

**ETHNOGRAPHY AS A PHILOSOPHICAL
AND CULTURAL PHENOMENON:
A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH**

L.Yu. Korolyova, G.P. Pirozhkov

Tambov State Technical University, Tambov

Represented by Doctor of History, Professor A.A. Slezin

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Abstract: The programme of the scientific analysis of Ethnography as a scientific and academic discipline is examined in literature for the first time. The definition of Ethnography is given.

Science as an integrated phenomenon emerges in the New Time as a result of separation from Philosophy and passes through several stages each of which is characterized by new ideals and norms, research methods, a way of thinking and a conceptual apparatus. In the XVIII – the beginning of the XIX centuries all main branches of the modern scientific cognition were singled out from Philosophy. Ethnography at that time was interpreted as a kind of the human activity connected with the studying of some particular part of the country.

Ethnography of the second half of the XIX century was studied within Science of Motherland, then as a part of the Humanities. On the whole this method of studying Ethnography was peculiar for the period when it played a relatively small role in the life of the society and its social effect was rather insignificant. With the increase of the social and economic effect of Ethnography the process of the formation of its “organism” begins, the need to study Ethnography as a science against the background of the formation of Science of Science becomes actual [1].

This process was on the rise in the 1920s, when the study of Ethnography involved the research of particular conditions under which it was formed – the Soviet government challenged the role of Ethnography in the solution of political problems as well as the participation of ethnographers in the construction of Socialism. That’s why the scientific research was based more on the record of external features than on the description of the contents of the

Королёва Людмила Юрьевна – кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры «Международная профессиональная и научная коммуникация»; Пирожков Геннадий Петрович – доктор культурологии, профессор, заведующий кафедрой «Связи с общественностью», e-mail: gpptmb48@rambler.ru, ТамбГТУ, г. Тамбов.

science. Historical, philosophical and cultural, sociological aspects of Ethnography were not studied.

In the 1930s Ethnography was used by the authorities as the most important means of the formation of the Soviet regime, it became a mechanism of the mass communistic doctrine (when people were made to respect the necessary ideology and culture) [see 11, p. 56–57; 16]. The research of different parts of the country was done by a group of people, agents of the regime, who had nothing to do with classical science.

In the aftermath of the war organizational and economical, socio-psychological and other problems of science were studied, special journals were published, and conferences were held. However, Ethnography returned to life as “the study of the particular part of the country (district, region), some natural places, a town or some populated place mainly by local residents” [2, p. 549]. But nobody carried out a serious scientific analysis of Ethnography.

Some scientific interest in Ethnography was shown in the 1960s, when generalized scientific works were published within Science of Science. There were scientific publications (mostly in a province) at that period in which the organization of Ethnography, its research directions and a database were analyzed. Nevertheless, Ethnography was not represented as a part of Science of Science then.

At the end of the XX century Ethnography as a scientific and academic discipline began to interest scientists. The analysis of various kinds of the ethnographic research helps us make a conclusion that a modern ethnographic science differs greatly from Ethnography of the previous decades in some features and first of all in its increased role in the life of the society. Today Ethnography is: 1) a science about an ethnographic activity, which has a long history, comprehensive theoretical contents, methodology, a large conceptual apparatus, a vast area of the practical application and other features characteristic of many scientific and academic disciplines; 2) a complex of scientific disciplines, which differ from each other in contents and particular methods of research but resulting on the whole in the scientific and comprehensive cognition of a region; 3) Ethnography as a *field of knowledge* characterizes a man's life activity on his land in time and space; as a *pedagogical category* – a mechanism of making a generation gain an adaptation experience from another generation; 4) any activity directed at the study of some particular place in order to solve scientific, production, self-educational problems, carried out by both local and federal authorities, household organizations, scientific institutions, public organizations, individuals [13].

The results of the ethnographic research influence all spheres of public life. Close connections of Ethnography with a general and culturological education, adaptation of young generations are doubtless [3] and this makes its examination from the viewpoint of Science of Science actual.

As Science of Science has two aspects – formal (metascientific) and contextual (philosophical, economic, political, sociological, ethical, historical, etc.), it is important to pay attention to the study of the structure of the ethnographic science. It is supposed that at the stage of external features and its contents its examination as a complex of sciences should be dominant. That's why a scientific approach to Ethnography demands to identify principles

common for the formation of many sciences, interrelations between Natural sciences, Humanities, Ethnography, Engineering and Production.

This concept allows to single out general things in the structure of the object (objects) of Ethnography and thus in the character of connections between its different branches. It will help find an approach to the definition of the contents of Ethnography. If we study it as a science we should solve the following problems: general laws and concrete forms of functioning and formation; the subject of the research; a way and forms of functioning; identification of the role and place in the system of sciences; connections with other sciences, etc. These problems were outlined in literature at different periods of time. But the time has come when we should raise a question about a serious study of theoretical principles of the organization, planning and management in the sphere of Ethnography, i.e. the system of actions based on the objective logics of the formation of the science, providing the maximal tempo of its formation and increase of the effectiveness of the scientific research. Studying the laws of the formation of Ethnography, it is necessary to pay attention to the important methodological principle – Ethnography today is a unique public phenomenon, a really existing process, developing in time.

The formation of Ethnography in Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia proves that the ethnographic science today is a creative activity directed at acquiring new knowledge, and the result of this activity is the aggregate of knowledge (mostly in the conceptual form), forming an integrated system on the base of particular principles (an ordinary combination of separate data is not scientific knowledge), and the process of its reproduction.

The main aspect of the existence of Ethnography as a science today is also a social institute with its infrastructure: the organization of science, scientific institutions; groups of researchers; finances, scientific equipment; the system of the ethnographic information; different communications of ethnographers; and a special sphere of the human activity, and an important element of culture.

In the scientific approach to Ethnography it would be a mistake to consider its contents only as a theoretical study of its object (objects). It will result in the underestimation of the specific contents of the applied Ethnography which in this case will meet the demands only of the theoretical Ethnography. The problem is to formulate a more accurate theory of the object (objects) and the subject, studied by Ethnography.

Scientific cognition is an integrated developing system which has a complex structure that can be represented from different viewpoints and correspondingly as the combination of its specific elements. There are elements in the structure of the ethnographic scientific knowledge which cannot be included into the traditional notion of science: philosophical, religious, magical ideas; intellectual and sensual skills, which cannot be verbalized or reflected; socio-psychological stereotypes, interests and needs; definite conventions, metaphors, contradictions and paradoxes; features of personal sympathies and dislikes, habits, mistakes, etc.

Taking into consideration such elements, V.I. Vernadsky stated that «there is one basic phenomenon which stipulates a scientific thought and differs scientific results and scientific conclusions simply and clearly from principles of Philosophy and Religion, – this is a general obligation and incontestability of

right scientific conclusions, scientific statements, notions». This is the main difference of science from any other knowledge and spiritual ideas of the mankind. V.I. Vernadsky believed that “the main incontestable basis of any science” (its hard core) includes the following main elements (sides): “1) Mathematical sciences with all their contents. 2) Practically all logical sciences. 3) Scientific facts in their system, classifications and empirical generalizations made on their basis – a scientific apparatus on the whole. All these sides of the scientific knowledge – a unified science – are developing all the time, and the sphere which they cover is becoming larger and larger” [19, p. 400, 428]. At the same time, in Vernadsky’s opinion 1) new sciences are filled with these elements and are formed “being aware of them”; 2) the scientific apparatus of facts and generalizations is growing as a result of the scientific work in the geometrical progression; 3) a lively dynamic process of such an existence of science, connecting the past with the present, is reflected spontaneously in the human life environment and it is a growing geological force, turning biosphere into noosphere – the sphere of mind. All three principles of the thinker can be fully applied to Ethnography, which was formed and is developing “being aware” of a unified science; its scientific apparatus is actively developing; it connects the past and the present of the human society [10].

So it is doubtless that Ethnography is a science including together with true knowledge some untrue facts but those which were received with the help of scientific means, having a hard core of science – a true, reliable layer of knowledge, which can become more trustworthy with the development of knowledge, having history, sociology, management, etc.

Since the end of the 1980s under the conditions of the increased interest of researchers in general theoretical problems of Ethnography and its local practical tasks (methodics, the membership of the ethnographic movement, the formation of new branches of the ethnographic knowledge on the boundaries with other scientific disciplines, the study of those problems which had been forbidden before, and the appearance of new branches of Ethnography), the change of the ethnographic paradigm, stipulated by informatization has begun. Due to this it became necessary to examine some problems, for example, to pay more attention to the information itself but not a document (“an ethnographic document”, “ethnographic information”, etc.). Focusing on Ethnography under the conditions of informatization, we state: due to the fact that its important overlapping sciences – library science, archives science, museum science and others – assimilated more and more the ideas of fundamental Informatics, Ethnography begins to use more actively many information technologies of overlapping sciences [12]. At the same time Russian Ethnography had a traditional model till the end of the 1980s. Some signs of the transfer into a new – information – paradigm emerged only in the 1990s. The slow tempo of the penetration of Ethnography into the modern information sphere is stipulated mainly by a bad preparation of the ethnographic community for the quick perception of realities of the information society.

Under these conditions it is very important to form the information culture of users. As Ethnography penetrates practically all spheres of knowledge and the human activity, everyone can have ethnographic information needs. Any

visitor of a library can be a potential reader of the ethnographic literature, a subscriber of the ethnographic bibliographic department; every researcher who wants to work with the documents of the local archives, to study some part of the country is a potential ethnographer; a visitor of a museum studying the history of a particular part of the country with the help of its exhibits, deals with Ethnography. Ethnographic bibliography takes a significant place in the formation of the information culture [6].

At the end of the XX century some ethnographic disciplines began to develop [14; 17]. The theory of all these disciplines is what must unite them. The study of general ethnographic problems is a unique task which can be accomplished within a corresponding scientific discipline – the theory of Ethnography. That's why theoretical publications in the sphere of Ethnography are also important for the development of Science of Science as a discipline about management of science.

The fact that all sciences (though at different time and in different contents) pass through such regular stages of the development as descriptive, logical and analytical ones on the base of which from the point of view of these or those methodological principles a qualitative analysis of the studied subject is carried out, and its highest stage – the stage of the harmonic unity of qualitative and quantitative methods of the scientific cognition, can be considered to be proved. Science – in this case – an ethnographic science, including due to the contents of its knowledge natural, technical, public data, information about the history of science and engineering and thus using methods of various sciences, what has been greatly noticed recently, begins with this logically approved stage of the development of complex methods of the research. The position of Ethnography on the boundary between natural, technical and public sciences also contributes to this.

So the theoretical Ethnography is a complex study and the generalization of the experience of functioning of a scientific system directed at the finding methods of the increase of the potential of science and raising the effectiveness of a scientific process with the help of organizational and social influence means.

Theoretical and applied needs of the society in Ethnography resulted in its interaction with other sciences [15], which provide it with reliable methods, allow to develop its own concepts. As none of the existing sciences stipulates the study of general laws of the development of nature and society, the interaction of natural, social, economical, structural and organizational and other aspects of the development of the society, this role can belong to Ethnography due to the integration of its knowledge. At the same time there is a great sphere of mutual combination of scientific interests of many sciences and Ethnography. In prospect the number of facts strengthening these relations with the aim of the further development of mutual scientific efforts of ethnographers and representatives of other sciences will grow.

The first quantitative component of Science of Science is scientometrics [20], which attracts ethnographers' attention more and more. It is known that there is a detailed study of long-term statistical data in scientometrics: of the number of scientific results; the number of publications; the number of ethnographic institutions and associations, etc. It is doubtless that the dynamics

of changes in time and according to spheres of the ethnographic knowledge of such like indicators allows to characterize essential features of the development of Ethnography. It should be admitted that there is such a statistic in the history of Ethnography which unfortunately has not been dealt with yet. It is quite evident that the use of statistical data about Ethnography in the scientific analysis will give an opportunity, though indirectly, but in some cases rather objectively, to have an idea about the tempo and tendencies of the development of such a complex historical phenomenon which is called science, will enrich scientists' ideas about both science on the whole including Russian science, and about one of its components – an ethnographic science, and will also give a more objective description of Ethnography itself – theoretical and applied.

A stimulus for the increase of effectiveness, an evidence base and the unity of decisions offered by Ethnography was mathematization of science. Mathematization of Ethnography raises the level of understanding laws of the studied part of the objective world, widens and improves a logical apparatus and made generalizations, conclusions, recommendations. At the same time, on the one hand, Ethnography must actively use quantitative methods of the analysis to solve its main problems, and on the other hand, it should be taken into consideration that not all aspects of the development of Ethnography can be described mathematically. And there is one more principle. Scientometrical, first of all quantitative methods of the study of Ethnography, is not a panacea. It is true that information processes in the ethnographic science, documentation ethnographic flows can be studied with the help of quantitative methods, but they must be based on the active use of the data of the scientific monitoring, questionnaires, some expertise, etc. It is wrong to refer all quantitative methods of the analysis to scientometrical ones [4]. Scientometrical methods have not been used in Ethnography until recently.

The second quantitative part of Science of Science is bibliometrics which is defined as “quantitative analyses of bibliographic features of the main part of literature” [8, p. 50–51]. We raised a question about the use of some bibliometrical approaches in the identification and analysis of ethnographic documents [see 7]. Bibliometrics as a quantitative research is not directed at the process of getting exact information about the problems of the ethnographic science but at the identification of its development tendencies. When one uses a bibliometrical approach to the analysis of Ethnography, secondary information, represented in various databases can be helpful. The use of bibliometrical methods of citing in the ethnographic research will point at the structure of the ethnographic knowledge (a theoretical aspect), will help in the search of new ethnographic documents (a practical aspect), and will also result in the bibliometrical evaluation of various examined objects: scientists, ethnographic publications, etc.

At the present moment there is a growing interest in the humanistic aspects of science, a specific discipline is formed – the ethics of science. It is doubtless that such an approach focuses on many problems of the ethos of the ethnographic science due to the publicity of the ethnographic community. It is time to raise a question about the formulation of an ethnographer's Code of honour. From this point of view principles, suggested by V.V. Ilyin and peculiar, in his opinion, only for the socio-humanitarian cognition [5, p. 122–125], some principles of the Code of professional honour of the association of British museums [18] can be of some interest.

Those who deal with the ethnographic science must pay a special attention to the problems of interrelations between Ethnography and the authorities, the boundaries of the regulation of the science, the character of consequences (especially negative ones) of this regulation on the part of both state institutions, business and the society [9]. V.I. Vernadsky stated that “a scientific thought must not come across the state power if the state works properly, because *it is the main source of the people’s wealth, the basis of the state power*” [19, p. 405].

Thus science has always been influenced by the society, in its turn influencing the public progress greatly. It affects the development of ways and methods of the material production, conditions of our life. Due to the use of scientific innovations in engineering and technology global changes of productive forces take place. Science influences the spiritual life of the society not only indirectly but also directly, as a result it affects the social life on the whole. It refers in a full way to Ethnography. Its scientific analysis can enrich not only general ideas about science on the whole and Russian science in particular but Ethnography itself, optimize its humanistic influence on the state and society.

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Краеведение как философско-культурологический феномен: науковедческий подход

Л. Ю. Королёва, Г. П. Пирожков

ФГБОУ ВПО «Тамбовский государственный технический университет», г. Тамбов

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Аннотация: Впервые в литературе рассмотрена программа науковедческого анализа краеведения как научной и учебной дисциплины. Представлено определение краеведения.

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