterwards proved to be against the ideal he had imagined.

In the autumn of 1685, Miron Costin received the letter written by his brother, Velicico (he had written it on 17 September of the same year) asking him to return to Moldavia, otherwise he would lose his entire fortune. The scholar’s brother expressed his hope that the king – the old protector of their family – would not object to the wanderer repatriating, ensuring however Miron Costin of the goodwill manifested by the new prince, Constantin Cantemir, and by the influential Turkish dignitary, Suleiman the serasker. Some commentators of the events stated that the Polish king granted him the permission to leave:

easily, (...) because Costin’s repatriation was a perfect fit in the military and political plans made by the Polish king. In the person of the loyal Moldavian boyar, with such an important word to say in the country, the king would have a valuable collaborator, who could bring to the side of Poland both the prince and the Moldavian boyars – eager to escape the sultan’s yoke<sup>40</sup>.

Furthermore, Miron Costin would have received on 19 November 1685 an amount of money for his travel to Moldavia from hetman Stanisław Jabłonowski<sup>41</sup>. Moreover, with hetman Jabłonowski, with the Kiev prince Andrzej Potocki and with the king himself, documentary sources prove that Miron Costin had a “hidden” political correspondence during all this time<sup>42</sup>. In addition:

it is assumed that besides money Miron also received recommendations and instructions concerning the activity he had to carry out in the country in favour of the royal plans, which would have had positive outcomes for Moldavia<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere to Miron Costin, Opere*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> E. Ruseev, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>42</sup> P. P. Panaitescu, *Introducere to Miron Costin, Opere*, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> E. Ruseev, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

Regarding the prince's attitude towards the wandering boyar Miron Costin, two elements are defining for his situation: the entire family becoming wealthy (the prince even wanted to marry one daughter with a son of Miron's) and the suspicion that Constantin Cantemir still preserved concerning his future father of the son-in-law for the close relations he had with Poland. Consequently, Miron Costin was assigned with managing the Putna region (the future Vrancea Region), with the obvious purpose of keeping him away from the Moldavian-Polish border, thus reducing the ties he had in the neighbouring state:

The given situation becomes easier to explain if we view it in the light of the policy promoted by Sobieski in the last two decades of the seventeenth century concerning Moldavia and Walachia, a policy finding its natural expression in the repeated military expeditions on the Moldavian realms. Or, all of these could not possibly put at ease the mind of the aging prince, flanked by the Tatar hordes, always ready to remind him of his duties as a Turkish subject, and having to keep a son at the Porte – as proof of his loyalty to the sultan. Finding himself between a rock and a hard place, Cantemir led hidden negotiations with the Poles and also made efforts to ensure their goodwill, should they come out victorious from the confrontation with the Turks<sup>44</sup>.

In December 1691, Miron Costin's head fell, too; killed through a plot of the boyars surrounding prince Constantin Cantemir. A deed for which the prince was subsequently regretful; he died three years afterwards bearing this burden. Concerning the causes of the killing, most historians and exegetes of Miron Costin's work agreed upon the idea that it would have occurred due to the divergences between the pro-Polish party represented by Velicico and Miron Costin, and the pro-Turkish party whose representatives were the Cupărești boyars, Lupul Bogdan, the son-in-law of Constantin Cantemir and other boyars with the same political views<sup>45</sup>. The conflict between the pro-Polish party – whose heads were the Costinești brothers – and the party represented by the prince, supported by the powerful kinship of the Ruset boyars, is also well-known. It became acute due to the dissatisfactions caused by the military incursions carried by John Sobieski in Moldavia (such as the one of the second half of the year 1691):

Feeling that the circle was getting tighter and that the conflict with the prince could have a tragic outcome, Miron Costin – on 20 October 1691 – asked his old friend Marek Matczyński to come help him. However, harassed by the Tatars, decimated by diseases and other vicissitudes, the Polish army retreated from Moldavia, leaving his garrisons in the cities of Soroca, Suceava, Câmpulung and Neamț – a bridgehead for the new campaigns<sup>46</sup>.

The tragic end of the Moldavian scholar is related to the name of the spatharus (*spătar*) Ilie Enache Țifescu, as shown by Ion Neculce, Nicolae Costin and Dimitrie Cantemir in their writings. The dignitary disclosed to prince Constantin Cantemir –

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Ioan Șt. Petre, *Introducere* to Miron Costin, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei*, edition with commentaries, introduction, glossary and index by Ioan Șt. Petre, Bucharest, 1943, p. 25.

<sup>46</sup> E. Ruseev, op. cit., p. 21.

during a wedding occurring in the village of Băcani, north from Bârlad – the plot set up by the two Costinești brothers against him:

A boyar rose from among them, namely Ilie Enache Țifescu, who was nicknamed All-you-can-eat, and he blew the whistle on the boyars to prince Cantemir, telling him all of their plans...<sup>47</sup>.

The case of this deed was another conflict – of a personal nature – between the denouncer and hetman Lupul Bogdan, the son-in-law of Constantin Cantemir. The conflict began from the ownership of an estate, Ceucani, for which the latter had claimed to be entitled, rather than the spatharus (*spătar*) Țifescu<sup>48</sup>. After the princely ruling, the latter lost the estate in favour of Lupu Bogdan:

Ilie Țifescu may have blown the whistle on the boyars to prince Cantemir, telling him all of their plans, in order to be better viewed by the prince, in the matter with his son-in-law Lupu Bogdan, showing that he remained loyal despite having been mistreated<sup>49</sup>.

I cannot disagree with the same author, who condemns both the deed and its outcomes:

A rather ugly deed per se, and even uglier through its sad and horrible consequences!<sup>50</sup>.

Several conclusions may be drawn from all the aspects featured above.

Miron Costin understood that the history of Moldavia could not be taken out of the general framework of Eastern-Central Europe. The political history of the region – even from the first half of the seventeenth century – was dominated by the balance of the relations between the Turks, Cossacks, Polish and Transylvanians, the first of them representing, beyond doubt, the main force. Moldavia was involved in these diplomatic and military competitions, the changes within the power relations having effects on his political situation.

The pro-Polish attitude of Miron Costin has been proven clearly by the literary, diplomatic activity (the envoys he led, with the purpose of benefitting – in a very complicated climate where Moldavia was involved in the second half of the seventeenth century – from military assistance from the Nobiliary Republic and from the protection that Moldavia asked in case of successes on the battlefield, the letters drafted up with the same purpose in the year 1674, addressed to head Grabowiecki or those sent in 1681 and 1684 to king John Sobieski) and military activity of Miron Costin. The political strategy followed by the Moldavian dignitary – who achieved in 1675 the highest position in the Princely Council, namely great chancellor (*logofăt*) – was meant to preserve, of course, the integrity of the country. Miron Costin was also a great boyar.

<sup>47</sup> I. Neculce, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>48</sup> I. Tanoviceanu, *Marele spătar Ilie Țifescu și omorârea lui Miron Costin și Velișco Costin*, “Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice” 1910/XXXII, p. 1-38 (excerpt): “precisely the conflict-filled relationship between Ilie Enache and hetman Lupu Bogdan is the cause for denouncing the plot of Băcani” (ibidem, p. 24).

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

In his view, Poland offered the best state model where the nobiliary class had more privileges compared to the Moldavian boyars. And this reason, I must admit, is among the grounds that determined him to join the pro-Polish party and its political actions, which seem to have even imagined the possibility of including Moldavia among the possessions of the Polish crown. Consequently, the hope for liberating the country from the Ottoman domination was in Poland. However, when the political circumstances imposed it, the pro-Polish Miron Costin acted strictly in the best interest of his country, thus taking a different side than the Polish-Lithuanian Republic and joining the prince, his assets and his family. For Miron Costin, the “Polish model” was his political belief until the end.

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## **Miron Costin's pro-Polish policy: diplomatic and military aspects**

### *Summary*

Miron Costin (1633-1691) was among the politicians with the Polish culture and government system as a model; he was also the first genuine Moldavian scholar, not just chronicler. This study outlines key points of his diplomatic and military career, outlining the pro-Polish option in his dual activity.

**Keywords:** military activity, political strategy, the pro-Polish option

## **Politica pro-poloneză a lui Miron Costin: aspecte diplomatice și militare**

### *Abstract in Romanian language*

Miron Costin (1633-1691) se numără printre oamenii politici pentru care cultura polonă și modul de guvernare a țării au constituit un model și tot despre el putem spune că a fost cu adevărat primul cărturar și nu doar cronicar al Moldovei. În studiul de față ne-am propus să schițăm câteva coordonate ale diplomatice și militare ale acestuia, cu scopul de a puncta opțiunea pro-polonă în activitatea diplomatică și militară a lui Miron Costin.

**Keywords:** activitate militară, strategie politică, opțiuni pro-polone

