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Recent Studies on Past and Present II. Power, Belief and Identity

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Reinventing Middle Age: the inauguration of the statue of Stephen the Great (Iași, 1883)

LIVIU BRĂTESCU

THE YEAR 1883 can be considered as a model for several reasons that we are going to explain in the current article. The alliance treaty signed with the Central Powers, the start of the coagulation of the united opposition, which led eventually to the downfall of the I.C Bratianu government but also the international incident occurred by the unveiling in Iasi of the statue of Stephen the Great, these examples emphasize the authenticity of the first statement. We intend to analyze in the following rows the way in which a power, at the beginning of a long political and mediated siege, will succeed to organize the inauguration of a statue, long awaited due to its symbolic background of the character that it represents. To understand how was possible that an event preconceived as a moment of solidarity transformed into a reason for new disputes on the power-opposition front, we considered necessary a short glimpse on the internal political atmosphere of the months that preceded the event.

Knowing that the state has in general the tendency to fabricate celebrations and to utilize certain symbols to justify its existence, the unveiling of the statue of Stephen the Great can be considered as an example for the way in which a society participates in public events, political in nature because it has a certain degree of reoccurrence, and the authorities are always present. The mobilization from this year leads us to think at the fact that the government representatives in the region, but also the ones from the center, believed that for a large segment of the population, the primary reason for the celebration was turning into an uninteresting one mainly because of the growing dispute between the liberals and the conservative party (to this group latter on will join a fraction from the National Liberal Party). There is also at the same time an attempt coming from those who had the power, as through the organization of these manifestations to build a

new legitimacy to the electorate and to attract the sympathy indirectly of the historical personage, like Stephen the Great.

Appeared as a result of a proposition formulated by a former student of Gh. Asachi of the Royal Academy, during an graduation exam, in the form of triumph arc marking the celebration of Stephen¹ victories, the statue of the Moldavian ruler knew in time an interesting evolution. The intention to mark in a grand way the importance of Stephen the Great rule in Moldavia occurred in 1956. An opponent of the Union and a supporter of the political movement, who had as its objective the preservation of the Moldavian identity, Theodor Bals considered prolific the reiteration of Stephen the Great's memory in those times. Furthermore the Moldavian political leader believed that the former ruler deserved a public recognition for its battles fought for the survival of Moldavia's autonomy². Even if for Bals, Stephen has constructed alone an edifice through his actions and deeds, the erection of a monument meant to glorify them, was seen as a debt of honor for all of the Moldavian descendents, obliged to preserve his memory³.

The figure of Stephen the Great was stirring up new disputes in the years 1870-1871. The reoccurrence of the idea of a statue in the honor of the former Moldavian ruler was a delicate problem brought again in the public's attention. The most important aspect was the fact that the building of the monument, thought as a symbolic urn, which had to reunite all the areas occupied by Romanians, involved a considerable financial effort that needed a national public agreement⁴.

A new phase was starting with the year 1875, when the problem of a proper organization of such an event was put into question. In the situation in which the suzerain never hesitated to make references at Stephen's place in the "national heroes" gallery (in 1878 was also the 12th anniversary of the rule of Stephen⁵ since its inception) it was becoming surprising the lack of a consistent financial support from the liberals, now in power, and also the appeal of national public economic gathering. Postponed because of the war, the commission's activity, which requested to the townhouse of Iasi on the 19 September 1877 a placement space for the statue, was again reformulated in the spring of 1879, through a letter signed by Iacob Negruzzi, Stamatopulos and Nicu Gane. Gradually, the implication of the authorities was more and more serious, and from these the activities of the Municipal Committee of Iasi, the ministry of public affairs but also the Academy or the University. The first task of the newly formed commission, in the summer of 1882, was to find a place in which the statue had to be placed because the city hall of Iasi announced that the monument was already finished⁶.

A coordinated effort like the type that the liberal government had in mind and publically stated was the rebirth of the memory of Stephen the Great. To what extent was the mobilization was directed as a contribution to the growth of

the popularity of the liberal government and also the inclusion of the idea that although contested, the liberals had the sympathy of the population confirmed by the overall activities planned for the days of 4, 5, and 6 June 1883.

For two weeks Iasi was symbolically, the capital of Romania at least if we have in mind the names and the number of personalities that were supposed to attend the event. The presence of the local authorities at the inauguration of the statue will have different bearings. First of all continuing a practice of the previous years, in which the University's teachers from Iasi (considered probably today as image vectors) were called to different religious ceremony's organized for the anniversary of the suzerains, the representatives in the region of the government send on the 5th of June, personal invitations to the didactic personal from all the faculties to participate at the unveiling of the statue of Stephen. Despite the fact that the invitations come repeatedly not only from the prefect's office and form the mayor's office, the rector being an intermediary of the official messages, the teachers were reclusive or even indifferent. Even so, the mayor asks for a list with all the teachers that were attending the commemoration, in order to give them tickets⁷.

Despite all the reported difficulties, the academic sphere from Iasi designates some representatives in order to give speeches, in which the accent was supposed to emphasis the place and the role of Stephen in the history of the country. There were even stronger pressures on the people working in administrative area and in the justice department: first they had to confirm the participation at the inauguration and then to acquire tickets to the "play" that was set for the 5th of June. Furthermore they were required to specify if they are married or single, and if the response was positive an extra ticket for the spouse was suggested. Among those who insisted on the acquisition of tickets was not only the mayor⁸ or the prefect⁹ but also the president of the Iasi's High Court deeply involved in the mobilization of the locals¹⁰. Mindful at all the aspects concerning the event the opposition's newspapers were stressing out the contrast between the grand unveiling of the statue of Stephen and very difficult economic state of the country. Newspapers like "the Social Pact" were pointing out the possibility that the liberal objective was to be undermined by the comparison involuntary between the dire economic situation of the country and the memorable past of "the greatest Rumanian that ever lived in Moldavia." It becomes clear that the "hero which Europe called Christianity's shield" was invoked to define new political dimensions. With ease the journalists close to the conservative party move the image from the heroic Moldavia of Stefan to the liberal government responsible for the loss of the south Bessarabia and the acceptance of the 7th article of the Constitution, the ransoming of the iron road and for all the problems related to the ascension of Austria in the Danube area. All of them were presented as evidence of the liberal incapacity to run the country

and their lack of patriotism¹¹. In opposition's newspaper strategy were presented discourses from the former co-workers of I.C Bratianu. The new adversary of the government, Dimitrie Bratianu, was quoted in "Pact Social" from 4th June 1883, for the comparison between the political and economic situation of the country during Stephen and the numerous contemporary difficulties to whom Romania had to answer.

Beyond the techniques used by the political adversaries to win the sympathy of the electorate, the opposition was right at least in some points and one of them the implication of the central authorities in the planning of an event that could have been as well handled by the local administration. In the conditions that the problem with the allocation of certain funds was very delicate, mainly caused by the low financial support from the government and the interference of Bucharest was irritating. The method in which this problem could have been resolved was that of a national collect¹² backed in a truth and by funds approved by the government¹³ and the House of Deputies¹⁴ but also by the local authorities. Newspapers fond of the executive weren't treating such subjects, covering the event with a strong propaganda in the form of many articles dedicated to Stephen and also presenting the program of the event. First approved by the government and then in its final form by Carol, this was a general description on what was supposed to happen at Iasi from 4 to 6th of June. Duplicated in hundreds of copies in order to be sent all of the country¹⁵, the scenario was spread on the streets of Iasi and published in the newspapers close to the liberals, where they appeared as publicity bought by the authorities thanks to the direct intervention of the prefect¹⁶.

Arrived in Iasi, as planned with two days before the event, Carol brings with him an impressive number of politicians and officers of the Rumanian army¹⁷. These men in front with the mayor receive him according to protocol at the platform of railway station in Iasi. Incriminated by the opposition the presence of children¹⁸ from middle, general, commercial, technical school was a key component in the management of the moment. This being the first visit of Carol I as king, the town's elite, the magistrates, the teachers¹⁹ and the merchants, accompanied by lawyers and civil and military personal present their greetings to the head of state at the Royal Palace²⁰.

In the second day, 4th of June, was kept not only the triumphal welcoming of the delegates from the country but also a historical conference held in the hall of the University by Al. Vizanti, while Nicolae Ionescu was appointed to talk in front of the statue, since the 22 of September 1882²¹. For a festive moment as was wished for the invocation of Stephen's memory it surprised the presence of the local police²², justified only by the large number of people that were supposed to attend and also by the diversity of the audience composed by stu-

dents and representatives from other regions. Wanting to provide a atmosphere of popular celebration, in the evening are organized in the public garden, in city hall, but also in other places many concerts performed by the military fanfare²³.

“The big day” started in a traditional fashion due to the prospects of a religious society with a service held at the Metropolitan church. Also natural was the participation of the local civil authorities at religious manifestations. The prefect tried in the past to organize various actions in which local teachers and the other citizens to show their appreciation to the dynasty. Almost not a single event in the life of the royal family was ignored “14 march, 8 April (Carol birthday), 24th April (day of the queen), 10 may were occasions in which the teachers assisted at special religious ceremonies²⁴. Not knowing how many teachers were attending to these events we can’t jump to any conclusions. We only know that the rector of the University sent in their name letters of congratulations in such occasions²⁵. The action from 10th of may was in a way announcing the one from the 5th of June.

Carefully planned, the scene in front of the statue was also o reason for dispute simply by its placement because representatives of the Parliaments, of the High Court of Cassation and of Accounts, of the regional councils as well of the army, Academy or University from Bucharest and Iasi was considered a sign of value from the sovereign for one or the other. Without entering into much detail a brief description we believe to welcomed. In front of the statue was a royal tent, with canopy of red velvet and with blue atlas curtains. Under the tent, the throne of Stephen, found at Vanatori, gave Carol the possibility to have a bigger picture of what was happening in front of his eyes. At the right of the tent, in front of the tent was the tribune of the speakers. Around the monument there were strides a little lifted above the ground: first for the ladies, then for the courts and tribunals, the academic circle, the students of the University, for the communal and regional representatives, and the stride of the local council of Iasi. In the back of the royal tent was placed the stride of the Parliament, and in front, in the back of the statue the one of the High Court of Cassation. The local personalities had reserved seats, between these strides and in the right and left of the statue, in front of the palace there were erected two large tribunes for the public²⁶. Meant to glorify the deeds of the great Lord, the sculpture rise in front of the administrative palace, the former royal court of Moldavia, near the Sf. Neulai Domnesc church, build by Stephen the Great.

The same generous press presents us Iasi as a city filled with enthusiasm at the prospect of meeting the suzerain. “In Iasi a real rain of buckets of flowers and other decorations flowing at every window and balcony in the royal chariot. In the evening the town was illuminated”; “we salute the first visit of Carol as king of Romania, in the old capital of Moldavia” and as not to forget the Moldavians

contribution to the Union, directly it was remember to Carol the fact that Iasi was “the cradle of the Union and of the great national ideas²⁷”. Stipulated in the official program the interventions were uttered, in order, by the king, Nicu Gane (the delegate of the statue’s commission), Leon Negruzzi (mayor of the town), C.A Rosetti (Parliament), D.A Sturdza (Academy), Nicolae Ionescu (Iasi University) and B.P Hasdeu (the teacher’s delegate from Oltenia). Their common points were the glorifications of Carol and Stephen and the emphasis of the historical realizations from both their times²⁸.

After the military parade, the discourses that were held honor also the importance of the action. The first one to address the crowd had to be obviously the suzerain. We could also notice with this occasion at the Romanian monarch its full admiration for Stephen, but also remembering the deeds of Mihai Viteazul. Another constant in Carol’s interventions was the mentioning with every chance the army’s contribution at the accomplishments of the former officials not only in festive moments. Full aware since its first days as suzerain about the Moldavian’s concerns about the possibility of continuing the Cuza administrative model, the king tries through all of its actions and words to convince the locals that their town has for him an equal symbolic value the same as Bucharest. The enforcement of the phrase “Iasi the second capital of the country” in the Romanian public discourse is due to Carol and the invocation of the natives from Iasi contributions to the Union to serve its purpose to a tighter bond with the host town²⁹.

Speaking in the name of the Committee that had as a burden the erection of the statue, Nicolae Gane considered important to remind the vast number of victories obtained by Stephen and also his great number churches built in Moldavia. As for the other speaker, it appears at Gane a parallel between the Moldavian Lord which contributed in his opinion in the creation of the Romanian state and King Carol who succeeded in winning the independence that put the keystone of the same state³⁰. It was now reiterated a common practice the correspondence between Carol and Stephen or of the starting mission of Stephen and carried out by the fresh king³¹. Many local politicians reminded with every chance they got their contribution to the Union, Leon Negruzzi spoke in the name of the town, didn’t lose the opportunity to make a remark in that direction. Showing with subtlety his discontent to the fact that Iasi was not the capital of the kingdom, he expressed his hope that at least symbolic the town was the “cradle of union of Romanians in feelings, heart and fact.”

An important man of the moment, C.A Rosetti, was met at the railway station with much enthusiasm³², came to Iasi, in his quality as president of the House of Deputies. Thanks to its dignity, his speech in which he remarked the resonance of Stephen’s name and Carol’s for the Romanian people, indifferent of the territory in which they lived, could have launch controversies or protests especial-

ly coming from Austria. The euphoric moment was created by the allusions that there were Romanians territories outside the borders from that moment of the kingdom was received without any special attention³³. The volcanic pasoplist could not forget in such a glorifying occasion of the past, the Latin origin of the Romanians and their mission granted by Europe at the north of the Danube.

Without trying to stress a conclusion on these discourses we can observe a common note is the symbolic affiliation between Stephen and Carol, but also the fact that in many cases of them, the attention is focused more on the suzerain³⁴. “The academic corpus from Oltenia sent me here to show the intimate bond between Oltenia and Stephen... in 1457, after the death of Bogdan, Stephen ran in Muntenia, he was Moldavian on his father side and oltean by his mother—the performance of King Carol started to complete the one of the great Stephen”. After the end of the speeches, it began the march of the schools and the deposition of flower garlands in the sound of military music. And then it followed the representatives of the regions and communal with their flags, civic guards and other military regiments.

We can say that from this moment there were two spectacles. One organized for the citizens of the town and the other for the high ranking guests. The first acknowledged that their city was well illuminated, music played in the public gardens and in Copou, where it was installed an electric sun, the fireworks could be seen from the plateau across the round from Copou. Eager to be in the center of the population, Carol went the second day after the big manifestation on the plateau above mentioned where he delivered presents for target shootings and where he received the army parade³⁵. For the same public on the night of the 7th of June, the dramatic society from Iasi participates also on the celebrations that were taking place by organizing a big show during which there were read many poems dedicated to Stephen the Great³⁶. The festivities continued on the night of 5th of June, in a restricted circle, we could say, if we take into account the fact that there were many representatives local and from the territory. The meeting took place in the hall of the National Theater where gave the opportunity to different political leaders to give new speeches even more fiery.

The one that opened the meetings was also the king. His toast, shorter than some expected, tried to stabilize first the importance of the whole manifestation through the fact that it represented a new modality to emphasize the national solidarity. Making abstraction to the unwillingness of the opposition to participate, the presence of different social classes from all the corners of the country was seen as a success for Carol and the mentioning of the phrase “my second capital” was well received by an audience of 400 persons by some statistics³⁷.

In the unexplained and unjustified absence of I.C Bratianu the one appointed to represent the government was Gh. Chitu, the minister of Internal Affairs.

Different in his approach but also in that of Nicolae Voinov, the vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies was the fact that beside the transformation of Stephen in a saint “father of independence and of the Romanian greatness” the one glorified more and more was Carol I and less Stephen the Great. We find with little effort, enough elements that will entitle us to say that they contribute with or without their wish, to the beginning of the personality cult of the king Carol. “... The whole Romania understood your highness knowledge and through the elite and its leaders responded with enthusiasm to your suzerains appeal. Proud and happy of seeing the whereabouts of its beloved king, bringing homage of gratitude and admiration, to its biggest hero, to its most beloved Lord in times of glory and national independence³⁸.” Beyond any other connotations of such interventions, the most popular moment was the speech of Petre Gradisteanu, on which we will insist on the right moment, as well concerning its content and of its consequences.

From the picture of the festivities, it was present also the poems read in certain occasions and widely published in newspapers close to the central power: “At the statue of Stephen”, “The reel of Stephen”, “Singing at the statue of Stephen” (anthem written by Vasile Alecsandri) are some of them. Surprisingly is for us not the pathetic-emotional character of these poems but the fact that despite the existence of this festive moment, some of the authors try through their descriptive methods of the adversaries of Stephen in such a way that the former lord yet again prevails as the winner. “When the hoards of the semilune, the Hungarian haughty,/ lesi, Tatars and other gents across the country pillaged/, hurrying form Suceava and in its uncanny wrath,/ stormed over their gatherings and beating them they dissipated”. Some of them represent actually the discontent towards the contemporary politics considered as simple echoes of the interest coming from foreign powers. Along time ago, it is underlined, in a categorical manner that in the period when “Stephen ruled – the Romanians didn’t bowed their heads to foreigners to venetics.”³⁹ Some themes are reflections of the political speeches, and many of them the ones where is mentioned the well known and invoked contribution of Stephen in the protection of Christianity of the Western world were not forgotten⁴⁰. Related in this perspective is the poem “At the statue of Stephen” signed by Ar. Densusianu⁴¹. The upheaval to superlative of the current events and their transformation in national epopees were made not because of the political game but also to give the population the sensation that something important was happening and that “something” was the success of the current power. The growing number of natural celebrations is used by the political leaders in order to provide more opportunities to stand out and interpret more popular roles.

The satisfaction in participating to such a celebration was not the feeling dominating all the locals. The unsatisfied ones by what was happening in their

town originated obviously from the opposition. The reasons were many and they passed from the lack of confidence in those who were in power, to the capacity of the government representatives to keep the legacy from the former lord⁴² to the excessive implication of the central authorities in an action considered local. The high presence of law enforcement officers at the inauguration of the statue but also the rumors that tried to discredit the opposition⁴³ created the impression that solemnity didn't serve the stability of I.C Bratianu⁴⁴ power. Trying to compose a reaction to these accusations, the newspaper "The Liberal" from Iasi showed at 10th of June that all who didn't want to participate showed its anger on the symbol of Stephen the Great, even they foreseen a negative response of the public opinion to them⁴⁵.

Concerned with details, I.C Bratianu government didn't consider that after the unveiling of the statue the action was over. Declaring that the purpose of the event was the development of the national feeling and the memory of Stephen, the executive from Bucharest disposed the realization of an impressive number of paintings with the image of Stephen and the whole ceremonial inauguration, which were supposed to be sent through city halls at schools from every regions of the country. In some cases the city halls request the government or from Iasi paintings like the ones described⁴⁶. The number of paintings sent by the Internal minister Chitu distributed at grade I schools was of 483, with the specific note to be used also in other national celebrations⁴⁷. Even if many of the accusations coming from the conservative party was respecting the normal tone of the anger towards the central power, an evidence of the hardship in which Iasi was in during this period comes from I.C Bratianu. At the end of the activities organized in Iasi, he thanks for its involvement the prefect of Iasi, Dimitrie Pruncu, to whom sends the sum of 5.000 lei, destined accordingly to King Carol disposition to be handed out to the poor⁴⁸. The discussions between the townhouse and the prefect's office from Iasi treated the allocation of different expensive generated by the organization of the event, also being evidence of the existent economic difficulties at that time⁴⁹. If the event in question had a certain historical attention, this was not only due to the fact that it was about the inauguration of a statue of the greatest Lord of Moldavia but mainly because of the intervention on the night of the 5th of June of Senator Petre Gradisteanu. On some of the particularities of his speech held in the hall of the National Theater from Iasi we shall refer on the next rows. In the already specified atmosphere the discourse of the senator was to become, in short time, a new subject of the power-opposition battle. While those close to PNL tried to diminish his references to Romanian territories in the composition of other states, the adversaries of the government insisted on the international complications that were about to occur as a result of the words of Gradisteanu. Member of PNL since the coalition from Mazar Pasa, he proved to be during his entire political career, a

temperamental leader which as other political leaders went from political groups to others and so on⁵⁰. He held a speech at a banquet organized by the town hall of Iasi, in National Theater's hall, in front of 420 guests from around the country, which provoked many controversies. The words of the liberal senator, pronounced in a assembly outside the program, carried out a lot a weight and because of its important position in the Romanian Senate, a little time ago.

In the specified note of also the other interventions, Gradisteanu noted on the beginning of its speech, a real laudation to the suzerain. The liberal Parliament seem to consider grand that in the "glorious city of Stephen" came citizens from all the corners of the country and the explanation came from the powerful bond between the Romanians and its monarch⁵¹. The distinction from its ante speakers, Petre Gradisteanu reminds in its related notification on the great absences from Iasi, the queen and the prime minister, which symbolically dedicated a glass of wine. What caused the dissatisfaction of the Austrian diplomats and provide political weapons to the opposition was the suggestive reference to Banat, Bucovina, and Transylvania or to Bessarabia. His statement took a serious political weight when he at the end addressed the king and tried to shake his hand in front of such a large audience. From that moment there were many interpretations and denying certain facts. Meanwhile the liberal senator tried through a letter addressed to "Romania libera" to clarify the text which appeared in many newspapers⁵², the government insisting on its presence at the banquet as an unofficial member of the state, fact enforced by not publishing the statement in "Monitorul official". But the deed could not be undone the text was published in "L'Independence Roumaine" where the author specified also the names of the three provinces adding also Bessarabia⁵³. The first effect of this unpleasant situation was the expulsion of the owner of the newspaper Emile Gali.

Through Gradisteanu speech the celebration from Iasi caught the eye of the foreign press. Mindful at the events taking place in Romania, the western newspapers describe with many details the political atmosphere from the country and the speeches that are held at the inauguration of Stephen statue and also the relations between Carol and the Romanian political class⁵⁴. The frequent remembering of the former battles won by Stephen against Hungary, Poland and the Turks wasn't left unnoticed indifferent to whom it belonged⁵⁵. Without renouncing the defense of its interests the Romanian government searched for new methods of showing their future allies on the lack of connection between its foreign political intentions and some individual political actions like the ones of the liberal senator mentioned above. This direction was enforced by not publishing in the "Official Monitor" of the intervention of the senator and after pressures from the Austrian government through an official denial published on the 19th in the Monitor⁵⁶.

We can say without reaching any conclusions that what happened in 1883 at Iasi doesn't represent an isolated case, but it respects a certain pattern. The events from year that we mentioned in the rows above can be understood if we take into consideration some aspects. First of all the Romanian society found in a full process of modernization which had in permanence the tendency to look in the past. If those who had the power invoked mythical characters like Stephen, to obtain a circumstance victory, the other's invocation on the same hero or the sake of an antitheses with the contemporary political leaders. As a component of the political strategy, the reference to a golden past was frequently used in different ways. If the national-liberals (as the followers of Bratianu were called) remind the glorious times of Stephen to show their bearings in the political field and for their actions, the opposition was preoccupied by invoking the same period to show the decadence of the contemporary époque of whom the liberals were responsible. The year 1883 came after two important actions in which the liberals participated as the political governmental group (the winning of the independence and the proclamation of the kingdom) and that was their primary cards in their political battles. The unexpressed dissatisfaction of the conservative party was determined by the fact that they weren't invited to participate in the decision making process concerning the ceremony of Stephen's statue inauguration. The opposition knew very well that in the context of a strong contestation, the group that had the power made all the rules of the game in such a manner that all the material profits and of image belonged to them, accomplishing thus a new legitimacy⁵⁷. Strongly attacked beginning with 1883, even by former liberal co-workers as D. Bratianu, liberals around I.C Bratianu sensed that the maintenance at power can be made only by organizing and winning elections. To obtain credibility it was needed a diversification of the forms and legitimacy mechanisms⁵⁸. Beside the speeches they were asked notable accomplishments just like those from 1866, 1877 or 1881. The inauguration of the statue, long waited by the natives from Iasi and not only, was an effective occasion to use in their own advantage an ancient symbol in a new ceremonial frame. For the liberals but also for Carol the inauguration of the statue was the perfect method to express their leader status. This was made by evoking a common hero important to a group (Moldavians) and even for an entire society, stirring sentiments of cohesion and popular support for those organizing the event. The measure in which this strategy gave the results preconceived by the liberals had to be seen in the next years. If we take into consideration the rapid growth of contestations to believe that the "plan" didn't work.

We could not finish without making a few considerations on the other political factor involved in the action unfolded at Iasi, in 5th of June 1883, Carol I. The same as the governmental staff, he knew that in a society in which the information circulation was not quite as good through the intermediation of

the press, the safety feeling of the population could have been enhanced in the conditions of putting into place some grand historic and political symbols as Stephen the Great⁵⁹.

The monarch knew from the beginning of its mandate that in order to be followed by the people, he needed to have direct link with them, to create at least the impression that they could obtain what they wanted. Furthermore placing himself as a continuity of Stephen, not only his, he had the possibility to generate strong emotional reactions in the population⁶⁰, which the presses made us understand that happened. Carol I had to face now its political opponents that didn't believe in the liberal capacity to efficiently run the country, but with leaders that he understood to represent perfectly the external political image of Romania. To block the flow of accusations brought to I.C Bratianu, the monarch could not lose the opportunity to present himself as a good leader capable of handling any economic difficulties, thanks to a well placed strategy. In the conditions related to the control of Austria of the Danube river, Carol's speech in the hall of the National Theater, where he evoked the personality of Stephen and its battles, contributing thus to a identification with him, and also assuming a commitment for the future.

Beyond the objectives of every actor involved, the inaugurations from 5th of June 1883 lead us to think to a type-situation, in which the political power uses a moment to build a common memory⁶¹. Through Stephen's statue, erected in a delicate moment, tradition could demonstrate its constructive force and the revived past appeared as a mixture which we found nostalgia, frustration and satisfaction⁶².



Notes

1. Nicolae Grigoraș, Statuia lui Ștefan cel Mare de la Iasi, in „Cercetari istorice“, 1972, new series (III), p. 282.
2. Ibidem, p. 283.
3. Ibidem.
4. Virgiliu Z. Teodorescu, Simboluri de for public dedicate cinstirii lui Ștefan cel Mare, în „Revista arhivelor“, iulie, august, septembrie, nr. 3, 1993, p. 282.
5. Carol I, Cuvântări și scrisori, tom II, p. 210; apud Vasile Docea, Carol I și monarhia constituțională. Interpretări istorice, Timișoara, Editura Presa Universitară Română, 2001, p. 118.
6. Nicolae Grigoraș, op. cit., p. 290.
7. Arhivele Naționale Iași (ANI), fond „Rectorat“, 1883, 22 mai, fila 21, 24 mai, fila 22, 25 mai, fila 23. Idem, fila 25.

8. ANI, fond „Prefectură“, dosar nr. 96, 1883, 30 mai, fila 6.
9. He sent more letters with this porpoise towards the President of the Court of Appeal, to the general prosecutor and to the first prosecutor in ANI, idem, 30 mai, file 5.
10. Idem, fila 42.
11. Pactul social, 4th of June 1883, p. 1.
12. The sum of 135.000 lei, the cost of the statue, obtained through a national collection. At 20 may 1883, Municipal Committee of Iași announced the day of 5th June for the grand unveiling of the statue of Stephen the Great as part of a national ceremony (Nicolae Grigoraș, op. cit., p. 301).
13. At 3th June the Municipal Council approved unanimously a fond of 27.038 lei for expenses of the inauguration.
But because it was decided the national character of the ceremony, the Municipal Council asked the minister of Interne to request to the Deputies Assembly for the approval of a special found and to give back to the City Hall the sum (the government approves only the sum of 1110.000 lei, the same sum was at the disposal of the City Hall of Iasi). See ibidem, p. 302.
14. ANI, fond „Prefectura“, dosar nr. 96, 1883, 28 aprilie, fila 8.
15. The internal minister talks about 600 copies (Idem, 1 June, file 33).
16. The prefect asks the functionaries under him to send to the editor chief of the “Liberal” the ad (page1) with the program of the manifestation. Also him claims to be informed about the cost of putting into place his dispositions. in idem, file 10.
17. „Românul“, 3 June, 1883, p. 491.
18. In circular of the government it is recommended the participation of all the pupils from schools (ANI, fond „Prefectura“, dosar 96, 1883, 8 may, files 19, 20).
19. On the 2 of June 1883, the rector asks the teachers of the University from Iasi to go with him to salute the head of state. See ANI, fond „Rectorat“, dosar 483, 1882-1883, files 3, 4.
20. Idem, file 1.
21. The minister of Cults and Public Instructions asked the rector, a long time before, to see will participate at the ceremony, and to appoint those who were to held speeches at the inauguration of the statue, and also at the University (Idem, 28 mai, fila 26). Despite the organized effort made by the rector, his colleagues don't respond to his appeal proposed on the 4th of June only in a small amount the papers being signed only by 20 of 42 teachers (Idem, 4 June, file 30).
22. The government asked the prefect of Iasi to assure the presence of four police sergeants' at the conference that was supposed to be held at the University. (Idem, file 32).
23. Idem, 2 June, file 2.
24. Idem, 12 March, file 11, 6 April, file 12, 22 April, file 15.
25. Idem, 24 April, file 16.
26. „Curierul“, 5 June, 1883, year XI, nr. 62, p. 2; ANI, fond „Rectorat“, dosar 483, 1882-1883, 5 June, fila 4.
27. „Curierul“, 5 iunie 1883, anul XI, nr. 62, p. 1.
28. Ibidem.
29. „Curierul“, 9 June, 1883, p. 2.

30. N. A. Bogdan, Regele Carol I și a doua sa capitală, f.l. f.a., p. 287.
31. „It cannot be but for us the Rumanians a more beautiful day like this, in which we can see our past interconnecting with the future and which lifts up our faith that under the rule of His Majesty the king of Romania will go on further and further on the path of prosperity that is now opened“, in *Ibidem*.
32. „Curierul“, 9 June, 1883, p. 2.
33. N. A. Bogdan, op. cit., p. 290-291.
34. „Curierul“, 12 June, 1883, year XI, nr. 65, p. 2.
35. N. A. Bogdan, op. cit., p. 309.
36. „Curierul“, year XI, nr. 61, 4 June, 1883, p. 2.
37. *Idem*, year XI, nr. 63, 9 June, 1883, p. 2.
38. The toast of N. Voinov, vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies, „people and king toke their vows, sacred vow that today all of the sacrifices made for country and only for country, the glory obtained on the battlefield of Bulgaria under the leadership of his Majesty made us to look straight at the statue of Stephen the Great and see the glorious past“ (*Ibidem*).
39. „Curierul“, 5 June, 1883, p. 2.
40. An example in this direction is „Ode at the statue of Stephen the Great“, by Vasile Alecsandri, in „Curierul“, 9 June, 1883, year XI, nr. 63, p. 1.
41. „But your pure heart (Moldova) of burning longings \ A long time ago was stolen by a young beautiful lad\ and a lad with eyes to search the sun \ But not in his grandness but in his shinny face („Curierul“, 5 June, 1883, year XI, nr. 62 , p. 2).
42. „Pactul social“, 8 June, 1883, p. 2.
43. *Idem*, 5 June, 1883, p. 4.
44. *Idem*, 8 June, 1883, p. 2
45. Nicolae Bogdan, op. cit., p. 311.
46. ANI, fond „Prefectura“, dosar nr. 96, 1883, 23 iulie, fila 54.. The prefect of the region of Prahova announces his counterpart from Iasi of the receiving of the painting with the scene of Stephen’s statue (*Ibidem*, 5 august, file 58).
47. *Ibidem*, file 39.
48. „Curierul“, year XI, nr. 65, 12 June, 1883, p. 2.
49. *Idem*, 9 June, p. 3.
50. Petre Grădișteanu was one of the most active members of the liberal group in the period of 1877-1890, participating at the forming of the coalition of Mazar Pașa, present in numerous political arrangements of the time (Apostol Stan, *Putere politica și democrație în România 1859-1918*, București, Editura Albatros, 1995, p. 165).
51. „Curierul“, 9 June, 1883, p. 3.
52. „Sire, many are missing from this table and who wanted to be here, they love you sire and so do all of us, for they see in Your Majesty not the king of Romania but the king of the Romanians. And with their help your Majesty will conquer, the precious stones that miss form the crown of Stephen the Great“, in C. Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată*, vol. I, București, Editura Eminescu, 1987, vol. I, p. 162.
53. This testimonial appears in the same newspaper from the correspondent who described the event, in the number of 28th of June of the magazine („Curierul“, nr. 1730, p. 1).

54. The German gazette „Nordeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung“ publishes, at 27th of June, a description of the action from Iasi. The Germans foresaw in the action from 5th of June a manifestation of adulation to the suzerain and to the dynasty („Românul“, 22 June, 1883, p. 553).
55. Ibidem.
56. These words, in part exaggerated, in other incorrectly reproduced, were pronounced by surprise by a person that didn't have a official role at the ceremony. The government could only disagree in a dynamic way and the official path this kind of manifestations and tendencies from wherever they might come“ („Monitorul Oficial“, 19 June, 1883, p. 1247).
57. C. Sălăvăstru, Discursul puterii, Iași, Institutul European, 1999, p. 39.
58. Ibidem, p. 43.
59. Murray Edelman, Politica și utilizarea simbolurilor, Iași, Polirom, 1999, p. 43.
60. Ibidem, p. 75.
61. Ibidem, p. 184.
62. Ibidem, p. 186.

Abstract

Reinventing the Middle Age: the Inauguration of the Statue of Stephen the Great (Iași 1883)

The year 1883 can be considered as a model for several reasons that we are going to explain in the current article. The alliance treaty signed with the Central Powers, the start of the coagulation of the united opposition, which led eventually to the downfall of the I.C Bratianu government but also the international incident occurred by the unveiling in Iasi of the statue of Stephen the Great, these examples emphasis the authenticity of the first statement.

We intend to analyze in the following rows the way in which a power, at the beginning of a long political and mediated siege, will succeed to organize the inauguration of a statue, long awaited due to its symbolic background of the character that it represents. To understand how was possible that an event preconceived as a moment of solidarity transformed into a reason for new disputes on the power-opposition front, we considered necessary a short glimpse on the internal political atmosphere of the months that preceded the event.

Beyond the objectives of every actor involved, the inaugurations from 5th of June 1883 lead us to think to a type-situation, in which the political power uses a moment to build a common memory. Through Stephen's statue, erected in a delicate moment, tradition could demonstrate its constructive force and the revived past appeared as a mixture which we found nostalgia, frustration and satisfaction.

Keywords

inauguration, statue, controversies, ceremony, collective memory