

## Summary

The aim of this dissertation is to analyze the history of Warsaw photography in the period of 1864-1883. I present a special moment in the history of this medium, when from a technical curiosity and experiment it has become an inseparable element of everyday life and a factor significantly influencing and shaping the identity of modern Polish society and Polish visual culture. This dissertation is therefore primarily a study of photographic practices presented in a broad context taking into account phenomena in the area of culture, politics and customs. It extends the existing research of new perspectives, including social and anthropological studies. Photography is understood here not as an autonomous form of art or production, but as an element of 19th-century mass culture, which was born from the womb of modern industrial society and was to serve its needs. I would like to show how photographic images participated in the creation of the vision of the modern world, how the story about this world was socially produced, and finally what was the origin and consequences of adopting specific image conventions. The analysis of individual, most common types of representations, such as portraits, reproductions of works of art, views of monuments, scientific photography or reportage photography, is to help understand their functions and role in the period in question. An important part of my work is to show the functioning of photography from a comparative perspective, primarily in relation to the situation in France, Great Britain and, to a lesser extent, the United States. Although thanks to an extensive source query and the use of many unknown or previously unused documents, this work also contributes to the traditionally understood history of photography: images made in this technique, photographers and their establishments, it is primarily a study of the history of society, which medium it has adapted to your needs.

The territorial scope of the work was limited to Warsaw, in justified cases it was extended to the province of the Kingdom of Poland. There are several reasons for this decision. First of all, political, economic and social differences between particular partitions require treating each of them separately. Secondly, Warsaw, as the largest and richest Polish city in the Kingdom, was at the same time the largest market for photographic services, and the photographers operating here were pioneers in the implementation of all new inventions and improvements in Poland. What is more, Warsaw was also a reservoir of human resources, and Warsaw photographers often migrated to the provinces, hoping that their knowledge and reputation would allow them to achieve

professional success in a less competitive environment. So I treated Warsaw as a model for the functioning of the photographic services market in Poland, and the conclusions drawn on its basis seem to be decisive for the development of Polish photography in general.

The time frame for the work is limited to the years 1864-1883. The starting date is the end of the January Uprising, widely regarded as an important turning point in the history of Poland. The post-uprising period brought brutal tsarist repression and intensification of Russification on the one hand, and on the other hand marked the beginning of a mature phase of capitalism. The changes taking place in this period marked the end of feudal social relations in the Kingdom, and the place of the previous privileged class - the gentry - was taken by the middle class. At the same time, there were also groundbreaking changes in photography itself. Already at the beginning of the 1850s, taking photos was revolutionized by the introduction of the wet collodion plate process combining the greatest advantages of two previous processes: daguerreotype, which was associated with sharpness of the image, and calotype, which allowed for obtaining many prints from one negative. A few years later, the format of visiting cards was patented in France. These improvements significantly lowered the price of photography and initiated a fashion that soon spread throughout Europe. Photography has become a truly mass medium subject to market requirements. The medium has reached the maturity stage - its development was still to some extent dependent on the individual interests of photographers, but was to a much greater extent subordinated to the needs of modern society that photography had to satisfy.

In the Kingdom of Poland, these phenomena occurred with a certain delay in relation to the more industrialized countries, and it was only at the end of the 1850s that the growing role of commercial photography could be observed. This process was temporarily halted by the outbreak of the January Uprising, but it accelerated again with all its might after its collapse. It was after 1864 that the model of the functioning of the photographic services market developed, which will survive without major changes until the beginning of the 1880s.

The 1880s brought another important change in photographic technology related to the spread of the bromo-gelatin technique, commonly known as dry plate. The invention allowed to prepare plates in such a way that they did not have to be used immediately after and to store ready-made materials for a long time. Consequently, in the late 1870s, the first factories specialized in the production of dry plates on a mass scale, which led to a decrease in the prices of photographic

materials and services. It was also another step towards a significant simplification of taking pictures, opening the way to the profession for people without much knowledge in the field of chemistry or optics. Since the introduction of the new technique in Warsaw, the price of services has dropped significantly and the number of establishments has increased, among which the small ones aimed at less affluent customers have started to dominate. The profession of a photographer, so far requiring a lot of technical knowledge and aesthetic sense, has lost its prestige. At the same time, taking photos has become so simple that it is also available to amateurs, who now could use small and easy-to-use cameras. And it was in 1883, closing this dissertation, that Konrad Brandel patented one of such devices, the so-called photo revolver. On the one hand, this camera allowed him to change the profile of his activity, the basis of which was now reportage photography, and on the other hand, it quickly gained popularity among amateurs who could easily take pictures.

The structure of the dissertation is subordinated to the analysis of the most popular types of photographs taken in the 19th century. The only exception is Chapter I, entitled *Warsaw Photographic Studios in 1864-1883*, which is a kind of introduction. Its aim is to present the broad context of the functioning of Warsaw photography *ateliers*. Treating photographers primarily as entrepreneurs responsible for the success of their companies, I analyze the economic, social and legal conditions in which they happened to operate, recognizing that the decisions they made were not only the result of their individual passions, but also - and perhaps above all - by recognizing the needs and financial possibilities of customers. So I discuss the structure of the photographic services market: the evolution of the number of plants, their location, positioning and characteristics. I also analyze the marketing strategies of the most important Warsaw photographers in terms of setting prices for the services offered or promotional activities. One of these strategies was their participation in international exhibitions, which in my opinion were primarily a tool for promoting photography studios on the local market. At the same time, I would like to point out that the photographers were subject to strict control by the tsarist administration, and their activities were subject to restrictions resulting from the provisions on censorship, which significantly impeded their freedom of action. In this chapter I also discuss the influence of Warsaw photographers on provincial centers.

The second chapter is devoted to portrait, which was undoubtedly the most important area of 19th-century photographic production. It was the demand for cheap images made in the new

technique that was the main factor that contributed to the development of the photographic services market throughout Europe, starting from the 1850s. The portraits made mainly in the *cartes de visite* format were characterized by a significant degree of uniformity: both the manner of posing, as well as the props and backgrounds used were so similar in all European countries that actually only company vignettes allow the origin of a given image to be identified. Researchers recognize that this uniformization was one of the greatest advantages of photographic portraits, as it allowed to build and strengthen the identity of the bourgeoisie, i.e. the social class, which already played a leading role in capitalist societies. This issue has a wealth of literature in Western Europe and the United States, but in Poland it has not yet been elaborated on. It happens, however, that attempts are made to apply the conclusions drawn by researchers based on observations of industrial societies directly to the situation in Poland, where the industrial revolution arrived with a significant delay and where the social structure was significantly different. In this chapter, therefore, I will pay special attention to outlining the specific role of portrait photography in Poland, taking into account the local specificity.

The next chapter is devoted to photographs of monuments and works of art. This type of depiction had a long tradition in European culture and engravings on this subject were sought after by collectors throughout the modern period. However, photography offered new possibilities, allowing to capture even the smallest details, giving the illusion of fidelity to reality impossible to obtain in graphic techniques. These advantages were quickly noticed by the researchers of monuments, who began to use prints made in this technique in their work. However, photographs depicting works of art owed their true career to mass audiences. On the one hand, they have become an important part of the photographic services market, and on the other hand, they have played a significant role in disseminating knowledge about art, aesthetic education, and building a cultural identity among the broad masses of society. The latter aspect was particularly important in the context of Polish society deprived of its own state, in a situation where, after the January Uprising, teaching native history or geography was forbidden. The artists of that time also used the extraordinary popularity of photography to popularize their own work.

The documentary qualities of photography, thanks to which it became a tool in the hands of art historians, made it also the focus of attention of representatives of other scientific disciplines. Many nineteenth-century critics and journalists saw the proper calling of this medium in the

function of a scientific aid. It was used in natural sciences such as astronomy, biology and zoology, in medicine and ethnography. Its application contributed not only to many scientific discoveries, but was one of the manifestations of science entering the modern era. I present the most important examples of the use of photography by Polish scientists, demonstrate how they contributed to the progress in Polish science, and analyze the reasons why photography was used in Polish science only to a very limited extent during the period in question.

The last chapter is devoted to Warsaw. From the very beginning, photography was closely related to the city and urbanization. Its invention coincided with the birth of a modern metropolis, a natural place for its development. Its subject matter is also urban - monuments, buildings, views of construction sites, photos from various events, portraits of residents. In its early days, photography aimed on the one hand to capture the existing image of the city, to inventory the existing state of affairs, and on the other to document the changes taking place in it, accelerating the pace of life and showing it from a new perspective. In this chapter, therefore, I discuss both landscape photographs derived from the painting tradition, and the beginnings of reportage photography. A separate subsection is devoted to panoramas, aerial photography and stereoscopic photography, which have challenged the existing, traditional models of vision.

This work does not cover all issues related to Polish photography of the nineteenth century, not only because of its time and territorial limitations. Contemporary research on photography makes it possible to take up many interpretative tropes and analyze them taking into account issues that have not been taken up by me, such as, for example, collecting, institutionalization of photographic practices, and the materiality of photography. The "uses" of photography (recalling John Berger's formulation) are varied and in each of them it serves a different purpose. In this sense, this dissertation presents only one of the possible research perspectives, however, it is extremely important for the history of 19th century photography. The main goal of my work is to place it within specific social practices, within which it was only a pretext to talk about broader cultural phenomena that determined the development of photography to an equal or even greater extent than technological progress and the personal aspirations of individual photographers. Moreover, I am convinced that such an approach allows us to see in photography not only an illustration of times long gone, but also a fully-fledged participant in the cultural discourse, which on the one hand reflects the needs and expectations of Polish society, and who also actively

participated in the process of shaping this society. on the threshold of modernity, at a time when the existing social structures and system of values were eroding, and this society had to adapt to new realities. Therefore, my dissertation is an innovative approach to the discussed issues, and as such it will contribute to the improvement of our knowledge on this subject.