

LOOK INTO THE CAMERA: SCIENTISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE KAZAN PROVINCE IN THE END OF THE XIX CENTURY

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The relevance of the study of photography as source lies in the fact that with the onset of digital technologies a lot of things considerably change in ways of fixing, the idea of approach of an era of “post-photo” is even more often introduced. The purpose of article is the analysis of a situation of creation of the forwarding photo during formation of photo equipment. The leading approach to the research of this problem is interdisciplinary approach as it allows to consider social realities in the context of historical and cultural changes. The article shows the role of photographic practices of the Kazan scientists and photographers in the context of Imperial development at the turn of XIX – XX centuries, the main planes of interaction of scientists and photographers are defined; the role of photography in the development of science and ideological politics is shown. A special attention in article is paid to interrelation of science and museum as the material bases of Ethnography. In article the characteristic is given to collected collections. Materials of article can be useful for researchers of media, history of science and cultural studies, museum staff and anyone who is interested in the topic.

Keywords: ethnography, photography, history of science, expeditions, museum, Kazan province, Russian Empire, the history of media.

INTRODUCTION

The Volga-Ural region of Russia historically developed as the territory with poly-ethnic and multi-religious population. From the moment of the basis the Kazan University was approved as the intellectual center of this region. The second half of the XIX century is noted by a great interest to the traditional culture, a certain romanticizing of rural tenor of life and searches of “national roots”, especially concerning the Finno-Ugric peoples who were under the close attention of the Finnish researchers. The photographic image – a culture element without which human life is inconceivable more than a hundred and fifty years. Photography in the Russian Empire in general, and in Kazan in particular, became widespread in the first decades of its existence, underwent a variety of changes: ups and downs,

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big wins (for example, the highest awards of pre-revolutionary photographers at International exhibitions). Among little-known sources, revealing the pages of history of Kazan, are photographic materials, the kind of which is ethnographic photography, i.e. photographs depicting the ethno-cultural diversity of the region.

The relevance of the study of photography as source also lies in the fact that with the onset of digital technologies a lot of things considerably change in ways of fixing, the idea of approach of an era of “post-photo” is even more often introduced (Krutkin, 2009). Here we agree with K. Girts (2004) who spoke about complexity and need of studying “in anthropological works of other anthropological works”, in other words – sources of a different order. Recent studies allow us to look at the photo through a prism of imperial history and “archeology of the power” of M. Foucault (Abashin, 2012). The colonial view of the empire through the first photographic projects is shown by works of authors who analyze both images and destiny of the whole albums about this or that region (Dikovitskaya, 2007). By means of studying of technical journals and archival materials the question of how the formation of a genre of the ethnographic/anthropological photography is raised (Tolmacheva, 2014). All these works give an idea about the historical context and methodological boundaries, which were the first attempts of photographic images of the Russian Empire.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodological base of the research includes a review of the historical facts and ethnographic realities in the relationship, development and critical evaluation. Historical research methods are used in this work: problem and chronological, historical and comparative, cultural and anthropological. The work is also based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods: discourse and content analysis, biographical methods associated with studying work of scientists and photographers, as well as the method applied visual analysis, involving a stage of description, reconstruction and socio-cultural interpretation. The framework of sources includes the photos of the Ethnographic museum of the Kazan (Volga region) Federal University covering culture of the following Turkic and Finno-Ugric ethnic groups: the Tatars, the Chuvashes, the Bashkirs, the Mordovians, the Maris, the Udmurts, residents of Permian, the Besermyans; scientific writings of ethnographers-members of the Society of archeology, history and ethnography of the Kazan University, archival documents.

RESULTS

In the autumn of 1869, the official A.F. Rittich, publishing a book on the Ethnography of the Kazan province, noted the “unusual” success, connected with the fact that he could see “in nature” the diversity of the population which he described. In “Materials for the Ethnography of Russia” he placed one of the first

ethnographic photos taken in the Volga-Urals. The owner of a photographer's studio in Kazan was the author of these pictures, the German citizen G.F. Locke, and they imprinted "all elected nationalities called to Kazan for representation to His Imperial Highness the Sovereign Heir Tsesarevich" (Rittich, 1870). A.F. Rittich's work was published in 1870, respectively, photos had been taken earlier. At the end of the 1860s the Crown Prince visited Kazan twice: in 1866 (on August 22) and 1869 (on June 17). Two years after the visit of Crown Prince, G.F. Locke presented specially made album as a gift to Imperial House of Romanov about what with delight wrote the Kazan newspapers, and later on its basis released lithographs with characters that got into museums and collectors. One of these lovers of antiquity became a traveler, S.I. Polyakov, who brought cards retouched in the style of a postcard to St. Petersburg, where they appeared in the Cabinet of curiosities marked only with the imperceptible imprinted seal with the name of the photographer, and by drawing up the inventory the authorship was referred to S.I. Polyakov.

The described situation shows several important points: the problem of authorship and attribution of historical sources, the specificity of the development of the photographic business, Imperial policy toward non-Russian population. The analysis of photos in museum collections will allow to understand how at the end of XIX – the beginning of the XX centuries in the process of interaction between scientists and photographers the issue what to consider the ethnographic photo was resolved. Photos remain the evidence of various processes which accompanied their creation. This may include plans of expeditions where photographers were involved, the economic side of cooperation of the university and of photo studio, making of images and the formation of museum collections, storage and use conditions in the museum exhibition space.

The museum pieces which are one of the most representative types of historical sources also possess the biographic and quite often autobiographical features. The collections gathered by researchers at the end of XIX – the beginning of the XX centuries, join in three-dimensional system of the relations, representing symbolical and material space of traditional culture, indicating creative and functional motivations of owners (manufacturers). These things are connected with the identity of the collector who is guided often by the personal research program and subjective perception of the studied culture.

In researches of the ethnographic photo there is a certain difficulty – the photo in essence is the one-stage picture inconvenient for perception out of a context. Therefore the study of photos (sometimes single) united in one fund only by the principle of the contents (presentation "types and material culture" one nation) on the background of violations of the principle of series require insight into the history of collecting of all images in one place.

Ethnographic photography developed at the junction of two spaces: research and technical, so we can talk about diversity on this topic in the literature. For

photographers it was possibility of application of scientifically focused portrait shooting, for researchers – material fixing which was actualized from the moment of the invention of portable equipment and possibility of an exit with it in a research field.

It is possible to allocate three main strategies of interaction between communities of photographers and ethnographers which can be described as the “ethnographer-photographer”, “ethnographer-buyer” and “ethnographer-customer” models. Actions in each of the specified situations are caused by a practical component. The ethnographer-photographer had to cope with equipment professionally. In case of purchase of photos (most often it were studio portraits) the researcher had to apply to the management with the request for funding. The most fruitful, if you look at the amount of material, was the situation when the photographer has received the status of commissioner of university or the scientific community and went on an expedition.

Studio portraits can be easily allocated from general array of photos on a number of signs. First, it is the personalizing data: existence of a stamp and press of a photo institution, name of the owner, the address of studio, an inscription “negatives remain”. Secondly, they were marked out by a graceful vignette framework, embossed on the mat, a firm substrate. Thirdly, the instruction on the represented group of people often meets.

In a case with G.F. Locke the photography made on the occasion of arrival of Crown Prince was used subsequently studio for release of a series of lithographs. And there is a question of commercial success of photography.

The situation when the researcher independently works with photo equipment in expedition became possible thanks to technical improvement of the equipment. Maintaining diaries and records by scientists allows to reconstruct the specificity and practitioners of the forwarding photo, to analyze a communication situation between the photographer and “natives” an intermediary role between which was carried out by the representatives of “institute of local assistants”, i.e. teachers, priests, seminary graduates. In difficult accessible villages a man with the camera caused fears and suspicions. For example, about the photographer-ethnographer M. E. Evseyev it is known that in 1889 in one of places where he worked with M.P. Vesce, the teacher of the Finnish adverbs of the Kazan University, inhabitants nearly set fire to a log hut in which the researchers spent the night. In other Mordovian village the headman forbade to do shooting of a festive ceremony, having told words of inhabitants that they don't wish “to take the portrait of their praying” (Evseyev, 2004: 9). S.A. Morozov wrote about one more problem aspect: “Many cares it was worth preserving records on bumpy roads. Local authorities also created barriers. Once the local police officer ... was so frightened by the photographer from St. Petersburg with the device on a tripod and a black cover that was going to destroy all his records” (Morozov, 1953).

The Finnish ethnographer U.T. Sirelius in 1907 investigating residents of Perm and Udmurts of the Volga-Urals described the following difficulties in his diary: "It was almost impossible to persuade women to be photographed. When a few, the most courageous of them were photographed, the requirement at once followed: "Pay money". From old men the special relation was caused by research interest in fixing of ancient constructions: "For this purpose you photograph second-hand articles, in order to show to tsar, in what bad houses the Votyaks live, to what life they came, cooking kumyshka. By this you want to achieve that the tsar will forbid us to drive it from now. But we will call any other scientific person here. He will take pictures of better houses and will carry them to the tsar" (Sirelius, 2003).

In the context of late nineteenth-century photographer was a figure operating power imperatives. He was not like the local community: he was dressed a different way, often spoke a different language - the language of administration, and from ignorance of local languages he used the services of officials, or teachers, or local assistants. He had completely incomprehensible and unprecedented subjects. He wanted to perform unfamiliar actions, forcing to stand in front of the lens, and long enough; to keep static position of a body, to put on the best clothes, to get winter subjects in summertime, to dress up in a wedding suit, etc. Speaking about a context of the power of the photographer as the authorities of the representative of the empire, S. Abashin on materials of photos from Central Asia of this period expressed opinion that the process of photography took place with obviously forced relationship, and described as proof of frowning facial expressions (that could be linked to the displeasure of the process that derives the prohibition on the depiction of God in the Muslim tradition), the use of local prostitutes for shooting portraits of women with uncovered faces (which again was contrary to religious dogma) (Abashin, 2012).

The following examples show what attitude towards the researcher had been developed in peasant communities, as ideas of the "bad official" raising taxes, and opposed to "the kind tsar", all these influenced the attitude of peasants to an unfamiliar figure of the researcher "burdened" with a black box of the camera.

Photos were in great demand, because otherwise they would simply not have reached us in such large numbers, indicating the extent of replication and model diversity. Photos of the beginning of the period of "printing capitalism" were used as an illustration for the open letter, as souvenir products (for what decorative framework and letters were drawn), as cards. Sometimes one picture was urged to mark one ethnic group, although all together continued to be for "classifying mind of the state" (where the main distinguishing feature was confessional) "non-Russian", "Mohammedans" or "non-Christian" (Chazan, 2009). In any case, the picture became one of spheres of designing of visual codes and reading of information formulas.

Another important mechanism of transmission was represented by periodicals and cultural and educational illustrated editions, which helped to distinguish the multivolume edition of “Picturesque Russia” and the magazine “Living antiquity”. “The Ethnographic review” was less extensively illustrated, however with expansion of printing opportunities also technicians of a visual reinforcement of text material were replenished.

A special feature of the cultural life in the specified time period it is possible to call a phenomenon of “Ethnographic albums”. Most often collections of photos were pasted in usual large-format albums and supported with comments of the originator. Such “visual presentations” of M.E. Evseyev were awarded prizes at the Nizhny Novgorod industrial and Parisian World exhibition (Evseyev, 2004). In Chuvash humanitarian research institute the ethnographic albums of N.V. Nikolsky built on a combination of pictures of professional photographers remained (K.T. Sofonova, G.F. Locke, O.I. Smolentseva).

DISCUSSIONS

A study of the development of the genre of ethnographic photography at the intersection of Imperial history, source analysis, and cultural studies involves the use of large complex heterogeneous sources. Numerous works related to the “visual turn” in the Humanities, have proposed to consider the potential of ethnographic photos by different analytical schemes. One of them was offered by R. Bart: Operator (the one who takes a picture), Spectatum (the one who is photographed), Spectator (the one who looks) (Bart, 1997). The Russian philosopher L.V. Krutkin added the fourth figure to the research scheme of R. Bart – the person who tells/shows/interprets (Krutkin, 2009). Based on this scheme, the authors of this article refer to the figure of the photographer who could play an interpreter role, and the scientist – to be that who interprets, and who looks at.

Besides, that R. Bart’s scheme is used, individual trajectories of specific scientists, photographers and collectors are described in research. While E. Tolmacheva (2014) writes about a conventional framework of the photographic message and algorithm of its studying, this work provides examples of evolution the genre of the ethnographic photo, and “career” of people who were connected with creation of these photos in the context of development of ethnographic science round the Kazan Imperial University.

In the context of late nineteenth century the photographer was a figure operating power imperatives. Memoirs, diaries and field notes of collectors are the main source on the matter (Rittich, 1870; Sirelius, 2003; Evseyev, 2004) The collector, as seen from the given episodes, did not look like representatives of local community: he was dressed differently, often spoke other language – language of administration, because of ignorance of local languages, he was forced to use the services of officials, teachers or “local assistants”. From the given examples of

work of photographers and scientists we can see what attitude towards the researcher had been developed in peasant communities, as ideas of the “bad official” raising taxes, and opposed to “the kind tsar”, all these influenced the attitude of peasants to an unfamiliar figure of the researcher “burdened” with a black box of the camera. The question of how the researchers came into contact with the local population requires separate consideration, what were the causes of “communication failures”, because this includes a study of the “imaginary world” (when a traditional society gets acquainted with technical novelties – such as a samovar, a camera, a watch, or electricity), the analysis of diaries and letters, some facts reflected in fiction.

CONCLUSIONS

The photo does not exist by itself, because, placed in a folder and forgotten in the archives, it not only is exposed to destruction in a physical sense – is excluded from the situation of information exchange. Therefore, the ideological loading is manifested at different platforms, via different channels, which promoted the broadcasts of ideas to the public sphere. The first channel acts as an exhibition and exposition activity. The second channel – the publication in the specialized illustrated editions and magazines (“Picturesque Russia”, “Living antiquity”, “An Ethnographic review”). The third stage can be called souvenir production and release of portrait types, stamps and open letters. The third stage was the production and release of souvenir production, portrait types, brands and open letters. By means of the listed channels of broadcasting there was a visualization of ethnic diversity when mass reproduction, the “logotipization” and replication of images of different ethnoses served one purpose – an illustration of a variety of views of Imperial space, promoted recognition by a narrow-minded look of “marker” of an ethnic group and stereotyped design of the idea of “ethnicity” at the consumer level.

Photographic practice in ethnographic research was distributed almost simultaneously with the development of the photo itself. In the figurative row, we can also mention a few variants of functioning of photography in the scientific field. The first option is presented by joint activity of the photographer and scientist: as an example – cooperation of Professor of the Kazan University I.N. Smirnov and the photographer K.T. Sofonova. The second “scenario” is associated with photographic activity of the ethnographer-researcher, as an example can be given field pictures taken by P.M. Bogayevsky in expedition on studying of customary law in the life Votyakov of the Sarapul district of the Vyatka province. The third option is an attraction to scientific processes of studio works which were carried out mainly by acquisition and donation of photos in favor of scientific organizations.

Recommendations and guidance to the photography reflected the primary interests of the authors and interpreters associated with the mass of anthropological measurements, the attitude towards the photographed people as to scientific objects, assessment of Russian (“progressive”) influence on non-Russians, study of

“ethnography” and “exoticism” which were expressed, according to experts of magazines, in “the image of costume, weapon, special ceremonies” and ancient accessories. Pictorialism can be viewed as a response to the proliferation of documentary footage, - technique, which was quite common among Russian photographers, technique where particular attention was paid to the dramatization of the plot, giving a romantic flair, use of retouching, focus on personality, romanticizing and personification.

Recommendations

This article allows to look in a new way at developments of the ethnographic photo as genre, to consider technical aspects of photographing. The results of the study can be useful for researchers of media, the history of science and cultural studies, museum staff and anyone who is interested in the topic.

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