

SARGIS HARUTYUNYAN



This volume of “Fundamental Armenology” was already completed when the breaking sad news arrived. Prof.Dr. Sargis Harutyunyan, corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences, the patriarch of modern Classical Armenology had passed away not long after the celebration of his 90th birthday.

S.Harutyunyan was born in September 22, 1928 in the village of Ghazanci, Ashotsq district of Armenia. After graduating primary school in Tbilisi, Georgia, he studied eastern languages and literature at the Department of Philology, Yerevan State University (1947-1952). In 1956 he became a post-graduate student at the M.Abeghyan Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences where he defended his PhD («Armenian folk fables»). From 1960 onwards S.Harutyunyan entered the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography (National Academy of Sciences) first as an associate researcher then deputy-director, which became his life-long working place. His second dissertation was devoted to the prominent philologist Manuk Abeghyan («Manuk Abeghyan. his life and studies», 1971). From this time onwards M.Abeghyan, the classic of Armenian philology became a benchmark for S.Harutyunyan leading him to his highly productive scholarly career.

The scope of scholarly interests of S.Harutyunyan was extremely wide and includes different aspects of folkloristics and religion (blessing, curse, folk-prayers, divination, mythology, national epos, pantheon etc.).

Fundamental studies of S.Harutyunyan first were focused on Armenian folklore and its genres. Among them the «Armenian folk riddles» (1960) and the publication of the comprehensive texts of riddles (1965) initiated this previously under-studied field of folkloristics in Armenia. This was followed by other genres of folklore like curse and blessing, divination and folk-prayers (1975, 2006).

A special role in the studies of S.Harutyunyan occupies the Armenian national heroic epos of «The Daredevils of Sasun». In 1971-1973 he lead an expedition into about 200 towns and villages of Armenia where his team collected numerous variants of the epos which were published in 1970-1990s.

Later in his career S.Harutyunyan was fully attracted by the Armenian mythology. His two fundamental studies (2000, 2001) are encyclopedias where he collects all available data regarding the topic. Numerous articles on Armenian mythology were published still in the Soviet encyclopedia «Myths of the peoples of the world» (1981–1982, reprinted in 1990 and 2000).

S.Harutyunyan was one of those true scholars who throughout his whole life did not fail to pay tribute to prominent Armenologists of the past, evaluating their heritage - Garegin Srvandztyants, Manuk Abeghyan, Garegin Levonyan, Garegin Hovsepyan,

Stepan Malkhasyants, Karapet Melik-Ohanjanyan, Aram Ghanalanyan and others. These and many other classics of Armenology follow S.Harytyunyan until the end.

S.Harutyunyan combined his scholarly activities with lectures at the Yerevan State University and other universities of Armenia. A great number of future philologists of different fields had passed his fundamental school. During the last twelfth years S.Harutyunyan held the position of the editor-in-chief of «Patma-banasirakan handes» (Journal of history and philology), National academy of sciences (2006-2018).

Monographs of Sargis Harutyunyan

1. Armenian national riddles, Yerevan, 1960 (in Armenian).
2. Manuk Abeghyan. His life and studies, Yerevan, 1971 (in Armenian).
3. The genre of curse and blessing in Armenian folkloristics, Yerevan, 1975 (in Armenian).
4. Armenian mythology, Beirut, 2000 (in Armenian).
5. Cult, religion and pantheon of ancient Armenians, Yerevan, 2001 (in Armenian).
6. Armenian divination and folk-prayers, Yerevan, 2006 (in Armenian).