

Iconographic Heritage of the Caucasus

The Photographic Collections of Baron de Baye

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Abstract Famous archaeologist and ethnographer Joseph Berthelot Baron de Baye (1853-1931) travelled to the Caucasus in 1897-1904. The photographs taken during his travels are kept in museums, archives and private collections in France. We have developed an integrated database for the consolidation of these photo collections, which allowed us to specify the place, the date of the shots, as well as to identify the people and architectural monuments. The article analyses the importance of these photographs in terms of the development of the history of photography and also discusses their role in cultural transfer between the Caucasus and Europe.

Keywords Baron de Baye. Photography. Caucasus. Collections. Cultural transfer.

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1 Introduction

Photographs taken by French archaeologist Joseph Berthelot Baron de Baye (1853-1931) in the Russian Empire during 1897-1910 are stored in museums, archives and private collections in France. Baron de Baye is well known both to the researchers of the prehistory

of France and to those who study the history of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries of the Russian Empire and its cultural relations with France. De Baye's scientific expeditions and travels have been the subject of a number of researches and publications; however, the photographs taken by him during his trips have not been studied duly or published before.

This research project originated in 2008 when I was offered at the *Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac* to have a look at Baron de Baye's photographic albums. The albums had been acquired by the museum not long before and they had not been digitized yet. I found the collection very interesting and worthy of extensive research. An agreement was concluded between the *Embassy of Georgia to the Republic of France* and the MQB to enable the initial joint study of the afore-mentioned collection by me and Carine Peltier, the Head of the Museum's *Iconothèque* Department. This study was carried out during October-November 2009, and in December of the same year, I transferred to the MQB the data obtained during the initial phase of the research: the first results of the identification of people and places shown in the photographs. The initial stage of the research had demonstrated the significance of these photographs for the study of the history and cultural heritage of Georgia and the Caucasus region; therefore, this project was continued at the initiative of the *Embassy of Georgia to the Republic of France*: on June 22, 2011, an agreement on scientific and cultural cooperation was signed between the *Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac* and the *Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts*. Based on this agreement, the MQB transferred to the GNCM digital copies of the photographs for further study. I was able to continue the research of the photo collection as part of this project. Unfortunately, the exhibition in Georgia envisaged under the cooperation agreement did not take place due to certain reasons.

As part of my PhD work at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales*, from 2014 I resumed the study of Baron de Baye's photographs preserved at various institutions and private collections in France. As a result, I created a database comprised of all the photographs taken by Baron de Baye in the Caucasus during his scientific expeditions over the period of 1897-1904.

The present article offers the results of the research of the aforementioned photos; furthermore, it presents Baron de Baye's photographic activities and reviews this collection using the cultural transfer example.¹

1 The study of de Baye's photo collection allowed us to explore series of important issues that will be discussed and given in subsequent publications.

1.1 Baron de Baye in the Caucasus

Baron de Baye was a self-educated archaeologist who performed first archaeological excavations at the age of 19 and discovered Neolithic graves carved in chalk rocks, of a type completely unknown to the nineteenth-century archaeology. In his article, Philippe Roux provides details of the scientific context in which young de Baye entered archaeology: initially, French scientists showed great interest towards his discoveries, although many begrudged de Baye later (Roux 2011, 4-12). Young self-educated archaeologist struggles to gain a foot in the field of science in France, and becomes interested in research outside France from the 1880s.

In 1890, de Baye takes part in the 8th International Congress of Archaeology in Moscow (Ėnciklopedičeskij 1890, 228). De Baye soon gets close to the Russian aristocracy. He has a particularly close friendship with Count Sergey Sheremetev² and also attends the coronation ceremony of Emperor Nicholas II in 1896 in the capacity of an official representative of the French delegation (Koronacionnyj 1899, 330). During 1895-1913, he makes annual scientific business trips to the Russian Empire under the French Ministry of National Education. Evidently, due to his shattered reputation in France, research in the Russian Empire opens to de Baye an opportunity of professional rehabilitation. During 1897-1904, he travels to the Caucasus annually for two-three months to conduct ethnographic expeditions. Often, he first stays in Tiflis, where his circle of friends grows year by year, and next he travels to the South and North Caucasus. De Baye's initial goal is to carry out archaeological excavations, although he is unable to pursue it due to the law passed in the Russian Empire in 1889 that mandated a special permit – the *Otkrytij list* – for archaeological excavations on state lands (Sorokina 2011, 453). The permit was issued by the Russian Imperial Archaeological Commission, and due to strict conditions, obtaining permit was hard for archaeologists of the Russian Empire, leave alone foreign archaeologists. This is the primary reason why de Baye gets interested in the ethnography of the Caucasus. In 1899 he notes in a business trip report³ addressed to the Minister of National Education that he had followed his friends' advice to introduce himself as an ethnographer to everyone in the Caucasus and this has enabled him to purchase ethnographic as well as archaeological collections.

De Baye conducts expeditions at his own expense and sends the purchased collections to the French Ministry of National Education.

² Sergey Sheremetev (1844-1918) - Russian historian, public figure and collector. When he travelled to the Russian Empire, Baron de Baye mostly stayed at Sheremetev's place in Moscow or their various estates.

³ ANF. F/17/2936/B.

Upon return to France, after each scientific business trip, de Baye organizes exhibitions and conferences to present the results and photos taken during the trips. Furthermore, he organizes exhibitions using archaeological and ethnographic materials purchased during business trips, and after the exhibitions are over, he donates these collections to French museums. His articles are published in various scientific publications. He also annually publishes brochures illustrated with his own photos, providing a detailed narrative about his every scientific business trips.

In 1914, at the beginning of the World War I, de Baye is in Russia, being unable to return to France due to the circumstances. After the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution he is in a precarious situation and finds shelter in the Museum of History of Moscow; some of his friends have died and others have been detained. He manages to return to France only in 1920 (Roux 2011, 19). Weakened by illness, de Baye is no longer able to engage in scientific activities. Disappointed by the fact that his scientific studies have not been properly appreciated by scientists and curators (Baye 1964), he sorts his archives and photographs and donates them to various societies and institutions – supposedly, his last attempt to attend to his own scientific heritage.

2 Sources and Methodology

Baron de Baye's archives have been put out for bids in France numerous times over the past 15 years. These lots included various archive materials of de Baye and his family (including de Baye's correspondence with friends and colleagues), books written by him, family photo albums, and photographs taken during scientific expeditions. The collections of many museums and archives of France have been replenished as a result of these auctions. I have been able to fully examine these collections; however, this article will focus solely on the collections that include photographs taken by Baron de Baye in the Caucasus.

Baron de Baye's 14 photo albums preserved at the *Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac* were purchased⁴ at an auction in 2006 (Artcurial 2006). Kodak red-covered albums contain photographs taken by Baron de Baye in the Russian Empire during 1897-1910. This includes a total of 1,319 photos, 752 of which have been taken during the trip to the Caucasus in 1897-1903. Some albums contain postcards. All photos are taken by Baron de Baye, except for 5 stereo photos with cuts in the middle that must be authored by the photogra-

⁴ Along with the albums, this lot contained Baron de Baye's brochures compiled as a book, with the name of one of the brochures used as a common title: *En Petite Russie*.

pher Dimitri Ermakov,⁵ based on the numbering and captions. There are 4 photos on every page of the album. The photos are often accompanied by Baron de Baye's hand-written captions. The photographs are printed on aristotype paper.

Baron de Baye's family albums are also stored at the *Archives départementales de la Marne*. Among them, there is only one album that depicts de Baye's travels: this is a blue-covered album with two photos per page with the inscription "Album" in Russian on the outer cover.⁶ Out of 64 photos, 63 were taken in Caucasus in 1897, 1903 and 1904.

The fund of the *Société de Géographie* housed at the National Library of France contains about 470 photographs which had been donated by de Baye to the SG over the years (Fierro 1986) – some of the photographs were donated after returning from expeditions, while others in 1927. This collection also contains photos printed on glossy paper that were supposedly intended for a dummy copy. Only 99 of these photographs were taken by de Baye in the Caucasus.

The collection preserved at the *Institut d'études slaves*⁷ is for the first time briefly mentioned by Éliane Fouchard in her article (1992, 337), according to which "de Baye's small collection of photographs is stored without an inventory code". Indeed, this is a fairly sizeable fund: several hundreds of photographs taken by various photographers, including Baron de Baye, are distributed in 17 boxes along with his other archives. According to a rather superficial description posted online in 2014 (Ybert 2014), these archives, or major part of these archives, were originally intended for the opening of the Museum of *Podvor'e de Saint-Serge* projected during the Baron's lifetime, in the 1920's. However, the museum was never opened and these archives were forgotten. 10 of the 17 boxes contain documents and photographs related to de Baye's trip to the Caucasus, among them 195 photos taken by the Baron.

Most of Baron de Baye's archives, as well as his brochures, are preserved in a private collection, which I was able to view thanks to Jean-Jacques Charpy, an archaeologist and a curator. Only few photos taken in the Caucasus were found here. De Baye's album previously owned by another collector is now stored at the *Musée du vin de Champagne et d'Archéologie régionale*.

I have developed an integrated database for the consolidation of these photo collections. The following fields have been specified: 1.

5 Dimitri Ermakov (1846-1916) - famous photographer of the Russian Empire. Ermakov learned photography in the army, as a topographer. In 1866 he opened a studio in Tiflis, where he made portraits and sold the photos he brought back from his travels. He is particularly famous for his photographs of the landscapes, monuments and populations of the Caucasus.

6 ADM. 43 J 62.

7 IES. Baron de Baye's Archives.

Index number of the photo, 2. Inventory number (according to an institution where a photo is kept), 3. A title given by de Baye, 4. Year taken, 5. Location of a shot, 6. Title assigned by me in case of an untitled photo, 7. Description of a photo, 8. Location where a photo is stored, 9. The place of publishing, 10. Comment, 11. Keywords.

At the same time, I have scrutinized de Baye's archives, personal diaries, correspondence, and the printed press in France, Switzerland, and the Russian Empire of that period where I have found multiple reports about his expeditions. Furthermore, the memories of Baron's contemporaries and fellow travellers have also been studied. Based on the combination of these materials and photographs I have been able to specify location, date of a number of photos, as well as identify the individuals depicted in photos. As for the architectural monuments, I have compared the photos to the same monuments taken by other nineteenth-century photographers, and later, to their present condition.

Combining the photos into a single database has enabled me to find duplicates. I have compared the inscriptions made by de Baye on the duplicates. Based on this, I have identified errors in the captions of the photographs in the portion of the collection stored at the National Library of France that de Baye had transferred to the SG in 1927. De Baye suffered from arthritis close to the end of his life; hence, his handwriting had changed considerably from the 1920s. I have made this observation thanks to the personal diaries kept by de Baye for 40 years in a private collection. The captions on the photos donated in 1927 should have been made in the 1920s. Perhaps this explains errors in indicated locations on some of the photos in the collection.

Out of the total of 1,825 known photos taken by de Baye during his travels to the Russian Empire during 1897-1910, about 1,140 have been taken in the Caucasus. This number implies the same shots printed several times. This number is presumably going to increase in the future, for the location of the originals of some of the photos published in de Baye's brochures is still unknown.

3 Baron de Baye as a Photographer

The photos taken by Baron de Baye in the Caucasus differ significantly from the ones taken by his other contemporary travellers. De Baye is not interested in shooting indoors, he takes everything *en plein air*. His photographs depict landscapes, architecture, daily life of cities and villages, various religious holidays, etc. He aims to discover new, unfamiliar places with his own camera and therefore, upon arrival to each new city or village, he goes to a market to take portraits of the locals. Such setting enables him to discover a great variety of

‘types’ of people in a day. Throughout his travels, de Baye also concentrates on a variety of topics; for example, he shoots Jewish settlements scattered in the regions of the Caucasus, or attends religious holidays in order to depict them. One of de Baye’s favourite themes is showing the crossroads of Europe and Asia at the example of everyday life in the Caucasus. To achieve this, he takes a series of portraits on the streets of Tiflis throughout years. He demonstrates the fusion of Europe and Asia using European and Caucasian costumes in a single shot in these photos.

When reading de Baye’s texts a kind of hasty style common to his narration strikes the eye – he attempts to squeeze several stories in a small book and enrich it with legends and oral traditions. One gets the same impression after an initial glance at the photos: it looks like there is some haste, impatience and the author tries to take as many shots as possible. Moreover, it should be noted that such haste in no way means superficial approach to a story, for each shot is well thought out in advance. De Baye’s wish to provide as much information as possible in his texts and photographs must be due to the idea he mentions in one of his texts: he says that one should hurry when researching the peoples of the Caucasus, as they are doomed to extinction and loss of originality due to the Russian invasion of this region and assimilation with them (Baye 1899a, 5).

3.1 Eastman Kodak Photo Camera

During the study of photo collections one should first determine a camera a photographer uses, since camera model and technical features are the determinants of a photographer’s working style. In her study of various types of photo cameras, Marie-Sophie Corcy stresses that the production of small portable cameras has developed significantly from the 1880s (Corcy 1995, 20). These cameras have played a major role in the spread of photography: these lightweight, practical, and convenient cameras have proven to be particularly attractive to novice photographers. George Eastman’s Kodak is worthy of particular mention; it was put in commercial use in 1889 (Corcy 1995, 21). This small camera became very popular as soon as it appeared on the market. This popularity was due to the fact the Kodak camera used cellulose nitrate photo film. This camera was lightweight and convenient to carry, eliminating the risk of the breakage of glass negatives while travelling. Perhaps this is why Baron de Baye got interested in Kodak’s camera; he starts his photographic career with this camera brand. The date of de Baye’s first photographs is 1897, when he travelled to the Caucasus. When examining his publications and archives one cannot see that he had used any other camera during his scientific expeditions before this date.

The camera brand can be established using several sources. In a postcard⁸ sent from Paris to Tiflis on October 31, 1901, Tedo Sakhokia,⁹ a Georgian ethnographer tells Baron de Baye about sending him a camera.

J'attends votre retour avec impatience. Aujourd'hui, M. Gogobéridzé part pour Tiflis. Il vous apportera votre "Codak" [sic]. Bien des chausures [sic] aimables.

I look forward to your return impatiently. Today Mr. Gogobéridzé¹⁰ is travelling to Tiflis. He will deliver your Codak [sic] to you. Best wishes.¹¹

It is unclear from the postcard whether de Baye had left this photo camera behind in Paris, or whether he had asked for a new camera, although, irrespective of the spelling mistake, it is about a Kodak brand camera.

Reels of flexible cellulose nitrate film were placed in the Kodak's camera. One film fit 12 exposures. The size of each exposure and, hence, of a printed photo was 9 × 9 cm. Cardboard boxes of the film, with Baron's inscriptions, are stored at the IES¹² as well as in a private collection. Several negatives of the film are kept in the same private collection. No corroborated source has survived to indicate whether it was de Baye himself who developed and printed the photos.

3.2 Cinematic Impression

Static shots are rare among de Baye's photos. Most of the photos show people in motion, which attaches special life and rhythm to these shots. This is firstly owing to the technical specifications of the camera: the Kodak camera used by the Baron has short exposure time, allowing

⁸ GNCM. 1035.

⁹ Tedo Sakhokia (1868-1956) - a Georgian ethnographer, lexicologist, translator, Correspondent Member of the *Académie de Reims* and Foreign Correspondent Member of the *Society of Anthropology of Paris* - was friends with de Baye and accompanied him during the Abkhazia trip in 1903.

¹⁰ Nikoloz Gogoberidze (1838-1911), a Georgian publicist, entrepreneur and teacher. He supposedly had good relations with Baron de Baye. In 1900 the exhibition of de Baye's collections from the Caucasus was opened in Paris, at the *Musée Guimet*; signatures of Nikoloz Gogoberidze and Tedo Sakhokia are found in a Book of Impressions stored in a private collection.

¹¹ Unless otherwise specified, the translations are from the Author.

¹² IES. Box 16.



Figure 1 Joseph de Baye, *Station Samtredi entre Batoum et Tiflis, photographie prise, le train en marche* (Samtredia station between Batumi and Tiflis, the photograph taken from the moving train). October 29, 1897. Aristotype paper, 9 × 9 cm. ADM, 43 J 62. © ADM

Figure 2 Joseph de Baye, *Route militaire géorgienne. Dans les neiges au point le plus élevé* (Georgian Military Road. In the snows at the highest point). November 7, 1897. Joseph de Baye, *En Géorgie*, 1898, 16

a photographer to obtain a high quality image and flawlessly capture fast motion on a tape. De Baye manages to take photos from a moving train [fig. 1] and a carriage [fig. 2] thanks to this characteristic. Such an obvious technical advantage¹³ over his contemporary photographers enables de Baye to delve more extensively into the daily life and customs of the locals and to deepen his research into ethnography. He takes a series of photos during various religious and official celebrations, as well as dances, wrestling competitions, grape harvests, etc. When the photos of each series are arranged in order, a full picture of an event opens before our eyes – photos are like movie shots enabling us to fully revive the scenes. This is especially impressive in case of dances, since such photos enable to restore dance techniques. Owing to his camera, de Baye was able to capture and fit significant content in 5-7 exposures and create an illusion of a film show using the succession of these photos at his conferences in France. It is hard to say whether de Baye's use of this cinematic effect was deliberate. Could he had been influenced by the films of the Lumiere Brothers who held their initial shows in Paris in 1895? Or perhaps he arrived at the idea

¹³ During this period the Kodak camera has not entered the Caucasus market yet. First advertisements of Kodak appear in the newspapers of Tiflis from 1900.

of taking such serial photos independently? The only thing I can say definitively is that the technical parameters of the camera enable him to achieve this effect. Thus, from the very first travel to the Caucasus, and thanks to his photo camera, de Baye turns into a photographer and an ethnographer, leaving his original profession of a prehistoric archaeologist behind, in the past.

3.3 Multi-Plane Photos

The examination of the photos shows that de Baye usually divides photographs into several planes. Every frame is well thought out, even though these are not pre-staged scenes. Following careful inspection of a seemingly insignificant photo one can find information hidden in the background – items or people whose identification and explanation grant particular importance to these photos.

On the photo taken in Golovinsky Avenue [fig. 3], main street of Tiflis of that period, first thing that meets the eye is two men sitting on a wooden bench on the frontal plane – one is in the centre; as for the other man, only his arm is visible. At a glance, one would be surprised about why a photographer would shoot such an insignificant frame. However, after careful observation one can notice the sign plate of the photo studio of Eduard Klar,¹⁴ a famous photographer, in the background, across the street. During his travels, de Baye often takes photos of signboards of local photo studios. The series of these photos include an exposure taken in Sokhumi showing the signboard of the studio of photographer Leonid Pimenidis¹⁵ along with a group of men [fig. 4]. Apparently, de Baye tries to follow the development of photography in the Caucasus. He also had a large collection of photographs by local photographers, including Dimitri Ermakov, which is presently stored at the IES.¹⁶

I would like to bring another interesting example of multi-plane photos. This is a photo taken in 1897, in Kardanakhi village, Kakheti, at Sergey Sheremetev's vineyard [fig. 5]. A Georgian gardener of the vineyard is in the centre, Sheremetev and Sergey Jemchoujnikov¹⁷ are barely visible on the left, behind the vine leaves (they can be identified by referring to other photos taken on the same day). Such puzzle-photos are characteristic of de Baye during his trip to the Caucasus.

¹⁴ Eduard Klar (1861-1922) – a photographer, was born in Ukraine, in Poltava – moved to Tiflis in 1893 and opened his photo studio in Golovinsky Avenue, city centre. He was famous for photo portraits.

¹⁵ Leonid Pimenidis – a photographer of Greek origin, who had his studio in Sokhumi. Few details of his life are known.

¹⁶ IES. Box 14.

¹⁷ Sergey Jemchoujnikov (1863-1919) – Sergey Sheremetev's family physician and friend – travelled to Georgia together with Sheremetev and Baron de Baye in 1897.



Figure 3
Joseph de Baye, *Tiflis*.
1900. Aristotype paper,
9 × 9 cm. MQB, 70.2006.26.6.
© Joseph Berthelot de Baye
(c) musée du quai Branly -
Jacques Chirac

3.4 Presence of Shadow

De Baye's shadow is often seen in photos. Shadow in a frame is not by accident; it is a signature prevalent during the period when photo cameras did not yet have a delay function and photographer would capture themselves in photos they took. Baron de Baye uses this very signature in the scores of his photos whenever his shadow can be seen. He tries this way to capture himself in photographs. Naturally, the position of the sun is crucial for the photos taken *en plein air* and the sun should always be behind a photographer to achieve a good exposure. And this means that the likelihood that the author will appear in a frame is high. However, based on the observation of Baron de Baye's photographs it is evident that the distance between the lens and an object is always deliberate to achieve a shadow in the exposure. He had been using this signature method throughout the years. He places his shadow near the signboard of the photographer Pimenidis in the photo taken in Sokhumi [fig. 4], thus entering in a kind of dialogue with his colleague. He places his shadow near Sergey Sheremetev in the photo taken on the Georgian military road, to emphasize his presence on this road [fig. 6]. The baron's inscription made in ink next to the shadow further accentuates the author's presence in the exposure.



Figure 4

Joseph de Baye, *Sokhumi*.
1903. Aristotype paper,
9 × 9 cm. MQB, 70.2006.26.12.
© Joseph Berthelot de Baye
(c) musée du quai Branly -
Jacques Chirac

3.5 How to Show the Presence of other Photographers

De Baye's photos have another characteristic - showing his fellow traveller photographers in the photos. Tripod is not needed for a Kodak camera, therefore, it seems particularly strange that photos often show a tripod. Following research, I have established that this tripod belonged to other photographers who accompanied him during his travels. This is another technical feature the Baron uses as his signature, in addition to a shadow. What might such a hint mean? Did de Baye want to demonstrate through his photos his technical advantage over his fellow travellers enabled by the Kodak camera? Or was his only intention to leave an imprint of other photographers in his photos, just like his own shadow? No precise answers can perhaps be found to these questions; nevertheless, these features have enabled me to reproduce the moments of taking photos, find his fellow travellers, and thus to perform a more thorough study of the history of their travels.

Photographer's hand and a tripod can be seen on the left in the photo taken in 1897 in Kardanakhi village [fig. 7]. I have noticed that his book, which Baron published after his return from this trip, also includes two photographs taken by Jemchoujnikov in the same village (Baye 1898, 27-8). The fact that Jemchoujnikov travelled with de Baye is also confirmed by the latter's diaries, kept in a private



Figure 5

Joseph de Baye, *Les vignes du comte Chérémeteff et le jardinier en chef* (The vines of Count Cheremetev and the head gardener). 1897. Aristotype paper, 9 × 9 cm. MQB, 70.2006.26.1. © Joseph Berthelot de Baye (c) musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac

collection. This was the primary information based on which I have considered that the tripod belonged to Jemchoujnikov. Similarly, I have presumed that it is Jemchoujnikov who is depicted as a photographer with a photo camera attached to a tripod on a photo taken on the military road of Georgia at the beginning of the same trip [fig. 6]. The examination of the archives kept at the IES has corroborated my presumption. Jemchoujnikov wrote in a letter¹⁸ sent to de Baye from Moscow to Paris on January 23, 1898:

Mon cher monsieur le Baron! Je vous envoie les photographies faites par moi et copiées par mr Ermakoff à Tiflis - ces mêmes que vous avez vues déjà.

My dear monsieur Baron! I am sending you the photos taken by me and copied by Mr. Ermakov in Tiflis - these are the ones you have already seen.

This letter is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, one of the photos stored in the same archives¹⁹ shows exactly the same exposure, the

¹⁸ IES. Box 3.

¹⁹ IES. Box 14.

**Figure 6**

Joseph de Baye,
*Près du village Sioni
 sur la route militaire
 géorgienne* (Near the village
 Sioni on the Georgian Military
 Road). 1897. Aristotype paper,
 9 × 9 cm. MQB, 70.2006.26.1.
 © Joseph Berthelot de Baye
 (c) musée du quai Branly -
 Jacques Chirac

same group of women as in the afore-mentioned photo. The only difference is the format of the photo, as well as the focus is more towards the left, compared to the Baron's photo. Consequently, my assumption that the tripod belonged to Jemchoujnikov was confirmed. Secondly, this letter confirms a prevalent opinion among nineteenth-century researchers of photography according to which Ermakov made copies of the photos taken by other photographers and posted them for sale in his catalogue.

It is noteworthy that de Baye published this photo taken in Kakheti in his brochure, which depicts his first trip to Georgia (Baye 1898, 29). Both Jemchoujnikov's hand and tripod are clearly visible in the published photo; this proves that the presence of this photographer in the frame was deliberate. Otherwise, de Baye would have cut off the left edge prior to publishing this photo.

I would like to offer another similar example. On October 6, 1898 (Kavkaz Кавказ, 24 September 1898), Baron de Baye and his friend Hugues Krafft²⁰ left Tiflis for a visit to Yerevan and Echmiadzin (Baye 1899b, 22). During the trip they are taking photos: landscapes, cit-

20 Hugues Krafft (1853-1935) – a French philanthropist, traveller and photographer. Travelled to the Caucasus in 1896 and 1898-99.



Figure 7
Joseph de Baye, *Khordanakhi*.
1897. Aristotype paper, 9 × 9
cm. MQB, 70.2006.26.1.
© Joseph Berthelot de Baye
(c) musée du quai Branly -
Jacques Chirac

ies and villages, mosques and churches, markets and passers-by. The photos of two French friends have such resemblance that it would be impossible to even identify the author, if not for their different format. They stop near Yerevan to take photos of the camped Kurds. In de Baye's photo series taken at this location a tripod is seen on the right side of a girl's portrait [fig. 8]. Although, this tripod may not be Hugues Krafft's, since Krafft used a photo binocular for this photo shoot, and it did not require a tripod (Cheishvili 2017, 33). While studying Dimitri Ermakov's collections, a portrait of the same girl has caught my attention (Masters 2014, 172). The title of the photo is: "9916. Yerevan. Tatar gypsy woman. 885". According to the report sent by the Baron de Baye to the National Ministry of France,²¹ he was accompanied by Dimitri Ermakov on a trip to Georgia in 1897. Ermakov often served as a guide for foreign researchers visiting the Caucasus. This photo by Ermakov that pictures the same person as that in the photos of de Baye and Krafft, confirms that he accompanied French travellers in October 1898 in Armenia. The comparison of the works of the three photographers listed here has enabled to date Ermak-

²¹ ANF. F/17/2936/B.

ov's photograph as well, which is important because he never referenced a date of photographs in the catalogues.

4 Photographs as a Vector of Cultural Transfer

According to the concept of cultural transfer developed by Michel Espagne, transfer of any cultural object from one context to another results in the transformation and resemanticization of the content of that object (Espagne 2013, 1). This transformation can be fully recognized only by taking into account the historical vectors of that transfer.²² Baron de Baye's photo collection is a clear testament of this concept of cultural transfer - the content of the photographs taken in the Caucasus has undergone many transformations over 120 years.

4.1 From Scientific Expeditions to Personal Diaries

These photographs, with their original purpose and content, depict de Baye's trip and show his first steps in ethnographic and anthropological photography. However, it should be pointed out here that de Baye does not consider himself a photographer; He perceives this valuable collection, accumulated over the years as merely auxiliary material for ethnographic research - illustrations he shows to the audience during scientific presentations and then publishes in his brochures.

The entire pool of de Baye's photographs can be divided into two parts: on the one hand, there are photos which he donated after returning from the trip, as well as in the 1920s, to various French societies and organizations, and, on the other hand, there are photos that he kept for himself and arranged in albums. The research has showcased that the photos inserted in the albums acquire a personal emotional importance for Baron. Emotional inscriptions on the photos and the edges of the album clearly show that these photos change their original content, turning from the illustrations of travel into the source of personal emotions. Over years, the more proficient he becomes, the more de Baye uses photography to convey his personal emotions. Like a page of a diary, the pages of the album reflect the author's mood along with the memories: "Tout seul !", "Encore tout seul !" - he writes such captions on self-portraits taken in Russia.²³

²² The purpose of the article is not to analyse the concept of Michel Espagne, I just want to indicate that photographs taken in the Caucasus during the nineteenth century are less studied as an example of cultural transfer. About early photography in the Caucasus, see Gorshenina, Sonntag 2018.

²³ MQB. 70.2006.6.12.



Figure 8

Joseph de Baye, *Kurdes près d'Erivan* (Kurds near Erivan). October 12, 1898. Aristotype paper, 9 × 9 cm. MQB, 70.2006.26.14.
© Joseph Berthelot de Baye
(c) musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac



Figure 9

Aleksandre Matatashvili, *Guests: Inspired by Daft Punk and Vintage Georgian Traditional Street Style Fashion*. 2021. Digital photo.
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4.2 Photographs as a Way in the Fight for Independence

The albums do not represent an end point of resemanticization. Against the backdrop of the historical and political changes in early twentieth century, these photographs change their content once again and become a tool for political struggle in a new historical context. De Baye's publications and photographs have acquired a new meaning in France during the 1920s – the Government of the Republic of Georgia in Exile showed interest towards this material. Following the annexation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921, the Georgian government moved to France into political emigration, where the members of the government continued their political struggle by organizing conferences and various events. Along with political matters, conferences were used as a venue to introduce to Europe the life and culture of the Caucasus. Archive materials show that for this very purpose, at meetings, receptions and other events organized for supporting Georgia's independence they used the photos de Baye had taken in Georgia and brochures published by him. The Baron's diaries show that Georgians living in France were on friendly terms with him and often visited him. Two notes in the 1929 diary have caught my attention:

Le 12 mai 1929. Visite de M. Takaïchvili à 5h1/2, emporté brochures.

May 12, 1929. At half past five, Mr. Takaishvili²⁴ visited me and took away the brochures.

Le 17 mai 1929. Ai reçu une lettre d'invitation du Président de l'Association des Amis de la Géorgie, sans doute les nombreux géorgiens que j'ai connus au Caucase.

May 17, 1929. I received an invitation letter from the President of the Association of Friends of Georgia. These are perhaps those many Georgians whom I have met in the Caucasus.

Undoubtedly, the brochures Takaishvili took away were intended for the events organized in support of the independence of Georgia. Georgians in emigration in France who had known de Baye since his visit to Georgia regarded him the best cognizant scholar and a sup-

24 Ekvtime Takaishvili (1862-1953) – a Georgian archaeologist, historian, public figure, one of the members of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia – was in political emigration in France during 1921-45. He was on close terms with Baron de Baye which is evident from the memories and publications of both scientists.

porter of the Caucasus. The same is evidenced by a letter dated February 15, 1930, in which Nino Nicoladzé-Coquet (1881-1972) writes to Baron that in Europe he is the best person to promote and support Georgia.²⁵ Nicoladzé-Coquet goes on to thank de Baye for sending photos of the Caucasus that they had used during the presentation about Georgia. Some traces of this correspondence can also be found in the Baron's diary for January 1930, although those letters have not survived.

Consequently, the photos taken in the Caucasus become a kind of tool to continue the political fight - these photos are not mere illustrations; rather, along with the author's inscriptions in the brochures they represent a vector that should convey to the audience Georgian culture not only from ethnographic perspective but also from the perspective of the fight for Georgia's liberation.

4.3 Contemporary Studies

If the transfer through the photos was directed from the Caucasus to France, in modern studies it has changed direction towards the Caucasus. Since 2010, several TV channels of Georgia have dedicated several programs to the collection preserved at the MQB, giving rise to the first wave of great interest towards these photographs. Digitized and online uploaded MQB photo collection, to which photos posted on the website of the National Library of France were added later, became very popular in Russian-language and Georgian-language blogs and social networks. Since these digitized photos are now available to everyone, I can assume that they have already virtually returned to the shooting location. This time, from France to the Caucasus, these photos have transferred and brought back to the Caucasus the tangible and intangible cultural heritage that was destroyed or forgotten during the twentieth century. Furthermore, these photos have even acquired a new life. Aleksandre Matatashvili, Georgian architect and digital collage artist, has offered his own interpretation of one of the photos taken by de Baye in Tiflis and published it on his Instagram profile on January 21, 2021 [fig. 9]. De Baye took this photo in 1900 at Golovinsky Avenue, and it is part of the series in which the photographer presents Tiflis as a crossroad of Europe and Asia, using the example of the outfits of passers-by: two men in the foreground are wearing Caucasian "Chokha" (National Suit) while a man in a European outfit is seen in the background. An inventory number assigned by the National Library of France is inscribed in the upper right corner of the photo, and Matatashvili has

25 IES. Box 2.

placed his signature opposite this number, in the lower right corner. The artist first coloured this photo and later added various elements: flying saucers in the sky, and painted helmets like the famous French electronic music duo *Daft Punk* on the heads of two men. The title of the work is *Guests: Inspired by Daft Punk and vintage Georgian traditional street style fashion*. According to Matatashvili, main elements of this work are intercultural synthesis and time travel; the aim of the collage is to try to preserve old historical and cultural elements in a new way and to take beyond the stereotypical perception of time (Matatashvili, pers. comm.).

5 Conclusion

Baron de Baye's photographs are the largest iconographic collection preserved in France that depict the Caucasus in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the present article, I have endeavoured to show the initial results of my multi-year study. The above mentioned content clearly shows the material and cultural heritage of the Caucasus, part of which was destroyed during the twentieth century, and part of which has survived in a modified form. Moreover, this is the first time we have got serial story-driven photos that offers unique opportunity for the exploration and restoration of intangible cultural heritage.

The photo collection has enabled me to study the photographic activities of Baron de Baye and identify his style of work. De Baye takes utmost use of technical capabilities of a photo camera to achieve versatile and interesting photos, however, he does not refer about himself as a photographer anywhere in the brochures and diaries. Hence my view expressed above that the Baron considers the photographs as auxiliary illustrative material for his ethnographic research. From the present perspective, in my opinion, de Baye's photographs are more important than his publications - this material has got a much deeper content for the study of the Caucasus as compared to de Baye's texts. Baron de Baye was awarded Molteni Prize in France in 1903 for the photographs taken in the Russian Empire (Trésors 2006); although, presently his name is not associated with photography. He is better known as an archaeologist, ethnographer and a traveller. That is why one of the goals of my research, along with the study of the photographs, is to establish de Baye as a photographer in the field of science.

De Baye's photo collection, as an iconographic heritage of the Caucasus, is a particularly interesting example of cultural transfer; especially that this transfer is two-way, first from the Caucasus to France, and from France to the Caucasus a century later. As mentioned above, the photographs have been resemanticized several times: loaded with

ethnographic information, it has become a tool for expressing personal memories and emotions, on the one hand, and a means for political fight, on the other. Given valuable and rich content of the material, I believe that it is even more important to continue their study. Baron de Baye's photographs will offer more interesting discoveries and will continue to be a source for research for the specialists of various fields for years to come.

List of Abbreviations

ADM = Archives départementales de la Marne.
 ANF = Archives nationales de France.
 GNCM = Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts.
 IES = Institut d'études slaves.
 MQB = Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac.
 SG = Société de Géographie.

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 IES = Institut d'études slaves, Baron de Baye's Archives. Paris.
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