Knowledge about the past: a result of the interaction between man and technology

Gustavsson, Karin

2013

Citation for published version (APA):

Total number of authors:
1

General rights
Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

• Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
• You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
• You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Paper presented at the conference of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF), in Tartu, Estonia, July 2013

Author:

Karin Gustavsson, Ph D student

Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, division of Ethnology, Lund university

Knowledge about the past: a result of the interaction between man and technology

Short Abstract:

Investigations of a vanishing rural lifestyle and vernacular architecture were conducted in Scandinavia about 100 years ago. Several technologies were used – cameras with different accessories, tools for measuring, drawing and writing, and also technologies for transportation (bicycles, railways).

Long Abstract:

In my on-going PhD research project I study how investigations of a vanishing rural lifestyle and vernacular architecture was conducted in the Scandinavian countries during the first decades of the 20:th century. Several technologies were used in these documentation projects - cameras with different accessories, tools for measuring, drawing and writing, and also technologies for transportation, mainly bicycles and railways. The aim of making the documentations at the countryside was to preserve knowledge about housing and lifestyle, not primarily preservation of houses and sites.

Knowledge of considerable dimensions came out of these investigations. Several books and articles pictures (both photographs and drawings) were spread both to researchers and to public. All the photographs taken during the investigations created what can be characterized as "visual conventions" of the rural lifestyle, housing and vernacular architecture. These conventions dominated the notion of rural lifestyle for a long time - perhaps still?

The knowledge that was produced about rural lifestyle and vernacular architecture was dependent on the technology that was used, and the ideas among the men working in these projects were formed by the technical preconditions. The ideas emerging from Bruno Latour about the relations between man and thing can be used to analyse how the fieldworkers of the past interacted with their tools. The fieldworkers' way of thinking and acting was influenced by contemporary technical conditions. By studying the photographs, drawings and records from the fieldworks the dependence on technology also in knowledge that is known as a part of humanities becomes evident.