

## Szathmári, a great documentary artist\*

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### Abstract

Carol Pop de Szathmári was born in Cluj, Transylvania, on 11 January 1812. His talent for painting shone out from an early age. Being a passionate traveller, Szathmári journeyed through Europe and often crossed the Carpathian Mountains to visit Wallachia and its capital, Bucharest, where he eventually settled in 1843. An accomplished landscape and portrait painter, at ease with both watercolours and oil paints, Szathmári obtained commissions from the wealthy Wallachian boyars. Szathmári kept up constant, good relations with the successive ruling princes of Wallachia for whom he painted portraits and various other compositions. By 1848, Szathmári began to experiment with photography. The outbreak of the Russian-Ottoman War in late June 1853 saw the Romanian principalities occupied by the Russian army. In April 1854, Szathmári filled a van with his cameras and glass plates and went to the Danube to document the fighting between the Russian and Turkish armies. The result of Szathmári's bravery and hard work was a photographic album. His album, containing some two hundred images, became famous due to its presentation at the 1855 Paris World's Fair and Szathmári was awarded the Second Class Medal for his work. From that time on, photography, painting and lithography were always closely connected in Szathmári's career. In 1864 he became a member of the Société Française de Photographie in Paris and in 1870 of the one in Vienna. In 1863, he was appointed Court Painter and Photographer, a position he held for the rest of his life. In that capacity, he followed his patron, Prince Carol I, on the battlefield during the Russian-Romanian-Ottoman War of 1877, which was waged south of the Danube. Alongside martial compositions and albums, Szathmári had long been attracted by folk types and produced a large series of pictures of peasants, gypsies, postillions, merchants and artisans. He toured the fairs and the crowded streets of the town in search of picturesque types. The artist's last major work was the chromolithographic album of the themed floats which paraded the capital city at King Carol's coronation pageant, on 10-11 May 1881. Szathmári died in Bucharest on 3 June 1887.

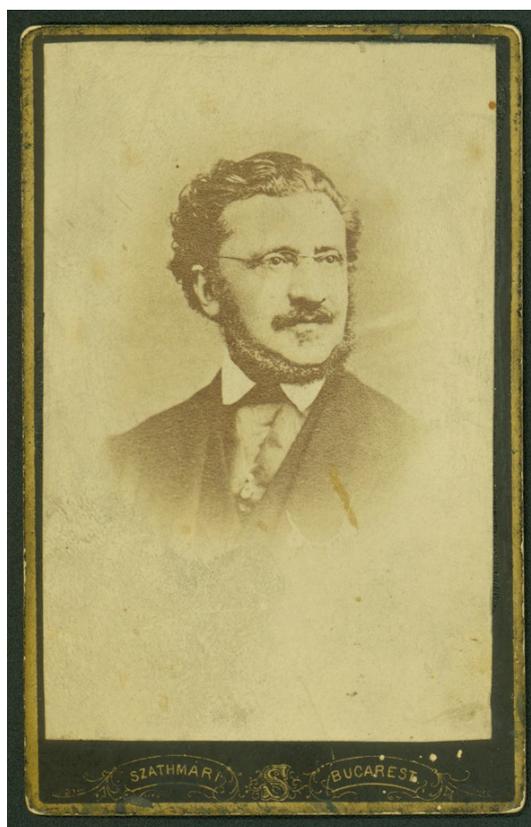
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- [1] Carol Pop de Szathmári's name is well known to the Romanian public, having long entered the national consciousness along with other famous artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Theodor Aman and Nicolae Grigorescu. More recently, he has become known – and accepted – abroad due to his contribution as a pioneer of photographic art. Owing to the diversity of his preoccupations, the techniques and genres that he mastered – easel painting, portrait, landscape, compositions with multiple characters occasioned by political, military, religious or social events, lithography, photography – he stood a better chance of making himself known on the Romanian artistic scene than many other

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contemporary artists. Cutting a rather unique figure in the visual arts, both local and European, and having vast connections in the most diverse circles – from monarchs to writers and musicians, from high-ranking military officers and fellow artists to townsmen, tradesmen and peasants – Szathmári was a man of admirable adaptability and infinite talent for inter-human communication. (fig. 1)



1 Carol Popp de Szathmári, Self-portrait, carte-de-visite, albumen print, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

- [2] He had come from his native Transylvania to Walachia, during the fourth decade of that century, like many an itinerant miniaturist, in order to take advantage of a market greedy for portraits, a genre which had but recently been discovered and adopted by the Romanian high society, as had countless other occupations that were known in the homelands of the Austrian and especially the Russian troops. At first, he did not show more promise than any of the other painters working in Bucharest, such as his friends, the older Anton Chladek and Carol Wahlstein, or the itinerant artists Barabás Miklós, Sikó Miklós, Paulus Petrovits and Iosef August Schoefft.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, he conformed to the sanctioned formulas of the technique of miniature and produced adequate portraits for members of the high society: he painted the portrait of beautiful Marițica Bibescu, the wife of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, dressed in folk costume but wearing a very expensive

<sup>1</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Pictori străini pe meleaguri românești," in: Ileana Căzan and Irina Gavrilă, eds., *Societatea românească între modern și exotic văzută de călători străini (1800-1847)*, București 2005, 295-318; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială în România secolului al XIX-lea*, București 2008, 21-45.

tiara and a heavy necklace made up of three strings of imperial gold coins (fig. 2), and that of her brother-in-law, the Prince's elder brother, Barbu Știrbei (fig. 3), who was to become the next ruler of the Principality and a generous patron of the artist.



2 *Princess Marița Bibescu*, miniature, watercolour on ivory, 1845, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



3 *Barbu Știrbei*, miniature on copper, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

- [3] In an ample composition in the same minute style, he immortalised a ball from the reign of Bibescu, where alongside gentlemen in tailcoats and Russian officers shining in their parade uniforms, one can see numerous fashionable ladies dressed in evening gowns, adorned with lace and fabulous jewellery, as well as ladies dressed in oriental costume, wearing embroidered fezzes on their heads and short jackets with long slashed sleeves, conversing with bearded boyars of the Phanariotic period parading their fur-lined mantles

worn over the long striped tunics caught at the waist by a cashmere sash. This painting might represent either the social gathering organised by the municipality to celebrate the coronation of Prince Bibescu, or the *soiree* given by Chancellor Barbu Știrbei, the Prince's brother, of which the periodical *Curierul Românesc* gave an account.<sup>2</sup> On that date, in February 1843, the artist was already in Bucharest, where he had taken permanent residence, and may thus have witnessed the event. The variety of costumes in the composition is accounted for by the fact that it was a gathering in which most of the affluent people in the Capital City participated, from merchants to grand boyars, and where everyone came wearing their Sunday best, of which oriental costumes were still much appreciated. This also explains the fact that, in the group standing in the mid-foreground, to the left, one can see Barbu Știrbei, dressed in his tailcoat, top hat in hand, conversing with a Turkish pasha. However, the central character, on whom all gazes converge and relative to whom all the other figures – including Prefect Slătineanu, also wearing a tailcoat and many decorations around his neck and on his chest – are positioned, showing great condescendence, seems to be not Prince Bibescu but rather a Russian general, wearing a tight-waisted uniform, and making a kind gesture with his hand. His features, the shaven cheek, unadorned by long sideburns but only by a moustache, have nothing of the delicate, almost feminine physiognomy of the new Ruling Prince.

- [4] The artist's perceptiveness played a significant role in accurately noting the major changes that urban society was undergoing in Romania and which Barabás too had immortalised in his late personal memoir,<sup>3</sup> without however producing a drawing of equal evocative power.
- [5] Nonetheless, unlike the other drawing-room portraitists, Szathmári also had a propensity for the landscape, which helped him glide easily towards another genre which was promising to become of great interest – the documentary – to which he devoted a great part of his later career.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, during his lifetime, Szathmári was unjustly

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<sup>2</sup> *Curierul Românesc* 15/19 February 1843: "On Tuesday evening, 16 Febr., the Municipality of the capital city organised a resplendent ball to celebrate the enthronement of His Highness [Gheorghe Bibescu], in the hall of Prefect I. Slătineanu, which His Highness was kindly invited by the Town Council to grace with His presence. Likewise were all the boyars resident in the capital city invited, as well as the medical body and the more affluent merchants together with their families. Everything was splendid and appropriate for such an occasion, owing to the care and tenaciousness of the Council Chair, Mr I. Filipescu. Tonight, Chancellor B. Știrbei is giving a resplendent *soiree* at his beautiful *hôtel*."

<sup>3</sup> Andrei Veress, "Pictorul Barabás și românii (cu însemnările sale din 1833 despre viața bucureșteană)," in: *Academia Română, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare*, vol. III, No. IV, *Memoria* 8/1930, 373-384; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Barabás Miklós și eleganța bucureșteană," in: *Revista Istorică*, vol. XIV, 1-2/2003, 239-248; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Un artist martor al transformării societății românești la început de secol XIX," in: Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Portrete în istoria artei românești*, Nørresundby 2001, 19-22; Paul Cernovodeanu, ed., *Călători străini despre țările române în secolul al XIX-lea (1831-1840)*, București 2006, vol. III (new ed.), 53-62.

<sup>4</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Szathmari documentarist," in: *Arta* 8/1983, 36-37; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Artă și document*, București 1990, 196-209; 286-298.

considered by one of his contemporaries, C.I. Stăncescu – an artist with an infinitely smaller, less valuable work than his own, but who was influential due to the official positions he had attained, including that of professor of aesthetics and art history at the School of Fine Arts –, at a conference in 1878, among the inexperienced, naive documentary artists, along with Wahlstein, Chladek, Schiavoni, Livaditti and Rosenthal.<sup>5</sup> Stăncescu failed to acknowledge the achievement of Szathmári's mature creation which recuperates and showcases rural and urban traditions of his country, making them known abroad. Moreover, unlike other contemporary artists, Szathmári was not drawn to fashionable historical themes, inspired from the country's valiant, glorious past, which ensured success and a generous income from the government, but rather to the events of recent history, in which he had participated personally and which he could record on the spot in his notebooks.

[6] Szathmári's biography is widely known,<sup>6</sup> therefore we will not recount it in any detail in what follows, but will mention instead only a few highlights. His work, divided between the brush and the camera lens, has been widely discussed by art<sup>7</sup> and photography<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> C. I. Stăncescu, *Ce este frumusețea; Artele plastice în România între anii 1848-1878; Cum se judecă operele de artă*, București 1896, 56.

<sup>6</sup> Em. G. [Emil Gârleanu], "Pictorii Carol și Alexandru Satmary tatăl și fiul," in: *Calendarul literar și artistic pe 1909*, București 1909, 125-133; G. Bora, "Însemnări cu privire la pictorul Carol Popp de Satmary," in: *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 7/1 July 1941, 184-193; G. Oprescu, "Pictorii din familia Szathmary," in: *Analecta* 1/1943, 41-87; G. Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, București 1984, 73-83; G. Oprescu, *Szathmary*, București 1954, 16-22; Ion Frunzetti, *Arta românească în secolul XIX*, București 1991, 251-275; Árvay Árpád, "Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmáry," in: *SCIA* 19, 1/1972, 141-146; Ana Maria Covrig, "Contribuții la deslușirea biografiei și la cunoașterea operei pictorului Carol Popp de Szathmary," in: *SCIA*, AP 23/1976, 89-100; Kolta Magdolna, "Szathmári Pap Károly életrajza," in: Kincses Károly, ed., *Uralkodók festője, fényképésze: Szathmári Pap Károly*, Magyar Fotográfiai Múzeum, Keskemet 2001, 8-24; Murádin Jenő, *Szathmári Pap Károly*, Kolozsvár, 2003, 9-14; *Szathmári. 200 de ani de la naștere*, București 2012, 3-31.

<sup>7</sup> Oprescu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmary*; Oprescu, *Pictura românească în secolul al XIX-lea*; Oprescu, *Szathmary*; G. Oprescu, *Grafica românească în secolul al XIX-lea*, București 1945, vol. II; G. Oprescu, "Carol Popp de Szathmary desinator (1811-1888)," in: *Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare*, Seria III, X, Memoria 2/1941, 1-12; Frunzetti, *Arta românească în secolul XIX*; Acad. Prof. George Oprescu, Ion Frunzetti, Mircea Popescu, eds., *Scurtă istorie a artelor plastice în R.P.R., Secolul XIX*, București 1958, 113-115; Maria Constantin, "Costumul popular femeiesc în stampele pictorului Carol Popp de Szathmary," in: *SCIA* 19/1972, 93-108; Stela Ionescu, *Carol Popp de Szathmary – desen și acuarelă*, exh. cat., București 1988; Radu Ionescu, "La 100 de ani de la moartea lui C. Popp de Szathmary," in: Radu Ionescu, *Pictura și sculptura românească*, ed. Maiko, București 2002, 7-11; Mariana Enache, "Acuarelele lui Carol Popp de Szathmari," in: *Arta* 4/1988, 15-18; Mariana Vida, "Carol Popp de Szathmári aquarelliste," in: *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art XXXVI-XXXVII*, 1999-2000, 39-66; Mariana Vida, "Az akvarellista," in: Kincses Károly, ed., *Uralkodók festője, fényképésze: Szathmári Pap Károly*, Magyar Fotográfiai Múzeum, Keskemet 2001, 94-107; Doina Pungă, *Grafica pe teritoriul României în secolul al XIX-lea. Litografia și gravura în acvaforte*, București 2009, 48-51, 102, 117-119, 277.

<sup>8</sup> C. Săvulescu, "Bucureștiul în fotografia secolului XIX," in: *Fotografia* vol. 2, 5/May 1969, 307-312; Săvulescu, "The First War Photographic Reportage," in: *Image* 1/1973, 13-16; Săvulescu, "Carol Popp de Szathmari, primul fotoreporter de război?," in: *Magazin Istoric* 12/December 1973; Săvulescu, "Early Photography in Eastern Europe – Romania," in *History of Photography. An International Quarterly* vol. I, 1/January 1977, 63-77; Săvulescu, "The First War Correspondent – Carol Szathmari," in: *Interpressgrafik* 1/1978, 25-29; Săvulescu, "Carol Szathmari, primul reporter fotograf de război," in: *Fotografia* 190/July-August 1989, 2-3; Săvulescu, "140 de ani de la primul fotoreportaj de război," in: *Cotidianul* 53, 791/5-6 March 1994; Constantin Săvulescu, EFIAP, *Cronologia ilustrată a fotografiei din România, Perioada 1834-1916*, București 1985, 16-27; Pat

historians, reviewers and critics. One would think that not much has been left unsaid about him. And yet, upon consulting the rich bibliography that has been dedicated to him, one can notice how little the archives have been researched and how flimsy the documentary evidence is in the case of many of the scholars who have felt drawn to his personality. Therefore, much erroneous information is repeated, being picked up from one scholar to another without proper checking. Moreover, the archives can still offer rich material that often modifies the available data provided by various scholars who have not had access to them or have ignored them deliberately. Being one of the artists who, owing to his many preoccupations and skills, for which he was in great demand and which he himself often put at the disposal of relevant bodies, Szathmári has left behind a great wealth of documents; it would therefore be a pity to neglect them. However, in order to be able to read many of these, the researcher must master the transitional Romanian alphabet, the gothic alphabet for German and the French language, in addition to the Hungarian in which his epistles to Transylvanian friends are written.

- [7] Uncertainty persists concerning the way in which his name should be spelled, some contemporary scholars preferring to use a final *y* – as G. Oprescu did in 1943, following the suggestions of his main informant, Ortansa Satmary, the artist's daughter-in-law, and the spelling on the label which had been attached by her and her husband, the artist Alexandru Satmary, to the father's unsigned works<sup>9</sup> – although we have clarified this

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Hodgson, *Early War Photographs*, Oxford, 1974, 14-15; Lawrence James, *Crimea 1854-1856: The war with Russia from contemporary photographs*, Oxford 1981, 9,10,15,16; Paul Fort, "Carol Popp de Szathmari," in: *Photographic Collector*, vol. 2, November 2/1981, 8-14; Emanuel Bădescu and Ștefan Godorogea, "Carol Popp de Szathmari fotograf," in: *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor – Muzeu* 6/1983, 54-60; Petre Costinescu and Emanuel Bădescu, "Imagini inedite din Războiul Crimeii," in: *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor – Muzeu* 1/1986; Radu Ionescu, "Fotografia românească în secolul al XIX-lea," in: *Arta* 7-8/1982, 20; Karin Schuller-Procopovici, "Ein Land aus dem Bilderbuch. Das Rumänienalbum des Carol Szathmari (1812-1887)," in: Bodo von Dewitz, ed., *Silber und Salz. Zur Frühzeit der Photographie im deutschen Sprachraum 1839-1860*, ed. Braus, Köln und Heidelberg 1989, 452-453; Ruxandra Balaci, ed., *Fotografii de Carol Popp de Szathmari în colecțiile Muzeului Național de Artă*, exh. cat., București 1992; Barbu Brezianu, "Szathmari, primul fotograf de război," in: *Arta* 3/1992, 2-5; Paul Kerr et. al., *The Crimean War*, London, 1997, 20; Kincses Károly, "A Fotográfus," in: Kincses Károly, ed., *Uralkodók festője, fényképésze: Szathmári Pap Károly*, Keskemet 2001, 75-85; Quentin Bajac, *L'image révélée. L'invention de la photographie*, Paris, 2001, 77; Joëlle Bolloch, *War Photography*, Paris, 2004, 7-8; Bahattin Öztuncay, "Fotograflarla Belgelenen İlk Savaş/ The First War Documented Through Photography," in: Bahattin Öztuncay, ed., *Kırım Savaşı'nın 150nci Yılı/150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Crimean War*, Istanbul, 2006, 38, 46; Anton Holzer, "Faszination und Abscheu. Die fotografische Erfindung der 'Zigeuner'," in: *Photogeschichte. Beiträge und Ästhetik der Fotografie*, Heft 110/2008, 51; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania," in: *History of Photography. An International Quarterly*, vol. 13/4 October-December 1989, 285; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Fotografii de Carol Szathmari din Războiul Crimeii în colecții americane și britanice," in: *Muzeul Național X/1998*, 71-82; Adrian Silvan Ionescu, *Cruce și semilună*, București 2001, 159-174; Adrian Silvan Ionescu, *Penel și sabie*, București 2002, 111-126; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Fotografie und Folklore. Zur Ethnofotografie im Rumänien des 19. Jahrhunderts," in: *Photogeschichte. Beiträge und Ästhetik der Fotografie*, Heft 103/2007, 49-51; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Szathmari: from a War Photographer to a Ruling Prince's Court Painter and Photographer," in: Anna Auer, Uwe Schögl, eds., *Jubilee – 30 Years ESHPh Congress of Photography in Vienna*, Fotohof Editions, Salzburg, 2008, 80-89; Adrian Silvan Ionescu, "Carol Szathmari (1812-1887): Pioneer War Photographer During the Danubian War Campaign," in: *Centropa. A Journal of Central European Architecture and Related Arts* 9, 1/January 2009, 5-16.

<sup>9</sup> Oprescu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmari*, 38, note 2; Oprescu, *Pictura românească*, 199, note 1.

issue in a 1983 paper which was later developed and included in a book in 1990.<sup>10</sup> The name by which an artist becomes known and which he wishes to be kept in posterity's memory is not necessarily the one on his birth certificate, but the one he uses throughout his life in order to sign his works and the official papers he submits, on various occasions, to state institutions. More often than not, the artist signed his name *Carol* – or *Charles*, or simply *C.* – *Szathmári*. On some photographic prints he signed only the initials of his first and second names, *C.P.*, followed by *Szathmári*, and less frequently he used the formula *Carol Pap* – or *Pop* – *de Szathmári*, as is the case of dedications on albums (such as the one presented to Princess Elena Cuza<sup>11</sup> in 1863) or of certain documents (such as the one in which he offered to lithograph the official portraits of the ruling family<sup>12</sup>), where he wanted to draw attention to his noble origins, so as not to be looked down upon by those he was offering his artistic services to. One of his business cards dating from this period belongs to the Barbu Brezianu donation, preserved at the "Barbu Brezianu" Centre for Brancusi Studies of the G. Oprescu Institute for Art History. It is written in French, being intended for use during travels abroad or for foreign customers who visited his studio: "Charles P. de Szathmari/ Peintre de S.A. du Prince de Roumanie/ Membre de plusieurs Academies". Ministry clerks with whom the artist came into contact and journalists who wrote about him often gave strange spellings to his name, as will be seen below: Sat-Mari, Sad-mari, St. Mari, Satmari, Satmary.

- [8] He was born in Cluj, on 11 January 1812, in a family that had given many clergymen and intellectuals who had had positions in the Transylvanian administration and had been rewarded for their service by being granted the first title in the hierarchy of Hungarian aristocracy, that of *nemeş* (esquire). Carol too had been intended by his parents for the church, but very soon after beginning his studies it became obvious that this was not meant to be, as the calling of the arts was much stronger in him than that of the pulpit.
- [9] From an early age he was a tireless, curious traveller, who travelled the country and then Europe and the Orient, his sketchbook always handy, in order to record the picturesque and unique quality of various places. His position as painter and photographer of the Ruling Prince, which came later, gave him countless opportunities to travel, with his patron's retinue, to various regions of Romania, as well as abroad. The expenses were covered from Court funds. During the rule of Prince Alexandru Ioan I – the one who, on 16 October 1863, had appointed him official painter and photographer – he did not make very many journeys in the country and only accompanied the Prince on two visits to Constantinople, one in 1860, to accept his investiture from the Sultan, and then again in

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<sup>10</sup> Ionescu, *Szathmari documentarist*, 37; Ionescu, *Artă și document*, 196-199.

<sup>11</sup> Theodor Enescu, "Un album de fotografii al lui Carol Popp de Szathmary cu vederi din București," in *Studii și Cercetări de Bibliologie* I/1955, 291-299.

<sup>12</sup> Arhivele Nationale Istorice Centrale (The Central National Historical Archives, hereafter, ANIC), MCIP, folder 1315/1863, MS 2, 5.

1864, to have the new Constitution ratified. He immortalised both these occasions in sketches which, once they were completed, were published in illustrated periodicals.

[10] During the rule of Prince Carol I – "the years of the great journey," as Ion Frunzetti<sup>13</sup> calls them – he undertook countless journeys in most of the counties, accompanying the new foreign Prince who wanted to know the actual economic potential and the character of the inhabitants of his new country. For each amount of money he received, he wrote a receipt, usually in French or German. On a longer list of expenditures incurred by the Ruling Prince on the occasion of a trip on the Danube between 4 and 5 June 1867, continued through Bessarabia and returning through Jassy, the painter features with various amounts: 10 gold coins for accommodation in Brăila and Galați, which he shared with D. Brăescu, secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs, Ion C. Brătianu, then another gold coin in Jassy and three more in Mihăileni, in Botoșani county.<sup>14</sup> On another list, titled *Dépenses faites à l'occasion du voyage de Son Altesse au-delà du Milcov*, Szathmári features with various amounts: 10, 12 and then 2 gold coins, probably for travel expenses, and 10 gold coins in payment for the 8 photographs ordered by the Prince.<sup>15</sup> On 29 August 1867, he acknowledges the receipt of 12 napoleons from the Ruling Prince.<sup>16</sup> On 20 September 1867, an official from Râmnicu Vâlcea telegraphed Dimitrie Brătianu, the Minister of Public Works, asking whether he was authorised to pay the artist the amount of 20 napoleons, which had been requested by the latter who was evidently pursuing his work in that area.<sup>17</sup> During the same year, and probably the same month – a supposition we owe to the absence of any date on this document –, the artist referred the waggoner with whom he had returned from Pitești, and who was to be paid 10 gold coins for his services, to the Court Administration.<sup>18</sup> On 23 August/ 4 September 1868, Szathmári was paid 32 gold coins as travel expenses for trips from București to Câmpulung (10 gold coins) and Târgoviște to Pietroșița (10 gold coins), as well as miscellaneous expenses incurred on this occasion (12 gold coins).<sup>19</sup> On 8 October 1868, he cashed in the amounts of 15 and 20 napoleons, respectively, from the Court Marshal.<sup>20</sup> Another receipt for 687 francs is signed by the artist with the Court Pay Office on 15

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<sup>13</sup> Ion Frunzetti, *Arta românească în secolul XIX*, 273.

<sup>14</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală (The Royal Household), folder 81/1867, MS. 139, 140 v., 142.

<sup>15</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81/1867, MS. 145-145 v.

<sup>16</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81/1867, MS. 253: "Reçu de Son Altesse Serenissime douze napoleons comme frais de voyage./ Bucarest 29 Août 1867/ Ch. Szathmári."

<sup>17</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 77/1867 I, MS. 97: "Mr Satmari asks me for 20 napoleons on behalf of His Highness; please advise, should I or should I not give it to him?"

<sup>18</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 77/1867 I, MS. 96: "Monsieur de Picot! Je prend la liberté de Vous envoyer notre voiturier qui nous a conduit de Pitești ici et qui a à recevoir 10# pour le transport. En Vous priant de me permettre de me signe avec le plus haute consideration,/ Votre très dévouée serviteur,/ Charles Szathmári."

<sup>19</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 350.

<sup>20</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 88/1868, MS. 90, 91.

October 1868.<sup>21</sup> On another list with the Office of the Court Marshall, concerning the period when the Ruling Prince travelled abroad, titled *Dépenses faites par Ordre de S.A. pendant son voyage en Occident*, Szathmári features with 370 francs for delivering 74 photographs (5 francs per piece) on 10 October 1868, and another 500 francs received in Paris on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the same month.<sup>22</sup>

- [11] Starting with the year 1868, when he was given the task of elaborating a series of albums containing lithographs of images from the country, monuments, landscapes and folk costumes, which the Ruling Prince needed in order to present his foreign guests with or as gifts to his blue-blooded hosts abroad, the artist became the employee of the Prince's Court for a period of almost two years. Starting on 28 March/ 9 April of that year, he received 50 gold coins every month, for which he signed a receipt.<sup>23</sup> On 12/ 24 January 1870, he was informed that his salary had been discontinued by royal mandate.<sup>24</sup> During that period he had been curator of "His Highness the Ruling Prince's National Art Institute for the Dissemination of Art" – endowed with a printing press and the needful materials supplied by the Ministry of War – where the first chromolithographed pamphlets of the *România Album allu M.S. Domnitorulu Carolu I* (Romania Album of HM the Ruling Prince Charles I) were published in 1868.<sup>25</sup> The album was not very well received, and the reviewer for *Convorbiri Literare* even mocked it for the pretentious legends and the mediocre quality of the colouring of the prints.<sup>26</sup> Other commentators, however, greeted this work – or perhaps they were merely trying to be agreeable to the Ruling Prince who was its patron – and even proposed that it be taken up by other institutions that could ensure a greater access of the public:

Mr Satmary [sic] is to complete, under the patronage of HM the Prince, the handsome Album of our country's picturesque landscapes and monasteries. Mr Satmary's attempt to work in chromolithography, at the behest of our God-sent, art-loving Prince, have been successful enough to encourage us to hope that before long this album will reach even the most modest abodes. The Minister of Religious Affairs would do an equally great service to the arts if he had the Ministry's Album chromolithographed, so as to provide little models of beauty and educate the people's taste.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 88/1868, MS. 102.

<sup>22</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 87/1868. MS. 7-7v.

<sup>23</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 24, 105; folder 88/1868, MS. 16, 170, 202, 299; folder 126/1869, MS. 24, 266.

<sup>24</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 132/1869, MS. 38: "To Mr Szathmari, Court Painter, in Bucharest,/ Having been appointed by His Highness to administer the civilian payroll, I have the honour of informing you that, as of the end of January, your monthly salary of # 50, paid to you from the Court Administration Pay Office, will be discontinued, as we have ordered a different use for that amount. Indecipherable signature."

<sup>25</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Artă și document*, 207; Doina Pungă, *Grafica pe teritoriul României în secolul al XIX-lea*. 117.

<sup>26</sup> "Albumul Înălțimei Sale Carol I, Publicatu sub direcțiunea Domnului Szathmary," București 1868, in: *Convorbiri Literare* 6/15 Maiu 1868; Ionescu, *Artă și document*, 205-206.

<sup>27</sup> T., "Cronica artistică," in: *Atheneulu Român* Anulu III/January-August 1869, 79.

- [12] Szathmári was not always successful. On the contrary, lithography even caused him unpleasantness when, as soon as his salary was discontinued, the press and the engraving utensils<sup>28</sup> which had been lent to him were reclaimed and had to be returned. Those objects were estimated to be worth 1343 lei and 47 bani.<sup>29</sup> The then Minister, Colonel George Manu, ordered drastic measures for the recuperation of the objects as the artist was delaying: "Mr Szatmari is hereby summoned by the Justice of Peace to return or pay for them, for which the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division will address that same Justice with a request to that effect."<sup>30</sup> In November 1870 the Prefect of Police sent a constable to the artist's residence to persuade him to return the borrowed inventory. However, the situation was still unresolved almost a year later, when Szathmári was sued at the Ilfov County Court for a remainder of unreturned objects. In a memo addressed to the Ministry, he objects to this extreme measure and requests that he be exempt from any obligations, all the more so since he had not benefitted in any way from the work he had done at the lithography shop:

In the year 1868, by royal mandate of His Majesty the Ruling Prince, I was given by the Honoured Ministry you head a lithographic press so I could produce a number of national pictures for the propagation of the fine arts among the people. Last year, when I was required to return it, I did so. I see now that the Honoured Ministry summons me through a Court of Law to return certain objects which, although had initially been missing, I have in the meanwhile returned in full, with the exception of a few objects and materials which were used in completing the works which had been commissioned by His Highness, and which are of little worth. I therefore petition you, Mr Minister, to kindly order that I be exempt from this request, all the more so as I have drawn no benefit from these works, which represent my offering to His Majesty's wish.<sup>31</sup>

- [13] However the Minister was implacable and, following the court ruling which was communicated to him on 21 September 1871, the defendant was forced to return the objects or pay the amount of 2,731 old lei plus the interest corresponding to the period when he had kept them, as well as 100 new lei in court costs.<sup>32</sup> A bailiff, State attorney Corbescu, was delegated to take charge of retrieving the objects.
- [14] Four years later, however, the matter was still unresolved, to the artist's exasperation, as it was pursued to the point of having his possessions seized although he had returned those objects, which the authorities had not been informed of. Addressing the Minister, he requested that they check the minutes which had been drawn up on the occasion, so as to be spared further troubles.<sup>33</sup> The holder of the War portfolio, General Ioan Emanoil

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<sup>28</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios (The Military Archives, War Ministry, Legal Service), folder 33, MS. 6 (also see MS. 48).

<sup>29</sup> Romanian currency [translator's note]. Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 2 v.

<sup>30</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 16-16 v.

<sup>32</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 19.

<sup>33</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 34.

Florescu, ordered the needful investigation and, if the veracity of the artist's words could be proven, the charges were to be dropped. To this effect, on 18 September 1875, Intendant Alexandru Movilă and Superintendent Ștefan Naiman, head of the Department of Printeries of the War Ministry, were dispatched to question engraver-lithographer Carl Danielis and printer-lithographer Adolf Molder, who were employees of that military Department and who confirmed that all the objects and materials had been returned in good order by Szathmári.<sup>34</sup> However, not even after this edifying investigation was the artist exonerated: the prosecution continued for the recuperation of the 100 lei owed in court costs, as evidenced by a memo of the War Ministry to Public Attorney Borș, dated 4 February 1876.<sup>35</sup> The painter rightly requested that he be exempt from paying this amount, since he had returned the objects in question,<sup>36</sup> but the Minister takes a fatherly tone as he points out in his explanatory note that the money is destined for the public treasury, not the Ministry, and therefore Szathmári cannot be exempted from paying it. He also points out that the petitioner had already been exempted from the other payments stipulated in the court ruling. The artist has no choice but to submit, paying out the amount on 18 May 1876 and being issued a receipt in return.<sup>37</sup>

[15] Nor was this the first time that Szathmári had a conflict with the authorities. For not meeting a commission for several large compositions representing the enthronement of Prince Barbu Știrbei he was prosecuted for years, long after the latter had left the throne. By princely decree no. 9 of 5 January 1850, the recently anointed Ruling Prince approved the report of the Department of Faith which proposed that three canvases be painted to immortalise the stages of the coronation festivities. These were meant to be exhibited in the General Assembly Hall and the artist was to receive 400 gold coins in two payments.<sup>38</sup> The amount was so large because the Prince was a lover and protector of the arts and wished to have his reign marked by a few valuable works. Besides the generous honorarium – which he was quick to cash in – in June 1850 the artist was also given a working space in the building of the Administrative Council.<sup>39</sup> In December of the same year, he was allotted the wood necessary for the heating of that ad-hoc studio.<sup>40</sup> However, despite this "luxury", the artist was late to meet this order. In the meanwhile, on 21 June 1853, a new war had started between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires

<sup>34</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 39, 40.

<sup>35</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Arhivele Militare, Ministerul de Război – Serviciul Contencios, folder 33, MS. 59.

<sup>38</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice (The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education, hereafter MCIP) – Țara Românească [Wallachia, hereafter ȚR], folder 2611/1849, MS. 3; V. A. Urechia, *Istoria școalelor de la 1800 la 1864*, București, 1894, vol. III, 35; Gh. Oprescu et al., "Crearea școalelor de arte frumoase în țările române," in: *Buletin științific, Secțiunea de știința limbii, literatură și arte I*, 1-2/January-June 1951, 6.

<sup>39</sup> ANIC, MCIP – ȚR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 8.

<sup>40</sup> ANIC, MCIP – ȚR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 11.

in the attempt to find a military solution to the "Eastern Question". The Tsar's troops had occupied the two Romanian countries, Moldavia and Wallachia, and their ruling princes, subjects of the Ottoman suzerain, had been forced to temporarily leave their thrones and establish themselves in Vienna. On 23 October 1853, when he abandoned the Wallachian throne, Prince Barbu Știrbei left the country in the care of an Extraordinary Administrative Council, whose president was the Prince's *locum tenens*, Governor Gheorghe (Iordache) Filipescu.<sup>41</sup> Szathmári had become fascinated with his photographic work which, before long, was to bring him world fame, and he had forgotten the old contracts whose completion had lost its object since the Ruling Prince was no longer in office. The latter returned on 23 September/ 5 October 1854, after the Russian evacuation and the occupation by the Austro-Hungarian Imperial army.<sup>42</sup> However, even in the Prince's absence, the ministry clerks ensured that the commissioned work was retrieved from the artist, as indicated by a memo issued by the Department of Faith on 11 February 1854, in the midst of the Russian occupation, whereby he was imperatively required to return the 200 gold coins he had received as a down payment.<sup>43</sup> The artist failed to comply for the time being. Therefore, on 8 February 1856, he was sent a memo in which he was given a deadline in six weeks' time for delivering the three canvases.<sup>44</sup> The artist, who had not even started working on those compositions, being busy with other projects, ignored the deadline, so that, on 13 August of the same year, he received a summons in which he was given 24 hours to either deliver the works or return the money.<sup>45</sup> The artist again failed to comply, so that on 23 November 1856 – by that time the Prince's seven-year term had ended and he had left the Wallachian throne permanently – the Ministry resorted to the Constabulary to retrieve the money.<sup>46</sup> The police however were powerless, as the reply to that memo reveals: "[Mr Sathmari] has refused to make the payment, arguing that he has worked for that money and that, if the honoured Ministry has any claims on him, they should address them to the honoured Austrian General Consulate, whose subject he is."<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the artist had worked for that money, although his object had not been the three compositions: in 1851 he had made

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<sup>41</sup> Ruling Prince's Decree No. 1737/23 October 1853.

<sup>42</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, ed., *Războiul Crimeii. 150 de ani de la încheiere*, Brăila 2006, 20-21.

<sup>43</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 13.

<sup>44</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 14.

<sup>45</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 15.

<sup>46</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 16: "Having received the go-ahead for these paintings, the Ministry contracted Mr Sad Mari [sic], the artist, to paint them in exchange for #400, of which he received a down payment of 200 gold coins from the funds of the Central Household. Since then, it has been seven years and Mister Sat Mari [sic], despite all verbal and written invitations, has not so far proceeded to do anything, but has verbally held the Ministry back, giving assurances that he would do them. This delay and limitation being out of the ordinary, it fills the Minister with suspicion and puts him in a position to seek security. Thus, regarding this as a breach of contract, he kindly asks the Honoured Constabulary to take appropriate measures in order to recuperate the money from the above-mentioned artist [...]"

<sup>47</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 17.

the lithographed portraits of the ruling Prince and Princess, as the newspaper *Vestitorul Românesc* (The Romanian Herald) proudly announced.<sup>48</sup> The demand for those prints seems to have been fairly great, since a new edition was printed the next year,<sup>49</sup> of which in 1853 copies were still available on sale or even free of charge with subscriptions to that periodical.<sup>50</sup> However this argument could not convince the authorities that the 200-gold-coins down payment had been covered by the work mentioned above, so that the artist had to resort to the subterfuge of claiming Austrian citizenship, thus taking refuge from the repercussions of local legislation.

[16] His reply surprised the officials, who had great respect for him and had supported him on previous occasions. On 8 January 1857, the Minister of Religious Affairs addressed the State Secretary and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to persuade the Austrian Consulate to force the artist to return the money received:

Since then [since the works were commissioned in 1850] it has been [...] years and Mr Sat-Mari [sic] has still not completed those paintings: on several occasions their completion was called for, on several occasions he was invited through messengers of the Ministry and on several occasions he was formally requested to finish those paintings or return the money. And Mr Sat-Mari has availed himself of false promises and extended deadlines all this time, until the Ministry, losing all faith in him, has felt compelled to invite the honoured Constabulary to retrieve the money. To this, instead of returning the money or giving a satisfactory reply concerning his commitment, Mr Sat-Mari offers resistance, arguing that he has worked for the money he received and that if the Ministry has any claims on him, they should address the honoured Austrian General Consulate, whose subject he is. This unexpected reply, from an artist who has so far had our trust, after such a long time of delays after delays, is not in any way conformable to his engagement, nor that one might expect from an honest man, all the more so since the Ministry has been all this time prepared to pay out the rest of the money as soon as he handed in the paintings. We therefore hereby inform the honoured Secretariat of this reply and kindly request that it draw an agreement with the honoured General Consulate to compel the above-mentioned artist to return the money with interest to date, since he has not been able to complete the work in due course as promised and since he has not completed it to this day, but rather has invoked

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<sup>48</sup> "Vestitorul Românesc" no. 82/3 November 1851: "Mr Satmari, famous artist in the art of painting, who has given ample evidence of a faultless resemblance of his works to their natural original, after his return from London and Paris, has considered giving the Romanian people a precious souvenir by making the portrait of His Majesty, our most gracious Ruling Prince, as well as of Her Majesty, the Princess. The remarkable resemblance to the sitters highly recommends the extraordinary talent of this artist. Also by him have been printed the portraits of His Eminence, the Metropolitan Father, and His Excellency, the Great Sword Bearer Herăscu. The image of the Prince, which will be firmly engraved in the esteem of each employee, has introduced the custom, which has become a rule in all countries, of the portrait of the Head of the Nation being hung in all administrative and public buildings. On this favourable occasion provided by the famous artist, we will now proceed to carry it out. The portraits are for sale with the Master booksellers Rosetti-Winterhalder and Ghiță Ioanidi."; see also G. Opreșcu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmary*, 81.

<sup>49</sup> Doina Pungă, *Grafica pe teritoriul României în secolul al XIX-lea*, 117.

<sup>50</sup> *Vestitorul Românesc* 5/17 January 1853: "The Editorial board of the semi-official Journal *Vestitorul Românesc* informs the Gentlemen subscribers that the portrait of His Highness, our most gracious Ruling Prince has been completed by the most famous of artists and the Gentlemen subscribers can write to the Editorial Offices to receive it free of charge from the Editorial board as a most precious souvenir; copies will be sent to the provinces with subsequent shipments."

false reasons in order to obtain extensions and further commissions, whereby he hopes to be able to appropriate public funds.<sup>51</sup>

- [17] Whether or not they interceded with the Austro-Hungarian Consulate at the time remains uncertain, as the matter was suspended for another four years. In February 1861, the unresolved paperwork was rediscovered, probably by an overzealous clerk, who noticed that no reply had been received for the 1857 memo to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The correspondence between the two Ministries was picked up again and it was learned that the artist, who had been in Vienna, had returned to the Capital and could now be found by the police at his address.<sup>52</sup> The Austrian Consul makes the necessary inquiries and informs them that "He [Szathmári] has stated that he is ill and that Doctor Grunau, who has been treating him, would not allow him to go out in winter."<sup>53</sup> To this reply, Barbu Bellu, the Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education, attaches an explanatory note in which he suggests an intercession with his colleague, the Minister of Home Affairs, who could "withhold the amount owed by Mr Satmary [sic] from the money he was to receive for lithographing the map of Wallachia." At the time, the artist, who was very adept at the graphic arts, had contracted to make a map of Wallachia and, at regular intervals, he would submit a fragment of it. On 10 March 1862, a memo was sent to this effect to the Ministry of Public Works in which, among other things, it was said that the illness he had invoked was no more than "a pretext aiming to win him another extension, whereas Mr Satmari has been seen recently in the Capital's streets."<sup>54</sup> Dimitrie Cornea, the holder of the Public Works portfolio, commented on the same sheet that he did not find it opportune for the amount to be withheld from the honorarium for the map, as there was the danger that the artist would not complete this commission, which at the time was much more important than the money:

A reply shall be drafted to the effect that this Ministry cannot meet the other's request in this matter, as, according to his contract, Mr. St. Mari [sic] receives the money owed him upon turning in each one of the columns that make up this map, and therefore, if this Ministry agrees upon this measure of withholding the promised money, there is the risk that Mr. St. Mari might not complete the chromolithographed map that has been commissioned and we might thus fall into the same category as the other Ministry, which is very probable and very evident. Therefore, in the present matter the best way to proceed is to sue properly and recuperate the money from the defendant's assets, in accordance with the court ruling.

- [18] A memo to that effect was sent on 21 March 1862 to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education.<sup>55</sup> The Minister suggested a little stratagem to recuperate at least a fraction of that amount: "In order to avoid reaching the same result, as you indicate,

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<sup>51</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 18, 29.

<sup>52</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 20, 22.

<sup>53</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 24.

<sup>54</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice (Ministry of Public Works), folder 153/1862, MS. 51.

<sup>55</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 27.

might we not withhold the last instalment that the honoured Ministry must pay him upon the completion and final submission of that map, when Mr Satmari would no longer have the opportunity of neglecting his work on the map."<sup>56</sup> Thus ends the inter-ministerial correspondence regarding Szathmári's breach of contract concerning the three compositions representing the coronation of Prince Barbu Știrbei.

- [19] His entanglements however do not end here: apparently the artist was incapable of submitting to the rigours of a contract with fixed deadlines. Even in the case of the chromolithograph of the map of Romania there were great delays, which were not easily tolerated by the beneficiary, who kept sending him imperative summonses to complete the work. The contract had been signed on 18 February 1860 and it stipulated that, by the end of 18 months, the "entrepreneur" Szathmári print 1,000 copies of the map, for which his honorarium was quoted at 10,000 Austrian gold coins, the equivalent of 315,000 lei; the map was expected to be delivered in the form of 112 columns which would then be conjoined; moreover, the artist was contractually bound to initiate in the art of typo-lithography a group of twelve young men, civilian and military, selected by the Ministry in order to specialise in this field.<sup>57</sup> In November 1859, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs the maps made by the engineers of the Austro-Hungarian army, and a month later the Cabinet decided that the 112 plates be chromolithographed, choosing Szathmári to do the job.<sup>58</sup> A board of specialists, made up of August Treboniu Laurian, Petrache Poenaru and Lieutenant Nicolae Dona, were appointed to check and correct the map in case some of the names of places or rivers were inconsistent or had been changed in the interim. On 17 March 1862, the Ministry sent him a missive in which he was admonished for the slowness with which the work was being done and the reasons he was giving for the delays, such as the fact that the Danube had frozen, interrupting the naval traffic.<sup>59</sup> To this, Szathmári replied showing the hardships he had encountered with the printing of the map, many of which were owed to the way in which the payments were made:

Realising that it might come to this due to the lack of specialised workers here, I found myself in a position to seek the means to do part of the work in Vienna, where there are more such workers, that I may meet the conditions of the contract. Moreover, I have been held back by the mode of payment, which represents the primary reason for the delay, as I cannot pay the workers, being restricted by the fact that the Honoured Ministry only pays for the maps I have delivered.<sup>60</sup>

- [20] He then gives an account of the delivery to date of the nine already finished columns, for which he had already received the amounts owed him – 2,500 lei for each column – and,

<sup>56</sup> ANIC, MCIP – JR, folder 2611/1849, MS. 28.

<sup>57</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 153/1862, MS. 197-198.

<sup>58</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 153/1862, MS. 196.

<sup>59</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 153/1862, MS. 46.

<sup>60</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 153/1862, MS. 93.

at the end, he requested a down payment of 20,000 lei which would have facilitated the completion of the commission in less than two months. On 4 June 1862, during the meeting of the Council for Public Works, in view of the fact that the artist had delivered two thirds of the project and had paid a deposit of 2,000 gold coins on taking up the job, it was decided that he be given a portion of the amount he had requested, namely 12,000 lei, in exchange for "his word and promise of delivering the complete Map, in accordance with the conditions of the contract, within two months."<sup>61</sup> However, even after this, the "entrepreneur" did not deliver on his promise, so the head of the Section III of the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Public Works claimed that there were still 20 columns left until the ensemble of 112 columns could be completed in accordance with the contract.<sup>62</sup>

[21] A decade later, the artist became the unhappy actor of an accident which might have turned into a disaster. In 1873, he had been charged with photographing all the important railway stations and he had travelled by train in the north of the country, to Suceava, Botoşani and Iaşi. On the way back, on the night of 2 to 3 July, between the stations Tecuci and Galaţi, a fire started in the freight car in which his luggage was stored. The fire was supposed to have been caused by the chemicals used by the photographer. One of the periodicals which ran the news mentioned the phial of collodion he used for making photographic plates.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the collodion used by photographers as a coating for the glass plates – a procedure discovered in 1849 and publicised in 1851 by the British sculptor and calotypist Frederick Scott Archer – consists of a solution of a powerful explosive, pyroxylin, dissolved in ether.<sup>64</sup> Another newspaper exaggerated the proportions of the accident, claiming that "the passengers had barely escaped with their lives and the clothes on their backs; all else was reduced to ashes."<sup>65</sup> The same paper mentioned that one of the travellers who had barely saved their lives at the last moment was Baligot de Bayne, former private secretary to Ruling Prince Alexandru Ioan I. As the scandal was gaining momentum, Szathmári sent a letter to the offices of the French-language journal in the Capital, *Le Journal de Bucarest*, whose manager and principal contributor was Ulysse de Marsillac, a friend of his. In it, the artist tried to blame the accident on the Railway Company itself, as, in his opinion, the luggage car had not been

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<sup>61</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 153/1862, MS. 114-114 v.

<sup>62</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 153/1862, MS. 199.

<sup>63</sup> *Presa* 149 11 July 1873: "We are informed that on the night of 2 to 3 this month, an unfortunate accident happened on the train coming from Tecuci to Galaţi. A crate filled with Mr Satmary's [sic] art objects, checked into the luggage car, in which unfortunately there was a phial of collodion (a highly flammable substance), fell down due to the jerky movements of the car, and as the phial broke, the substance inside caught fire, which then spread to the rest of the luggage, turning it, together with the car -- which was only with great effort separated from the train -- to ashes."

<sup>64</sup> Brian Coe, *The Birth of Photography*, London 1976, 30-31; Micher Frizot, *A New History of Photography*, Köln 1998, 91-92.

<sup>65</sup> *Trompeta Carpaţilor* 8 (20) July 1873.

connected properly and the rails were not built well by the constructor Stroussberg, thus causing inadmissible jerky movements to the cars. He also specified that after his prolonged work photographing the stations along the way, his substances had run out and could not have endangered the safety of the car. And, in order to convince his readers of his innocence, in the end he represented himself as a victim of the accident:

The reading public are wrong to assume that photographers carry self-combusting substances. Their substances are only dangerous to themselves [i.e., the photographers], as they are very powerful poisons, but they cannot catch fire unless they are placed in contact with a burning object. And the same might be said about a phial of cologne or any other kind of spirits which travellers frequently take on their journeys. To conclude, let me add that, had I believed my substances to be dangerous, I would not have put them together with my most valuable belongings, my trunk and two duffel bags containing valuable objects, such that my personal loss in this sad accident amounts to more than twenty thousand francs.<sup>66</sup>

[22] In the next issue of the periodical containing Szathmári's statement, in accordance with the right of reply, the General Manager of the Railways showed that only the photographer's chemicals could have been the cause of the fire, since institutional regulations forbade the transportation of undeclared flammable substances, and that the photographer did not have a permit for those substances, as he had claimed, but only a permit of free circulation by train and an order from the Railway Company addressed to the personnel of the railway stations he was passing through, according to which they were to give him any kind of help he needed.<sup>67</sup>

[23] Ever mindful of the benefits, Szathmári always knew how to sell his works at a profit. To the ruling Princes, he was the portraitist *en titre*, as has been seen above, during the last years of the Organic Regulations, even though he did not have an official position. On 26 October 1863, shortly after he had been appointed Court Painter and Photographer, and after the Prince and Princess Cuza had posed for him in the elegant studio he had at Hanul Verde (The Green Inn) in Bucharest – remarkable for the stucco work on the walls – the artist wrote an application to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education in which he offered to reproduce the portrait by lithographing it on broadside. Written in French, the document is an admirable instance of the way the artist could advertise his work and turn it to good account:

Your Excellence [i.e., the Minister] knows that, so far, the country only possesses very poor portraits of Their Highnesses. No doubt, he will consider my enterprise as the kind of work that deserves the interest of the Government. Romania will be happy to see, at long last, the publication of portraits worthy of the Maker of the Union and the Founder of the [Princess] Elena Asylum.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Le Journal de Bucarest* 302/23 July 1873.

<sup>67</sup> *Le Journal de Bucarest* 303/27 July 1873.

<sup>68</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 1315/1863, MS. 2,5; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Fotografia – sursă pentru portretele unor personalități politice din secolul al XIX-le multiplicare prin gravare sau litografiere," in: *Revista de istorie socială* I/1996, 82-83.

- [24] For his work he requested 300 gold coins, which was approved by Dimitrie Bolintineanu, the then Minister. The portrait was printed in Paris, in the famous Lemercier establishment for visual arts, with which he had collaborated before. The press enthusiastically announced the appearance of the prints.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, other portraits of the princely family were circulated in the country, made by other authors whose work did not always measure up to the standards of the beneficiaries. On 15 July 1865, the Prefect of Prahova County wrote to his Minister to inform him that "several villages do not want those portraits edited by Mr. Papazoglu, arguing that the resemblance to Her Highness the Princess is not very like." He requests that they be "sent 21 portraits of the kind in which there is a greater resemblance to Her Highness the Princess, as they cannot accept the ones made by Mr. Papazoglu."<sup>70</sup> The ministerial marginal note to this application offers to replace the unsatisfactory works with the more expensive works of a reputed artist: "It will be replied that better made portraits of Her Highness the Princess are those of Mr Satmari, but they are more expensive, going for up to a gold coin a piece." However, the people of Prahova found the price too high and sadly had to content themselves with the poorer works.<sup>71</sup>
- [25] In the autumn of 1864 Szathmári was also commissioned an oil portrait of the Ruling Prince to be placed in the Senate Hall. He received 120 gold coins for it. After Alexandru Ioan I's deposition, that portrait no longer belonged there, and given its artistic worth, a correspondence ensued between the Ministries of Finance and Religious Affairs during the last months of the year 1866 in order to find a new place for it. The most appropriate place was the Painting Gallery, where it was eventually submitted by the Senate Intendant.<sup>72</sup>
- [26] Upon the arrival of the new Ruling Prince, Carol I, Szathmári again offered his services as portraitist. The press announced in 1866 that the artist was to lithograph a work representing the Prince's features.<sup>73</sup> The plate was very successful and it was purchased by the majority of local authorities. Many years after it had been printed, it continued to be in demand in the province. The Gorj Prefect requested 8 copies for which he paid 32 Austrian silver coins<sup>74</sup> on 24 May 1868, and on 6 September of the same year he

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<sup>69</sup> *La Voix de la Roumanie* 5/ 22 December 1864; No. 6/ 24 December 1864; 7/5 January 1865: "En vente dans toutes les librairies DEUX MAGNIFIQUES PORTRAITS EN PIED de L.L. A.A. LE PRINCE ALEXANDRE JEAN I ET LA PRINCESSE HÉLÈNE dessinés par Szathmari, d'après nature et lithographiés par LEMERCIER, à Paris. Prix: un ducat chacun".

<sup>70</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne, Divizia Comunală [The Ministry of Domestic Affairs, The Locality Division], folder 132/1865, MS. 51.

<sup>71</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne, Divizia Comunală, folder 132/1865, MS. 70.

<sup>72</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 446/1866, MS. 227, 228, 248.

<sup>73</sup> *La Voix de la Roumanie* 35 /19 Juillet 1866: "Des aujourd'hui, nous pouvons annoncer qu'un portrait lithographié du Prince Régnant, dû au crayon de M. Szathmari, sera prochainement livré au public."

<sup>74</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne, Divizia Comunală, folder 209/1868, MS. 6, 7.

requested 35 more copies, for which he paid 140 Austrian silver coins.<sup>75</sup> Being abroad, the artist failed to deliver the prints, so the Prefect's Office lodged a complaint with the Capital City Constabulary in February 1869 in order to compel the artist to deliver the already paid-for prints.<sup>76</sup> In 1869, when he lithographed a portrait of the bearded Ruling Prince – until then, Carol I had only worn sideburns – Szathmári sold 50 copies for the amount of 450 old lei to the Ministry of Religious Affairs,<sup>77</sup> which was to distribute them to various educational institutions. The same portrait was also requested by the Theological Seminary in Râmnic on 14 May 1869 and, the next year, by the Boys' Primary School in Drăgășani, the Boys' School in Galați and the Primary School in the Green district, in Bucharest.<sup>78</sup> The price of a print was 4 Austrian silver coins.

[27] Szathmári's works were universally admired. Therefore, other painters' attempts to establish themselves as authors of official portraits could only be met with ridicule, as evidenced by a note published in the periodical *Adunarea Națională*, whose manager was the historian, literary critic and aesthete V.A. Urechia – himself perhaps the author of these lines: "Oil portraits of H.H. the Ruling Prince have been exhibited for sale at various shops for the past few days. Those who have painted them would do well to learn their craft better."<sup>79</sup>

[28] In the year 1877, Szathmári made a full-length portrait of the Ruling Prince using the same drawings as for the previous Prince. It is very probable that the artist did not require his blue-blooded model to sit for him, as he could draw his physiognomy from a preliminary photograph, adapting it to a pre-existing composition. Consequently, the Prince is depicted wearing highly ornate cavalry uniform, in contrast with his proverbial sobriety and his habit of appearing before his subjects dressed as an infantry general. Moreover, he was surrounded by obsolete insignia of power which he had never displayed: the rich white cloak with the sable collar on his shoulders, the ceremonial mace and the plumed sable hat displayed on the table. Although Alexandru Ioan I, the Prince of the United Principalities, had been represented with the white cloak on his shoulders – which however he was not wearing in the preliminary photograph, but for which the painter had created a still scene in his studio – he no longer used those insignia which recalled the rulers from the period of the Organic Regulations and even caused outrage amongst the ultraconservative boyars at a parade when, as Dr. Éugène Léger recounted, he wore a French bicorn and no cloak.<sup>80</sup> By comparing the lithograph of Cuza's official portrait with the painting representing Carol I, held by the National History

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<sup>75</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne, Divizia Comunală, folder 209/1868, MS. 10.

<sup>76</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne, Divizia Comunală, folder 209/1868, MS. 11, 13, 14.

<sup>77</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 106/1869, MS. 2.

<sup>78</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 95/1870, MS. 24, 56, 72, 84.

<sup>79</sup> *Adunarea Națională* Nr. 8/5 June 1869: 4.

<sup>80</sup> Éugène Léger, *Trois mois de séjour en Moldavie*, Paris 1861, 48.

Museum,<sup>81</sup> one can notice the stark resemblances between the two. It is worth mentioning that George Peter Alexander Healy, the famed Chicago painter who had established himself as the portraitist of European royalty and current political personalities, had painted a large canvas in which the Ruling Prince is wearing the same cavalry uniform amidst a lovely mountain landscape. The painting was presented at the exhibition organised by the Society of the Friends of the Beaux-Arts at Herdan Hotel in the autumn of 1872.<sup>82</sup> Szathmári had also made an ink-wash bust portrait of the Ruling Prince wearing the same uniform, but in most of the works in which he immortalised the Prince's noble features, the latter is depicted wearing a general's ceremonial uniform, with all the orders and decorations on his chest, as in a 1881 watercolour from his coronation as the first King of Romania. (fig. 4)



4 King Carol I, watercolour, 1881, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

[29] From the very first year of the Prince of Hohenzollern's arrival in the country, Szathmári worked for him intensively and cashed in substantial honorariums, as the receipts bear witness. The works for which he received the honorariums are not always mentioned; mention is, however, made of the equivalents in various currencies of the amounts received. On 9/21 August 1866, he received a hundred ducats at Cotroceni Palace, the Prince's summer residence;<sup>83</sup> on 29 November/ 11 December 1866 he received a down payment of 500 ducats for the watercolours he had made for the Ruling Prince;<sup>84</sup> also in

<sup>81</sup> Muzeul Național de Istorie al României, inv. 66320.

<sup>82</sup> Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială*, 153.

<sup>83</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 82/1866, MS. 4.

<sup>84</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 82/1866, MS. 101.

1866, on an unspecified date, he received 14 gold coins for "une grande photographie colorié de Son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Régnant" and its frame;<sup>85</sup> another 500 ducats – i.e., 1,600 piaster – cashed 18/30 May 1867;<sup>86</sup> a down payment of 6,400 lei – or 200 gold coins – was received on 31 May/ 12 June 1867;<sup>87</sup> another hundred ducats was received for work delivered on 29 July 1867<sup>88</sup> and 150 ducats on 18/30 August.<sup>89</sup> Besides the monthly salary paid him by the Court Administration, Szathmári also received fees for each work or batch of works: on 21 May he received 25 ducats as a down payment for chromolithographs.<sup>90</sup>



5 *Curtea de Argeș Metropolitan Church*, from the *Romania Album*, albumen print, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

[30] For Szathmári, 1868 was an outstanding year in terms of deliveries and payments.<sup>91</sup> He produced work of every description and in various media: drawing and photography, watercolour, oil painting, chromolithography, offering his patron separate plates and entire albums of monuments and costumes, cityscapes, compositions representing official events, portraits of the Ruling Prince and his family, particularly his parents. Thus, on 10/22 April, he cashed the amount of 397 new lei from the Palace pay office for 9 large

<sup>85</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81/1866, MS. 79.

<sup>86</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81/1867, MS. 74.

<sup>87</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81/1867, MS. 103.

<sup>88</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81,1867, MS. 182.

<sup>89</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 81/1867, MS. 223.

<sup>90</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 6.

<sup>91</sup> In order to be able to assess the artist's income, we specify that, between 1867 and the end of the century, the exchange rate between a French franc and a Romanian leu was 1 to 1, whereas prices for basic food were very low, as can be seen below: 1 kg of bread cost 0,11 lei; 1 kg of pork, 0,34 lei; 1 kg of potatoes, 0,05 lei; 1 l of wine, 0,40 lei (cf. Romeo Cîrjan, Mihai Dima, Dan Ilie, *Istoria leului*, exh. cat., București 2010).

landscape photographs he had made for the Prince of Dessau (45 lei), 16 images of Pasărea Convent (80 lei), 2 portraits of the Ruling Prince's mother (24 lei), 2 portraits of Matei Millo (48 lei), and 40 large photographs for the Prince's album (200 lei).<sup>92</sup> On 13 May he received another 350 new lei for an album the Ruling Prince had commissioned for the Metropolitan of Moldavia and which was to comprise 48 plates of churches from Bucharest, 16 plates of the Ecclesiastical Metropolis at Curtea de Argeş (fig. 5) and 6 panoramic cityscapes of Bucharest.<sup>93</sup> Only a few days later, the photographer endorsed a receipt for the amount of 147 new lei in exchange for 4 pictures representing Colţea (20 lei), 6 representing Filaret (30 lei), 5 of the Metropolitan church (25 lei), 2 of Pantelimon (10 lei), 10 images of the Moşilor Fair (50 lei) and one large portrait of the Ruling Prince (12 lei).<sup>94</sup> On 25 July 1868 he wrote a memo in German, in which he specified that he had "personally delivered to His Royal Highness" an album of coloured photographs representing Swedish harbours (45 francs), 5 facsimile of Braun (35 francs), and 2 carbon printed panoramas from Switzerland (20 francs), for which he was paid 100 francs.<sup>95</sup> An undated receipt mentions several more expensive portraits, which probably owed their price to their sizes and fittings: 7 framed portraits of the Ruling Prince (7 gold coins), one portrait of the Prince's father, Prince Anton of Hohenzollern (1 gold coin) and three portraits of the Prince's mother (3 gold coins), plus a panorama of Bucharest which was to be framed by the framer Schlegel (2 ½ gold coins), to the total amount of 13 ½ gold coins, the equivalent of 158 francs and 62 ½ cents.<sup>96</sup> Another series of large photographs representing images from Câmpulung and Târgovişte, among which two panoramas of the two towns costing 25 and 20 lei, respectively, is delivered on 13 September 1868, in exchange for 390 new lei.<sup>97</sup>

[31] During the next years the artist continued to work, but his payments were slightly rarer. At some point in 1869 he was paid 40 lei for two portraits of Princess Elisabeth,<sup>98</sup> whom the Ruling Prince had recently married. On 5/17 December of the same year, he delivered 40 large photographs – whose topic is not specified – and two large portraits of the Ruling Prince in exchange for 22 gold coins, the equivalent of 258.50 lei.<sup>99</sup> He delivered another commission on 22 May/ 4 June 1873: 32 large photographs for the Princess, at 6 francs each; 6 ½ dozen *carte-de-visite*-size photographs (12 francs a dozen) for Princess Maria of Wied-Neuwied, Princess Elisabeth's mother; and 3 colour photographs, at 6

<sup>92</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 49.

<sup>93</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 129.

<sup>94</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 144.

<sup>95</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 283.

<sup>96</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 10.

<sup>97</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 88/1868, MS. 36.

<sup>98</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 121/1869, MS. 219.

<sup>99</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 121/1869, MS. 207.

francs each, totalling 288 francs.<sup>100</sup> On 7 February 1874 he delivered to Butler Seelos a portrait of the Ruling Prince and one of his brother, Prince Friedrich, which had been commissioned by the Court Marshal, worth 7 gold coins or 82.25 francs.<sup>101</sup>

[32] Szathmári was not always happy with the honorarium he had been paid. For instance, in a petition to the Court Marshal, written in French and undated but very probably dating from the end of the year 1873 or the beginning of the next, the artist complained that, having been commissioned by the Ruling Prince to paint a watercolour of the coronation ceremony for four bishops, he had been paid 50 gold coins, an amount which he considered insufficient, given the difficulty of the work which had stretched over a longer period than had been expected and had required a large number of portraits.<sup>102</sup> A note in the corner of that document reads, also in French: "Remis 50 # par ordre de M. le Marechal," and on 12/24 January 1874 the petitioner signs a receipt for that amount which was paid out of the Prince's private funds.<sup>103</sup>

[33] In addition to current work, Szathmári also received various amounts for materials necessary for his photography and lithography shops. 100 ducats were given him on 24 March/ 8 April 1868 in down payment in order to start the chromolithography shop.<sup>104</sup> The employees' salaries were also paid by the Royal Palace Administration: an engraver was paid 25 lei/month, a typographer received 15 lei/month, a typographer's assistant 4 lei, the rent was 6 lei/month.<sup>105</sup> Between 1 October 1867 and 30 March 1868, the expenses of this shop amounted to 382 lei. In a petition to the Court Marshal, the artist requested a down payment of 50 gold coins for the purchase of chemicals from the factory, in view of developing large photographs of Romanian landscapes.<sup>106</sup> The money is delivered on 27 April 1868. He had separate tariffs for the negatives: for 4 negative plates of the Metropolitan church, at 3 gold coins per negative, he was paid 12 gold coins; for 2 negatives of Antim Monastery he received 6 gold coins, for 2 negatives of Pantelimon Monastery another 6 gold coins, 5 negatives of the public feast that took place at Filaret on 10 May cost 15 gold coins, and 10 negatives of the Moșilor Fair, 30 gold coins. Of this, 25 gold coins were spent on the chemicals.<sup>107</sup> Sometimes he also supervised the framing of some of his works which were intended for the Prince's collection and paid the artisan, as shown by a receipt dated 13 May 1868, when he was reimbursed the 20 gold coins which represented the cost of two frames for the two large oil paintings which represented the landscapes of Curtea de Argeș and Neamț, as well as

<sup>100</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 121/1869, MS. 272.

<sup>101</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 38/1873, MS. 357.

<sup>102</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 38/1873, MS. 283.

<sup>103</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 38/1873, MS. 284.

<sup>104</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 25.

<sup>105</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 83.

<sup>106</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 70-71.

<sup>107</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 145.

30 gold coins for another frame "made of pure silver in the pattern from Curtea de Argeş."<sup>108</sup> With the bookbinder Schlegel he placed orders for both frames and art book binding for the more special volumes intended for the Prince's library: in June 1870<sup>109</sup> Szathmári paid him 264 lei for framing 22 watercolours and 90 lei for binding 20 copies of the memoir written by his friend, the French journalist Ulysse de Marsillac, *De Pesth à Bucarest*.<sup>110</sup> In September 1870, he had 32 watercolours and 2 steel engravings framed at Schlegel's shop for 450 lei,<sup>111</sup> and in December of the same year he had 2 photographs glass-and-gold framed for 14 new lei, 2 watercolours for 12 lei, a portrait of the Ruling Prince for 10 lei, as well as ordering bindings for the works of Prince Maximilian zu Wied, Prince Elisabeth's uncle, the famous naturalist, anthropologist and explorer of American lands:<sup>112</sup> *Reise in das innere Nord-Amerika* (2 volumes for 28 lei) and *Abbildungen zur Naturgeschichte Brasiliens* (one volume for 24 lei).<sup>113</sup>

[34] At the risk of making this series of figures and receipts seem fastidious to the reader, they give us the measure of the success of the artist's work, even during his lifetime, as well as of the means he used to display it properly.

[35] In order to give impetus to Romanian art, the Ruling Prince Carol I exhibited his private collection publically, between 28 June and 7 July 1869, at the University – then known as the Academy Palace, as it housed the Academic Society which had been founded two years previously. Szathmári was in charge of organising the exhibition, transporting and displaying the exhibits, for which purpose he enlisted the help of a few porters, coach drivers and the building administrator.<sup>114</sup> It is true that his own work was well represented by several watercolours and photograph albums at the exhibition. Writing a detailed presentation of the event in two successive reviews published in the periodical *Adunarea Națională*, V.A. Urechia praised the work of the Court Painter and photographer:

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<sup>108</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 128.

<sup>109</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 121/1869, MS. 173.

<sup>110</sup> Ulysse de Marsillac, *Bucureștiul în veacul al XIX-lea*, Adrian Silvan, ed., București 1999, 9-10, 23-100.

<sup>111</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 121/1869, MS. 193.

<sup>112</sup> George Bengescu, *Din viața Majestății Sale Elisabeta, Regina României*, București 1906, 11-12; Thomas Davis and Karin Ronnenfeldt, eds., *Le peuple du premier homme. Les indiens des plaines au temps de leur dernière splendeur. Carnets de route de l'expédition du Prince Maximilian sur le Missouri, 1833-1834*, 1977, 14-28; Hans-Jürgen Krüger, "Eine Familie von Welt. Die Fürsten zu Wied im 19. Jahrhundert," in: Bodo von Dewitz und Wolfgang Horbert, eds., *Schatzhäuser der Photographie. Die Sammlung des Fürsten zu Wied*, Göttingen 1998, 95-96; Gabriel Badea-Păun, *Carmen Sylva. Königin Elisabeth von Rumänien – eine rheinische Prinzessin auf Rumäniens Thron*, Stuttgart 2011, 18-19.

<sup>113</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 121/1869, MS. 216.

<sup>114</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială în România secolului al XIX-lea*, 2008, 121, 124-125; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Expositions sous le patronage du Prince Carol Ier," in: *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, Séries Beaux-Arts*, XLIII/2006, 65.

Mr Satmari [sic] has exhibited some of the works he did for His Highness, several watercolours and photographs from nature and a few oil paintings. [...] To make a detailed catalogue of Mr Satmari's work is to reveal the high esteem that his diligent brush has been able to attract for him from our august Maecenas [Carol I], as well as His Highness's wish to have, one day before anyone else, through the medium of photography (until Romania's painters get to work), representations of the beautiful views of our country. [...] An oil painting representing the panoramic landscape at Curtea de Argeş. The church is in the middle ground. His Highness the Ruling Prince's journey to Sinaia and His Highness's entry into Târgovişte draw the public's attention. His Highness's reception by villagers in Vrancea, amidst their grey, frost-capped mountains, the old haven of freedom and national identity, fills the viewer's soul with longing for the mountain and the homeland, but also with love for the tireless Ruling Prince, who alone, in ages, has gone to visit the rocks of the Vrancea hawks. [...] The Bucegi, that lord among Wallachia's mountains, and the Ceahlău, that lord among Moldavia's mountains, have allowed Mr Satmari to capture, as Romanians put it, their shadow, not so he can improve the walls, but rather to increase his valuable and picturesque Romanian album to great advantage. In this album, pride of place is given to the new photographs exhibited by Mr Satmari, due to the historical monuments, whose memory at least will be preserved for posterity. His Majesty Carol I had the initiative and covered the costs for this album, which is magnificent and valuable in every respect: through it, His Majesty has showed us, once more, that to work for the future is to love and respect the past, that root without which there can be no present bole or future fruit. And the photographic album shows us the past in the form of the monuments of ancient piety and at the same time it reveals landscapes taken from our land, such that the foreigner may learn the beauty of the Romanian sky and nature, the poet may draw abundant colour for his palette, the artist may find inspiration, and, moreover, anyone of us may find a new reason to take pride in being Romanian and in having a Ruling Prince like Carol I.<sup>115</sup>

- [36] In the same venue were exhibited the watercolours of the Maltese count Amedeo Preziosi, who had travelled across the country with the Prince's retinue and had immortalised landscapes as well as the Ruling Prince's meetings with local authorities. The two artists had known each other for some time<sup>116</sup> and now had the opportunity to work side by side. Probably in order to immortalise this collaboration, beside a pencil and ink-wash portrait sketched in Preziosi's notebook, which is currently deposited at the Bucharest City Museum – and which, for a long time, was considered to be a self-portrait by the Maltese master<sup>117</sup> – the guest also painted a self-portrait with his Romanian colleague, representing the episode when the princely cortege was welcomed by the inhabitants of a health resort in Prahova County. The reviewer noted: "In the painting representing His Highness's entry into Slănic, the author saved a little corner for himself,

<sup>115</sup> U. [V.A. Urechia], "Esposițiunea de opere artistice de la Museu," in: *Adunarea Națională* 19/13 July 1869.

<sup>116</sup> According to G. Oprescu – who was not even certain what the Maltese artist's first name was, thinking that perhaps it was Antonio (and even supposing him to be a "Levantine Italian," cf. Oprescu, *Arta românească în secolul XIX*, 270, and Oprescu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmary*, 64) – their relationship dated from 1859 when an epistolary exchange took place concerning the Romanian artist's wish to purchase the large lithograph album *Stamboul. Recollections of Eastern Life*, which had been printed the previous year. The letter studied by Oprescu was at the time in the possession of Szathmari's daughter-in-law, Ortansa Satmari (cf. Oprescu, *Carol Popp de Szathmary desinator*, 9, note 1).

<sup>117</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Preziosi în România*, București 2003, 22-23.

where he represented himself on horseback, accompanied by Mr Satmari, also on horseback."<sup>118</sup> Urechia even ventures a comparison of the works of the two watercolourists, displayed side by side, which proves unfavourable to Szathmári:

As compared to the watercolours by Count Pretiosi [sic], particularly the ones representing men's and women's costumes, Mr Satmari's works, though not inferior, still are more easily described. Count Pretiosi is, one might say, less poetic, in order to be more realistic, whereas Mr Satmari idealises his characters, whom he moreover dresses in magnificent national costumes. There are characters in Mr Satmari's watercolours who *one might wish were Romanian, they are so handsome*, but who nonetheless look more like foreign types. This is not a reproach levelled at Mr Satmari but rather a mere comparative characterisation we draw of the two painters.<sup>119</sup>

[37] Although Preziosi returned to the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which had become his adopted homeland,<sup>120</sup> relations between the two continued for a fairly long time. Oprescu even ascribes to this friendship the fact that Szathmári started publishing chromolithographed albums, assuming that the suggestion for this enterprise came from Preziosi, who however was a lithographer at best.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless, by the time of the Maltese artist's arrival in Romania, in the summer of 1868, Szathmári's lithography shop had already been set up and it had produced his first works during the spring of that year, as has already been mentioned. In some of Szathmári's works one may notice blatant resemblances with some of Preziosi's compositions, which have set many researchers thinking. They are clearly copies, some of them signed in his own name, despite the fact that the design was clearly the Maltese artist's. Oprescu is again the one who tries to defend Szathmári before posterity, at the risk of exaggerating his worth at the expense of his colleague:

Whence the strange confusion between the respective works of the two? *Szathmári was a much more talented and more important artist than Preziosi*, therefore there can be no "plagiarism". There can only be one explanation. The two watercolourists were not only friends, but also collaborators, associates, one might say, using a business term, since the printing of chromolithographs was a commercial enterprise. They worked together on the plates from which the prints were made that were then published either separately or in albums. Neither artist attached too much value to the share they contributed to work of such low artistic worth. Thus, they could both present these resource works – for that is after all what they were – set up in accordance with the imperatives of chromolithography, as the work of either one or the other of the two, as the case may be.<sup>122</sup> (Our emphasis, A.S.I.)

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<sup>118</sup> V.U. [V.A. Urechia], "Esposițiunea de opere artistice de la Museu," in: *Adunarea Națională* 17/6 July 1869.

<sup>119</sup> U. [V.A. Urechia], "Esposițiunea de opere artistice de la Museu."

<sup>120</sup> Ionescu, *Preziosi în România*, 40.

<sup>121</sup> Oprescu, *Carol Popp de Szathmary desinator*, 9; see also Oprescu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmary*, 64-65.

<sup>122</sup> Oprescu, *Carol Popp de Szathmary desinator*, 9; Oprescu, *Pictorii din Familia Szathmary*, 70; Pungă, *Grafica românească*, vol. I, 41.

- [38] Nonetheless, from this ostensible long-term, mutually beneficial lucrative collaboration, only one chromolithograph was produced which was signed by Preziosi. This was titled *Secerătorii* (The Reapers) and it was personally made in stone by the author in Paris, at Lemerrier's establishment for the visual arts, in 1870, but Szathmári supervised its printing and safe delivery.<sup>123</sup> Despite the fact that the Maltese artist ostensibly "found in the Principalities, as in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, a colourful, dynamic world in fairs and bazaars, a universe which he popularised through idealised, artificially theatrical images, which however did not lack a jovial humour recalling the world of Nastratin Hogeia," he has not left an album dedicated exclusively to our country and titled *România*,<sup>124</sup> as the author of this characterisation – a distinguished researcher of national visual arts – claims. Rather, he made only disparate large watercolour drawings which were intended exclusively for the Prince's collection. In the collections of the Bucharest City Museum there is a notebook of sketches made in our country in 1869, whose first page bears the handwritten title *La Valachei par Preziosi*,<sup>125</sup> written in blue pencil, but this is hardly an album *per se*; rather, it is a portfolio containing quick notes intended for later completion in the studio.
- [39] The Graphic Arts Department of the National Art Museum of Romania preserves several works by Szathmári, some even bearing his signature, which, upon comparison with Preziosi's watercolours, emerge as copies: besides the technique of laying the watercolour and of suggesting shadows, the characters' silhouettes and physiognomies, at times bordering on caricature, are an indelible mark of the Maltese artist's style.<sup>126</sup> While studying the entire collection of works by Szathmári housed by the Engravings Department of the Library of the Romanian Academy, our attention was caught by the large number of copies the artist made from works by other colleagues. It is obvious that his interest was exclusively in the documentary style of some of his contemporaries. Sometimes he would practice by drawing from Michel Bouquet – for instance the

<sup>123</sup> Ionescu, *Preziosi în România*, 39-40; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Documents inédits concernant la visite du comte Amedeo Preziosi en Roumanie (1868, 1869)," in: *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art* XLI-XLII/2004-2005, 113, 133.

<sup>124</sup> Vida, *Carol Popp de Szathmári, aquarelliste*, 60, 66, note 101.

<sup>125</sup> Ionescu, *Preziosi în România*, 29.

<sup>126</sup> Muzeul Național de Artă al României (National Art Museum of Romania); *Derviși cerșetori din Istanbul*, inv. 27.570/2971; *Târgul Drăgaica din Buzău*, inv. 27.700/3102; *Vânzătoare de brățări la Moși*, inv. 27.594/2995; *Jărani la târg*, inv. 31.843/7248; *Biserica Batiște din București*, inv. 27.535/2936; *București – vedere din Turnul Colței*, inv. 27.534/2935; *Întoarcerea de la Târgul din Buzău*, inv. 27.557/2958; *Mănăstirea Hurez*, inv. 27.764/3166; *București – Biserica Sf. Spiridon Nou*, inv. 27.696/3098; *București – Biserica Sf. Ioan Grecesc*, inv. 28.440/3843; *București – Biserica Stravropoleos*, inv. 28.704/4107; *București – Biserica Schitu Măgureanu*, inv. 28.705/4108; *Vizita lui Carol I la Schitu Durău*, inv. 28.473/3876; *Vizita lui Carol I la Schitu Durău*, inv. 28.712/4115; *București – Biserica Stravropoleos*, inv. 29.095/4498; *Vizita lui Carol I la Schitu Durău*, inv. 29.247/4650; *București – Biserica Schitu Măgureanu*, inv. 29.543/4946; *Biserica Filip din Vălenii de Munte*, inv. 29.084/4487; *Carol I la Mănăstirea Pasărea*, inv. 28.711/4114; *Carol I la Mănăstirea Pasărea*, inv. 29.089/4492.

Romanați gendarme, represented from behind<sup>127</sup> – or from Charles Doussault, whereas at other times he would make actual copies and insert various picturesque types into his own compositions, as is the case with the county gendarme drawn by Bouquet and placed as a central figure in a scene from the Moșilor Fair.<sup>128</sup> (fig. 6) This work is featured as placed on the easel in the compositional portrait the artist made of himself amidst his studio and his collections. Nevertheless, the one he copied most frequently was Preziosi, with whom he shared many affinities. In the same collection belonging to the Romanian Academy, there are many works in various stages of completion, whether they were mere outlines or he had added ink-wash touches to mark the shadows, or sometimes they were finished plates on which he often wrote his name. It is worth noting however that, in such cases, he did not use italics, as usual, but rather regular uppercase print-like letters. One may assume that this is how he marked the copies as against original work. Marin Nicolau-Golfin, who has devoted an in-depth study to Preziosi, has noted judiciously the great qualitative differences and the clumsiness that distinguish the original from the copies. Although he had admirable patterns, Szathmári could not overcome his limitations, and the result was, more often than not, mediocre and lacking in the brightness and freshness of the work of the Maltese master, who did not stint on high-quality materials, as the Romanian artist tended to do. Nicolau-Golfin has even compiled a list of these copies from Preziosi.<sup>129</sup> The explanation is again supplied by archival documents: in a series of receipts in which Szathmári justified the honorariums he had received from his princely patron, several references crop up to his travel and work companion, concerning either certain photographs he had made for or from his work, or the copies he had made from watercolours which were owned by the Ruling Prince. The most plausible explanation is that, as the Ruling Prince was the owner of an important collection of images from the country made by Preziosi during his two visits to Romania, in 1868 and 1869, he had commissioned the Court Painter to make a series of copies with which he could present his blue-blooded guests and his hosts at the European courts where he was invited. On 25 July 1868, the Romanian artist submitted to the Court Pay Office a list of his latest works, among which there were "25 sheets forwarded for completion to Mr Preziosi," whose price amounted to 125 new lei.<sup>130</sup> In a receipt dated 3/22 July 1869, for the important amount of 320 new lei in payment for various works, "8 watercolours from Mr Preziosi"<sup>131</sup> are mentioned, whose cost was estimated at 40 lei. A few days later, another receipt certifies the delivery to the Princely House of "8 of Mr

<sup>127</sup> Muzeul Național al Țăranului Român (National Museum of the Romanian Peasant), *Bărbat văzut din spate pe fundal de biserică, Romanați*, watercolour, 1847, inv. 041.

<sup>128</sup> Muzeul Municipiului București (Bucharest City Museum), *Târgul Moșilor*, oil on canvas, 1861, inv. 11185.

<sup>129</sup> Marin Nicolau-Golfin, "Între Preziosi și Szathmary," in: *Revista Muzeelor*/1968, 9; Idem, *Amedeo Preziosi*, București 1976, 23-24.

<sup>130</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 284.

<sup>131</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 126/1869, MS. 296.

Preziosi's watercolours" in exchange for 8 gold coins, as well as the forwarding to the Maltese artist of "6 copies of watercolours" for 30 lei.<sup>132</sup>



6 *The Moși Fair*, oil on canvas, 1861, The Bucharest City Museum

[40] In addition to current activities in the Prince's service and in the photography studio, which brought in a substantial and constant income, Szathmári also took in collateral orders of a more practical nature. Besides the above-mentioned lithograph of the map of Wallachia, in February 1860 he was commissioned by the Ministry of Public Works to make sketches for the national coat-of-arms of the United Principalities,<sup>133</sup> and then for the national flag and the first national decorations<sup>134</sup>: the Order of the Union, later to be called the Romanian Star, the Military Virtue and the Honorific Sign for 18 years of military service.<sup>135</sup> In 1864 he carried out a request by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education to make a project for a cabinet which was to contain Michael the Brave's skull. Major Dimitrie Pappasoglu, a passionate amateur historian and print editor, wrote an article in which he recorded that Minister Dimitrie Bolintineanu had proposed that the Prince's skull be moved from Dealu Monastery to Mihai Vodă Monastery and that the House of Representatives had already approved the amount of 1,000 gold coins necessary for the production of such a cabinet.<sup>136</sup> In his French-language periodical, Ulysse de Marsillac described the project developed by the artist: "A marble shrine in the shape of an ancient tomb sustains a bronze urn surmounted by a Romanian eagle. Two bronze lions guard the glorious relic which is visible through a crystal. Gold-lettered inscriptions are traced on marble and bronze plates."<sup>137</sup> In 1872, the Bucharest City

<sup>132</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 126/1869, MS. 300.

<sup>133</sup> ANIC, Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice, folder 299/1860, MS. 4.

<sup>134</sup> Muzeul Național de Artă al României, *Proiect pentru stema țării în timpul lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza*, inv. 29.291/4694; *Proiect de drapel cu stema României în timpul principelui Carol I*, inv. 29.315/4718; *Proiect de medalii*, inv. 29.189/4592.

<sup>135</sup> Ion Safta, et al., *Decorații românești de război 1860-1947*, București 1993, 15, 38-39, 116-117, 121.

<sup>136</sup> Maj. D. Pappasoglu, "Capul lui Mihai Viteazul", in: *Reforma* 27/1 April 1864.

<sup>137</sup> *La Voix de la Roumanie* 22/20 April 1864.

Council decided to replace the neutral figures on playing cards with the faces of former Ruling Princes and Princesses from the national history. To that effect, General Barbu Vlădoianu, the Mayor of Bucharest at the time, called on Szathmári to carry out this patriotic project. He thus chose to use the features of Mircea the Old, Black Rudolph, Matei Basarab and Michael the Brave for the kings, the ladies Despina, Elena, Stanca and Bălașa for the queens, and of the military leaders Mihalcea, Manta, Radu Buzescu and Tudor Vladimirescu for the knaves, according to the enthusiastic account by the same French journalist naturalised in Bucharest.<sup>138</sup>

[41] Legends were spun around Szathmári's powerful, multifaceted personality, some even during his lifetime, sometimes invented and maintained by the artist himself and perpetuated without a minimum research of the facts, by those who devoted articles or more extensive monographs to him. Such is the case of his fictional journey to China, undertaken in 1872, and his appointment as Court Painter of an imperial prince.<sup>139</sup> In fact, Szathmári never went to the Far East and his path crossed that nobleman's not in the Celestial Empire but on board a ship, as they were both travelling to Europe. It is worth noting that those who have mentioned – and to a certain extent mystified – this episode have even mistaken the Prince's name with that of the city he came from, namely Tali-fu. In fact, the prince's name was Hassan and he was the adopted son of "Sultan Suleiman" – the name and title taken up by Tu-wen-hsiu, the leader of the Muslim Chinese, known as the Hui people, Huízú or Panthay, from the Yunnan Province in southern China, who had rebelled against the Qing Dynasty. The rebellion had started in 1855 and two years later the city of Tali-fu was conquered, thus becoming the capital of the new Islam kingdom, whose power peaked between 1860 and 1868. The imperial government however struck back, and in 1871 it conquered most of the towns in the region and surrounded Tali-fu. In order to save his country, the sultan sent his adopted son, Hassan on a mission to England, to petition for British military assistance; they were however not successful.<sup>140</sup> That is when the Romanian painter met the young diplomat and painted his portrait. The prince, wearing a simple yet ample garment made of blue silk, has a juvenile round face, with an incipient moustache; with the exception of slightly slanted eyes, his face does not betray his race's phenotypes. At the bottom of the page, the author wrote the name of the sitter using Chinese characters, adding underneath, in Latin script, "Talifu Hassan Prințu" (Prince Tali-fu Hassan). Happy with the quality of the portrait as well as the title he had added to his already extensive portfolio, the artist exhibited the work in the shop window of his studio and the Bucharest press hastened to

<sup>138</sup> *Le Journal de Bucarest* 201/28 July 1872.

<sup>139</sup> Árvay Árpád, *Pilda precursorilor*, București 1975, 79, 101; Árvay Árpád, *Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmáry*, 144; Hilda Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, București 2011, 46.

<sup>140</sup> John Anderson, *Mandalay to Momien: A Narrative of the Two Expeditions to Western China of 1868 and 1875*, London 1876, 242, 243; Dr. Thaug, "Panthay Interlude in Yunnan: A study in Vicissitudes Through the Burmese Kaleidoscope," in: *JBRS Fifth Anniversary Publications* 1/1961, 481.

proclaim the event. However, a few confusions made their way into the account, some encouraged by the artist himself: the newspaper *Românul* stated that the Prince was the heir of the imperial throne, which Ulysse de Marsillac denies when he quotes that note: "If memory serves, the current emperor of China is a very young man who has only recently married. The character drawn by Mr Szathmári is a handsome young man of twenty who does not share the Chinese phenotypes. How could the Celestial Son have a son who is older than himself?"<sup>141</sup> Details concerning the Panthay Rebellion in Yunnan and the fact that not only was this prince not the emperor's son, but he was his declared enemy, were not widely known in our country at the time. Avid for honorary titles – which at any rate were well deserved – Szathmári gratefully accepted the title of painter of that noble Chinese prince about whom he knew next to nothing but who had had the generosity to confer it on him, in a moment of good will and gratefulness for the honour of having stirred the interest of a European artist who took the trouble to paint his portrait. However, owing to his uncertain status as the ambassador of a country which was not officially recognised as such, which was under siege, and which, moreover, he was soon to lose – as, in his absence, in 1873, the city of Tali-fu was captured by the imperial army and Sultan Suleiman was beheaded – the prince had no real power and was in no position to confer such titles. Thus, Szathmári's title had no official value and it was all rather a simulacrum that both artist and sitter tacitly accepted: it was unlikely that they should ever meet again so that the painter would actually be in a position to fulfil his obligations as Court Painter. But China was too far, and the artist liked titles, so in the catalogue of the Vienna World's Fair he added this rather fictional title, along with the real one from the Romanian Court: "Szathmari, C. von, Hofmaler und Photograph Sr. Hoheit des regierenden Fürsten von Rumänien und *des Prinzen von China Talifu*"<sup>142</sup> (our emphasis, A.S.I.).

[42] Desirous of titles and recognition, all his life Szathmári cultivated the publicity and popularity that he enjoyed in the highest circles. This was like a business card which opened many doors, behind which there often were potential patrons and beneficiaries of his work. And the honours he was granted by the powerful of the world he moved in flattered him exceedingly. He therefore printed on the back of his photographic paper all the decorations and medals he received in time, in an ample composition which, by 1878, surrounded, like a crown, that entire space – perhaps the most copious display of badges ever printed by a photographer not only in Romania but throughout the world.<sup>143</sup> And the truth is that few contemporaries were more spoiled by the heads of states and the chairmen of various exhibitions than Szathmári. A chronological list of all the decorations,

<sup>141</sup> *Le Journal de Bucarest* 222/10 October 1872.

<sup>142</sup> Oprescu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmary*, 74.

<sup>143</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Arta graficii publicitare a cartoanelor de fotografii din secolul al XIX-lea," in: *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor – Muzeu* 6/1988, 75-77.

medals and prizes he received has been compiled.<sup>144</sup> Laureate of all the important World's Fairs – the first one, in London, in 1851, then the ones in Paris in 1855 and 1867 and the 1873 one in Vienna – and of the Exhibitions of Living Artists organised in Bucharest in 1865 and 1868, he adds to these medals the perhaps more gratifying ones he had received from Queen Victoria, the emperors Napoleon III and Franz Josef I, Sultan Abdul Aziz, the Queen of Sweden, and the Ruling Prince, later to become King, Carol I, in a prolix composition.

- [43] The press was also in a hurry to proudly announce the gaining of some new decoration by the artist. The Istanbul visit of Prince Alexandru Ioan I was described in great detail in the periodical *Buciumul*, which was quoting from an article published in the *Courrier d'Orient* on 11 June 1864.<sup>145</sup> The Ruling Prince's retinue was enumerated there, the painter included. Several members of the retinue were awarded the Medjidie Order in various ranks; among these, Szathmári was awarded the fourth class of the distinguished Ottoman decoration. The French newspaper in the Capital pointed out that few civilians were thus rewarded, as the others were military men or high-ranking dignitaries in the administration and the justice system of the United Principalities.<sup>146</sup> Twenty years later Szathmári was awarded the Star of Romania in the rank of Knight.<sup>147</sup> The artist was proud of his medals and in several of the portraits he or other colleagues made of him, he sat wearing these decorations, either regular size or as miniatures strung on a little chain of precious metal.
- [44] Still it is strange that new legends are still spun even nowadays: recently, some authors have started to claim – without however supplying any conclusive proof – that the artist travelled in Siberia,<sup>148</sup> where he took "an impressive series of art photographs which capture the beauty of one of the wildest regions on earth."<sup>149</sup> At a time when there is already an extensive bibliography that can reconstruct in great detail the artist's life and career, it is unjust and superfluous to circulate – even in tabloids – fantastical information

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<sup>144</sup> Bădescu and Godorogea, "Carol Popp de Szathmari fotograf," 56-57; Viorica Neagu and Cornelia König, eds., *Carol Popp de Szathmari (1812-1887): martor al epocii*, exh. cat., București 2002, 6.

<sup>145</sup> *Buciumul* 241/10/22 June 1864: "Prince Alessandru Iónnu's retinue includes: Mr. C. Negri, the United Principalities' ambassador to the Sublime Porte, who is returning to his post; Mr. R[osetti] Bălănescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Baligot de Bayne, Secretary, chief of the Prince's Cabinet; Prince A. Cantacuzino, Mr. E. Silion, members of the Court of Cassation; Mr. G. Lambrino, Prefect; Mr. Strat, member of Board of Public Education; Dr. Davila, general inspector of Medical Services, both civilian and military; Lieutenant Colonels Pisotski, G. Catargiu and Zefcari, Captain Silion of the Prince's Staff; Captain Filitis and Lieutenant Casimir, cavalry officers and aides-de-camp; Mr. Halfon, a banker from Bucharest; Mr. Sathmary [sic], Court painter and photographer."

<sup>146</sup> *La Voix de la Roumanie* 48/19 Octobre 1864.

<sup>147</sup> *Românulu* 6/7 February 1884: "The Knight's Cross of the Star of Romania has been awarded to Carol Szathmary [sic], painter-photographer."

<sup>148</sup> Árvay, *Pilda precursorilor*, 87; Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, 46.

<sup>149</sup> Claudiu Pădurean, "Istoria primului fotoreporter de război din lume," in: *România Liberă* 13 January 2012.

which can only confuse the novice and confound the researcher who might be tempted to verify the information in previously unknown archive documents.

[45] Another legend which was embraced and perpetuated enthusiastically by several authors up to our times<sup>150</sup> is the one according to which Szathmári was the Court Painter of all the Wallachian Princes during the period of the Organic Regulations, from Ghica to Știrbei. He did indeed work various compositions for all of them. However, between painting canvases and being appointed in an official position there is a fairly long distance. He only received that title from Alexandru Ioan I, in 1863, as mentioned above. Let us not forget that between the time of his first visits to Wallachia and his eventual settling there, several other painters were active there, who were equally entitled to aspire to that title and even had greater chances of receiving it than the artist from across the mountains. Constantin Lecca was the author of official portraits of Gheorghe Bibescu and Barbu Știrbei and of a portrait of Princess Marițica Bibescu wearing the folk costume,<sup>151</sup> and when the Ruling Prince Bibescu eventually married the beautiful and elegant gentlewoman, in the autumn of the year 1845,<sup>152</sup> it was he, and not Szathmári, who drew sketches at the nuptials, which he intended to turn into two large oil compositions, according to the *Curierul Românesc*.<sup>153</sup> Carol Wahlstein also painted the portraits of the Ruling Prince Bibescu, Sultan Abdul Medjid and, upon the Russian Consul's observing that the portrait of the Tsar of all the Russias was missing from the collection of St Sava College, he also produced a portrait of Nicholas I.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, in the autumn of 1854, when Prince Știrbei returned from his self-imposed exile to Vienna during the Russian occupation of his Principality, he painted a composition representing this event: he transferred the image, initially in watercolour, to oil, on a large canvas, and then he published it in the magazine *Illustrirte Zeitung* in Leipzig.<sup>155</sup> Had he held such a high position with the Court, it would have been Szathmári, rather than Doussault, who was selected to accompany Prince Bibescu's retinue when, in August 1843, the new Prince paid homage to Sultan Abdul Medjid at the Sublime Porte.<sup>156</sup> At the time, Szathmári had already been living in Bucharest for at least six months, as shown by a letter he sent to his Cluj friend, Sándor Pataki, on 28 February 1843, in which he actually complained about the existence of serious competition from two other painters.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, 46.

<sup>151</sup> Paul Rezeanu, *Constantin Lecca*, București 2005, 31, 39-40.

<sup>152</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Căsătorii, divorțuri și aventuri galante în ținuturile românești în vremuri de tranziție (1800-1859)," in: Irina Gavrilă, ed., *Celălalt autentic. Lumea românească în literatura de călătorie (1800-1850)*, București 2010, 38-39.

<sup>153</sup> *Curierul Românesc* 66/14 September 1845, 261.

<sup>154</sup> Ion N. Vlad, Gh. Stancoveanu, *Carol Valștain*, Craiova 1967, 68-70.

<sup>155</sup> ANIC, MCIP – Țara Românească, folder 270/1851, MS. 82; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Cruce și semilună*, 102-103, 106; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, ed., *Războiul Crimeii*, 21.

<sup>156</sup> *Curierul Românesc* 62/ 16 August 1843; *Albina Românească* 69/ 2 September 1843; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Pictori străini pe meleaguri românești*, 326.

<sup>157</sup> Árvay, *Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmáry*, 142.

- [46] Yet another legend – a lovely one this time, owing to its romantic aura – is that of a love story between Szathmári and the charming Marițica Văcărescu, who was allegedly the reason he moved to Bucharest.<sup>158</sup> However, the great difference in social status as well as the young gentlewoman's ambition to reach the highest social position – which she achieved first by marrying Swordbearer Constantin Ghica, younger brother of the Ruling Prince of the Organic Statutes, Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica, and then a Ruling Prince, Gheorghe Bibescu – did not warrant any high hopes for this youthful dream of love.
- [47] According to a further legend which has survived in time, he was the one who manipulated the Daguerrean camera at St Sava College, not so much in order to immortalise portraits and landscapes, but rather as an object of study for the hard sciences. This story was circulated by George Potra, who, however, acknowledges that it was a supposition: "Carol Popp de Szathmari was probably the one who, as an employee, manipulated the daguerreotype camera purchased by the School Administration in 1840 [...]."<sup>159</sup> Constantin Săvulescu, the unchallenged pioneer of the systematic study of the history of photography in our country, took up the information and relayed it in the same hypothetical form.<sup>160</sup> Árvay Árpád rendered the story as a certainty although, in the letters he published, he never supplied any argument to support it.<sup>161</sup> Hilda Hencz, picking up his unfounded announcement almost verbatim, stated that the artist "showed Ruling Prince Alexandru Ghica how the daguerreotype operated" and she added, without supplying any credible testimony, that "only four years after the process was patented, he opened a daguerreotype studio on Mogoșoaiei Bridge, on the ground floor of the Bossel House, across from the future National Theatre."<sup>162</sup> The author who attempted a rectification, without however supplying irrefutable arguments, was Emanuel Bădescu, who averred:

The statement according to which from the very beginning it had also been used by Carol Popp de Szathmari, who was to establish himself – as a painter! – in Bucharest during the year of 'Wilhelmina Priz's notification' [1843], is hardly more than mere speculation. Szathmári only used it in 1844 and only for experimental purposes. He tried to become initiated in this technique by using the camera at St Sava, probably with the assistance of his host, Carol Valștain, a teacher at that school.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Árvay, *Pilda precursorilor*, 83; Emanuel Bădescu, "Tainica dragoste a lui Carol Popp de Szathmari pentru Maria Bibescu," in: *Curierul Românesc* 1/2005, 15-16.

<sup>159</sup> George Potra, "Aspecte din istoricul fotografiei în România," in: *Fotografia* 10/1970, 577; George Potra, *Din Bucureștii de altădată*, București 1981, 428; George Potra, *Din Bucureștii de ieri*, București 1990, vol. II, 256.

<sup>160</sup> Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată*, 3.

<sup>161</sup> Árvay, *Pilda precursorilor*, 86-87; Árvay, *Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmári*, 142.

<sup>162</sup> Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, 45, 46.

<sup>163</sup> Emanuel Bădescu, "Fotografiile Bucureștilor (1843-1866)," in: Stelian Țurlea, ed., *Bucureștii în imagini în vremea lui Carol I*, București 2006, vol. I, 30.

- [48] Nevertheless, for the latter statement, regarding the use of the daguerreotype, albeit in 1844, there is no reference. Neither was there any reason why Valștain – or rather Wahlstein, as he usually signed his name – would mediate Szathmári's access to the device, since he worked as a drawing teacher, whereas the daguerreotype was in the care of the hard sciences teachers. Furthermore, the year 1844 was fairly late for anyone to be impressed by the daguerreotype, even in the Romanian Principalities: the press had already presented, in great detail, this "awe-inspiring discovery of the century"<sup>164</sup> and itinerant practitioners had reached the main towns, such that "Madama Wilhelmine Priz" had been mentioned in Bucharest in the spring of the previous year.<sup>165</sup> Nonetheless, Szathmári was not an obscure personage, so the event of the inauguration of a daguerreotype studio would not have been missed by the press, who would have been sure to publicise it, as they did in Jassy, where *Albina Românească* greeted Professor Teodor Stamati's contribution in this respect.<sup>166</sup> Stamati can be regarded as the first authentic, attested Moldavian daguerreotypist, who had made a few cityscapes which were exhibited in the rooms of the Mihăileană Academy.<sup>167</sup>
- [49] Since there are no archive documents to certify the use by Szathmári of the Daguerrean technique, the above-mentioned suppositions cannot be accepted. Moreover, the first image known to belong to him, obtained by using the photographic camera, is a collotype representing a cast of a *putto* with severed arms which the author inscribed in pencil for authentication with a text in German which testifies to his first successful attempt: "Die aller erste Photographie die ich gemacht habe im Jahre 1848 November. Carl v. Szathmári."<sup>168</sup> No other collotypes by him have been preserved, as soon afterwards he opted for the improved technique of wet collodion, in which he became an unchallenged master. In 1853, when the Crimean War started and the Tsar's troops occupied the Romanian Principalities, Szathmári was already famous as a studio portraitist and his studio was frequently visited by the imperial officers. He then travelled to the Danube banks where he made his name known as the first war correspondent-photographer in the world, a topic that has been long debated and admirably argued by Romanian authors – and reluctantly accepted by foreign authors – during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the next.<sup>169</sup> (fig. 7) Indeed, it was difficult to admit that Szathmári had done so eleven months before Roger Fenton. Rather than visit the Lower

<sup>164</sup> *Albina Românească* 79/6 October 1840.

<sup>165</sup> *Vestitorul Românesc* 23/19 March 1843; George Potra, *Aspecte din istoricul fotografiei*, 576; Idem, *Din Bucureștii de altădată*, 427; Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată*, 7; Emanuel Bădescu, "Fotografii Bucureștilor (1843-1866)," 29-30.

<sup>166</sup> *Albina Românească* 79/6 October 1840.

<sup>167</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Fotografii itineranți europeni în ținuturile românești (1840-1860)," in: Daniela Bușă and Ileana Căzan, eds., *Curențe ideologice și instituțiile statului modern – secolele XVIII-XX. Modelul european și spațiul românesc*, București 2007, 219.

<sup>168</sup> Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată*, 14.

<sup>169</sup> See note 6.

Danube, where the Danube Campaign had ended, the latter went straight to Crimea, where the two camps had moved the battlefield of their fierce clashes. The Briton had landed in the Balaclava Bay and, for 3 months and 18 days, from 8 March to 26 June 1855 – when, having contracted cholera, he had to set off for his home country – he made 360 plates of various aspects of the camps and the battlefield,<sup>170</sup> without however being able to take snapshots, for which the slow technique of impressing sensitised glass plates for 3 to 20 seconds, took too long.<sup>171</sup> Szathmári gathered his photographs into a few albums which he offered to Europe's royalty, and a copy was presented at the World's Fair in Paris where it caused quite a stir and it won him one of the Second Class medals. *La Lumière*, the periodical of the French Photographic Society, proudly gave a detailed account of the arrival of the Romanian artist in Paris to display his album in the Ottoman pavilion<sup>172</sup> and of his audience with Emperor Napoleon III<sup>173</sup> – who, in order to show his satisfaction with and appreciation for what he had seen, congratulated him and requested that his august name be put down on the subscription list for purchasing an album<sup>174</sup> – and with Queen Victoria, who received him at Osborne Castle, on the Isle of Wight, in the presence of the Prince Consort and the King of the Belgians who was paying a visit at the time.<sup>175</sup> It thus becomes apparent that Szathmári sold his album by pre-paid order and that the Emperor's name at the head of the list ensured an increase in the number of subscribers who were attracted by the idea of having their name on the same list as the most powerful man of the day.

[50] However, Szathmári's photographs were not exhibited anywhere else other than in Paris, and, as luck would have it, not only were they less well known than Fenton's, but they disappeared in dramatic circumstances: the album in the imperial collection burned when the Tuileries Palace was set on fire by the communards in 1871; the one owned by the royal family of Great Britain seems to have been at least partly lost during a fire that affected part of Windsor Castle in 1912; the ones in the German lands were lost track of during the First and Second World Wars, whereas the copy which had been preserved, either integrally or as separate plates, in the author's house on Biserica Enei Street, as well as all the plates and print-outs were destroyed, together with his fabulous art and ethnography collection, during the bombing that devastated the Romanian Capital on 25 August 1944. Consequently, Roger Fenton's fame in time surpassed Szathmári's to such

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<sup>170</sup> "Mr. Fenton's Crimean Photographs," in: *The Illustrated London News* 769/ November 10, 1855, 557; Captain H. Oakes-Jones, "Photography in the Crimean War," in: *The Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 66/Summer 1938, 67-70; 67/Autumn 1938, 133-134; 68/Winter 1938, 221-222; 69/Spring 1939, 21-22; 70/Summer 1939, 95-97; 71/Autumn 1939, 129-132.

<sup>171</sup> Nicole Garnier-Pelle, *Aux origines du reportage de guerre. Le photographe anglais Roger Fenton 1819-1869 et la Guerre de Crimée 1855*, exh. cat., Château de Chantilly 1994, 6-8.

<sup>172</sup> *La Lumière* 22/2 June 1855.

<sup>173</sup> *La Lumière* 23/9 June 1855.

<sup>174</sup> *La Lumière* 25/23 June 1855.

<sup>175</sup> *La Lumière* 30/29 July 1855.

an extent that his primacy was simply forgotten, although even at the time, Ernest Lacan, reviewer for *La Lumière*, had given the Bucharest artist the credit he deserved: "We have stated that Mr Szathmári's work has been the introduction to the dramatic history of the Eastern War. We are now awaiting the book. Mr Roger Fenton has taken it upon himself to write it."<sup>176</sup> Lacan was not the only one to write about Szathmári's success in Paris: Jules Ziegler, a teacher at the Dijon School of Beaux Arts and director of the art museum in the same city, devoted a paragraph to the Romanian artist's interesting photographs in his leaflet, *Compte rendu de la photographie à l'Exposition Universelle de 1855*, published in a confidential circulation of only 50 copies which were not intended for bookshops. Commenting on the images displayed, Ziegler praised the composition representing Marshal Omer Paşa amidst his staff, as well as the scenes representing peasants wearing traditional costumes and gypsies dressed in rags.<sup>177</sup>



7 Turkish Cavalrymen, salted paper print, 1854, author's collection

- [51] Szathmári ordered two images of warriors of the Ottoman regular troops, taken on the front, to be chromolithographed in Vienna the next year, and these benefitted from wider exposure than the initial photographs. In the margin of the prints it was specified that the camera had been the basis for these images: "Nach einer von Szathmari vor Oltenitza gefertigten und collorirten Photographie." One represents a group of three *Başibuzuci arabi* (Arabian Bashibouzouks) in their colourful clothes and laden with weapons. The preliminary watercolour is full of freshness and immediacy, unlike the final print, which abounds in minute details devoted especially to the weaponry and the ornate clothing: the trombone, the sword and the embroidered jacket with slashed sleeves of the seated character, and the silver pistol handles and striped coats of the other two.

<sup>176</sup> Ernest Lacan, *Ésquisses photographiques à propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*, Paris 1856, 167.

<sup>177</sup> J. Ziegler, *Compte rendu de la photographie à l'Exposition Universelle de 1855*, Paris 1855, 37-38.

[52] Also to this period can be dated the full-length portrait of a fierce and gallant Albanian mercenary wearing his fez tipped to one side, a short coat, richly embroidered with gold thread on the chest and the slashed sleeves, which revealed his impeccably white shirt, and a pair of *shalwar* also embroidered with gold thread. In his broad belt he had his entire fortune: pistols, a hanger and a scimitar, all the handles and sheaths covered in silver, masterly crafted by skilful goldsmiths, and in his hand he held a carbine. This photograph, held by the National Military Museum, is wrongly dated 1849, as some of the scratches and corrections of imperfections on the right side were retouched on the original glass plate. Such retouches would not have been possible in the case of the collotype technique, which he employed before the invention, in 1851, of the wet collodion technique which used glass plates. To any connoisseur of early photographic techniques, it is evident that the Albanian mercenary was obtained through the wet collodion process. The fact that salted paper was used for reproduction – which was still in use even after albumin-covered paper was adopted in the age of wet collodion – is not evidence enough for antedating it. A further element in support of dating it to the period of the war correspondences and oriental types of 1854 is the lithographed border of the cardboard on which the large image (37 x 27,5 cm) is glued, as well as the text printed at the bottom: "Établissement Photographique de Charles Szathmari à Bucarest," the same as on the prints in the André and Marie-Thérèse Jammes collection auctioned by Sotheby's on 27 October 1999.<sup>178</sup>

[53] On his expeditions to the East and during the time when he was roaming the enemy camps at Oltenița and Silistra in 1854, the artist encountered admirable faces of warriors which he immortalised in watercolour. Fine, noble features, dreamy gazes from green eyes or dark ones under fiercely frowning eyebrows (fig. 8) give an indication of the artist's penetration as an analyst of his models' psychology. The bright red or purple, golden yellow and blue are the favourite colours of the garments of these staunch desert riders. The distinguished and fierce aspect of these oriental volunteers seems to be the perfect illustration of the description written by the French journalist Éugène Jouve of a similar Syrian officer with whom he shared a boat crossing the Danube on the way to Giurgiu: "Said-Ahmed-Beg of Marach, not far from Aleppo in Syria, is the most noble of all the *mad-heads* [his interpretation of the term *bashibouzouk*, our note, A.S.I] that I have met so far. His splendid, irreproachably clean oriental costume emphasised to great advantage his tall and elegant stature, more Roman-like than Arab or Turkish."<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Ionescu, *Szathmari, War Photographer*, 223, 225.

<sup>179</sup> Éugène Jouve, *Guerre d'Orient. Voyage à la suite des armées alliées en Turquie, en Valachie et en Crimée*, Paris 1855, vol. II, 109; Daniela Bușă, ed., *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea (1852-1856)*, ed. Academiei Române, București 2010, vol. VI, 572.



8 *Arabian War Chief*, watercolour, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

[54] Not all the inhabitants of Asia and North Africa, where all those *bashibouzouks* were recruited from in order to form the blood-thirsty irregular troops of the Ottoman army, wore such elegant and colourful clothing. A *Captain of a Turkish vessel* – whose name is written, in Arab letters, down the page on which he was drawn – wears much more simple and sober clothes: short *shalwar* down to his knees, yellow pointed slippers, a lilac vest with a yellow border and a broad red belt, as well as a red fez on his head, whereas the clothes of the two seated venerable inhabitants of Chorsabad chatting nearby are dominated by white, ochre and brown.



9 The "*Elizabeth*" Battery at Calafat, on the Left Danube Bank, albumen print, 1877, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



10 Prince Carol Entering a Bulgarian Village during the War, watercolour, 1877, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

[55] During Romania's War of Independence, Szathmári found himself on the battlefield again and resumed his work as war correspondent with the same passion and devotion he had shown 23 years earlier.<sup>180</sup> The resulting photo album, *Suvenir din Resbelul 1877-78* (Souvenirs from the War, 1877-78), enjoyed a wider circulation than the one from the earlier Danube Campaign and is still part of the holdings of several Romanian institutions: the Library of the Romanian Academy, the National Library of Romania, the National Military Museum, the Bucharest City Museum, the National Navy Museum, the "N. Iorga" Institute of History, etc. The survival of a larger number of complete copies is also owed to the difference in costs between the two periods when the author made his albums, the 1855 one being undoubtedly more expensive due to the high price of paper and of the glass plates used at the time, as compared to the lower prices afforded by the improved technique and larger number of producers of photographic materials during the eighth decade of that century. Marching troops, cavalry squadrons crossing the Danube on pontoons, artillery batteries on the river banks – some operated by sailors (fig. 9) –, the Headquarters of the Ruling Prince Carol I, supreme commander of the Romanian troops, and his staff were subject matters that Szathmári immortalised for this album. Moreover, the artist also elaborated a series of drawings and watercolours intended for the Prince's collection – "Marele Căpitan" (The Great Captain) who had commanded the Western Army. (fig. 10) Others were reproduced in illustrated magazines in Romania and abroad, such as *Resboiul*, *Illustrirte Zeitung*, *L'Illustration* and *The Illustrated London News*.<sup>181</sup> On the front he also made original drawings. Some were elaborated from sketches of another artist, the probably younger Mathes Koenen (sometimes spelled Könen or Köhnen), with whom the master had associated. The latter was himself a correspondent

<sup>180</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Fotografia ca document al Războiului de Independență," in: *Revista Istorică* XIII, 3-4/May-August 2002, 37-41; Ionescu, *Penel și sabie*, 111-116.

<sup>181</sup> Ionescu, *Penel și sabie*, 108-111, 140-143.

of the periodical *Illustrierte Zeitung* of Leipzig, in which he published several sketches and articles starting in mid-May 1877,<sup>182</sup> including the exciting correspondence he sent from the Grivița I Redoubt which was seized by the Romanians on 30 August.<sup>183</sup> On 3 November 1877, Szathmári and Koenen signed a contract which stipulated the terms of their collaboration.<sup>184</sup> Henceforth, the images published in the pages of Leipzig magazine always bore a note specifying, "Nach einer Skizze von M. Koenen und C. Szathmari." Not much is known about the later evolution of this collaborator of the great Romanian documentarian. In the summer of 1878 he was still in our country, advertising his work as "painter and decorator of placards" – i.e., signboards, which was not exactly the appropriate line of work for a true artist – along with his address at 18 Doamnei Street.<sup>185</sup>

[56] From the very beginning, painting and photography were interdependent in Szathmári's work. Photography was for him both a means and an aim: a means of primary documentation for many of his watercolours and chromolithographs and the final aim of works intended for immediate marketing and media impact. He was one of those photographers who had originally been painters and had then turned to the new technique, which they raised to the rank of an art, equal in every respect to its older sisters: Gustave le Gray, Henri le Secq, Charles Nègre, Charles Marville, Oscar Gustav Rejlander, Henry Peach Robinson, William Lake Price, Carjat and even the great Nadar. However, he never gave up painting. Starting his flattering presentation of Szathmári's work from the Danube Campaign period, Lacan pointed out this connection between the two techniques of visual arts: "Mr Ch. Pap de Szathmari is a Transylvanian nobleman living in Bucharest, who became a painter because he loved the arts and a photographer because he was a painter."<sup>186</sup>

[57] His photographs of Romanian landscapes with architectural monuments – especially ecclesiastical edifices – and human types in traditional costumes had a wide circulation, both separately and in albums. They were among the most popular exhibits in the Romanian pavilion at the World's Fairs in Paris in 1867<sup>187</sup> and Vienna in 1873,<sup>188</sup> along with his portfolios of watercolours and chromolithographs. For the former event, where

<sup>182</sup> Ionescu, *Penel și sabie*, 103.

<sup>183</sup> Ionescu, 105-106.

<sup>184</sup> Biblioteca Academiei Române (Library of the Romanian Academy), Cabinetul de Manuscrise (Department of Manuscripts), Arhiva artiștilor plastici (Archive of the Visual Artists), Szathmari IV documents 5.

<sup>185</sup> *România Liberă* 336/4 July 1878.

<sup>186</sup> Lacan, *Ésquisses photographiques à propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*, 155.

<sup>187</sup> Alin Ciupală, "Românii și Europa. Participarea României la Expoziția Universală din 1867," in: Ioan Scurtu, Mihai Sorin Rădulescu, eds., *Timpul istoriei II – In honorem emeriti Dinu C. Giurescu*, Universitatea din București – Facultatea de Istorie, București 1998, 194.

<sup>188</sup> [Ulysse de Marsillac], "L'Exposition Roumaine à Vienne," in: *Le Journal de Bucarest* 271/2 April 1873: "Un riche album photographique et une soixante d'aquarelles, dus au talent de M. Szathmari, permettront aux visiteurs étrangers de se rendre compte des beautés pittoresque de la Roumanie et surtout des costumes si beaux et si variés des paysans et des paysannes."

he was awarded an honourable mention,<sup>189</sup> his photographs of Curtea de Argeş Metropolitan church – 14 of them, selected from his 1866 album dedicated to that building – and of Stavropoleos church were sent to architect Ambroise Baudry to serve as a model for the building of the Romanian pavilion.<sup>190</sup> At the latter Fair he was awarded a medal of merit for "local photographic images" presented in Section XII, "Visual Arts and Industrial Graphics."<sup>191</sup> Moreover, in Vienna he was on the organising committee for the Romanian pavilion, where he contributed to identifying and cataloguing folk costumes. In a letter to his family, sent from Vienna on 2 July 1873, General Carol Davila, M.D. appreciated very highly Szathmári's diligence and efficiency in this activity, contrasting it to other less hard-working co-nationals who were taking advantage of their stay in the capital of the Habsburg Empire to have some fun:

Les seules personnes qui travaillent sont: en tête et toute la journée, M. le Dr. Bernath qui ne reçoit aucune indemnité, et M. Satmary [sic]. [...] Le reste s'amuse, se promène, flâne, court les filles et n'apparaît au pavillon que comme échantillon de suffisance, digne d'obtenir le grand prix. [...] Bernath et Satmary tâchent de faire un catalogue qui la commission exige pour demain. [...] Les costumes, malheureusement, ne sont pas désignés par districts, ni par couleur. [...] Satmary tâchera de désigner les districts."<sup>192</sup>

[58] Szathmári thus made a few drawings of aspects from the exhibition and the pavilions of various countries. In one of these he represented the imposing Rotunda, the heart of the Fair, which the Viennese were so proud of.

[59] In 1859 Szathmári had exhibited at the French Photographic Society a large image on waxed canvas he had taken in the yard of Manuc's Inn, and in 1864,<sup>193</sup> when he became a member of that prestigious organisation, he exhibited four *carte-de-visite*-size photos of folk types (a peasant woman from the Bucharest region, the actor Costache Dimitriade as Vulturul Munților [the Mountain Eagle, a drama character, translator's note], a yoghurt seller leaning on his yoke, the two tubs as his feet, and a gypsy family). All these images are currently in the Society's collection,<sup>194</sup> where I was able to research them in the autumn of 2009. Manuc's Inn was a motif dear to the artist, who immortalised it by means of both the camera and the techniques of the easel. (fig. 11)

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<sup>189</sup> Laurențiu Vlad, *Imagini ale identității naționale. România la Expozițiile Universale de la Paris, 1867-1937*, București 2001, 175.

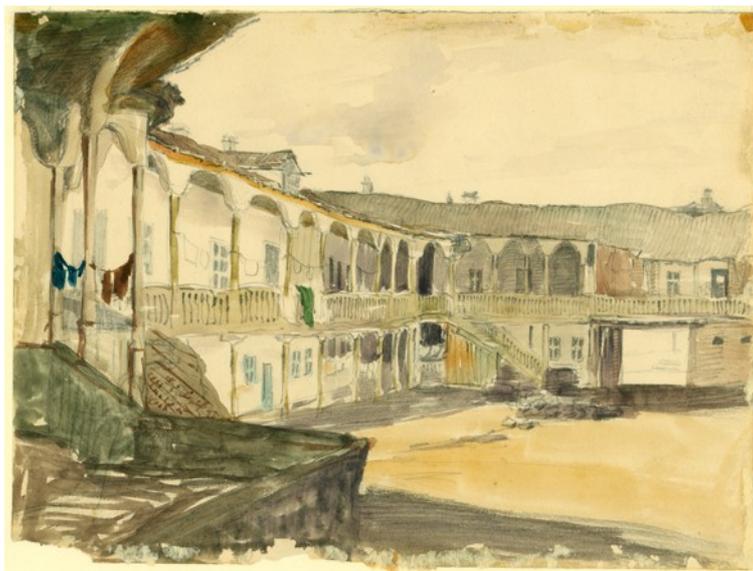
<sup>190</sup> Vlad, *Imagini ale identității naționale*, 39.

<sup>191</sup> "Raportul membrilor juriului internațional din partea României asupra recompenselor acordate de către juriul internațional expozanților români," in: *Presă* 183/24 August 1873.

<sup>192</sup> Elena Perticari-Davila, *Le Général Dr. Carol Davila, sa vie et son oeuvre d'après sa correspondance*, București 1930, 329-330.

<sup>193</sup> Pierre Marc Richard, *La Société Française de Photographie. Membres – Correspondants – Amateurs – Exposants. Index 1854-1876*, Paris 1990, 107.

<sup>194</sup> Société Française de Photographie, "Types et costumes de Roumanie" 409/1; Khan Manouk 409/2.



11 *Manuc's Inn*, watercolour, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

- [60] In 1870 Szathmári was elected member of the Photographische Gesellschaft (Photographic Society) in Vienna. His relation to that city and its master photographers was constant and of long standing. One of the few portraits he made elsewhere than in his own studio was in the studio of the Court Photographer of the Habsburg Empire, Ludwig Angerer, whose acquaintance he had made in 1854, when the former had been stationed in Bucharest in his capacity as drug assistant, the lowest rank in the hierarchy of military pharmacy.<sup>195</sup> The Romanian artist was a contributor to the periodical *Photographische Correspondenz* whose editor in chief was Ludwig Schrank, the secretary of the Vienna Photographic Society. Having travelled to the City of Lights in November 1864, Szathmári published a review – sometimes ironic, sometimes harshly critical – of the photographic art of his French colleagues, titled *Photographie parisienne*.<sup>196</sup>
- [61] In one of the 1870 issues of the periodical *Informațiunile Bucurescene*, edited by V.A. Urechia as a paper providing current information and advertisements, Szathmári features both on the list of painters and the list of photographers, and his address is given as "Biserica Ieni Street, the former Cornescu yard."<sup>197</sup>

<sup>195</sup> Anton Holzer, "Im Schatten des Krimkrieges. Ludwig Angerer Fotoexpedition nach Bukarest (1854 bis 1856). Eine wiederentdeckte Fotoserie im Bildarchiv der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek," in: *Fotogeschichte* Heft 93/2004, 26; Anton Holzer, "În umbra Războiului Crimeii. Expediția fotografică a lui Ludwig Angerer la București (1854-1856). O serie de fotografii redescoperite la Cabinetul de Stampe al Bibliotecii Naționale Austriece," in: Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, ed, *Războiul Crimeii. 150 de ani de la încheiere*, Ed. Istros, Brăila 2006, 243-244; Margareta Savin, "Ludwig Angerer, unul din primii fotografi ai Bucureștilor," in: *București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie* VI/1968, 223-229; Lelia Zamani, "București 1856. O fotografie inedită a lui Ludwig Angerer," in: *București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie*, XXI/2007, 357-364; Lelia Zamani, *Oameni și locuri din vechiul București*, București 2008, 129.

<sup>196</sup> C.v. Szathmary, "Photographie parisienne," in: *Photographische Correspondenz* II. Band, 7-18/January-February 1865, 1-10; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Szathmari, cronicar de artă fotografică," in: *Fotografia & Video* 209/1995, 28-29; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Fotografie și istoriografie," in: *Revista Istorică* XVIII, 5-6/September-December 2007, 519-521, 529-534.

<sup>197</sup> *Informațiunile Bucurescene* 35/8 Ianuarie 1870.

[62] His work in the photographic shop was demanding and required the help of specialised personnel. Szathmári did not work alone; instead, he had a posse of assistants whose jobs were very clear-cut. In routine activities, Szathmári no longer did the entire technological process, except for the times when he did field work, whether touring the country with the Ruling Prince's retinue or on his own, or, more rarely, when he was on the battlefield, during one of the wars caused by the Eastern Question. Whenever he had to take a camera portrait – especially if the beneficiary was a high society personage, politician or high-ranking officer, a minister or a great lady – the master, like all his colleagues throughout Europe, took charge only of selecting the background (the furniture and the most sumptuous drapery to match the outfit and statute of the sitter) and framing it, setting the light so as to foreground the physical qualities and the insignia, or conceal the defects, of the sitter. This is what the entire art of the portraitist consisted in! The rest was done by the assistants, who brought in the glass plate covered in wet collodion and placed it in the camera, opened and shut the lens, then developed and printed the plate, and, if necessary, also retouched it. Busy with his many duties in his capacity as Court Artist, the master was often away, but in his absence his shop – which brought in a substantial income – had to run full on. During his absence, his studio was run by his wife, who had been initiated in the secrets of photography<sup>198</sup> and could replace him admirably. During the last days of December 1874, Mrs Anna Szathmári petitioned the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education to pay the amount of 2,142 francs, the cost for a series of photographs she had delivered to that institution.<sup>199</sup> Titu Maiorescu, the portfolio holder of that Ministry at the time, demanded to see a power of attorney from the husband. The petitioner submitted the mandate requested, which had been provided in advance by the artist and authenticated by the Police Commissioner of the Culoarea de Roşu district of the Capital.<sup>200</sup>

[63] His albums of images from the country – *Episcopia Curtea de Argeş* (1866) and especially *România* (1868-1869) – were produced in several copies, and, at different times, for the use of either the Ruling Prince or the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education.<sup>201</sup> In 1868 such a copy of the *România Album* was sent by Prince Carol I to Nice, to the former Ruling Prince of Wallachia, Barbu Ştirbei, with whom he preserved friendly relations based on mutual esteem. On 9 October, Prince Ştirbei thanked Carol for this gift, which he had received enthusiastically:

The first object that gave me great pleasure was the superb album of Romania which Your Serene Highness had the extraordinary kindness to send me and about which my sons had already advised me. I have perused it with great curiosity and I found particularly Curtea de Argeş to have been perfectly rendered in all its

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<sup>198</sup> Oprescu, *Pictorii din familia Szathmary*, 74.

<sup>199</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 2589/1874, MS. 146.

<sup>200</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 2589/1874, MS. 147.

<sup>201</sup> ANIC, MCIP, folder 648/1868, MS.1-5; folder 227/1869, MS. 24.

detail. It has been an object of great curiosity for the distinguished foreigners that I meet in Nice during the winter season.<sup>202</sup>

- [64] At the time, Szathmári had done further work for the former Ruling Prince: the receipt of 25 July 1868, lists, along with other images, "4 sheets, large photographs, for Prince Știrbei's album."<sup>203</sup>
- [65] The *România Album* – a large work containing 47.2 x 64 cm plates with 29.3 x 35.5 cm photographs glued to them – was completed as a result of long years of hard work, of peregrinations in the country, in precarious circumstances, travelling post and striving to make plates of exceptional landscapes and monuments. Prints were made on demand, whenever the Ministry or the Ruling Prince needed more copies to send to various Romanian institutions or foreign officials. This explains why the albums comprise a certain number of common photographs, to which others were added, as the case may be, thus making each copy of the album unique. So far, only a few copies are known – three in the Prints Department of the Library of the Romanian Academy, one at the National Art Museum of Romania, one at the Central University Library in Jassy, another at "G. Oprescu" Institute of Art History, and two abroad, one in the Agfa Foto-Historama in Köln<sup>204</sup> and another, recently traced down, in the Swedish Royal Library.<sup>205</sup> Not even the number of plates is identical, varying from 30 (in the copy in Stockholm), 34 (in Jassy), 54 (in the Institute of Art History copy), 68 (the copy in the National Art Museum) to 69 (one of the copies at the Academy).
- [66] Possessed of the integrative vision of the documentarian preoccupied to create an *œuvre* which would comprise all the representative monuments of his country, Szathmári acted as a conservator who appraised the current state of historical and religious edifices. Although, unlike Cesar Bolliac, Alexandru Odobescu, Dimitrie Pappasoglu and Alexandru Pelimon, he was not a member of the committee appointed in 1860 by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education to catalogue the monuments of Wallachia<sup>206</sup> – for Moldavia, this task had been taken up independently by Gheorghe Panaiteanu<sup>207</sup> – he matched the profile of this institution by supplying the necessary iconography, to which he added folk types, costumes and even scenes from the festive events occasioned by

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<sup>202</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 79/1868, MS. 22.

<sup>203</sup> ANIC, Casa Regală, folder 90/1868, MS. 284.

<sup>204</sup> Schuller-Procopovici, "Ein Land aus dem Bilderbuch. Das Rumänienalbum des Carol Szathmari (1812-1887)," 455.

<sup>205</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Carol Popp de Szathmari – En fotopionjär i Kungl. Bibliotekets Samlingar," in: *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art* XLVIII/2011, 161-164; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Imagini românești neștiute în Biblioteca Regală Suedeză," in: *Ziarul de Duminică* 16 (550)/22-28 April 2011; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Szathmari la Stockholm," in: *Observator Cultural* 314 (572)/21 April – 4 May 2011, 6-7.

<sup>206</sup> A.N.I.C., M.C.I.P., folder 399/1860, MS. 3, 8; Aurelian Sacerdoțeanu, *Cercetări istorice și pitorești prin mănăstirile noastre acum opt-zeci ani. Lucrările lui Al. Odobescu, H. Trenk și G. Tătărescu*, București 1941; Ionescu, *Artă și document*, 164; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Renașterea națională și căutarea rădăcinilor," in: *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă* XIV/2000-2001, 14.

<sup>207</sup> Ionescu, *Renașterea națională și căutarea rădăcinilor*, 15-16.

the visit of the Ruling Prince to various places of worship. Thus, one single man covered a fairly extensive territory in order to put together a significant portfolio of images, following the example of his five colleagues of the Heliographic Mission which had been established in France nine years earlier.<sup>208</sup>



12 *Peasant Woman Spinning*, carte-de-visite, albumen print, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



13 *Peasant Woman Spinning*, pencil drawing, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

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<sup>208</sup> Anne de Mondenard, *La Mission héliographique. Cinq photographes parcourent la France en 1851*, Paris 2002, 19, 23-25.



14 *Stavropoleos Church*, chromolithograph, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

[67] Many of the photographs of simple people, taken in the studio, were used as patterns for the preliminary sketches he made for the chromolithographs gathered in the albums. Some of them have found their place in these compilations of faces and costumes, others remained at the stage of projects. A peasant woman spinning (figs. 12, 13), a postillion and a peasant woman from Romanaji are only a few examples in which the product of the camera was capitalised on at the easel. These compilations of national types and monuments were published in two stages, within 15 years of each other: the first one, titled *ROMÂNIA. Albumul Înălțimei Salle Domnitorului Carol I. Peisaje frumoase și costume grațioase ce avem în Țerră* (ROMANIA: The Album of His Highness the Ruling Prince Carol I. Beautiful landscapes and graceful costumes from our country), in 1868, and the second, *Albumul Național. Monumente, vederi, costume naționale din toate districtele României. Facsimile după aquarelle în Heliolithographie* (The National Album: Monuments, landscapes and national costumes from all the regions of Romania. Heliochrome-lithographed facsimile from watercolours), in 1883, in which many of these portraits of peasant men and women found their place. The publication of the former was announced by the press, specifying that it would be published in instalments whose content was detailed, and that the price of the subscription for the entire series would be 10 new lei.<sup>209</sup> The project was very ambitious but of the list of plates anticipated only the

<sup>209</sup> *Presa* 1/18 February 1868: "ROMÂNIA/ Album of H.H. the Ruling Prince / CAROL I / Beautiful landscapes and graceful costumes from our country (barely known heretofore). By order of H.H. the Ruling Prince we shall begin the publication of Chromo-Lithographed pictures in volumes. The subscription is 10 new lei, to be paid beforehand (the price is so low in order to ensure its dissemination in all the classes).

*Volume I will include:*

1. Women's costumes from Argeșu
2. Portrait of Ștefan IV (cel ă mare [the Great]) after an old painting of the Metropolitan See in Jassy
3. Tismana Monastery

*Volume II currently in progress:*

first volume were produced, whereas the cityscapes never appeared. Therefore, the publication was resumed in 1883, under a different title, and between its covers were gathered particularly folk costumes and a few important ecclesiastical monuments, such as Stavropoleos church. (fig. 14)

[68] Always thorough in elaborating his drawings, the author wanted to understand the tailoring of a peasant coat or skirt, the minute ornaments sewn on them, the shape and lacing of the soft leather footwear, as well as the structure and functioning of a handloom. Therefore, he often devoted his attention to the study of the object, in all its details: on the same sheet one might find various types of stitching, woollen socks, Turkish pointed slippers or a detail of a woman's costume, made up of blouse, vest and apron, on which he drew minute parallel stripes in the typical colours, a peasant's foot in worn-out soft leather footgear or a loom with the warp in place. In order to make the tailoring or the embroidered details as visible as possible, the artist often composed his characters in groups of two or more, front, side or rear view. (fig. 15) Whenever he did not have the time to add the colours of the costume, he would make a note, in either German or French, with references to the place where each colour belonged. By making these detailed notations, Szathmári exceeded his status as painter, albeit documentary, reaching, without even knowing it, the field of ethnographic research, itself at an incipient stage in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Loving the exciting and colourful world of country fairs, he often mingled with peasants and merchants, immortalising with gusto specific types: underneath the awnings stretching from one stall to another, merchants cajole their customers to admire and purchase the merchandise. (fig. 16) The return from the fair was another event worthy of his brush: around sundown, the peasants would return home, cheerful, laden with their purchases according to their means, walking – struggling with a young horse that did not recognise its new master –, on horseback or in their heavy carts drawn by several small, emaciated horses. (fig. 17) Some stop and rest on a wooded mound, to allow the heavily laden horses to catch their breath. (fig. 18) Not all his landscapes are serene: an experienced traveller, he had crossed the country in the post coach and was very familiar with the dismal stopping places where the horses were changed and where one could rest for a few hours. Such a stopping place in Moldavia is

1. H.H. the Ruling Prince's entry in the harbour of Galați
2. Costumes from Brăila
3. Romania by the Black Sea

*Future Volumes will include:*

Monasteries and Convents: Horezŭ, Bistrița, Cozia, Argeșŭ, Sinaia, Veraticŭ, Agapia, Neamțu, and many others.

Towns: București, Iași, Craiova, Pitești, Râmnic, Câmpul-Lung, Focșani, Roman, Bacău, Piatra, Mihăileni, Fălticeni and many others, as well as the most beautiful costumes in the country.

Subscriptions are accepted at all the bookshops and at Ión Weiss's printing shop.

STABILIMENTUL ARTISTIC AL I.S. DOMNITORULUI PENTRU RESPÂNDIREA ARTEI SUB DIRECȚIA D-lui C. Szatmari (The Artistic Establishment of H.H. the Ruling Prince for the dissemination of art, managed by Mr C. Szatmari)."

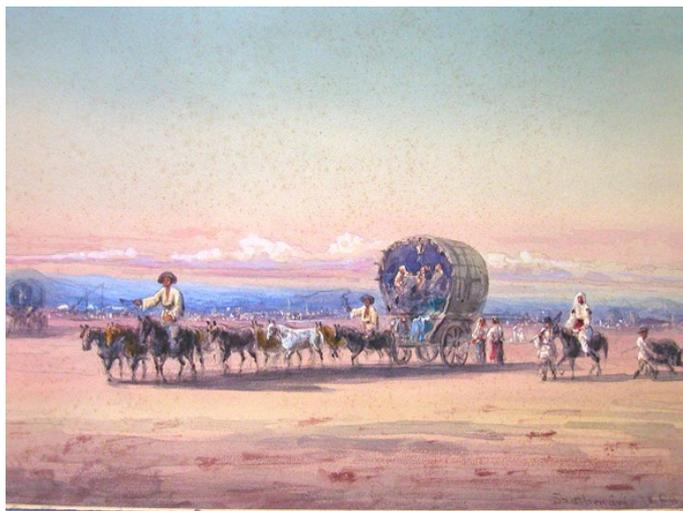
represented in the watercolour titled *Capul Dracului* (The Devil's Head), in which, in gloomy weather, the postillion bends against the gusts of wind and, holding on to his hat so it won't be blown away, enters a hut half-buried in the snow drift, while the passengers await, shivering under the tarpaulin of the wagon which cannot offer them much protection against the northern wind. (fig. 19)



15 *Peasant Women from Orșova*, watercolour, 1870, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



16 *Peasants at Fair*, watercolour, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



17 *Peasants Returning from the Fair*, watercolour, 1864, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



18 *Peasants*, watercolour, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



19 *Capu Dracului (Devil's Head)*, Moldavia, watercolour, 24 October 1866, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

[69] Szathmári was thoroughly familiar with most of the South-East European populations, frequently working in the neighbouring countries, either on his own initiative or on request. Between 1849 and 1885, he undertook several journeys to Serbia, amassing a rich collection of watercolours and drawings of costumes and human types which, in 1936, were purchased by several Belgrade museums<sup>210</sup> and which were exhibited in the Arts Pavilion during that very year.<sup>211</sup> He also put his talent in the service of the ruling family of Serbia, for whom he painted several compositions from recent history, such as: *Deputații sârbi adresându-se prințului Milos la București pe 3 ianuarie 1859* (Serbian Deputies Addressing Prince Milos in Bucharest on 3 January 1859) and *Ceremonia înscăunării prințului Milan, 10 august 1872* (The Coronation Ceremony of Prince Milan, 10 August 1872), or *Revista trupelor în fața regelui Carol I și a regelui Milan Obrenovici al Serbiei* (King Carol I and King Milan Obrenovici of Serbia Reviewing the Troops). These are currently in the holdings of the National Museum of Serbia and the Belgrade City Museum, respectively. When Alexander I of Battenberg became Prince of Bulgaria, the Romanian painter made a few drawings of the resplendent reception he was given at Rusciuk in 1879.

[70] Being a great lover of beautiful objects of perennial value, Szathmári accumulated a significant collection, both in the visual and decorative arts, and of folk costumes and artefacts, which he often used in order to complete the outfit of one of his rural models – often in disregard of regional specificity and mixing elements of costumes from various areas – or in order to dress in folk or oriental garments one of the urban beauties who wanted to be immortalised in costume, whether it was his own wife or some other lady of the Bucharest high society. For such images, he would decorate his studio with objects that were contiguous to the environment in which the sitter wished to be portrayed, often relying on the artefacts in his collection. A model wearing a folk costume needs a banister and a rustic bench, made of wattle, a stump, and perhaps a potted shrub hidden behind a few *papier maché* rocks, and in the background, a screen painted with a rural landscape. For an oriental scene he would bring in Persian rugs, cushions, a divan, a coffee table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, a similarly decorated little trunk, a Turkish coffee cup, a fan and a little paper whip to drive away the flies. He thus proved himself to be an inspired set designer of the given space of his interior.

[71] In 1857, while he was considering returning to his native land, he offered his collection to the National Museum of Transylvania which was being organised in Cluj, on condition they appointed him director of the institution. He considered himself worthy of such a post due to his prolonged and diverse study in European academies and museums, as

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<sup>210</sup> Mitar S. Vlahović, Bosiljka Radović, *Costumes populaires du XIXe siècle à Beograd. Musée Ethnographique de Beograd. Aquarelles et dessins de Charol Popp de Szathmary 1812-1887*, Beograd.

<sup>211</sup> *Изложба радоња из наше земље, Карол Поп барон де Сатмари, 1811-1888*, Београд, март 1936 године, Уметнички Павиљон.

well as his status as an artist. In his letter he specified: "As I am a painter, my calling is to form the public taste." He then gave a brief list of the great masters whose "original" paintings – as he emphasised – he owned in his collection: Titian, Correggio, Carracci, Dürer, Cranach, Parmigianino, Perugino, Domenichino, Rosa, Dolci, Caravaggio, Murillo, Van Dyck, Heemskerck.<sup>212</sup> He apologised for not being able to supply a catalogue, as it would take a few months' work. Despite these prestigious names whose work would have graced any European gallery, the sender does not receive any reply from Count Mikó Imre, the president of the Association for the National Museum of Transylvania. Truth be told, it is hard to believe that he actually owned such highly valuable works; rather, they were probably reproductions or works wrongly attributed to the masters. Ulysse de Marsillac almost suggests as much when, in a review of the group exhibition organised in the halls of the St Sava College in January 1864,<sup>213</sup> he pleads tactfully in favour of reproductions from great art works at the expense of modest creations by no-name artists:

Mr Szathmari exhibits a remarkable assortment of paintings worthy of serious attention [here follows the description of reproductions of *Flora* by Titian, *Diana Coming Out of Her Bath* by Rubens, *Portrait of a Man* by Dürer, *Cleopatra's Death* by Pietro da Cortona, *Venus* by Jordaens, *The Schoolmaster* by Van Ostade, *Smokers* by Mieris, *Landscape* by Wouwermans, *Ruins* by Salvator Rosa]. Not everybody can acquire the masters' works. Should we therefore be condemned to mediocrity in the name of originality? After all, what does it matter if a certain painting has come from Rafael's hands, as long as I find his impeccable drawing and his harmonious groups in it? Would you rather have a rustic signboard daubed by a painter's apprentice on holiday? [...] These are not all presented as perfectly authentic. Suffice it that I find in them the reconstruction of the great masters. I submit that Bucharest would be very fortunate if the government could buy the greatest part of paintings which make up the triple exhibition of Mr Aman, Tattarescu and Szathmari and leave them constantly under the eyes of the Romanian public, who would thus end by acquiring a taste for art objects which it has missed so far. Mr Szathmari is not only an *intelligent collector and a shrewd reproducer*. [Our emphasis, A.S.I.] He is a truly gifted painter and his exhibition contains several paintings by himself, which we have taken great pleasure in seeing. He has borrowed from Romania a few subject-matters that have brought him good luck. We recommend particularly a brightly lit square in Craiova and a remarkably verisimilar post coach.<sup>214</sup>

[72] After the success of his first important exhibition in Bucharest – and perhaps encouraged by Marsillac – Szathmári offered again to donate his collection for the endowment of the Painting Gallery.<sup>215</sup> In his petition he stated his Romanian citizenship and his preoccupation with the "scientific progress of the Romanian Nation," which had determined him to offer "some Works by several artists from the enlightened Europe,

<sup>212</sup> Árvay, *Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmáry*, 143.

<sup>213</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Prima expoziție de anvergură a artiștilor din București (1864)," in: *București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie XIX/2005*, 177-186.

<sup>214</sup> Ulysse de Marsillac, "Beaux Arts. Exposition de peinture à Bucarest," in: *La Voix de la Roumanie* 12/11 February 1864.

<sup>215</sup> A.N.I.C., M.C.I.P., folder 126/1864, MS. 58.

who would not fail to have the greatest contribution to the development of the Art of Painting in the National Academy." This time he claimed that, upon the minister's request, he could produce the complete catalogue of his collection. However, once again, his application remained unanswered and, as the artist was going to France to supervise the printing of the map of Wallachia, he requested that the works presented in the exhibition – both originals and reproductions – be stored in one of the halls of the College until his return.<sup>216</sup> His request was granted and his paintings were hosted there until the end of the summer, when that hall was due for refurbishment and he was summoned to retrieve the works stored there.

[73] Experienced in the art of set design which he practiced, as we have seen, by arranging his own photographic studio in accordance with the subject matter he was treating – whether it was a soldier, a delicate lady who wished to be photographed in her new ball gown or a few peasants and pedlars who had to be immortalised in their daily environment – Szathmári did not hesitate to contribute to the special effects of a theatre performance. In February 1866, the French-language periodical in Bucharest *La Voix de la Roumanie* commented on a performance staged by Matei Millo, to which Szathmári had had an important contribution by directing the lights so as to create the optical illusion of flying spirits:

Moreover, we have seen the spectres that Mr Millo has promised us. I certainly will not unveil their secret. [...] To see these floating figures, so like reality yet ethereal like a dream, is an extraordinary experience. One has the impression of seeing a chimera take shape and fly into the ether like a colourful cloud of fantastical reflexes. [...] [Mr Millo] presents an old professor with a venerable face and a second-rate con man, both of whom had caught gold-fever and could see before their eyes the ghosts of those whose fortunes they wished to inherit. The latter were a woman, an Algerian soldier and a Jew. [...] Let us give the ghosts the milieu that suits them: sightings of the supernatural need the blurred perspective of past centuries. The costumes of former times, the ideas and traditions of those ages match the billowing draperies and indistinct shapes of the ghosts. Mr Millo has known how to attract the audience by making his spectres appear in a contemporary ambiance. As he combines them in a fantastical play and a great spectacle, we anticipate an inevitable success. High praise is deserved by Mr Szathmari who has brought here this curious and troubling invention.<sup>217</sup>

[74] This was probably some kind of magical lantern which could be used to project onto the sets various fantastic images and colourful lights which transformed the stage into an enchanted space, suitable to the subject-matter.

[75] This was not the only profitable encounter between the visual artist and the actor: as they were both aware of the marketing value of photography, the two collaborated on making a series of images in which Millo features in various roles. The first publicity photographs thus came into existence in our country, and Szathmári emerges as a pioneer in this genre. In 1868, the press announced the publication of a composition

<sup>216</sup> Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială*, 76.

<sup>217</sup> U.M. [Ulysse de Marsillac], "Causeries," in: *La Voix de la Roumanie* 13/16 February 1866.

made up of 16 images representing the comedian embodying various characters surrounding his medallion portrait.<sup>218</sup> The parts played by the great theatrical performer had been selected from among his most notable successes, many of which he had achieved with Vasile Alecsandri's original plays.<sup>219</sup> These are, in clockwise order, starting in the upper right corner: Schoolmaster Găitan in the one-act vaudeville "Profesorul grec" (The Greek Schoolmaster), Herșcu the Pedlar, Barbu the Fiddler, Hârca the Crone, Paraponisitul (The Dissatisfied Man), Master Moise in "Lipitorile Satului" (The Village Leaches), Kera Nastasia, Master Moise again, in a different attitude, The Sexton, Booby the Politician, The Barber in the *canzonetta* "Balul" (The Ball), the old boyar in "Prăpăștiile Bucureștilor" (Bucharest's Pitfalls), a comedy written by Millo himself, the Pretzel Seller, Bunul odinioară (Mr Good Old Times) in Henri Murger's eponymous play, Mother Anghelușa and Pârvu the Peasant in "Prăpăștiile Bucureștilor." The great majority of these photographs, as well as a few others, of parts belonging to world drama, in which he played women's roles – such as in *La dame aux camélias* – are housed by the National Library of Romania.<sup>220</sup> A fairly minor painter from Craiova, Nicolae Elliescu, used this series as the model for a series of small oil paintings, without making any change or personal intervention in the model except perhaps the colouring. Millo is represented as Barbu the Fiddler – a painting which was displayed at the Exhibition of Living Artists in 1872<sup>221</sup> – Paraponisitul, Kera Nastasia, the Sexton, Schoolmaster Găitan and Moise of "Lipitorile Satului".<sup>222</sup> A rectification should be made regarding the attribution of roles made, in a recent paper, by one of the distinguished art researchers from Oltenia: Kera Nastasia is mistaken for Madame Chirița, the Sexton for the Pretzel Seller, the Postillion for Schoolmaster Găitan, and Master Moise for Herșcu the Pedlar – although the facial expressions and costumes of the two Jews, as Millo played them, were very different, especially as Herșcu wore a shtreimel.<sup>223</sup> The same exegete dates the painting of Barbu the Fiddler to 1889 – based on the painter's dating – although the work had already been exhibited in 1872, a more suitable time to present it publicly, shortly after Szathmári had displayed his photographs of the actor only four years earlier.

<sup>218</sup> "Buletinul Bibliografic," in: *Buletinul Instrucțiunii Publice*, May and April 1868, 88: "PORTRAIT of our celebrated dramatic artist M. Millo, surrounded by 15 [sic] portraits representing the most famous of his dramatic creations, by Mr. Satmary [sic]."

<sup>219</sup> Mihai Florea, "Arta actorului Matei Millo," in: *SCIA*, anul VII 2/1960, 126-131; Mihai Vasiliu, *Matei Millo*, București 1967, 58-61, 70, 77.

<sup>220</sup> Biblioteca Națională a României (The National Library of Romania), *Barbu Lăutarul*, inv. 2271; *Mama Anghelușa*, inv. 2274; *Kir Iani Avelas, mare boier*, inv. 2279; *Bunul odinioară*, inv. 2284; *Dascălul Găitan*, inv. 2287; *Moise*, inv. 2293; *Paraponisitul*, inv. 2295; *Herșcu boccegiul*, inv. 2297; *Gură-cască*, inv. 2299; *Covrigarul*, inv. 2300; *Paracliserul*, inv. 2301; to these, 4 other portraits were added, which did not feature in the composition, *Fiica poporului*, inv. 2302; *Poetul romantic*, inv. 2303 și 2309; *Prințesa* in "Banul Mărăcine," inv. 2308; *Dama cu camelii*, inv. 2307.

<sup>221</sup> [Ulysse de Marsillac], "Le Salon de 1872," in: *Le Journal de Bucarest* 186/6 June 1872; Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială în România secolului al XIX-lea*, 147.

<sup>222</sup> Acad. George Oprescu, Ion Frunzetti, Mircea Popescu, eds., *Scurtă istorie a artelor plastice în R.P.R., Secolul XIX*, București 1958, 160.

<sup>223</sup> Paul Rezeanu, *Istoria artelor plastice în Oltenia (1800-1918)*, Craiova 2010, 115-117.

- [76] At about the same time, at the Great Theatre – as the National Theatre was called – it had been decided to exhibit the portraits of the playwrights and founders of that institution, and as C.I. Stăncescu had drawn the faces of "V. Alecsandri, the creator of vaudeville and the popular Romanian comedy, and of the unforgettable creator of the national theatre, Cămpineanu, [these] were from the very beginning intended for this gallery of the future."<sup>224</sup> On the initiative of the director of the Italian Opera, Franchetti, Szathmári "endowed this gallery with a magnificent portrait of maestro Rossini."<sup>225</sup>
- [77] In 1880, Carol Szathmári was granted Romanian citizenship,<sup>226</sup> in recognition of his important services rendered to the country in which he had lived for almost 40 years – having been granted permanent residency as early as 1865.<sup>227</sup>
- [78] The last important work by Szathmári was *Albumul Carelor Simbolice de la serbarea încoronării Majestăților Lor Regele și Regina României* (Album of the Pageantry Celebrating the Coronation of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Romania). The basis for these chromolithographs were photographs which the artist then transferred to the lithographic stone plates. (figs. 20, 21) Appointed to immortalise the coronation ceremonies of 1881, he had enlisted the help of his colleagues, Franz Duschek and Andreas D. Reiser. However, 11 May was a rainy day and the photographs of the themed floats did not come out high quality. Thereafter, Szathmári abandoned photography and devoted his efforts exclusively to painting.<sup>228</sup> The only solution for meeting the king's wish to have an album comprising all the stages of the ceremonial proceedings was to draw minute, almost childish watercolours, which he then lithographed for the album he started in 1883 and finished in 1885, in Elia Grassiany's shop.<sup>229</sup> There is always a great difference between the preliminary sketch, full of gusto, and the finished work on the stone plate, reproducing all the details but lacking the freshness of the watercolour, which it lost in the shades of printer's ink, incapable of rendering brightness and transparency, as in *Carul agriculturii* (the float representing Agriculture). The print of King Carol I riding ahead of his staff in front of the people, after having left the Patriarchal See and having passed under the Arch of Triumph, lacked the grandeur the king had expected of this work intended to glorify his rise: the characters are recognisable, but the treatment is awkward, like the work of an unskilled, inexperienced amateur. (fig. 22)

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<sup>224</sup> T., *Cronica artistică*, 77.

<sup>225</sup> T., *Cronica artistică*, 77.

<sup>226</sup> *Monitorul Oficial al României* 55/7 (19) March 1880, 1514.

<sup>227</sup> ANIC, Senat, folder 1444/1879, MS. 11-11v.

<sup>228</sup> Árvay, *Cîteva scrisori inedite ale lui Carol Popp de Szathmáry*, 144.

<sup>229</sup> Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, "Ceremoniile încoronării și resuscitarea interesului pentru pictură în arta națională (1881)," in: *Revista Istorică* 3-4/2007, 264-266; Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială*, 195-198.



20 *The Actors' Cart at the Coronation Ceremony*, albumen print, 1881, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



21 *The Actors' Cart*, from the album *The Themed Floats at the Coronation Ceremony*, chromolithograph, 1885, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest



22 *King Carol I and his staff*, from the album *The Themed Floats at the Coronation Ceremony*, chromolithograph, 1885, Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest

- [79] The artist passed away on 3 June 1887, in his house on Biserica Enei St, in Bucharest. Having been deeply responsive to the techniques and genres of the visual arts, as well as a born collector and treasurer – through line, colour and the play of light and shadow on the photosensitive plate – of the Romanian people's traditions and the faces of the various nations he came into contact with during his travels throughout the world, Szathmári firmly attested his universality and ensured for himself, even during his lifetime, a privileged place in the national and international patrimony. Adaptable to new social and communicational environments, he was a true citizen of the world, receptive to new things, eager to learn and disseminate information in the most diverse circles by the means that were at his disposal: drawing, painting, lithography and photography.

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