

THE CONCEPT OF ARMENOLOGY AND THE RESEARCH METHODS

Research of the nature of the problem of Armenology from the viewpoint of its theoretical, scientific essence brings forth questions demanding answers corresponding to the present level of the development of science. It is time to define the subject-matter, tasks of Armenology and their solution methods¹.



Brutian G. A.

Academician of NAS RA
(1926-2015)

As the history of science testifies to many concepts seem well-known, while their correct use is apparent at each stage of the development of science. One of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century, English philosopher, logician, mathematician, Bertrand Russell writes that the concepts which seem to be correct at first glance sometimes are not so in reality². In this connection I would like to mention the opinion of the well-known Austrian-American logician, philosopher Rudolf Carnap who came to the conclusion that many, if not all, concepts used in science must be regarded as well-known but not exact concepts; he calls the latter *explicands*. Being corrected by the methods corresponding to the given period of the development of science they are transformed into exact concepts. Carnap calls this process *explication* and new exact concepts he calls *explicats*³.

When we compare the interpretation of the concepts Armenology, Hittitology, Arabistics, Germanistics, Russian Studies, American Studies, British Studies and others included in encyclopedias, we notice that these concepts need explication.

Armenology is regarded as a system of study which includes human and social sciences, as well as medicine which bears a relation to the Armenian reality⁴. If medicine is mentioned here the question arises why Armenian architecture is not?

According to the Dictionary of the Modern Russian Literary Language, Russian Studies and Russian philology coincide⁵. The subject-matter of Russian Studies is enlarged to some extent in the Dictionary of the Russian Language by V. Rozanova and I. Matveev. According to their interpretation, Russian Studies has two meanings - broad and narrow. Russian Studies from the point of view of a broad interpretation is a system

¹ Brutian G., The Subject-Matter of Armenology and Its Methods, Yerevan, 1999, pp. 3-27.

² Russell B., Religion and Science. London and New York, 1935.

³ Carnap R., Meaning and Necessity. A Study in Semantics and Modal Logic. Chicago. Illinois. 1956, pp. 7-8; Carnap R., Logical Foundations of Probability, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Routledge and Kegan, 1963.

⁴ Հայկական սովետական հանրագիտարան (ՀՍՀ), հ. 6, Երևան, 1980, էջ 130:

⁵ Словарь современного русского литературного языка, ред. В. И. Фелицина, И. Н. Шмелева, т. 12, М.– Л., 1961, с. 1577.

of science which studies the Russian language and culture; meanwhile, from the point of view of a narrower interpretation, it again coincides with Russian philology⁶.

Germanistics, according to the multi-volume Dictionary of the Modern Russian Literary Language, studies the language, literature and culture of the German people⁷.

Arabistics is also interpreted in broad and narrow senses. Arabistics in a broad sense is a system of study of the social life in its various aspects (manifestations) of the Arabic countries and people. Arabistics in the narrow sense refers to the study of the history, language and literature of the Arabic people⁸.

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press for the American Studies Association (ASA) the *Encyclopedia of American Studies* covers the history, philosophy, arts, and cultures of the United States in relation to the world, from pre-colonial days to the present, from various perspectives and the global American Studies movement⁹.

It is noted that, "British Studies is the academic study of Britain - its culture, geography and history"¹⁰.

According to the Armenian Encyclopedia, Hittitology studies the language, culture and history of the Hittite and Luvian people, who lived in the 2nd millennium B. C. in Asia Minor¹¹.

Significant differences are available in these explanations. Meanwhile it is interesting to approach the discussed problems from the point of view of a scientific criterion. The subject-matter of science from the methodological point of view is defined by the object of its study. It is possible to say in this sense that the object of Armenian Studies is the Armenian reality. In other words, the Armenian reality is the object - language of Armenology.

But let us consider such a situation. We construct on the basis of the semantics and syntax of the Armenian language a model with the help of which we interpret some

⁶ Словарь русского языка, ред. Розанова В. В., Матвеев, И. И., т. 3. М., 1959, с. 981.

⁷ Словарь современного русского литературного языка, ред. Бархударов С. Г., т. 3. М.-Л., 1954, с. 78.

⁸ Советская историческая энциклопедия, ред. Жуков Е. М., т. 1, М., 1961, с. 667.

⁹ <http://eas-ref.press.jhu.edu/>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_studies According to an article in "The Guardian", "British studies is, of course, a field that doesn't exist in the UK. "It is a weird thing, but no one in Britain knows what British studies is," says James Vernon, a Briton who set up the Centre for British Studies at the University of California, Berkeley in 2003. "There is no organised curriculum or research agenda around British studies. "Britain is simply so ubiquitously studied in humanities and social sciences departments in UK institutions that an interdisciplinary field called British studies barely makes sense. This is in stark contrast to the US, which, while dogged by worries that it is overly nationalistic, has a large "American studies" field (<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/may/02/british-studies-american-academics>)

¹¹ ՀԱՀ, հ. 6, էջ 44: When we compare this interpretation with the explanation given in the Soviet Historical Encyclopedia, we notice that the latter narrows the subject-matter of Hittitology: "Hittitology is a complex science which studies the history and culture of the Hittite Kingdom" (Советская историческая энциклопедия, ред. Жуков Е. М., т. 15, М., 1974, с. 575).

unknown aspects of the language of the Basques. It is well-known that such constructions belong to metascience. May we say that such an investigation has an Armenological character? The answer must be negative if we consider the question from the viewpoint of the object-language. Meanwhile, of course, it belongs to Armenology from the viewpoint of metascience. We must fix the interinfluence of the object-language and metalanguage in the process of the creation of the theory, if we use Nils Bohr's principle of complementarity in its methodological sense¹². So, we can come to the conclusion that in the case discussed here the scientific result of this process will belong both to Basque Studies as well as to Armenian Studies.

So, we can conclude that Armenology is a science the object of which is the specificity of the Armenian reality, or it studies a metalanguage on the basis of Armenian language and culture to solve some other similar problems.

I should like to consider the definition of Armenology as a proposal which remains merely a working hypothesis. It is accepted that there can be new additional arguments for its use. If it is refused, then there is a need for a new definition. So, probably it would be useful for Armenology. There is undoubtedly one thing: Armenology as a science on the modern stage of its development must answer, first of all, the question "what is Armenology" and hence must be defined.

Bertrand Russell is quite right when he writes that if we want philosophy to be true research, it must define its own subject-matter and reach results which other sciences can neither prove nor refute¹³. This equally concerns any science, including Armenology.

Let us compare some other definitions of studies like Armenology, particularly the definition of Germanistics and Hittitology. "Germanistics, Pertaining to the study of Germanic philology and antiquities"¹⁴. If we compare this definition with Armenistics we can notice that Germanistics has a narrower domain of investigation. As we mentioned above, Hittitology is a complex of sciences which studies the history and culture of the Hittite Kingdom. Although it is possible to continue our comparison, it seems to me that what has been said is enough to come to the conclusion that there is no possible unification of the definitions of Armenology, Hittitology, Germanistics, etc.

The nature and specificity of each science reflects the peculiarity of the matter under investigation. If we are studying, for example, ancient people who have not reached till the present day and we know only a little information about them, then the science of those people can include their entire spiritual and material culture. But when

¹² Bohr N., *Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1958; Moore R., Niels Bohr. *The Man and the Scientist*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1967; Brutian G., *Methodological Aspects of the Principle of Complementarity*. Yerevan, 1974.

¹³ Russell B., *Religion and Science*.

¹⁴ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. IV, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, G132.

we consider a people who are current and well-known, then it would be wrong to choose a special science or a system of science for such people as a whole.

Germanistics in this sense must be different from Hittitology, even to a considerable extent. It is not chance that some Germanists identify Germanistics with German philology. Intermediate variants are possible between those two extreme cases. It depends on the matter being investigated.

It is also important to know the aims of the above mentioned sciences. Armenology in Armenia concentrates its attention on Armenian Studies having in mind to deepen our knowledge of that subject under investigation. Let us elucidate what Armenology is from the methodological point of view. If we want to explicate the concept of Armenology, as well as the interrelation between Armenian science and Armenology we must take into consideration the object of the research and the researcher. The author of the book "The History of Armenia", Movses Khorenatsi (the 5th century) was Armenian and the subject- matter of his study was the history of the Armenians. There is no doubt that he was an Armenologist.

H.Hubschmann was a German and the matter of his research was the Armenian language; undoubtedly he was also an Armenologist. The Japanese Armenologist Nabuo Sato's aim is to introduce the Armenian reality to Japanese readers. So, his books on the grammar of the Armenian language, on the history of Armenians or the Armenian region of Artsakh and others, do not deepen our knowledge on the concrete aspects of Armenian reality, but expand the knowledge of Japanese readers concerning the Armenian people.

If we express the volumes of the concepts Armenian Science and Armenistics using Venn Diagrams, then we can notice that the relation between the volumes of these concepts can be considered not as relations of subordination, i.e. the relations between species and genus where Armenistics is a specific concept and Armenian Science is a generic concept, but as a cross-relation. It means that the volumes of the concepts Armenian Science and Armenistics partly coincide with each other. Armenology created in the Armenian reality belongs to Armenian Science.

Meanwhile Armenistics created in the English reality belongs not to Armenian Science but to EnglishScience. It is clear that the same refers to the interrelation of Armenology created also in other countries and the sciences of those countries. So, when we consider Armenian Science on one hand, and the entity of Armenology on the other hand, we can notice that these interrelations are cross-relations. The reason is that the volume of Armenian Science also includes such sciences which are created or developed in an Armenian reality but which have not the character of Armenian Studies.

Armenologists must know quite well the modern theory of the problem. Generally speaking, the history of any scientific problem is the modern theory of this problem turned upon the past in some sense. Armenology as any other science can be

introduced as a definite language with its own semantics and syntax. The semantics of the language of Armenology includes a set of concepts within Armenian Studies.

Armenology is realized as a concrete investigation into the history of the Armenian people, Armenian art, the origin and development of the Armenian language and similar problems; hence, the semantics of the language of Armenology may be constituted from different layers. It can be a layer of concepts which is characteristic for the discussed problem and a layer which includes the concept reflecting the specificity of Armenology, its relation to other sciences and the methods of investigation within Armenian Studies. It may also include other layers of concepts which can be useful for the realization of Armenian Studies. It is obvious that the semantics of the language of Armenology may be of a heterogenous character. These circumstances are determined by the specificity of the subject-matter of Armenology.

The syntax of the language of Armenology includes those means of scientific investigation which are necessary for the derivation of any conclusions from the given premises. The means and methods may be of a methodological, logical or rhetorical character. The description of the elements of the syntax of the language of Armenology and its classification is a matter of special research.

It is necessary, first of all, to notice that the syntax of the language of Armenology is determined by the specificities of the subject-matter of Armenology. The theory of science and the methods of its investigation must be in a synchronic relation.

It must also be noted that an Armenologist chooses from the set of methodologies those ways which serve the realization of the given investigation in the best way. Let us mention some methods which are most characteristic of Armenian Studies.

Historical-comparative method

This method has a wide application in Armenian (and not only in Armenian) investigations which deal with historical matters. The importance of this method can be explained in that the investigations concerning the past in the sphere of Armenology are much greater than the investigations concerning the present. We can mention *comparativism* as a special case of the historical-comparative method. When we use these methods the comparison of the sources, manuscripts, etc. acquire a great significance. The historical-comparative method can indeed reach scientific results only when we respect the necessary conditions of its use.

Hermeneutics as a method of Armenian Studies

Hermeneutics as a method has a large following in different sciences. It is especially used in Armenian Studies. Irrespective of the explanations of the nature of

hermeneutics, it is nothing but the interpretation of the text. The main field of Armenian Studies is the interpretation of old Armenian texts; hence, mastering the methods of hermeneutics (these methods are also called an art) is one of the main tasks of Armenologists. The different understandings and consequently different interpretations are often based on manuscripts which have been rewritten many times in different periods of history and which concern the same question written by the same author. It is a very difficult task for researchers to unify the interpretation of the key concepts of a text. The explication of the semantics of texts, especially of old manuscripts, becomes more difficult when we have in mind that the words have their own life, birth and death. The meaning of words changes during their life. The question "What does the author mean using a word" becomes an eternal question.

Contextual and Subtextual Analysis as a Way of Interpreting a Text

The exact understanding of the semantics of the word is the analysis of its meaning in context. No dictionary, even of an encyclopedic nature, can be more useful to interpret the text, than the explication of the meaning of the word (and sentence) with the help of its context. But even context analysis sometimes is not sufficient to discover the exact meaning of the concept. That is why the act of explication also includes subtextual analysis. In this case, we take into consideration not only what is written together with its surroundings (context), but also what is supposed, understood, and concluded from what is not written between the lines (subtext).

The discovery of the subtext is more complicated than the interpretation of the context. Each contextual meaning can have more than one subtextual meaning. One of the important tasks of the interpreter is to reach the exact possible interpretation of exact meanings of words with the help of system analysis.

Translation as a research method

One of the important ways to analyze the text is the comparison of the translation with the original as well as the comparison of different translations of the same original with each other. The translation must be understood both from the philological point of view and the logical-methodological point of view. The translation in the philological sense gives us an opportunity to discover the exact meaning of the words of the original text, to understand their explicit, hidden meaning. Finally, it is a fixation of the senses and meanings of the sets of words which essentially promote the understanding of the text. The knowledge of languages and first of all, the knowledge of the language of the original under consideration, has a great significance for the solution of the task mentioned above.

The translation from the logical-methodological point of view is a transformation from the language of one science (scientific domain) into the language of another science (scientific domain): the expression of the semantics and syntax of the first language by the apparatus of the semantics and syntax of the second language. The English mathematician, W. Sawyer, notes that this kind of translation realizes two main functions: it explicates the concepts of the given text and makes visible in the second language what is invisible in the first language. The best illustration of this thesis is a transformation of the language of Algebra into the language of Geometry¹⁵. It seems to me that it is also possible to use this method for Armenistic Studies. When Armenologists transform the model of the one domain of Armenian Studies to the model of another domain and if in this case there appears an isomorphic relation between the elements and relations of the two models, then we receive the most exact picture of the object investigated.

Objectivity of the methodological ways of investigation and the method of proof

Armenian Studies as well as any other theory must be a result of the objective approach to the problem discussed. The truth must be above everything in the investigation.

The title “the method of proof” is used here conditionally. Using this title we want to underline the significance of proof in research of works and especially in Armenian Studies.

The methodological means described above are only samples which remind us of the significance of methods in Armenian Studies. The classification of the methods and their analysis on the basis of Armenian materials can be a task of special research.

The methods of investigation, as a rule, have their place not in the text but in the subtext. It does not mean that we undervalue a special investigation of those methods.

Investigation of a metascientific character has an important significance in the modern stage of the development of science. It is an appropriate time together with metamathematics, metalinguistics, metalogic and other metascientific investigations to also have meta-Armenological research.

¹⁵ Sawyer W., A Path to Modern Mathematics. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969.