

PhotoResearcher



In Focus: Photography in Romania

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The area of expertise and research of most art photography historians stops at Vienna or – at best – Prague or Budapest. The *Great History of Photography* lacks information about the Eastern part of the continent where there were accomplished photographers to rival their Western colleagues.

Romania is a case in point; it is one of the countries about which little is known of the contribution it made to photography from the earliest days. In an attempt to redress the balance, this entire issue of PhotoResearcher is dedicated to the photography produced in Romania during the last one hundred and fifty years. I am deliberately specifying ‘produced in Romania’ and not ‘Romanian photography’ because some of the first generation of artists I will talk about were born in the neighbouring empires – the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (later Austro-Hungarian, and German Empires), and Russian and Ottoman Empires – before the unification of the Romanian Principalities in 1859, or were foreigners who happened to visit our lands and sometimes settle there.

In the east of Europe – the almost forgotten history of photography

Photography was embraced by the Romanian Principalities immediately after its invention had been publicised in Paris in 1839. Magazines in the capital of Wallachia (Bucharest) and Moldavia (Jassy) rushed to herald the birth of the new invention and even provided many details on how photography could be carried out.¹ By 1840, both the Mihaileana Academy of Jassy and Saint Sava College of Bucharest had already purchased two complete daguerreotype sets to be used for educational purposes. While the first person to use the Saint Sava College daguerreotype is still the subject of debate, it is known that the Professor of Natural Science Dr. Teodor Stamaty was the first person to use a camera in Moldavia. He took cityscapes and exhibited them in the Great Hall of the Mihaileana Academy in early October 1840.² The Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest still holds one of Daguerre’s brochures: *Historique et description des procédés de Daguerrotypie et du Diorama*, stamped with Saint Sava College’s seal on two pages. The same institution has another booklet by Daguerre: *Nouveau moyen de préparer la couche sensible des plaques destinées a recevoir les images photographiques*, published in Paris in 1844. This gives an indication that the stir generated by the new technique was still making waves in Wallachia.

The first professional photographer to arrive in Bucharest, in 1843 was ... a woman: German-born, Wilhelmine Priz.³ She opened up the path many others were to follow. One of the most prominent was Carol Popp de Szathmari (1812–1887), a painter from Cluj, who took up residence in Bucharest in 1842, opened a photo studio and enjoyed a notable success. We are not aware of when Szathmari actually began photographing, but the first images attributed to him are two calotypes dated with 1848 that are signed by the author.

1____ ‘Dagherotipie’, in: *Cantor de Avis și Comers*, Bucharest, No. 93 / 8 July 1839; ‘Descrierea adevăratului metod a D. Dageru’, in: *Albina Românească*, Jassy, No. 69 / 31 August 1839; No. 70 / 3 September 1839; No.71 / 7 September 1839.

2____ *Albina Românească* No.79 / 6 October 1840.

3____ *Vestitorul Românesc*, Bucharest, No. 23 / 19 March 1843; George Porta, ‘Aspecte din istoricul fotografiei în România’, in: *Fotografia* No. 10 / 1970, 576; Constantin Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată a fotografiei românești*, Bucharest 1985, 7.



fig. 1
Carol Popp de Szathmari, *Turkish
cavalrymen, Lower Danube, 1854*, salt
print 13.3 × 22 cm. Author's collection.

He made a name for himself as a pioneer and was the first war photographer to document the 1853–1854 Russian-Ottoman War. He took pictures of the Imperial troops in the Wallachian and Moldavian provinces after Russia had occupied the region in June 1853. The war that was waged initially on the borders of the lower Danube later developed into the major European conflict that became known as the Crimean War. These first battlefield photographs were executed in the wet collodion technique (___ fig. 1). Soon thereafter, Carol Popp de Szathmari completed an album of 200 pictures just in time to be displayed at the Exposition Universelle de Paris in the summer of 1855. Szathmari won a medal for this set of photographs and it appears that both Napoleon III and Queen Victoria granted Carol Popp de Szathmari a private audience. The two regents each received an album with these photos and other copies were offered to Tsar Alexander II and Emperor Franz Joseph I.

Ernest Lacan – the editor of the Paris magazine *La Lumière* and author of *Esquisses photographiques. À propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*, published in Paris in 1856⁴ – commented favourably on Szathmari's album and praised his set of photographs. However, it took almost 50 years for Constantin Săvulescu and other 20th century Romanian historians of photography⁵, to prove to their British colleagues and other Western historians that *the* first war photographer of the conflict was actually Carol Popp de Szathmari, and not Roger Fenton who did not go to Crimea until 11 months later, in the spring of 1855, after he had been commissioned to photograph the war effort.

4___ Ernest Lacan, *Esquisses photographiques. À propos de l'Exposition Universelle et de la Guerre d'Orient*, Paris 1856, 155–167.

Apart from the professional photographers who would pass by, Jassy also had some local talents to be proud of. These dilettantes included the Grand Logothetes (the ruling prince's chief adviser on foreign affairs) Constantin Sturza-Șcheianu (1797–1877), who loved the calotype and produced several remarkable portraits on silver iodide coated paper; seven have survived and can be found in the Etchings Department of the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest. Executed in 1852, in sizes ranging from 21.2 × 15.8 cm to 22 × 16 cm, the portraits prove that he had definitely used a large camera (___ fig. 2). Sturza-Șcheianu was an eccentric Grand Boyar who dedicated most of his time and energy to his hobby: photography.⁶ That benchmark titles about the beginnings of photography: *Traité pratique de Photographie* by Marc Antoine Gaudin (1844) and *La Photographie des commençants* by H. de la Blanchere (1863) were included in his famous library, is another indication of his keen interest in the new technique.

At the outbreak of the next Oriental War (1877–1878) between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, photographers returned to the battlefield. It should be mentioned that Romania's involvement led to the country's independence from the Turks and this war is therefore known as the War of Independence in Romanian history books. Szathmari, by now the official painter and photographer at the court of Prince Carol I, accompanied the Prince during the military campaign and took a set of photos. Franz Duschek (1830–1884), another Bucharest photographer, was assigned to accompany the Russian armies (___ fig. 3).⁷ Both assembled their sets of photographs in lavishly bound albums.



fig. 2
Constantin Sturza-Șcheianu, *Portrait of a young lady*, 1852, calotype 22 × 16 cm. Library of the Romanian Academy.

5___ C. Săvulescu, 'The First War Photographic Reportage', in: *Image* No. 11973; Idem, 'Carol Popp de Szathmari, primul fotoreporter de război?', in: *Magazin Istoric* No. 12 / December 1973; Idem, 'Early Photography in Eastern Europe – Romania', in: *History of Photography* vol. 1, No. 1 / January 1977; Idem, 'The First War Correspondent – Carol Szathmari', in: *Interpressgrafik – International Quarterly of Graphic Design* No. 1 / 1978; Săvulescu 1985 (reference 3) 18–27; Karin Schuller-Procopovici, 'Ein Land aus dem Bilderbuch. Das Rumänienalbum des Carol Szathmari (1812–1887)', in: Bodo von Dewitz, Reinhard Matz (ed.), *Silber und Salz. Zur Frühzeit der Photographie im deutschen Sprachraum 1839–1860*, exhibition catalogue, Köln, Heidelberg 1989, 452–453; Maria Georgescu, 'Carol Pop de Szathmari, reporter photographe de guerre', in: *Review of Military History*, Special issue, 2003; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania', in: *History of Photography*, Vol. 13, No. 4 / October–December 1989, 285; Idem, 'Szathmari, War Photographer', in: Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (ed.), *Războiul Crimeii. 150 de ani de la încheiere*, Brăila 2006,

211–237; Idem, 'Szathmari: From a War Photographer to a Ruling Prince's Court Painter and Photographer', in: Anna Auer, Uwe Schögl, Jubilee – 30 Years ES-HPH Congress of Photographie in Vienna, Salzburg 2008, 80–89; Idem, 'Carol Szathmari (1812–1887): Pioneer War Photographer During the Danubian War Campaign', in: *Centropa* Vol. 9, No. 1 / January 2009, 5–16.

6___ Et. Lonyai, 'Primii amatori fotografi români', in: *Revista Fotografică Română* No. 44 / 1937, 661; Petre Costinescu, 'Constantin Sturza-Șcheianu, Romanian Calotypist', in: *History of Photography* Vol. 11, No. 3 / July–September 1987, 247–254.

7___ Borislav Dranovski, Tzvetana Belicikova (eds.), *Pred fotoobektivna na istoriata. Neizvestni fotografii ot Rusko-turskata osvoboditelna boina 1877–1878 g.*, Varna 2008; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Penel și sabie. Artiști documentariști și corespondenți de front în Războiul de Independență (1877–1878)*, Bucharest 2002, 126–136.



fig. 3
 Franz Duschek, *Grand Duke Serge*,
 Bulgaria, 1877, albumen print from a
 wet collodion glass plate 12.8 × 20.4 cm.
 Library of the Romanian Academy.

Romania has always been an ethnographer's paradise and photography provides an ideal way of recording it. One of the first photographers to explore the richness of the country's typologies was Ludwig Angerer (1827–1879). He arrived in Bucharest as a military pharmacist with the Austrian troops that occupied the Romanian Principalities during the Crimean War.⁸ Throughout the 19th and the first part of the 20th century, it became trendy to capture scenes of picturesque villagers in their traditional attire, street traders, peddlers, all kinds of craftsmen, wagons and carts full of wares, fair days and gypsies.⁹ C. P. de Szathmari (___ fig. 4), Franz Duschek, Andreas D. Reiser, K. F. Zipser (___ fig. 5), and Herman Leon outdid each other in taking iconic images of the southern part of Romania.¹⁰ August Meinhardt (1845–?), Wilhelm Auerlich (1853–1917), Leopold Adler (1848–1924), Emil Fischer (1873–1965), Alexandru Roșu (1854–1913), and Camilla Asbóth (1838–1908), as well as Theodor Glatz (1818–1871) and his close associate Carl Koller (1838–1889),¹¹ were particularly active in Transylvania. Carl Schäffer worked in Herculane in the Banat region, and succeeded to produce sets of carte-de-visite pictures showing traditional local costumes.¹² Alexandru Bellu (1850–1921), a boyar indulging in his hobby for photography, managed to capture images of the farmers and gypsies working his estate in Urlați, Prahova County. He identified himself with his all-consuming hobby as early as in 1875, but his pictures were only to gain public recognition after the turn of the century; more precisely, after he published

8— 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, 23–50.

9— Uwe Schögl, 'Sinti und Roma in der Historischen Fotografie', in: Nicole Fritz (ed.), *Otto Mueller. Gegenwelten. Sinti und Roma in der Historischen Fotografie*, exhibition catalogue, Ravensburg 2014, 30–49.

10— Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Fotografie und Folklore. Zur Ethnofotografie im Rumänien des 19. Jahrhunderts', in: *Fotogeschichte* Heft 103, 2007, 47–60.

11— Konrad Klein, 'Foto-Ethnologen. Theodor Glatz und die frühe ethnographische Fotografie in Siebenbürgen', in: *Fotogeschichte* Heft 103, 2007, 23–45; Idem, 'Ein siebenbürgischer Fotopionier. Anmerkungen zu Leben und

Werk des Zeichenlehrers, Malers und Fotografen Theodor Glatz', in: Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (ed.), *Szathmari: Pionier al fotografiei și contemporanii săi/ Pioneering Photographer and his Contemporaries*, Bucharest 2013, 152–158; Idem, 'Aus der Frühzeit der Fotografie in Siebenbürgen. Zu Leben, Werk und Umfeld des Zeichenlehrers, Malers und Fotografen Theodor Glatz (1818–1871)', in: *Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde* 38. (109.) Jahrgang (2015), 104–148; Idem, 'Fotografische Ateliers in Hermannstadt 1860–1918. Einige Anmerkungen zur Erfassung des historischen Fotomaterials im Hermannstädter Staatsarchiv', in: Monica Vlaicu (ed.) *120 de ani de arhivă publică în Transilvania / 120 Jahre öffentliches Archiv in Siebenbürgen*, Sibiu 1996, 160–169.

12— Klonescu 2007 (reference 10), 57; Cristian Graure, *Istoria artei grafice din Banat între 1839 și 1918*, Timișoara 2017, 209–211.



fig. 4
Carol Popp de Szathmari, *Gipsy comedians with dancing bear*, c. 1863, carte-de-visite. Author's collection.



fig. 5
K. F. Zipser, *Woodcutters*, c. 1870, carte-de-visite. Library of the Romanian Academy.

sets of illustrated postcards with idyllic rural scenes and displayed them at the Romanian General Exposition of 1906. Admittedly, his output was strongly influenced by his friend, the great painter Nicolae Grigorescu and his pictures – especially the rural compositions.¹³

The well-heeled society of Bucharest and other major cities loved to have their portraits taken during carnival in the costume they had worn to the latest masked ball.¹⁴ It was the photographer's task to decorate his studio to match the period of the costume and the sitter's stance and pose. In Bucharest, Szathmari, Duschek, Ioan and Mihai Spirescu, Moritz Wandelmann, and Franz Mandy had to cater to all the fantasies of their clientele, and the same applied to Nestor Heck in Jassy, C. Hanny in Craiova, and Fridolin Hess in Timișoara.

Mandy, who was to become the Royal Household Photographer, took many costumed portraits of Her Royal Highness Princess Marie, the wife of the Crown Prince Ferdinand. Eager to pose in her multiple outfits, the Princess would willingly cooperate with the photographer in the quest for the most suitable corners of the palace and appropriate furniture to match what she was wearing and the period it was meant to portray.

Dramatic actors developed a taste for photography and wanted to have quintessential portraits taken showing them in character. Matei Millo, for instance, commissioned Szathmari with a set of portraits portraying him dressed in the various

13 ___ Petre Costinescu, *Documente în alt-negru. Un fotograf de la sfârșitul veacului trecut*, Bucharest 1987, 7–10, 12.

14 ___ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Balurile din secolul al XIX-lea*, Bucharest 1997, 17, 28–43.



fig. 6
Moritz Wandelmann, Constantin Nottara playing the part of Luca Arbore from 'The Blizzard' by Barbu Delavrancea, c. 1900, cabinet card. Author's collection.

costumes of the characters he had played successfully on stage that were later assembled to form one large composition.¹⁵ Other actors, like Constantin Dimitriadi, Ștefan Iulian and Fany Tardini posed at Szathmari's studio for the same purpose. At the turn of the century, Ion Livescu, Petre Liciu and Constatnin Nottara would come to Wandelmann to ask to be captured playing their signature roles: Napoleon in a period play, the Jewish village bartender from a comedy by V. Alecsandri, and Shakespeare's Hamlet, or Luca Arbore from *The Blizzard* by Barbu Delavrancea (— fig. 6).

Modernity around 1900 and the consequences of two World Wars

Urban photography was only of limited interest in the early days. However, the changes that took Bucharest and other main cities by storm, transforming them from oriental backwaters with narrow, winding lanes and low houses without any planning, surrounded by large gardens, to a rigorous urbanism with wide boulevards, bordered by substantial, eclectic European style palaces and mansions, a mixture of public and private buildings, rekindled the interest for the cityscape. Szathmari, Duschek, Mandy, Andreas D. Reiser, Moritz Benedict Baer (1811–1887), Eduard Pesky (1835–1909), Ioan Spirescu and Gustav Waber were the 19th century photo-artists who captured the new architecture of Bucharest.¹⁶ Carl Muschalek (1857–1904) and Emil Fischer

made a similarly outstanding photo documentation of Brașov.¹⁷

Historic monuments, like the Metropolitan Church at Curtea de Argeș, the Bucharest churches of Stavropoleos, Radu Vodă, Bucur, Zlătari, St. Dumitru, St. Spiridon and Mitropolitan Cathedral were to be captured through the lenses of Duschek, Szathmari, Baer and Ioan Spirescu (— fig. 7).¹⁸

War photography expanded greatly during the Great War. Professional photographers and cameramen were mobilized; however – more often than not – they were spared from fighting directly on the front line in exchange for newsreels, documentation and capturing images of the war. The Photographic Service of the Romanian Army was created a few months after Romania entered WWI on 29 November 1916 (— fig. 8).¹⁹ The photographers in uniform documented life on the front line, from the rank and file to the upper echelons, capturing the various aspects of the unfolding war.

15— Adriana Dumitran, 'Lumea scenei în fața aparatului de fotografiat: Matei Millo văzut de Carol Szathmari', in: *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei. Teatru, Muzică, Cinematografie*, Serie nouă, vol. 10–11 (54–55), 2016–2017, 3–22.

16— Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Romanian Architecture and Cityscape: The Legacy of Nineteenth-Century Photographers', in: Micheline Nilsen (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Photographs and Architecture. Documenting History, Charting Progress and Exploring the World*, Burlington 2013, 217–232; *Idem*, "'The City of Pleasure': Romantic Bucharest Through the 19th Century Travellers' Eyes and Pioneer Photographers' Lenses', in: *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei, Artă Plastică*, serie nouă, vol. 4 (48), 2014, 29–74; Emanuel Bădescu, Radu Oltean, Carol Popp de Szathmari: *Fotografatul Bucureștilor / Photographer of Bucharest*, Bucharest 2012.

17— Nicușor Dănuț Ivănuș, Dorina Negulici, *Brașovul de altădată în colecția Emil Fischer / Dar ehemalige Kronstadt in Emil Fischers Sammlung*, Brașov 2005; Camelia Neagoe, 'Contribuții la istoria fotografiei brașovene', in: Radu Popica (ed.) *Un secol de artă brașoveană 1815–1918*, Brașov 2018, 34–62.

18— Ionescu 2014 (reference 16), 56, 58–61; Ioan Crăciun (ed.), *Ioan Spirescu. Mănăstirea Curtea de Argeș*, Bucharest 2013; Calinic Argeșeanul, *Suferințele și biruințele Catedralei de la Curtea de Argeș*, Curtea de Argeș 2017.

19— Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *The Great War. Photography from the Romanian Front, 1916–1919*, Bucharest 2014.



fig.7
Carol Popp de Szathmari, *The Towers of the Curtea de Argeș Cathedral*, 1866, albumen print from a wet collodion glass plate 23 × 17.8 cm. Library of the Romanian Academy.

A real treasure trove was recently discovered in a photo studio in the tiny provincial town of Slobozia: the huge archive of Costică Acsinte (1897–1984), former war reporter during WWI and portrait-maker the rest of his life.²⁰

The inter-war period saw the development of the studio portrait, of the street snapshot, and of photojournalism, as well as propaganda and documentary photography.²¹

When talking about documentary and art photography, it is necessary to mention Adolphe A. Chevallier (1881–1963)²² (— fig. 9), Iosif Berman (1890–1941)²³, Nicolae Ionescu (1903–1974)²⁴ and Willy Pragher (1908–1992)²⁵. In 1941, Pragher published a bilingual monograph: *Bukarest, Stadt der Gegensätze / București, orașul contrastelor* where he registered, with humour and kind understanding, the ups and downs of the national psyche. It is during this inter-bellum period that the Romanian photographers began to organise themselves in societies emulating the medieval guilds, and to publish specialised magazines.²⁶

Is avantgarde photography possible under a totalitarian regime (1947–1989)?

After the communists took over power in Romania in the last days of December 1947, all the private photo studios, which had flourished in the inter-bellum period, were nationalized. Most of the former owners, who were actually skilled photographers, were kept and put in charge of the artistic and technical matters of the workshops. Any photographic activity, except portraiture and wedding pictures, was kept under the vigilant eye of the censors. It was only safe to take landscape and cityscape pictures and most amateur photographers focused on scenes of this kind.

High-quality materials, such as films, photographic paper, and chemicals, were scarce and difficult to find. Colour photographs were seldom made for the same rea-

20— Cezar Popescu (ed.), *Foto Splendid. Colecția Costică Acsinte. Viața socială*, vol. I, Bucharest 2015; Idem, *Foto Splendid. Colecția Costică Acsinte. Doamne și domnițe*, vol. II, Slobozia 2016.

21— Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, 'Photography in Romania in the First Half of the 20th Century', in: *PhotoResearcher* No. 14, 2010, 15–24; Idem, '1900–1938, The History of Romanian Photography', in: Václav Macek (ed.), *The History of European Photography 1900–1938*, Bratislava 2010, 498–506; Idem, 'Photographers in Romania 1840–1940. A Dictionary', in: *Muzeul Național XX*, 2008, 68–70.

22— Constanti Horghidan, *Artistul fotograf Adolphe A. Chevallier în colecția mea*, Piatra Neamț 2018.

23— Ioana Popescu, 'Iosif Berman. A Photo-Album', in: *Martor* no. 3, 1998; Ștefania Ciubotaru (ed.), *România interbelică în fotografiile lui Iosif Berman*, exhibition catalogue, Bucharest 2013; Adriana Dumitran (ed.), *Iosif Berman: maestrul fotoreportajului românesc interbelic / Master of the Romanian Interwar Photojournalism*, Bucharest, 2013; Idem, 'Arta fotografică a lui Iosif Berman (1890–1941)', in: *Studii și Cercetări de Istoria Artei, Artă Plastică, serie nouă*, vol. 4 (48), 2014, 75–88.

24— Emanuel Bădescu, *Nicolae Ionescu. Bucureștiul de altădată/ Bucharest of Yore/ Bucarest d'autrefois*, Bucharest 2002.

25— Kurt Hochstuhl, Josef Wolf (eds.), *Refractări. Willy Pragher – spații vizuale românești 1924–1944*, Alba Iulia 2007; Willy Pragher, *Bukarest, Stadt der Gegensätze/București, orașul contrastelor*, Berlin [1941].

26— Ionescu (reference 21), 19–20; Idem, *Commercial and Art Photography in Romania 1900–1950*, in: *Muzeul Național XXIII*, 2011, 60–62, 64–65.



fig.8
The Photographic Service of the Romanian Army, French General Henri M. Berthelot decorating some Romanian generals and senior officers with the Legion of Honour, Mărășești 1917, gelatin silver print 11.5 × 16 cm. Author's collection.

were designated by the area's name – such as Banat, Dobrudja, Moldavia, Muntenia (Wallachia), Oltenia (Little Wallachia) and Transylvania – and were based in the most important cities of those regions (Timișoara, Constanța, Jassy, Ploiești, Craiova and Cluj-Napoca).

The magazine: *Fotografia. Caiet selectiv* (Photography. Selective Copybook) started to be published in January 1968; it later simplified its title into *Fotografia*. The first editorial board was composed of Sylviu Comănescu, Napoleon Frandin and Leonida Tănăsescu. Beginning with 1959, The Art Photographers' Association organized large international exhibitions in Bucharest, sometimes itinerated in the province.

Books on technical topics and manuals for apprentice photographers were published in the 1960s–1980s to encourage youngsters to take up photography as a pastime or as a profession. Sylviu Comănescu (1914–1999 [?]), long-time president of The Art Photographers' Association, was one of the most prolific authors in this respect.²⁷ He was followed by Eugen Iarovici (1913–1993), who mostly dealt with aesthetics and art photography criticism.²⁸ The first album on contemporary Romanian art photography was published in 1964 under the editorship of Spiru Constantinescu, who was president of the photographers' association both before and after WWII.²⁹

27____ Sylviu Comănescu, *Evitarea greșelilor la fotografiere* (Avoiding Mistakes while Photographing), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1962; Idem, *Evitarea greșelilor în laboratorul fotografic* (Avoiding Mistakes in the Dark Room), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1963; Idem, *Drumețind cu aparatul fotografic* (Hiking with the Camera), Editura Consiliului Național pentru Educație Fizică și Sport, Bucharest [1968]; Idem, *Cum alegem aparatul fotografic* (How to Choose a Camera), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1969; Idem, *Procesul pozitiv (alb-negru)* (The Black and White [Positive] Processing), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1978; Sylviu Comănescu, Eugen Iarovici, *ABC-ul fotografului amator* (The A.B.C. of the Amateur Photographer), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1968; Dinu Teodor Constantinescu, *Fotografia și arhitectura* (Photography and Architecture), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1984.

28____ Eugen Iarovici, *Fotocompoziția* (The Photographic Composition), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1966; Idem, *Farmecul luminii* (The Light's Charming), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1970–1971; Idem, *Fotografia, limbaj specific* (The Photography and its Special Language), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1971; Idem, *Portretul modern* (The Modern Portrait), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1972; Idem, *Măiestria în fotografie* (Mastering in Photography), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1977; Idem, *Fotografie și industrie* (Photography and Industry), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1985; Idem, *Fotografia și lumea de azi* (Photography and Nowadays Life), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1989; Emilian Cristea, Eugen Iarovici, *Munții și fotografia* (Mountains and Photography), Editura Tehnică, Bucharest 1980.

29____ Spiru Constantinescu, *Arta fotografică în România* (Art Photography in Romania), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1964.



fig.9
Adolphe Chevallier, *Peasant woman boiling milk for preparing cheese, Valea Bistriței, 1925*, illustrated postcard. Author's collection.

The sole positive aspect during the period of communist rule was that art photographers were encouraged to publish albums with their works. These were mostly monographic volumes on topics such as historic places, peasant art and traditions, or cityscapes of local towns and European capitals. Dan Eremia Grigorescu (1918–1990) and Ion Miclea (1931–2000) distinguished themselves in this respect. Both travelled extensively abroad and took masterful pictures in Paris, Rome, Florence, Venice, Istanbul, Leningrad, Munich, China, Africa, and the United States, publishing their outstanding pictures in lavishly illustrated albums.³⁰ Grigorescu also contributed his pictures to important Romanian art and literary magazines such as *Secolul XX* and *Arta*. He authored a charming album with picturesque scenes of the Danube Delta³¹ and also illustrated a work on Constantin Brancusi's masterpieces by the outstanding Romanian art critic Dan Hăulică.³² Miclea journeyed widely in Romania and produced imposing albums with fabulous landscapes, peasant art and architecture in Transylvania, and historic monuments. He also cooperated with Radu Florescu, a well-known Romanian archaeologist and art historian, to illustrate books on the ancient art of the Dacians, the former inhabitants of what is now Romania.³³ Inspired by Brancusi's

30— Dan Eremia Grigorescu, *Paris*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1970; Idem, *Veneția*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1971; Idem, *Florența*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1974; Idem, *Roma*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1976; Ion Miclea, *Istanbul*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1970; Idem, *Leningrad*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1970; Idem, *München*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1972; Idem, *Pekin*, Editura Meridiane Bucharest 1973; Idem, *Africa*, Editura pentru Turism, Bucharest 1974; Idem, *Ngorongoro*, Editura Ion Creangă, Bucharest 1974; Idem, *Castelele Rinului* (Rhin's Castles), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1976; Idem, *Statele Unite ale Americii* (The United States of America), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1976.

31— Dan Grigorescu, *În Delta Dunării* (In the Danube Delta), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1967.

32— Dan Hăulică, *Brancusi ou l'anonymat du génie*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1967.

33— Ion Miclea, *Dulce Bucovină* (Sweet Bukovina), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1976; Idem, *Sibiel*, Editura 'Transilvania', Sibiu 1979; Idem, *Curtișoara*, Editura 'Transilvania', Sibiu 1981; Idem, *Rășinari*, Editura 'Transilvania', Sibiu 1983; Idem, *Romania / La Roumanie: Eternal Land / Terre éternelle*, Editura 'Transilvania', Sibiu 1980; Idem, *Sibiu*, Editura Dacia, Cluj 1972; Idem, *Alba-Iulia*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1985; Idem, *Cluj-Napoca*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1985; Idem, *Baia-Mare*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1986; Idem, *Buzău*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1988; Idem, *Focșani*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1989; Ion Miclea, Radu Florescu, *Dragomirna*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1976; Idem, *Prezențe musulmane în România* (Muslim Traces in Romania), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1976; Idem, *Proboata*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1978; Idem, *Geto-Dacii*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1980; Idem, *Preistoria Daciei* (Dacian Prehistory), Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1980; Idem, *The Art of Dacian-Roman Antiquity*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest 1986; Idem, *Histria / The City of Histria*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1989.

monumental sculptures at Târgu-Jiu – the ‘Endless Column’ and the ‘Table of Silence’ – Miclea compiled an attractive album, *Brâncuși la Târgu-Jiu*.³⁴

Hedy Löffler (1911–2007), another outstanding photographer from the communist era, focused her interest on local touristic attractions as the author of albums on the mountains or the beautiful Black Sea Coast, or depicting Bucharest, the capital city.³⁵

Artfully mingling the practice of amateur photography with that of a dilettante historian of photography, Constantin Săvulescu (1914–2001) authored the first well-documented papers about the beginning of photography in the Romanian Principalities and its evolution into the Kingdom of Romania.³⁶ He was also a distinguished landscapist. More than 270 of his photographs were published as picture postcards or postal stationery. His most popular postcards included: *The Salt Mountain* and *the Salt Lakes* of his native Slănic Prahova, *the Olt Valley at Gura Lotrului*, *Lacul Roșu* (the Red Lake), *the Suzana Monastery*, *Călimănești*, *the Casino in Constanța*. Between 1956 and 1971, Săvulescu contributed his pictures to such foreign-language magazines as *Roumanie d’aujourd’hui*, *Vacances en Roumanie / Holidays in Romania*, *A travers la Roumanie*. Other pictures were published in *Flacăra* (1959–1969), *Arhitectura* (1957), *România Pitorească* (1972–1978). Professor Virgil Vătășianu, a renowned Romanian art historian, selected some 62 pictures from Săvulescu’s portfolio of historic monuments to illustrate his album *Kunstdenkmäler in Rumänien, Ein Bildhandbuch* (Edition Leipzig, Leipzig, 1986).³⁷

In spite of censorship and the great lack of high-quality photographic materials, there were some opportunities for Romanian photographers to achieve fame during the oppressive regime of 1948–1989 if they showed obedience to the Communist Party and focussed their work on acceptable topics such as depiction of the country’s natural beauties and its ancient treasures.³⁸

Aspects of a history of photography in Romania

The question of how to investigate all the aspects of historical and contemporary photography in Romania initially led to a somewhat unconventional approach: namely, of exclusively selecting authors who had actually been part of the changing history of the territory that they were now to reflect on in a (photo) historical and critical context. In no way, should this be seen as a national (photographic) historiography; it is much more the case that the goal followed was to provide an international platform for the years of research and critical study that have been carried out in those places in today’s Romania that are in possession of important photographic sources.

34. Ion Miclea, *Brâncuși la Târgu-Jiu* (Brancusi in Târgu-Jiu), Editura pentru Turism, Bucharest 1973.

35. Hedy Löffler, *Brașov*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1962; Idem, *Vatra Dornei, Slănic Moldova*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1967; Idem, *Țara Bârsei*, Editura Meridiane, Bucharest 1971; *Litoralul românesc* (The Romanian Seacoast), Foreword by Radu Boureanu, Lyrics by Adrian Păunescu, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1975; Idem, *Sighișoara*, Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1976; Idem, *București*, Foreword by Ioan Grigorescu, Historical synopsis by Panait I. Panait,

Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1984; Idem, *Grădinile Bucureștiului* (Bucharest’s Gardens), Editura Sport-Turism, Bucharest 1984.

36. Săvulescu 1973, 1977, 1978, 1985 (reference 5).

37. Virgil Vătășianu, *Kunstdenkmäler in Rumänien, Ein Bildhandbuch*, Edition Leipzig Leipzig, 1986.

38. Ionescu 2011 (reference 26), 63; Eugen Rădescu, Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, ‘1939–1969, Romanian Photography’, in: Václav Macek (ed.), *The History of European Photography 1939–1969*, Bratislava 1914, 592–596.

In Romania, as elsewhere, both archaeology and photography are essentially children of the second part of the 19th century.

Catalin I. Nicolae, a young archaeologist, investigates the intertwined relationship between the two and introduces us to the little-known – but immensely valuable – photographic archive of the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest.

Camelia Neagoe uncovers another trove of photo archive material and deals with the urban iconography of Braşov, a gem of a town, as seen through the lenses of the famous local photographers of the 19th century.

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu felt the need to draw particular attention to Emil Otto Hoppé's journal inspired by his travel to Romania in the summer of 1923, and how he managed to capture not only the portrait of a new country, but also its soul. He was to use this successful template again and again in dealing with the UK, USA, Germany, and Africa, as well as in India, Australia, and New Zealand.

Adriana Dumitran brings Iosif Berman, and his photographic art, which unites documentary and photojournalistic quality, to our attention once again.

Andrei Pandele, an outstanding photographer and architect, deals with the murky world of artist photographers during the communist regime; the hurdles they faced and had to overcome to develop into the most illustrious generation of photographers to date.

Eugen Negrea, the President of the Association of Art Photographers in Romania, last but not least, portrays the ups and downs of this organization that has been dominated by huge talents – as well as huge egos – from 1956 until today.

This number of PhotoResearcher opens a window onto the photographic output in Romania. In doing so, it paves the way for a journey to a country that, in spite of the global pandemic, is once again attempting break away – both psychologically and intellectually – from its position on the periphery of Europe.

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, Ulla Fischer Westhauser, Uwe Schögl
Vienna, October 2020