

THE INTEGRAL ROLE OF PHILOLOGY IN THE HUMANITIES AS
WELL AS A SCHOLARLY EXAMINATION OF TEXTUAL AND
LINGUISTIC STUDIES

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Abstract: *Linguistic, literary, and historical analysis come together in the study of language as it is found in historical and prehistorical documents. At least that is what is generally understood by the term "philology." Although the field has roots that stretch back to ancient civilizations, modern philologists fancy themselves as practitioners of the sorts of interpretive arts that allow one to divine meaning from texts that may be rendered nearly unintelligible by layers of time and cultural change. Comparatively, current linguistics fancies itself more adept at the sorts of pen-and-ink work that preserve the structure and function of language. This essay investigates the history, subfields, and contemporary relevance of philology, especially as it pertains to the understanding of human communication and the transmission of thought. Whether philology is still being taught in a certain academic department or not, its contents—what we know about the history of language, our understanding of how texts have been transmitted, and our grasp of the kinds of things that human beings think—are still essential ingredients for any kind of adequate curriculum in the humanities.*

Key words: *Philology, comparative philology, classical studies, textual criticism, historical linguistics, philology and digital humanitie.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of written works is what constitutes the discipline of philology. It concerns itself with texts both ancient and modern, dilating on not just the linguistic component but also the literary and historical parts as well. In the main, and when at its best, it works on manuscripts, either with the naked eye or with some of the more expensive instruments of the trade. It passes judgment on those texts, negative or positive, and then, when it has understood all that it can understand, it produces what is called an edition of the text. Even though some universities have relegated independent philology to a lesser status, it remains a

dynamo in a few disciplines that have a strong historical bent, such as linguistics and literary studies, and even in some new ones like digital humanities.¹⁶ This paper traces the remarkably consistent history of philology and its principal subfields and assesses their contemporary relevance.

The traceable beginnings of philology are found in ancient civilizations, especially in Greece and Rome. There, classical scholars like Aristarchus of Samothrace and Varro engaged in textual analysis to safeguard and make sense of (interpret) the sorts of "literary" and "philosophical" works that we today consider part of the "classics."¹⁷ In the Middle Ages, scholars in the Islamic world and in Europe continued to build on archaic methods; they concentrated their efforts on more recent "sacred" texts (the Bible included) and those classics. During the Renaissance, ancient manuscripts became the objects of study for humanists who sought to achieve a return to the sources. They employed the tools of philology, and figure like Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam emerged from this cadre. They not only were able to recover the true texts of ancient manuscripts, but with the same techniques, they were able to challenge texts of religion and history that had been inaccurately copied over the ages. The 19th century then saw the rise of the combination of comparative grammar and historical linguistics. The specialized areas that contribute to our understanding of language and literature have a home within philology.

1. The historical relationships between languages are determined by studying their similarities and differences. One of the most significant branches of applied comparative mathematics, comparative philology, has long served as a tool for studying the evolution of not just one but many language families. Its principal expressions—linguistics, phonetics, and etymology—have likewise reconstructive and interpretive roles.

2. The study of ancient Greek and Latin texts is the focus of classical philology. Textual criticism, translation, and the interpretation of works from antiquity that are under our study today allow us to better understand those ancient civilizations. Texts by the great authors, such as Homer and Virgil, and even those not quite as well known, are the labor of love by classical philologists. Works of art from those times serve as not only an entertainment value for today's society but also as a means of allowing us a glimpse back into that time period.

3. The evolution of languages is the focus of investigation in historical philology, which studies the written records of languages from different times. This field of study contributes greatly to our understanding of the languages of

¹⁶ Abduramanova D. V. THE ROLE OF FICTION IN THE CREATION AND POPULARIZATION OF NEW WORDS // Экономика и социум. – 2023. – №. 11 (114)-2. – С. 1073-1079.

¹⁷ Turner J. Philology: The forgotten origins of the modern humanities. – Princeton University Press, 2015.

the past, etymology, and dialectology. Ancient manuscripts are the materials that historical philologists work with. They labor long and intensively, like a team of archaeological detectives, to uncover clues to their linguistic past. They work to reconstruct their languages and find the origins of their words.

4. Involving the analysis of manuscripts, textual criticism seeks to uncover errors, variations, and potential alterations in texts. This painstaking work is of utmost importance for producing reliable editions of documents or literary works from the distant past. Scholars in the humanities—especially historians and philologists—are the main users of textual criticism.

5. The modern textual study has been advanced into the territory of "digital philology" thanks to technology. Digital tools now empower the scholars of yore to apply fresh actions upon their dusty, text-based counterparts. Now, with the aid of technology, a new paradigm exists where scholars can analyze vast text collections, perform linguistic pattern identifications, and offer up digital manuscript editions—courtesy of today's electronic publishing presses¹⁸.

Even though it is no longer an independent discipline, philology still impacts many fields in many ways:

The interpretation of literary texts often involves the use of philology to grasp their historical meanings and contexts. History Historians interpret ancient documents, inscriptions, and manuscripts with the aid of philology. Digital Humanities Expanding the possibilities for philological research are computational methods. In the contemporary academic environment, philology has to cope with certain formidable prospects. It has seen the diversion of its erstwhile “focus of experimental attention” into what is now the 20th-century discipline of structural linguistics. In this diversion, not only has the “historical” disappeared from forms of text analysis, but so also has any serious work on the “editorial” as another form of historical text analysis. What has happened to the good old teacher-scholars of classical languages? They have disappeared because the emoluments of such positions seem, to many, to be a form of “pseudoscience.”¹⁹

Yet, the digital humanities have opened new avenues for philological research. Machine learning, text mining, and artificial intelligence are new tools that scholars are using to analyze texts—tools that make the traditional work of philology seem even more relevant in today's digital milieu. The field of philology is evolving by adopting fresh methodologies while remaining

¹⁸ Abduramanova D. V. DYNAMICS AND INFLUENCE OF FICTIONAL LITERARY WORLDS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEXICAL INNOVATIONS //Academic research in educational sciences. – 2024. – T. 5. – №. CSPU Conference 1. – C. 254-260.

¹⁹ Jensen K. B. Humanistic scholarship as qualitative science: contributions to mass communication research //A handbook of qualitative methodologies for mass communication research. – Routledge, 2002. – C. 17-43.

committed to its original mission of studying and interpreting the written word. The field of philology is still vibrant, with many an intellectual bringing life to the old texts that are the field's centerpiece. Those old texts form the basis of understanding the history of language, literature, and culture—understanding that the modern academic world disdains at its peril. On the whole, linguists and cultural historians have largely tended to look down their noses at the very serious and very important field of philology. But linguists and cultural historians ought to be paying very close attention to those figures within the old, yet still lively, field of philology.

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