

SZATHMARI AND THE CRIMEAN WAR

ADRIAN-SILVAN IONESCU

Today it is a common thing to learn about a war from newspapers and to see the accompanying pictures taken on the spot a few hours ago. Press photographers risk their lives everyday – some even lose them – on the frontline of armed conflicts somewhere in the world. Nobody seems impressed by their sacrifice, not even themselves. From Korea to Vietnam, Cambodia and Angola, from Bosnia to Afghanistan and Iraq they have followed the troops, mingled with soldiers and shared their life and adventures. In this way the photo journalists witness the most important moments of modern military history and complete a trustworthy documentation of every campaign. Many of their pictures are awarded such coveted prizes as the Pulitzer Price for press photography.

But, in the 1850s, photo-journalism was in its infancy. At that time it was more of a private enterprise than a government commission or a leading newspaper's special concern. It was expensive and cumbersome to take the cameras, tripod, glass plates and the necessary chemicals into the field. A van and a horse team were used for this purpose. Half of the van was used as dark room while the other half was turned into bedroom, dining room and kitchen. The photographer was self-sufficient and self-employed in this kind of project. Unlike nowadays when photo journalists are clad in battle dress, passing unnoticed among other soldiers, the 1850s war photographer kept his civilian clothes on the battlefield and often became an easy target for both opposing sides. The wet collodion technique was still too slow to allow taking snapshots. Consequently, the photographer had to ask soldiers to pose for a few seconds or even minutes. For obtaining good views of trenches and fortifications he had to expose himself by taking his camera as near as possible to those objectives.

The first photographer who had the intrepidity to take the camera on the battlefield was a Romanian, Carol Szathmari (1812–1887).

A well known painter and photographer, Bucharest-based Szathmari had the great idea to use his skill for catching the many faces of the war waged by Russians and Turks on the Lower Danube. It was the year 1853. That war later came to be known as the Crimean War when France and Great Britain entered the scene as allies of the Ottoman Empire and the battlefield moved from the shores of the Danube to Crimea.

Enterprising and industrious, a master of multitude of artistic expressions, genres and techniques including miniatures, lithography, watercolor, oil on canvas portrait and landscape painting, a passionate traveler with specific interests in ethnography and architectural themes, Szathmari understood the great advantages of photography to capture evanescent moments faster and better than other artistic means. Szathmari used the new process of wet collodion.

The Russian, Austrian and Turkish troops were based for a while in Bucharest and offered the artist a great opportunity to affirm his talent as well as gain financial rewards. Whether he asked the military commanders for permission

to take their likeness, or they just visited his studio, he succeeded in compiling an impressive collection of military portraits. The Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest has a series of glass negatives and copies on salted paper of such studio portraits of officers. They belong to either the Russian and the Austrian armies. On some of these portraits he later applied soft shades of watercolor.

The wood-cut portrait of the Russian general Prince Michail Dimitrievitch Gortschakov, published in "The Illustrated London News" No. 768/November 3, 1855 was based on one of Szathmari's pictures. The caption states: Prince Gortschakoff, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the Crimea. From a photograph by Szathmari".

In spring of 1854 the intrepid artist visited the battlefield on the shores of the Danube. He roamed around the fortifications of Oltenitza and Silistra and took photographs of strongholds, trenches and military camps. So he becomes the first well-known war photo-reporter in the world. In the American archives there exist a few daguerreotypes taken by an unknown photographer who documented the 1847 war with Mexico. In a rather unclear image, this photographer depicted General Wool's victorious entry into Saltillo at the head of his troops, just before the fall of Mexico City.¹ Fruitless attempts to find the name of that photo-reporter were made by American historians of photography. Thus it is Szathmari who gained the laurels of being the first war photographer. The quality of his pictures was also far superior than earlier examples as he used, as already mentioned, the wet-plate process which had the advantage of infinite reproductions versus the single copy obtained through the daguerreotype process.

The British photographer Roger Fenton (1819–1869) went directly to the Crimea and landed at Balaclava harbour on March 8, 1855, almost eleven months after his Romanian counterpart took his first pictures on the borders of the Danube. In the meantime Szathmari already exhibited his album at the 1855 Paris World Exhibition and offered copies of it to European royalty. For quite a while Fenton was considered to have been the first war reporter who used a camera. This was due to the better publicity he enjoyed and also to the fact that his work was considered to be of greater magnitude as he photographed the troops of France and Great Britain, both of which were major European powers at the time.

The late Constantin Săvulescu (1914–2001), the passionate researcher and historian of Romanian photography, established the truth and was supported by other authors as well.² In spite of all this evidence, Szathmari is still ignored and

¹ Oliver Jensen, Joan Peterson Kerr, Murray Belsky, *American Album. Rare Photographs Collected by the Editors of American Heritage*, New York, 1971, p. 17-18; Gail Buckland, *First Photographs. People, Places, and Phenomena as Captured for the First Time by the Camera*, New York, 1980, p. 248; Ed Holm, *Photography: Mirror of the Past*, in "American History Illustrated", t. XXIV, 1989, no. 5; Oliver Jensen, *New Views of an Old War*, in "American Heritage", t. 46, 1995, no. 7.

² C. Săvulescu, *The First War Photographic Reportage*, in „Image”, no.1/1973, p. 13-16; idem, *Carol Popp de Szathmari, primul fotoreporter de război?*, in „Magazin istoric”, 1973, no. 12; idem, *Early Photography in Eastern Europe – Romania*, in „History of Photography. An International Quarterly” t. I, 1977, no. 1, p. 63-77; idem, *The First War Correspondent – Carol Szathmari*, in

receives no credits for his activity as the first war photographer from historians of photography outside Romania. Few of them admitted that he was the first one to take the camera onto the battlefield and that his work preceded that of Fenton. It is true that the Lower Danube was not Crimea and the battlefield in front of Oltenitza was neither Alma nor Balaclava or Sevastopol. Also, his subjects were not gallant British or French soldiers but ragged Turks and Cossacks photographed outside their fortress and a few smartly clad Russian and Austrian generals proudly posing in studio.

In the last ten years, in three separate parts of Europe, Paris, Moscow and Istanbul, exhibitions of photographs from the Crimean War were displayed and from all of these Szathmari's masterpieces were missing and their author not even mentioned. In the first exhibition entitled *Crimée 1854–1856, premiers reportages de guerre*, organized by the Musée de l'Armée in Paris between 21st October, 1994 and 8th January, 1995 that omission was somehow explained by the fact that curators worked exclusively with images of the allied troops provided by French and British reporters.

But, in the second exhibition, organized by the Russian State Historical Museum and opened between 14th March and 14th April, 1997 at the State Exhibition Gallery "Malai Manej" in Moscow, *Krimskaia Voina 1853–1856. Gheroiceskaia oborona Sebastopolia – parvie fotoreportaji* (The Crimean War 1853–1856. The Heroic Defence of Sevastopol – the first photo reportages) the lack of any mention of Szathmari is inexplicable. Unlike the French exhibition, this one displayed old photographs from a longer period in time and included material from the Danube Campaign too. This period at the beginning of the conflict was the focus of special attention by Szathmari and was accurately chronicled by him in his pictures. Still another exhibition was mounted at L'Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes "Georges Dumézil" in Istanbul on the occasion of the conference "Around the Crimean War: New Approaches and New Topics", 26th-27th November, 2004, *The Crimean War Photographs in the Collection of the Musée d'Orsay*. No photograph by Szathmari was to be found in this display, even though

"Interpressgrafik", 1978, no. 1, p. 25-29; idem, *Carol Szathmari, primul reporter fotograf de război*, in „Fotografia”, 1989, no. 190, p. 2-3; idem, *140 de ani de la primul fotoreportaj de război*, in „Cotidianul” 1994, no. 53 (791)/5-6 martie; Constantin Săvulescu, EFIAP, *Cronologia ilustrată a fotografiei din România, perioada 1834–1916*, București, 1985, p. 16-27; Pat Hodgson, *Early War Photographs*, Oxford, 1974, p. 14-15; Lawrence James, *Crimea 1854–1856. The war with Russia from contemporary photographs*, Oxford, 1981, p. 9, 10, 15, 16; Petre Costinescu, Emanoil Bădescu, *Imagini inedite din Războiul Crimeii*, in „Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor – Muzeu”, 1986, no. 1; Karin Schuller-Procopovici, *Ein Land aus dem Bilderbuch. Das Rumänienalbum des Carol Szathmari (1812–1887)*, in the exhibition catalog *Silber und Salz. Zur Frühzeit der Photographie im deutschen Sprachraum 1839–1860*, Köln und Heidelberg, 1989, p. 452-453; Barbu Brezianu, *Szathmari, primul fotograf de război*, in „Arta”, 1992, no. 3, p. 2-5; Kincses Károly, *A Fotográfus*, in the exhibition catalog *Uralkodók festője, fényképésze: Szathmári Pap Károly*, Keskemet, 2001, p. 75-85; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania*, in „History of Photography. An International Quarterly”, t. 13, 1989, no. 4, p. 285; idem, *Fotografiile de Carol Szathmari din Războiul Crimeii în colecții americane și britanice*, in „Muzeul Național”, t. X, 1998, p. 71-82; idem, *Cruce și semilună*, București, 2001, p. 159-174.

the curator, Mrs. Joëlle Bolloch mentioned him in her introduction as a pioneer on that field. She also gives due credit to the Romanian photographer in her album, *War Photography*³ from the series *Photography at the Musée d'Orsay*. Unfortunately, the author perpetuates Helmut Gernsheim's mistake from his imposing 1955 *History of Photography*⁴ misspelling the photographer's name: Karl Baptiste (!) von Szathmari.

It is true that none of the mentioned museums had any photographs by Szathmari in their collections. (Most of the pictures in the Moscow exhibition were borrowed from French and British collections. Why, therefore, were no requests made to borrow photographic material from Romanian institutions? This omitted material would have illustrated the importance of Szathmari's early activity as a war photographer.) His contribution to the history of photography and especially to that war is too important to be neglected. He deserved at least a mention in the catalogue's foreword.

His album containing some two hundred images became famous due in part to its presentation at the 1855 Paris World Exhibition and the pertinent analysis that Ernest Lacan gave it in his book entitled *Esquisses photographiques. À propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient* published in Paris 1856. Ernest Lacan gives precious details about this album – now lost (or thought to be lost) – thus reconstructing the work for the greatest part. It is clear that among the proofs from the Library of the Romanian Academy, there are many that were used as backbone of this impressive work. Lacan presents the origins of the album and its author: “M. Ch. Pap de Szathmari est un gentilhomme transylvanien, fixé à Bucarest, qui s'est fait peintre parce qu'il aime arts, et photographe parce qu'il était peintre. Aux premiers jours de la guerre d'Orient; lorsque les Russes envahirent la Valachie, l'idée lui vint d'ajouter à ses albums, déjà riches d'épreuves, des types et des costumes empruntés à l'armée d'occupation. Sa qualité d'artiste et son talent bien connu lui donnèrent accès auprès des généraux dont il fit les portraits; puis, comme il avait ses entrées dans le camp russe, il en profita pour y prendre des vues et reproduire quelques scènes émouvantes dont les hasards de la guerre le rendirent témoin. C'était déjà beaucoup, et sa collection prenait tout l'intérêt d'un chapitre d'histoire lorsque, par suite d'héroïques efforts, les Turcs vinrent à leur tour occuper Bucarest et les villes que l'ennemi leur avait un instant enlevées. Cette nouvelle armée s'était déjà couvert de gloire en soutenant seule une lutte inégale pour la défense du pays menacé. La renommée avait déjà répété dans toute l'Europe les noms de ses généraux, naguère presque inconnus. M. de Szathmari comprit que son habileté de photographe lui imposait une honorable mission: celle de conserver pour l'histoire les traits de ces hommes dont le courage et le patriotisme faisait des héros, et de perpétuer le souvenir des événements qui se succédaient devant lui. A partir de cette époque et jusqu'au moment où la lutte changea de théâtre pour aller en Crimée, le laborieux amateur poursuivit son

³ Joëlle Bolloch, *War Photography*, Paris, 2004, p. 7-8.

⁴ Helmut Gernsheim, Alison Gernsheim, *The History of Photography from the Earliest Use of the Camera Obscura in the Eleventh Century up to 1914*, London, New York, Toronto, 1955, p. 205.

oeuvre avec un zèle que ni les difficultés ni les dangers ne purent abattre. C'est ainsi que M. de Szathmari a pu réunir les deux camps dans son album, et composer une collection de plus de deux cents planches qui étaient les premiers pages, tracées par la photographie, du grand drame épique qui se déroulait en Orient.⁵

As described by Ernest Lacan, the album opens with portraits of Russian and Turkish commanders, General Prince Michail Dimitrievitch Gortschakoff, General Baron Dimitri Erofeevitch Osten-Sacken, Field marshal Prince Ivan Feodorovitch Paskevitch, Commissioner Alexander Ivanovitch Budberg, General Pavel Eustatievitch Kotzebue, General Count Orlov, commander of Cossack troops, General Alexandr Nicolaevitch Lüders and two commanders fallen on the battlefield – General Selvan, killed at Silistra and Soimonoff, killed at Inkerman. Following these portraits, there is one of Omer Pasha, the Turkish commander-in-chief, Iskender Bey (Muslim name of Polish Count Ilinski who volunteered in the Turkish army and distinguished himself in battle), young Tefvik Pasha killed at Balaklava, Dervish Pasha and two officers from the British and French allied armies, Colonels Simmons and Dieu. There are also types of soldiers and local people, infantrymen and Cossacks from the Russian forces, Turkish bashibouzouks (irregular cavalrymen) and nizamyie (regular infantrymen), Austrian lancers, dragoons and infantrymen, a few gypsies and Romanian merchants and artisans.

But this display was not enough for the master photographer who needed to feel the pulse of the battle and who wished to capture very specific military subjects such as fortresses, bivouacs and troop reviews. So he went to the shores of the Danube with a mobile laboratory in a van. This lab became the target for the Turks in Oltenitza who suspected a Russian spy was hiding in it. Fortunately the artillerymen were not skilled marksmen and missed: "Ce n'est pas sans courir de nombreux dangers que M. de Szathmari a pu poursuivre son oeuvre. Ainsi, dans les premiers jours d'avril 1854, se trouvant près d'Oltenitza, que les troupes russes serraient de près, il voulut en reproduire la Quarantine. Dans ce but, il s'approcha de la ville avec la voiture qui lui servait de laboratoire : puis il installa ses appareils et commença l'opération. Tout à coup, il éprouve une commotion violente et rapide, et presque en même temps le bruit d'une détonation se fait entendre du côté du fort. M. de Szathmari pense qu'il a choisi une mauvaise place et qu'il eut sagement fait de se mettre hors de la ligne du tir de la garnison turque. Pourtant, il reste bravement à son poste. Un instant après, une second vibration de l'air, beaucoup plus significative que la première, et même détonation du côté de la ville. Il devient évident pour l'artiste qu'on lui fait l'honneur de tirer sur lui, et que l'on tire même avec une justesse progressive très inquiétante. Cependant, la vue qu'il prend en ce moment est si intéressante, les lumières et les ombres y sont disposées avec tant d'art, que le photographe ne peut se décider à abandonner la place. D'ailleurs, quelques secondes encore, et l'opération serra complète. Le courageux amateur attend que tout soit fini: puis il ferme ses appareils et se dispose à partir. Il était le temps. Un troisième boulet, beaucoup mieux dirigé que les précédentes,

⁵ Ernest Lacan, *Esquisses photographiques. À propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*, Paris, 1856, p. 155-156.

laboure le sol à quelques pas de lui et le couvre de sable. Mais l'épreuve était magnifique!"⁶

The result of Szathmari's bravery and hard work was the photographic album that he produced and which revealed such vivid images of the war that it could not but be acclaimed as a valuable work by all those who saw it.

In 1855 the press praised this work which was presented to Napoleon III in a private audience during the Paris Exposition Universelle. The French Photographic Society's publication "La Lumière", of 9th June 1855 enthusiastically reported "M. de Szathmari, l'habile amateur photographe de Bucharest, dont nous avons annoncé dernièrement l'arrivée, a eu l'honneur d'être reçu mercredi soir par l'Empereur. LL.MM. ont voulu voir toutes les épreuves que renferme son magnifique album ; les portraits des généraux russes et turcs les ont surtout vivement intéressé. Témoin oculaire de bien des scènes qui se rattachent à l'histoire de la guerre d'Orient, ayant connu la plupart des hommes qui se sont distingués dans cette grande lutte, M. de Szathmari a pu donner des détails curieux et qui ont fixé l'attention de LL.MM. L'Empereur a félicité l'auteur de cette intéressante collection, dont il a accepté l'hommage. Nous sommes heureux d'annoncer ce succès qui honore la photographie et qui montre avec quelle bienveillance LL.MM. accueillent et encouragent les progrès de notre art."⁷

Szathmari was also well-received by Queen Victoria at Osborne Castle on the Isle of Wight on 19th July, 1855. The audience lasted a couple of hours for both the queen, Prince Albert and their guest, King Leopold of the Belgians, were deeply interested by those war photographs. "La Lumière", the same French photographic magazine, stated: "Les portraits des généraux anglais, français, turcs et russes ont surtout fixé leur attention. La reine a daigné adresser des gracieuses félicitations à M. de Szathmari sur son beau travail et permettre qu'on lui annonçait que S.M. en acceptait l'hommage, et qu'une médaille d'or lui était accordée comme signe de sa haute satisfaction."⁸

In 1857 Auguste Devanux published an article in "Le Monde Illustré" on Szathmari's photographic work. In that moment the Romanian photographer was by far the best-known in France. Under the title *La Photographie en Orient – Types et costumes militaires, par M. de Szathmari*, the journalist mentioned: "Dans ces derniers temps, plusieurs photographes ont parcouru l'Orient et en ont rapporté un nombre considérable de vues qui en disent plus sur le véritable aspect de ces contrées, que tous les livres et tous les dessins, quelle que soit leur valeur artistique et littéraire. Voici maintenant que, pour compléter l'oeuvre, un artiste de talent, un homme d'intelligence et de goût, va livrer au public, dans une collection de plusieurs centaines d'épreuves, des spécimens de tous les types et costumes qui distinguent les diverses races implantées dans les provinces turques. Cet artiste est M. de Szathmari, de Bucharest, qui s'est fait connaître en 1855 par une série

⁶ Ernest Lacan, *op. cit.*, p. 161-162.

⁷ "La Lumière", 9 Juin 1855.

⁸ Ibidem, 29 Juillet 1855.

d'épreuves représentent les premiers épisodes de la guerre d'Orient, et les portraits des généraux commandant les armées russe et ottomane.”⁹

The images from the Library of the Romanian Academy's collection which certainly belong to Szathmari's Crimean War album are as follows:

– a Turkish camp with large Sibley tents, standing or seated soldiers all around and a foreground group of five officers clad in capes and fezes.¹⁰

– there are two slightly different compositions with a troop of Turkish cavalymen. In the first one, two troopers are mounted, rifles in hand, while six are dismounted (two standing beside their saddled horses).¹¹ They are wearing dark

blue tunics with thirteen rows of silk worsted cord on the front. All their accoutrements are white. The bugler on the left is resting his brass instrument on

his hip. The second picture has only the front group of four taken from a different angle, with more contrast in tonality and sharper contours on the white horses; the dismounted cavalryman with his elbow on the saddle appears to be an officer.

Two other photographs in this series are:

– the Oltenitza quarantine on the border of the Danube, in front of which some Russian officers are observing the enemy's lines with their spy glasses.¹²

– a large military supply base with carts ready waiting to be loaded.¹³

The most famous image, which was also taken from two different angles and published many times, was that of an old bashibouzouk lounging on a dirty carpet next to a dark-complexion woman. This was first reproduced in the above-mentioned 1857 issue of “Le Monde Illustré” and in several other more recent works.¹⁴ The photograph was published in the Parisian periodical as a woodcut entitled *Palicar et tzigane, d'après une photographie de M. Ch. de Szathmari de Bucharest*.¹⁵

⁹ Auguste Devanau, *La Photographie en Orient – Types et costumes militaires, par M. de Szathmari*, in “Le Monde Illustré”, no. 29/31 Octobre 1857, p. 14.

¹⁰ Also published by Petre Costinescu, Emanoil Bădescu, *op. cit.*; Kincses Károly, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹¹ Also published by Constantin Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată*, fig. 5; Petre Costinescu, Emanoil Bădescu, *op. cit.*; Kincses Károly, *op. cit.*, p. 78; Karin Schuller-Procopovici, *op. cit.*, abb.18.

¹² Also published by Petre Costinescu, Emanoil Bădescu, *op. cit.*

¹³ Also published by Petre Costinescu, Emanoil Bădescu, *op. cit.*; Kincses Károly, *op. cit.*, p. 79

¹⁴ “Le Monde Illustré”, no. 29/31 Octobre 1857, p. 16; Constantin Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată*, fig. 4; Lawrence James, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Cruce și semilună*, fig. 74; Robert Lebeck, Bodo von Dewitz, *Eine Geschichte der Fotoreportage 1839–1973*, Göttingen, 2001, p. 36; Anton Holzer, *Im Schatten des Krimkrieges. Ludwig Angerer Fotoexpedition nach Bukarest (1854 bis 1856). Eine wiederentdeckte Fotoserie im Bildarchiv der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, in “Fotogesichte. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie”, t. 93, 2004, abb. 20.

¹⁵ Eighteen years later, during another Eastern conflict, the French magazine republished the same Szathmari composition, with few facial details and costume changes done by two well-known artists of the time, under a new title *Types Bosniaques. Garde-frontière entre Knin et Livno (Dessin de M.G. Janet, d'après le croquis de M. Charles Yriarte)*, in “Le Monde Illustré”, no. 967/23 Octobre 1875.

There are also few portraits of Russian and Austrian generals and high ranking officers, their identities mostly unknown. Among them there is also a Romanian artillery colonel seated near an elegantly covered table with few books on it. All are salt prints.

Some of those photographs were used as an inspiration base for coloured lithographs which Szathmari commissioned to be printed in Vienna, in 1855. Two are preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy: *Arabian Bashibouzouks* and *Bashibouzouk and Arnaout*. The captions are in German: „Nach einer von Szathmari vor Oltenitza verfertigten und collorirten Photographie“.

From the same series of Oriental types there is, at the National Military Museum in Bucharest, a picture of a magnificent *Arnaout* in full costume. He wears large red shalvar embroidered with gold bullion thread on the sides, a *tschepken* (short jacket with slit sleeves) also fully embroidered, a sash in which he stuck two pistols and a yatagan while another dagger is hanging in front; on his head he has a red fez adorned with a large tassel. He keeps a hand on his trusted carbine to show that he is always ready to use it, if necessary. A coquettish moustache gives a milder touch to his stern, resolute countenance. Unlike the other compositions with bashibouzouks or various Oriental irregulars who were photographed outside, this elegantly clad arnaout has posed inside the photographer's studio : a silk curtain on the left shows a kind of elegance in that interior. The picture is mounted on cardboard with printed borders and credit "Etablissement Photographique de Charles Szathmari à Bucarest".

While visiting in 1993 the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, N.Y., I had the opportunity to study three Szathmari photographs dating from that period, which were completely unknown in Romania. One is a portrait of Lieutenant General Soimonoff, Russian commander of the 104th Division killed at Inkerman. This portrait was mentioned by Ernest Lacan in his book. In the fall of 1853, General Soimonoff was in command of a unit stationed in Giurgewo, on the border of the Danube. Additional details can be found in Dimitrie Pappasoglu's autobiography who, at the time, was a captain in the Wallachian army and referred to the Russian general as well.¹⁶ The general's likeness could have been taken in Szathmari's Bucharest studio, which was appointed with elegant furnishings, a fact proven by the elegant armchair next to a richly covered table on which the model is resting his elbow. He wears a double breasted frock coat with large epaulettes on the shoulders; his hair and moustache are white. Unlike other Russian generals there is no military bearing in Soimonoff's appearance. His pose is not at all imposing but has the air of a tired old soldier who's long military career has consumed and weakened his combative spirit.

The other two photographs from George Eastman House are landscapes. *The Bombardment of Silistra* shows two horses grazing peacefully in the foreground among wagons and, at some distance, there are the fortifications specified on the bottom of the cardboard: Arab Tabia, Fort Abdul Medjid, the city of Silistra and eighteen Russian battalions. *The Russian Lancer's Camp at Craiova* depicts a row

¹⁶ *Viața Majorului D. Pappasoglu*, [București, 1866], p. 4.

of white tents and in front of them a pyramidal structure made out of saddles, lances and guns surrounded by a few soldiers and officers. The photographs have a sepia tint. Their dimensions are 25.2 x 18.3 cm and 15.3 x 21.1 cm respectively. Each is in a window mount with printed decorative borders and bears a title, in French, handwritten in black ink by the author.

As consultant for Romania to the production of the documentary *The Crimean War* filmed by Mentorn Barraclough Carey Productions Ltd. of London and released in 1997 on Britain's Channel Four, I suggested to the curators of the production team to search The Royal Photograph Collection at Windsor Castle for the album offered by Szathmari to Queen Victoria. The researchers were successful in finding several pages that surely belonged to the original work.¹⁷ In a recent visit paid to England (July 2006) I had the privilege to study myself those pictures. The images' dimensions are similar to the ones mentioned above and are mounted on pages with decorative printed borders. They represent mostly types of Turkish and Russian soldiers with the specific equipment and weapons. There were twelve pictures out of which two represent three Bulgarian volunteers in the Russian army and a group of Don Cossacks while the rest represent Turkish regular infantrymen, artillerymen and staff officers. They were photographed outside in order to benefit the natural light. Always grouped four or five at a time, the models are positioned in such a way that all the details of the uniforms and equipment to be revealed.¹⁸ One of these pictures is of special interest for its central character is Omer Pasha himself. The Turkish marshal is surrounded by his staff and aides-de-camp.¹⁹ Ernest Lacan made a detailed description of this picture.²⁰

Part of these newly identified Szathmari pictures were published in the accompanying Channel Four Book, *The Crimean War*.²¹

These images recently discovered in the U.S. and Great Britain bring the hope of a future reconstitution of this important work of Carol Szathmari, for a long time thought to be lost forever.

But it seems that Szathmari's album is not altogether lost: some of its plates from private collections appear now and then in various places of the world. A 27th October, 1999 auction at Sotheby's brought to light some thirty-five plates from André and Marie-Thérèse Jammes's collection comprising portraits, military scenes and studies of characters in traditional costumes (Romanian peasants, artisans and merchants), credited "Etablissement Photographique de Charles Szathmari à Bucarest".

¹⁷ I am grateful to Teresa Cherfas, co-author of *The Crimean War* documentary movie and accompanying book, for her kindness to share with me the pictures she discovered in The Royal Photographic Collection, Windsor Castle.

¹⁸ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Fotografii de Carol Szathmari din Războiul Crimeii în colecții americane și britanice*, p. 77-78.

¹⁹ Idem, *Omer Pasha's Portraits*, in "Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art", t. XXXIII, 1996, p. 76.

²⁰ Ernest Lacan, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

²¹ Paul Kerr, Georgina Pye, Teresa Cherfas, Mick Gold, Margaret Mulvihill, *The Crimean War*, London, 1997, p. 20, 24, 37, 95.

Along with the volume exhibited in Paris at the World Exhibition, which received a Second Class Medal, Szathmari offered copies of his album to Emperors Napoleon III and Franz Joseph I, Queen Victoria, King of Württemberg and Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Saxa-Weimar-Eisenach, who in appreciation of his work, awarded the author various medals.

Unfortunately all of these precious historical documents depicting the first stages of the Crimean War seemed to be destroyed or lost. Napoleon III's album was burned during the 1871 Paris Commune in the Tuileries Palace. The one in Great Britain was thought to have fallen to the flames in the 1912 Windsor Castle fire, but the recent recovery of some images could shed a different light on that assumption. The albums in Austria and Germany have vanished without a trace after the First and Second World Wars. The few possible remaining copies and glass plates in Szathmari's legacy were lost during the 25th August, 1944 bombardment of Bucharest by the withdrawing German troops when the Szathmari family home was hit.

The 20th and 21st century Western historians of photography know too little of Szathmari's photography or perhaps his work has been deliberately ignored by them. Ultimately Szathmari has not received the well-deserved accolade of being the first war photographer. The majority of modern historians consider the Englishman Roger Fenton to be the first war photographer. Fenton's albums were kept very well and enjoyed much more publicity during his lifetime and afterwards, through a huge series of published studies and comprehensive articles.²²

However, the Romanian artist's right to be considered the first war photo-reporter cannot be contested any longer. Even without reconstitution of his complete work, many of its components are held in museums and private collections. Some have been recently re-discovered while others undoubtedly remain to be uncovered. Yet the few fragments of his work that are known show exceptional value. As a forerunner of modern photo-reporters, Carol Szathmari blended the clear quality of the historic document with the artistic ability of the accomplished artist. In this way, he was capable of empowering his images with great evocative quality, validating his creative power in photographs of immense significance, not only for national history but also for the universal history of photography.

²² *Mr. Fenton's Crimean Photographs*, in "The Illustrated London News", no. 769/November 10, 1855, p. 557; Captain H. Oakes-Jones, M.B.E. F.S.A., *Photography in the Crimean War*, in "The Journal of the Society for the Army Historical Research", 1938, no. 66; no. 67; no. 68; 1939, no. 69; no. 70; no. 71; Helmut Gernsheim, Alison Gernsheim, *op. cit.*, p. 206-207; Pat Hodgson, *op. cit.*; Lawrence James, *op. cit.*; Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present*, Boston, 1982, p. 85-88; Paul Kerr, Georgina Pye, Teresa Chervas, Mick Gold, Margaret Mulvihill, *op. cit.*; Joëlle Bolloch, *op. cit.*, p. 8-11.