

THE HEURISTIC CAPABILITIES OF THE FAMILY EPISTOLARY TEXTS IN THE RUSSIAN STATE

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Ivan T. Shatokhin 

Svetlana B. Shatkhina 

Margarita L. Radchenko 

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine the composition of letter texts by Von Wall and his family as a potential source for the study of everyday family life by a high-ranking official of the Russian Empire in the last quarter of the nineteenth century - early twentieth century. The methodological basis of this study is the historical and anthropological approach and methods of source analysis according to sources of personal origin. This article presents the results of Von Wall. The study of the legacy of von Wall and his family focused on three Russian federal archives. The authors found several groups of correspondence from the closest circle of correspondence with Von Wall is a special group consisting of epistemological texts addressed to Von Wall, his siblings, his wife and children. Some of the features of the composition of these documents are due to various circumstances such as the establishment of interpersonal relationships in his family, how to maintain correspondence, saving drafts and copies of his correspondence by von Wahl.

Keywords: Epistolary texts. Anthropological research. Historical research. Russia.

AS CAPACIDADES HEURÍSTICAS DOS TEXTOS EPISTOLARES FAMILIARES NO ESTADO RUSSO

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RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é investigar a composição de Von Wall e sua família como uma fonte potencial para o estudo da vida familiar diária por um imperador russo sênior no último quarto do século 19 ao início do século 20. Segundo fontes, a origem do pessoal. Este artigo apresenta os resultados da Von Wall. O estudo da herança de Von Wall e sua família se concentrou em três arquivos federais russos. Os autores encontraram vários grupos de correspondência do círculo de correspondência mais próximo com Von Wall é um grupo especial que consiste em textos epistemológicos dirigidos a Von Wall, seus irmãos, sua esposa e filhos. Algumas das características da composição destes documentos foram identificadas devido a uma série de circunstâncias, incluindo as relações interpessoais estabelecidas em sua família, a forma de guarda de correspondência, a guarda de minutas e cópias de sua correspondência por Von Wall.

Palavras-chave: Textos epistolares. Pesquisa antropológica. Pesquisa histórica. Rússia.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es examinar la composición de los textos de las letras de Von Wall y su familia como una fuente potencial para el estudio de la vida familiar cotidiana por un alto funcionario del Imperio ruso en el último cuarto del siglo XIX - principios del siglo XX. La base metodológica de este estudio es el enfoque histórico y antropológico y los métodos de análisis de las fuentes según fuentes de origen personal. Este artículo presenta los resultados de von Wall. El estudio del legado de von Wall y su familia se centró en tres archivos federales rusos. Los autores encontraron que varios grupos de correspondencia del círculo de correspondencia más cercano con Von Wall es un grupo especial formado por textos epistemológicos dirigidos a Von Wall, sus hermanos, su esposa e hijos. Algunas de las características de la composición de estos documentos se deben a diversas circunstancias, como establecer relaciones interpersonales en la familia, como mantener correspondencia, guardar borradores y copias de su correspondencia con Von Wahl.

Palabras-clave: Textos epistolares. Investigación antropológica. Investigación histórica. Rusia.

INTRODUCTION

Epistolary sources are widely used by the representatives of the humanities to solve a variety of research tasks, and in some cases without these sources it is impossible to solve them fully and effectively (BULAKH,1982, p. 78-86; GINDIN,1989 p. 63-76; NAUMOV, 1987, p. 35-45). The appeal to the epistolary heritage allows to solve the evolution problems of socio-political ideas, attitudes and judgments of statesmen, science and art (AKHTYAMOV, 2005, VOYTEKHOVSKAYA, 2009. p.108-112; ELINA, 1981; NAUMOV, 1985, SHEVTSOVA, 2004, SHOKHIN,1996, p. 4-32), the development of social consciousness, morality, traditions and innovations in the psychology of various social groups (GORBUNOV, 1976, p. 116-126; MARASINOVA,1999; FALINA, 2007, p. 3-7).

Some episodes of Viktor Wilhelmovich von Wahl's service activity came into the view of researchers (BERSENEV, 2002; RADCHENKO, 2018, p. 15-23; STEPANOV, 1917; STEPANOV, 2005; SHATOKHIN, 2007, p. 60-65), his epistolary heritage became the subject of special consideration only once (SHATOKHIN., RADCHENKO,2018,p. 690-696).

V.V. Wahl's career is unique in many ways. During his career, V.V. von Wahl managed to change seven provinces, in one of which he was the vice-governor (actually the beginning of civil service) and the governor in the subsequent ones. During 1892 - 1895, von Wahl served as the mayor of St. Petersburg. At the final stage of his state career, von Wahl was appointed as the Deputy Minister of the Internal Affairs (when the Ministry was headed by V.K. Plehve) and the Commander of the Separate gendarmes corps (1902-1904).

The hypothesis of the study is the assumption that the epistolary genre in the life of official families during the last quarter of the XIX-th - early XX-th century was a necessary element of communication, which allowed to implement the tasks of family ties maintaining and strengthening through information and emotional exchange. The preservation of epistolary texts in the family archive of officials was a significant tradition during this period.

METHODS

The choice of research methods is determined by the purpose, objectives and the nature of the study source base. The methodological basis of the study is historical and anthropological approach, which allows you to see a person in a variety of his statuses, activities, and social roles. Traditional historical sources are poorly informative during a person study in a family, and family daily life. In this regard, the sources of personal origin, especially epistolary texts, have much greater potential. The correspondence of family members promptly captures the event-everyday aspect of family life, which is always emotionally colored and traced in detail. These documents are interesting as they capture events and their momentary perception and evaluation, modern relations in their development, in contrast to the memoir retrospective description of events and relationships that have been rethought, analyzed, cleared of the petty and insignificant, erroneous and stupid over time. Large intra-family correspondence complexes are a rarity, and therefore the identified epistolary documents in the personal funds of V.V. von Wahl, including his correspondence with his brothers and sister, his wife and children, is of great interest for the study of the family daily life of a high-ranking official of the Russian Empire during the last third of the XIXth - early XXth centuries. The study of identified sources was carried out using the methods of source criticism. This made it possible to solve the tasks and to make a number of observations and conclusions concerning the heuristic potential of V.V. von Wahl and his family members, the composition and preservation of correspondence, the nature of interpersonal relations in the family.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of the epistolary heritage by V.V. Von Wahl, a high-ranking official of the Russian Empire of the last third of the XIXth - early XXth centuries, was deposited in his personal funds, in three federal archives. The functioning of epistolary text preservation practice is a value phenomenon in the family daily life of bureaucrats of the XIXth - early XXth centuries.

The information field of epistolary sources is always rich and multifaceted. It allows you to solve various problems of historical and anthropological study of the past. The epistolary texts of personal V.V. Wahl's funds provide a unique opportunity to recreate the history of his family in the event-everyday aspect, to trace the development of psycho-emotional components in the relationship between family members.

I. Epistolary texts in personal archival funds of V.V. von Wahl

The personal funds of Victor Wilhelmovich von Wahl are in three largest archives of the country. The largest of them is located in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (F. 542) - 1049 depository items (Personal Fund of V.V. von Wahl. State Archive of the Russian Federation (SARF). F. 542), and in the Russian State Historical Archive

(F. 916) (Personal Fund of V.V. von Wahl // Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA). F. 916) and the Russian National Library (F. 127) (Personal Fund of V.V. von Wahl // Russian National Library (RNL). F. 127.) - 40 and 31 depository items, respectively.

The composition of documents concentrated in V.V. Wahl's personal funds is very diverse. In addition to the correspondence, here are the collected manuscripts of the general, including his memories, diary entries and separate memorials, personal documents, telegrams in his name, various invitations and membership cards of various societies, clippings from Russian and foreign newspapers, drafts and copies of official papers, original documents of official office work, etc.

If we turn to the analysis of the actual epistolary documents, then their multiplicity and diversity should be noted. More than five hundred letters from V.V. Wahl and the letters addressed to him are concentrated in three funds. The letters by von Wahl are presented either in hastily written drafts or the copies of sent letters, which differ from the drafts by the absence of crossed out words, and by more legible handwriting. Almost always, von Wahl's letters have a date, sometimes they have a note about the date of sending, if it did not coincide with the date of writing. The letters addressed to von Wahl are originals, in some cases there are envelopes in which they were sent.

The whole complex of correspondence with V.V. von Wahl, contained in his three archival funds, can be structured into several parts, taking the status of his correspondents and the nature of letter content as basic principles. Based on the specified criteria, three large groups can be determined in V.V. von Wahl's correspondence. The first group is his official correspondence with various persons in fact, including some documents withdrawn from the office work of the governor's office. The second group is the letters of various persons addressed to the governor V.V. von Wahl, however, sent to him privately, possibly to his home address and without registration marks in his office. Frequently these are the messages of his acquaintances to former duty stations with requests for protection. The third group is V.V. von Wahl's correspondence with relatives and friends: with his wife and children, with his brothers and sister. This part of the letters can be attributed to a purely personal correspondence. Almost all of it was conducted in German or French. The presence in this part of the epistolary complex of a small number of letters from his wife, Elizaveta Georgievna, from their children, Vasily and Nadezhda, can be explained by the fact that they were together almost all the time. And the correspondence was conducted in cases when von Wahl was forced to leave his family by duty or his spouse and children were abroad or with relatives, while von Wahl was in his office in the province.

The closest relationships connected V.V. von Wahl with his brother Alfred, since he received the greatest number of letters from him. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the fact that perhaps not all of Von Wahl's correspondence has been preserved and deposited in the archives. So, despite the large number of letters from Alfred Wilhelmovich von Wahl to his brother, there are no response letters. Probably, for some reason, the general did not consider it was necessary to save drafts or copies of letters to his brother, it is possible that the general wrote letters to his brother without drafts. V.V. von Wahl's correspondence with the rest of his close relatives — brothers and sister — is represented in the archival collections by a small number of letters.

II. Victor Vilgelmovich von Wahl and his family

Victor Vilgelmovich von Wahl was born on July 17, 1840 in Verrosk district of Livonia province in the family of German nobles - Vasily Karlovich (Wilhelm Gustav) von Wahl and Anna Amalia (von Brasch). In addition to Victor Vilgelmovich, there were five other children in von Wahl family. With one of the brothers - Alfred - V.V. von Wahl had a rather intensive correspondence, which can be confirmed by the presence of an extensive collection of letters. V.V. von Wahl maintained the correspondence with other members of the family - brothers Erwin, Harald, Oscar and sister Anna Augustus (von Shtrik after marriage), but it is presented to a lesser extent than with Alfred. It is difficult to determine the reasons of this. Perhaps some of the letters were not preserved, or there was simply no need for intensive correspondence. Another possible reason could be Victor and Alfred's great emotional affection for each other and the presence of common interests.

Considering the personal communicative relations of V.V. von Wahl, it is impossible not to pay attention to relatives and friends, the friends of the person in question. The family, like the professional environment, could influence the formation of Wahl's personality, which affected the manner and the style of his communication in its own way.

Von Wahl's parents belonged to the German nobles who settled in the Livonia gubernia, where Wahl's father, Vasily Karlovich (Wilhelm Gustav) was a parish judge. Unfortunately, the funds of SARF and RSHA do not provide

the documents that would indicate Wahl's correspondence with his parents. Perhaps it did not survive. But von Wahl's correspondence with his wife and children is presented in a decent amount, as well as with his brother Alfred, which can be regarded as the presence of close and warm relations between them.

Family ties, the upbringing of children and the desire to arrange their future will help imagine most clearly the image of a high-ranking official of the empire. Victor Vilgelmovich was married to Elizabeth Georgievna Sinclair. This marriage was the second one for von Wahl's spouse, the first marriage with A.N. Melgunov was terminated, for unknown reason. It looks like this fact could give rise to various rumors that surrounded Elizaveta Georgievna, which is quite natural for a first-person spouse in the province. In one of the letters to von Wahl, we can find an example that his subordinates were keenly interested in the past of his spouse, including the former ones. So in the letters to Wahl from Kursk (the signature of the writer is not legible, but judging by the content it had a direct relationship to von Wahl during his stay in the Kursk gubernia) we can see the following phrase: "... the Kursk swamp spreads stench ... Alexander Sergeevich told me that there were people, who collected the information, like the maiden name of your Excellency's spouse, the educational institution where she learned <...> the place she was brought up and born ..." The presence of this kind of questions shows that the past life of Elizabeth Georgievna was not known to everyone for the most part. And this could not but arouse interest in her person.

Analyzing the anonymous letters addressed to von Wahl during his governorship in Vitebsk, we can see the opposite situation. Elizaveta Georgievna was already telling about her life. This was one of the reasons for writing an anonymous note. It presented a complaint to the vice-governor Shulepnikov, "who had already become a household person" in the governor's house, and to whom Elizaveta Georgievna told about all family matters: "how she lived in poverty, how badly the General-Governor treated you in disgusting details" Based on this, we can assume that the first marriage of Elizaveta Georgievna was not simple, which led to divorce later. Most likely, the reasons for the interest in this issue are based on the fact that Elizaveta Georgievna was the wife of von Wahl and, perhaps, the search for any compromising information in her past was intended to cast a shadow on the current high-ranking official. However, the fact that earlier, still in the Vitebsk province, she told the trustees about her former life, shows that no secret was made of this actually.

The personality of von Wahl's son Vasily Viktorovich is also interesting. In the future, a separate correspondence between von Wahl and the representatives of the highest authorities in St. Petersburg will be connected with the planning of his future. In an effort to ensure the future of his son, according to von Wahl's words, he asked for his transfer to the capital to the post of governor. A detailed analysis of this correspondence is of separate interest, deserving special consideration.

Vasily Viktorovich von Wahl (1880-1944), like his father, had a military education. At the age of nine years he was enrolled in candidate pages, and since 1893 he began to study at the Page Corps. In 1900, after the completion of training, he was transferred to the Life Guards Horse Regiment. The first attempt to get to the Nikolaev Academy failed, and he continued his military service. In 1904-1905, he participated in the Russian-Japanese war, was in captivity, was awarded the Order of St. Stanislav with swords and bow. After the second attempt in 1906, Vasily Viktorovich was enlisted as a student at the academy, and in 1908 he was counted in Headquarters. In 1913 he was promoted to colonel. From 1914 to 1916 he took part in hostilities, for which he received awards: the Order of St. Anna (2nd degree) with swords, the Order of St. Vladimir (4th degree) with swords and bow, the Order of St. Stanislav (2 degree) with swords and bow. He was dismissed from service in December 1917, with the preservation of his uniform (RUTYCH, 2002, p. 146-147).

Returning to Riga in 1918, Vasily Viktorovich von Wahl took an active part in the formation of the Northern army and in the further military operations of the North-Western corps of the White movement. He proved himself as an energetic and active military man, managed to bring great benefit to his unit. However, German origin, somewhat hampered his position. Victor Vilgelmovich had the same difficulties. "After the army retreated from Pskov in 1918, the corps commander, Colonel Nef, appointed Colonel V.V. von Wahl as the chief the corps headquarters. New chief showed a lot of energy in order to organize the supply of the Northern corps, according to the agreement with Estonia, receiving food, ammunition and a small part of uniforms. He managed to cope with the difficult task of corps restoration after retreating from Pskov. However, his position was particularly difficult: he belonged to the Baltic nobility of German origin, which aroused suspicion among the Estonian authorities and therefore experienced their hidden ill will" (RUTYCH, 2016 p. 148-149).

Nevertheless, even despite this fact, von Wahl remained in the service. After the dismissal, suspected of loyalty to the Germans of Colonel Nef, Colonel Wahl was left in his post, the reason for this was his energetic service and dedication. Before disbanding the North-Western Front, von Wahl, while remaining in service, also performed a number of diplomatic missions, mainly in Germany. After the liquidation of the front, von Wahl was in exile, first in

Berlin, then he moved to Belgium. He served in the establishment of the Belgian Congo. In 1939 he moved to Toulon, where he died in 1944. We know little about Vasiliy Viktorovich's family, except that he was married to Vera Ondlich, with whom he left for emigration.

Considering the fate of Vasily von Wahl, we can note a certain similarity of his way of life with Victor Wilhelmovich, which is quite natural. And we can assume that von Wahl, in its turn, was the model of imitation for his son, who built his service, focusing on his father. We can also note the fact that Vasily von Wahl also had to go through a not very positive attitude towards his person, which was expressed in national aspect. And although Victor Wilhelmovich was faced with a similar attitude from his employees, and his son was already in the North-Western Army during the period of hostilities, both of them had certain difficulties in establishing communication. In addition to his son, Victor Wilhelmovich had a daughter, Nadezhda Viktorovna, who married to Myasoedov. We do not have detailed information about von Wahl's daughter, but we can assume that she was educated in accordance with the established norms and traditions of the period under consideration. In personal sources, we can find mention of Nadezhda in V.V. von Wahl's dairies, belonging to 1901, the time of his appointment to the post of governor in Vilna.

Having received a decree of appointment, V.V. von Wahl was forced to postpone his departure to Vilna province in connection with his daughter's wedding. In these notes, he mentions that the Grand Duchess wanted to be an honored guest at the wedding (Personal Fund of V.V. von Wahl // Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA). F. 916, Inv. 1. C. 13. Sh. 5). This is the indicator of von Wahl's position in society. During the period from 1895 to 1900, although he was in charge of the Kseninsky Institute, the main activity was performed by the head of the institute, and the service was "less interesting and not so outstanding" for Wahl (Personal Fund of V.V. von Wahl // Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA). F. 916, Inv. 1. C. 13. Sh. 1), however, allowed to be visible to influential people of the capital.

The daughter's husband A.N. Myasoedov came from an old noble family, and, according to Wahl, was "a capable young man" the son of the senator N.A. Myasoedov. Since A.N. Myasoedov was appointed to the post of second secretary of the Russian mission in Tokyo, immediately after the wedding Nadezhda Viktorovna and her husband left for the Far East. Further A.N. Myasoedov, serving in the diplomatic department, was the representative of the embassy in Romania, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain and Italy. Nadezhda Viktorovna, respectively, lived with her spouse. After 1917, A.N. Myasoedov, devoid of titles and all positions, emigrated to Rome together with his wife, where he was one of the active leaders of the Russian emigration.

Von Wahl's archives have a fairly large number of letters from Nadezhda Viktorovna von Wahl, addressed mainly to her mother, Elizabeth Georgievna. Nevertheless, the letters from the daughter Nadezhda and the son Vasily, as well as the correspondence with the family are one of the components of V.V. von Wahl's personal fund. The presence of correspondence shows that von Wahl and his family had an active communication. This kind of correspondence can be represented not only by V.V. von Wahl, but, in principle, by any official burdened with his family and maintaining relations with them. The form and content will be quite possible to vary, but the main guideline will be similar for all the personal correspondents.

SUMMARY

Analyzing personal correspondence by V.V. von Wahl, we can conclude that his closest circle of contacts consisted of several groups. The first group, in our opinion, consisted of those representatives of von Wahl's subordinate in the bureaucratic apparatus, who were able to establish with him not only official relations, but also those which allowed to conduct correspondence, including those involving private topics. The second group of correspondents in this circle are the friends from joint studies, military and civil service. The third group is his family members and relatives.

Primary analysis of the correspondence by V.V. Von Wahl with his family members gives grounds to make several observations:

1) For the reason that has not been clarified so far, the letters of the parents and the copies or letter drafts by V.V. von Wahl's parents are absent in epistolary texts.

2) Of his three brothers and sisters, Alfred Wilhelmovich wrote to V.V. von Wahl most often. At the same time, the letters (copies or drafts) addressed to Alfred Vilgelmovich were not found in the funds. The context of the letters to V.V. von Wahl from his brother clearly indicates that the

correspondence was mutual.

3) An insignificant number of letters between the spouses — Elizaveta Georgievna and Viktor Vilgelmovich — is probably explained by the fact that the need for such a format of communication between them did not arise often: either during business trips by V.V. von Wahl, or during any spouse departures.

4) Of particular note is the presence of correspondence addressed to his wife - Elizabeth Georgievna in V.V. von Wahl's personal fund. This probably indicates the presence of the family idea about the value and indivisibility of family correspondence.

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¹Ph.D. in History, Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education "Belgorod National Research University", Belgorod, Russia. E-mail: shatohi@bsu.edu.ru. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0091-6644>.

²Ph.D. in History, Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education "Belgorod State National Research University", Belgorod, Russia. E-mail: global@orescoop.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5049-2942>.

³Postgraduate Student, Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education "Belgorod State National Research University", Belgorod, Russia. E-mail: info@prescopus.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1747-1090>.

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