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**ARCHIVAL SCIENCE AND PEDAGOGICS PRACTICE IN TERMS  
OF THEORY ON COGNITIVE HISTORY**

Nikolay N. Kuniaev (a), Irina V. Sabennikova (b), Aleksandr G. Cherniavsky (c), Liudmila N. Varlamova (d)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) The All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute For Records And Archives  
Management, Profsoyaznaya street, 82, Moscow, Russian Federation, kuniaev@vniidad.ru

(b) The All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute For Records And Archives  
Management, Profsoyaznaya street, 82, Moscow, Russian Federation, sabennikova@vniidad.ru

(c) The All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute For Records And Archives  
Management, Profsoyaznaya street, 82, Moscow, Russian Federation, chernyavski@vniidad.ru

(d) The All-Russian Scientific and Research Institute For Records And Archives  
Management, Profsoyaznaya street, 82, Moscow, Russian Federation, varlamova@vniidad.ru

***Abstract***

In the era of globalization, informatization and increasing cultural interactions intensity the issues of evaluation of the historical past and its documentary heritage become more important. The theory and methodology of cognitive history, developed by an outstanding Russian researcher O.M. Medushevskaya in her works, is a new paradigm of humanitarian cognition which allows to combining a number of research areas – philosophy of history, psychology, information and artificial intelligence theory, source science, archival science, as well as to realizing the coordination of these disciplines as a result of their integration in the teaching methodology. The object of research of all these disciplines is a whole totality of works created in the process of purposeful human actions – sources of all kinds and types, forms of fixation represented physically, have a structure appropriate to their creation purpose and act, in the process of their operating, as the actual realization of organizing relations in society, state, sociocultural community, civilization. The article provides a reconstruction of this theory's contribution to the formation of the modern concept of document science, archival science and archivistics – providing their information opportunities, refining the subject matter and terminology, important interdisciplinary relations. A particular focus is placed on determination of the parameters of structural, methodological and applied contribution of the theory to the solution of VNIIDAD's central problems of appraisal of the documentary heritage and its use, legal support of scientific and commercial use of information, publishing, scientific and pedagogics practice, optimization of data intelligence, archives, expert-level and consulting structures

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**Keywords:** Archival science, source studies, pedagogical practice.



## 1. Introduction

The objective of this article is to reconstruct the contribution of the theory and methodology of cognitive history to the formation of modern concept of source science, document science, archival science and archivistics by such parameters as method, subject area, interdisciplinary cooperation, terminology and practical use. The authors proceed from the fact that the given theory creates a common frame of understanding the modern state of this subject area; it also improves a new category system and is meant to guide the practical work of VNIIDAD as a scientific and research institute and a centre to coordinate scientific and practical, methodical and pedagogical work of archives activity which was founded in 1966.

Identification and interpretation of basic theoretical principles of the theory and methodology of cognitive history, as well as its categorical framework clarification, and also possible conclusions from it, for a relevant problematic became possible as a result of the appearance of the combined Collected Works Medushevskaya, (2017). The given publication includes not only her own resumptive works on philosophy of history and source science, but also a number of works covering issues of archival science, archival law, document theory and document science, document classifications, as well as archival education and pedagogics issues, in particular - a series of articles and reports prepared specifically for VNIIDAD's conferences (VNIIDAD, 2007, 2016, 2019).

From such points of view the following issues were analyzed in the article: new research prospects arising from the theory; document as an element of cognitive and information relations; document within information classification systems; reconstruction of interdisciplinary relations of source science, archival science and document science.

## 2. Problem Statement

The concept of cognitive history sees a solution to a problem in studying purposeful human behavior, which, developing in empirical reality, is inevitably accompanied by fixing research results, and also by creating knowledge products which in their turn are the starting point for evidence-based historical knowledge, possibly based on methods of classical source science.

The theory advances the concept of history as strict and accurate science based solely on critical analysis of sources information; it insists to purify scientific terminology and to form a conceptual framework that would be ascertainable (logically and empirically); it turns its focus toward consistent historian knowledge and historian information creation. It is of key importance to introduce the macro object of historical science as the totality of intellectual products which are the implemented products of human actions always structured as of their creation purpose. This offers prospects for studying those products from the standpoint of cognitive and special science. There is a great amount of literature (RSUH Cognitive history: concept - methods - research practices, 2011; The concept of cognitive history: intellectual sources, a place in the structure of modern humanitarian knowledge, 2013) on the subject covering the theory main provisions, its evolution, its crucial contribution to humanitarian knowledge development, as well as the revision of the place and identity of certain disciplines and groups of the professional communities. The scientific community is now challenged to reconstruct the exact meaning of the introduced concepts and to discuss their importance relating some certain knowledge areas. This

objective was partly accomplished relating sociology, history and anthropology (Sabennikova, 2015). However, it is far from complete relating document science and archival science. The theory conclusions in archival science and document science therefore require further discussion and clarification, the same for the introduced concepts.

Categorical framework of the research is defined by three key concepts of the theory – information exchange (whether direct or indirect); fixation of information (as the process and the result of cognitive activity); cognitive adaptation of an individual (ability to use and transmit information recorded on a physical storage medium). Those categories are universal in nature – they describe the process of cognitive activity which results in designing a social reality that is a picture of space, time and the reason for existence of a certain era (Medushevsky, 2018). At the same time, there is an opportunity to understand the mechanism of cognitive activity in the field of historical science – with all the fixed human activity products as its macro object, and information relations between a perceiving subject and a cognitive object (a source) as its method. To what extent are those terms applicable during drafting a modern concept of a document, “archival document” and document flow, particularly with the emergence of the new types of documents?

### **3. Research Questions**

The research discusses the following questions:

- 3.1. Document as an element of cognitive and information relations.
- 3.2. Document in information classification systems.
- 3.3. Source science, archival science, and document science: reconstruction of information and interdisciplinary relations.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Revelation and analysis of basic theoretical approaches, clarification of conceptual framework of theory and methodology of cognitive history, as well as its conclusions relating to the issue of document science and archival science..

### **5. Research Methods**

The method of the present research is based on the theory and methodology of cognitive history, on finding the relations between an object (intellectual product – a document) and a cognizing subject (researcher or practitioner) in order to define their system and information relations that arise from a person's natural aspiration to understand their meaning.

### **6. Findings**

#### **6.1. Document as an element of cognitive and information relations**

Traditionally, document (Documentum in Latin) has two meanings – a broad one and a narrow one. The broad meaning is close to the term “historical source” that is a physical medium (paper, film, photo,

magnetic tape, punched card, etc.) with information recorded on it intended to transmit it in time and space. In the narrow meaning it is an official paper that legally confirms any fact or right. Ordinarily used the relationship between these two meanings is rather vague since the broad and the narrow meanings of the term are not exclusive. Cognitive and information theory makes it possible to give a more clear definition of a document, and introduced categorical framework seems promising for developing the document and document science theory.

From the standpoint of the theory the document acts as a special type of source – a targeted human actions product which differs from other types (narrative sources) in its origin features, objectives of its creation, operating in information area, and several external and internal characteristics. The main difference of documents (in narrow meaning) as a type of sources (and a storage medium) is in their specific purpose – legislative and administrative regulations and administrative activity support.

It is crucial in the context of the theory to distinguish between direct and indirect information exchange: the first is performed verbally from one individual to another and does not involve fixing information on any storage medium. The second – indirectly: information is fixed on a certain storage medium for its transmitting in time and space. It is within the framework of the second type of information exchange the “living” information becomes “static” (fixed on a certain storage medium). Here appears document in a narrow specific perspective as an element of information exchange created and used specifically for the purpose of legislative regulation and administrative management.

Fixation of information in a document involves not merely the consolidation of certain data but the use of a known, more or less standardized (sometimes legally fixed), form of a formal exchange of information in the administrative structures. This means that it emerges in the course of indirect information exchange addressing issues of governance, and then fixes relevant information, its origin and recipient using specific systems for coding information – a language, signs and symbols. It is seen especially clearly in case of documents meant for transmission of classified information when special efforts are made by creators to form special communication systems (isolated and protected ones), coding systems and cryptography that could guarantee use of these data by a strictly limited group of information exchange participants.

The third – the cognitive adaptation of the individual – means the ability of the individual to establish the content of a document by means of special scientific techniques of rational cognition: source science (in the context of documents of the past as historical sources), archival science (in the context of fund formation aspects, storage and use of the document resources) or document science (in the context of the place of the document in management communication structure). It should be emphasized that the methods of these disciplines are general scientific (universal), although they do include some special techniques to research document information of different periods and types (such as traditional documents or electronic documents). For perception (decoding) the related information it is important to understand the characteristics of information exchange of each era - institutions and bodies, power hierarchy, administrators attitudes, records management format, coding system in use at different times.

According to the theory of cognitive history document is an intellectual product, a result of realized targeted human actions, and it converts movable and transient reality into enduring historical, universal human informative value and integrity. Thus archivistics as well understands integrally the worldview

matters of practical daily life related to document creation, its archiving, use and making historical information registered accessible for society.

Such approach allows to uncover the dual nature of the phenomenon of the document – as a historical source (a storage medium with information necessary for a researcher) and as a management tool (with information necessary for an administrator to make administrative decisions), showing, on the one hand, the necessity to distinguish between these two functions of a document, and, at the same time, demonstrating their intersecting nature and opportunities of research from different disciplines perspectives.

Within the cognitive and information approach the document therefore is defined as a special structural element of the integrated system of information exchange and archives, which purpose is to show the cognitive features of its creation, its fixation manner and coding procedures, as well as its operating in the scientific practice, in the legal practice, in the managerial practice and the pedagogical practice.

## **6.2. Document in information classification systems**

In the light of systematic or structural and functional theoretical approaches of humanitarian knowledge in XX century issues of the classification of historical sources are essential. The dilemma is formulated as follows: the systematic approach to corpus of (genetically) interrelated sources as historical phenomena, cultural phenomena or, on the contrary, an idea of not structured reservoir of sources where a cognizing subject can independently choose a priority object on the basis of their own values. The first approach refers to the criteria of naturally (historically) occurring documents, the second one – to the substantial (determined by the logics of research) and inevitably subjective classification criteria.

Any discipline deals with the issue of classification on a certain stage of development when it becomes “mature”, or when there are all the necessary conditions for the theoretical reasoning of the multitude of real objects of research as the integral whole, and the classification itself, as well as its logical construction principles are the sign of such state of science when the transition from the empirical stage of data accumulation and systematization to theoretical stage is possible (Schmidt, 1997; Medushevskaya, 2017). In this context the system of dividing sources into types, genera and species based on their intrinsic characteristics and functioning features of in a society of a certain era acts as a means of cognition of the features of sources within the framework of classification groups.

Viewed from that angle the discussion on classification of historical sources is essential for source science, archival science and document science, and it drew attention of historians, archivists, records managers and educators. It began with the discussion of scientists and academics of the History and Archives Institute about the concept of the course on general source science and the principles of classification of sources for that course. A quite clear solution was offered – a scientific classification of sources by type, confronting the alternative solution to group sources thematically (taking into account the ideological criteria – through the principle of review, that is a random selection of more and less important ones).

This alternative was presented more clearly in documentary classifications, during the development of which the issue of the relationship between substantive species and thematic groups was discussed. In the monograph of Rudelson, (1973) on this issue, the concept of understanding all the documentation

available in the country as a single information fund, providing acquisition, accounting, scientific processing and the full use of information, was put forward. The priority was given to such classification systems that more clearly express the general properties of homogeneous groups of sources, in particular species classification schemes, since they represent a number of such advantages when analyzing large groups of sources that are not given by classification by content. The basis of this approach is the study of the general structural properties of sources to obtain more diverse and accurate information related to their functioning in the historical and cognitive process. Therefore, those areas of the humanities (structural linguistics and anthropology) that focused on real structures (language, kinship, communications) were in an incomparably more advantageous position in terms of the value, accuracy and evidence of the information obtained. This appeal to “ontological reality” was the basis of a new paradigm of source science and the development of research practices, which are formed in the interaction of source science and archival science (The role of ..., 2017).

In the methodology of history proposed by Medushevskaya (2017), the created concept of the type (intellectual product) seems to be the most relevant. Type – this is the concept of structure, configuration, which a product created in a concrete historical community takes – in its system of mediated information exchange. Therefore, it is structured in accordance with the functions in demand in this community, as well as necessary to maintain the balance of the system. Type – a structural classification unit for dividing the whole of the product into classes based on the generality (similarity) of structure and function. A type, therefore, is a subset of an intellectual product that has common features of a structure that optimally corresponds to the function (purpose) for which the product was created. In other words, the type is “that sought-after structure that shines through the individual parameters of the product and acts as an indicator for monitoring the self-organization of the social system, to identify those functions that are in demand, and those that disappear, or find new ideas for their structuring.

This conclusion not only summarizes the discussion on the classification of sources, but also summarizes the experience of a number of disciplines - archival science, the history and organization of archives keeping, the history of government institutions, since they all rely on the principle of “non-fragmentation of the fund” and the importance of reconstructing the structure, competence and evolution of institutions-fund formers to identify internal information document flow. This approach turned out to be especially relevant in archival science - preserving the natural-historical relations of a document and a fund, as opposed to creating artificial thematic series (with parallel fragmentation of funds). It received consistent development in the writings of Avtokratov, (2001). Keeping its importance as a backbone principle in the archival industry, this approach has become the basis of a number of important VNIIDAD projects, in particular, on statehood (Statehood of Russia: Types and varieties of documents of the Soviet period (1917-1991)]: (Reference dictionary, 2016). A definite result in this direction was the unified classifier of document information created by VNIIDAD of the Archival Fund of the Russian Federation - a universal hierarchical classification system designed for the classification analysis of archival document information contained in the Archival Fund of the Russian Federation regardless of the time of creation of the document, information carrier and storage location (“Single classifier of documentary information of the Archival Fund of the Russian Federation”, 2007). Single classifier of documentary information of the Archival Fund

of the Russian Federation (EKDI AF RF) allowed to bridge the artificially created gap in the classification of documentary information on the history of Russia before 1917 and after.

It is important to note that the conclusions of the classics of domestic source science, archival science and document science remain relevant at the present stage, finding consistent application in the study of various types of sources, both traditional (on paper) and new (on electronic media) (“On the publication of documents on electronic media”, 2018).

### **6.3. Source science, archival science, and document science: reconstruction of information and interdisciplinary relations**

The starting point for the reconstruction of interdisciplinary relations is the idea of a single humanitarian foundation for source science, archival science and document science, the essence of which is determined by the common subject of their study (Khorkhordina, 2011). This subject is historical sources as cultural works, the products of purposeful human activity, which appear to the researcher as sources of information about a person. From these positions, we consider three problems – 1) the relationship of source science and archival science; 2) concepts - “source” and “archival document”; 3) the functions of a historian and an archivist.

In modern international literature the following questions were addressed: the work on archival science and humanitarian culture were presented (“Outline of Digital Archiving Project”, 2019), genealogy (Malm, 2017), family history (Tucker, 2006), anthropology and archives (Stoler, 2002), cultural and historical memory and managing those by use of audiovisual sources (“The Governance of Cultural Memory Through Audiovisual Broadcast Archives Preservation and Accessibility in four European Countries”, 2017), common principles of archival practice, storage and access to archival documents (Archive Principles and Practice: an introduction to archives for non-archivists, 2016), archival law and its changes in the light of new technologies, in particular, formation of digital archives (Anderson, 2013), personnel training, specific nature of archival services in different countries, interaction of archives and public administration. However, there were no integrated conceptual understanding of interaction between historical cognition, source science, document science and public administration until recently. The opportunities to this, in our view, are revealed by the theory of methodology of cognitive history.

The general statement of the problem is determined by the preservation (and even strengthening) of the traditional contradiction between practice and science. Despite the apparent similarities between archival science and source science, there is a certain difference and even a contradiction, primarily not in the discrepancy between the object of archival science and source science, but in the difference in approaches. The mismatch of approaches is clearly demonstrated by a different interpretation of the meaning and parameters of the assessment of activity, when the same document (it is the source) is considered using various criteria, motives and justifications for making decisions. For a scientist, such a defining criterion is the general accessibility of a document as an object of culture and study for any user. For an administrator, the main criterion for evaluating his activities is the administrative and legal protection of the document as an object of storage and use control, primarily in the interests of the effectiveness of administrative management. Thus, a conflict arises in the very situation of choice, when defining a criterion, and the object of study - a document, is in an unregulated space of relations between science and management.

Similar conflict, i.e. the existence of several systems in which the same real object operates, acting in different qualities - is inherent in different fields of science and practice (e.g., a contradiction in the activities of ecologists and economists), and its resolution involves dialogue and understanding of the arguments by both of its parties. The removal of such contradictions is possible only at the level of interdisciplinary synthesis. In the studied field of archival science and document science, the contradiction can be removed by realizing the relationship between the document and the source, the administrator and the scientist.

This deep analysis of the relationship between two areas of activity in the study of the document from the standpoint of cognitive and information theory, according to Khorkhordina, (2011), made it possible to offer a new interpretation of the concepts of “historical source” and “archival document”, their relationship in the research and management process. The fact that both of these concepts have been pushed to the periphery of society’s attention is due to three main reasons. Firstly, by the loss of the methodology of their common understanding, their pragmatic reduction to “auxiliary historical disciplines” and “applied archivistics”. Secondly, the historically established rigid functional separation of archives and research centers. Thirdly, the prevalence of technological priorities that contributed to the consolidation of utilitarian approaches, expressed in the concept of residual field of their activities.

The conflict of two traditional approaches to the assessment of an archival document - “purely academic” (which appeals to the scientific significance of document information) and “functional-managerial” (which appeals to questions of its pragmatic functioning in public administration) - expresses the “incompleteness of coincidence” of the concepts of “archival document” and “historical source”; the difference in the hierarchy of values and assessment systems of the corresponding professional groups (historians and archivists), the emergence of “special tension” in the activities of the archivist, who is forced to make a choice “between science and administration”. The way out of this dilemma in the framework of the cognitive approach is to solve the problem at the meta level: documents, historical sources are not only a means of cognition and a management tool, but above all - the "reality of the present." In this sense, they are the product of a unique interaction with the individual and society in the present mode, and an archivist is an intellectual who is able to combine different types of activities.

## **7. Conclusion**

Humanitarian education in Russia and the world as a whole is in a situation of change. The traditional model of learning is replaced by the transfer (translation in one form or another) of a certain finished volume of knowledge already acquired by the science, a qualitatively different model is forming that produces a creative personality, focused on solving new, sometimes previously unpredictable tasks within their professional competence. From the standpoint of cognitive theory, it is advisable to build a humanitarian education as fundamental, and not applied - to teach methods of independent identification, critical analysis of information and evidence-based verification of data, and not just to broadcast processes - the transfer of information blocks in a finished form. With this approach, the focus is on those disciplines that consider the problems of the method (as ways to achieve the optimal result) and how to improve it as a subject. A relatively narrow specialization can function successfully only in a wide cultural context, which implies a fundamental humanitarian culture.

In this context, the correlation of historical science and archival science is being revised. "In the strength test of the union of the historian and the archivist, centrifugal tendencies first appeared - a kind of self-isolation in the hope of surviving." The tendency to isolate two disciplines, which has been getting strength for a long time due to pragmatic and utilitarian considerations, did not exclude, however, "an intuitive consciousness of the naturalness of historians and archivists union." Postmodern reality made it better to realize the limits of strength of the cultural achievements of mankind and the importance of protecting them from a professional perspective. This consciousness has by now become a conviction of the need to integrate the efforts of two approaches: in the large-scale hierarchy of humanitarian cognition the historian and the archivist are aware of the commonality of their fundamental principles and goals and improve specific methods for their implementation. The state of historians and archivists community, on the one hand, and records managers and lawyers, on the other hand, shows that for the mutual enrichment of both specialties it is necessary not only a formal rapprochement of positions, but the creation of new areas of research and teaching.

The result was a new concept of teaching the humanities, including a cycle of new programs and teaching methods for the methodology of history, source science, archival science, document science, the entire cycle of auxiliary historical disciplines. A special place in this concept was taken by disciplines or areas of knowledge that turned out to be the most practically demanded by modern society - archival science, archival law, historical geography and anthropology and genealogy (interest in which is associated with the development of national identity and the growth of mass interest in the history of family, clan, etc.)

The concept of information quality introduced by the cognitive approach is very important, which allows one to distinguish between genuine and surrogate in research and teaching (what has now become known as "fake", that is, false information that is considered to be true in public space) in research and educating. The behavior program and the dynamics of civil society development generally depend on what information an individual receives and on how this information will be analysed (Kunyaev & Chernyavsky, 2018). The consumption of information outside and an independent scientific critical verification of its reliability by an individual opens up a scope for ideological manipulation and information segregation. The corresponding educational standards should, therefore, be based on a consistent concept of the historical process - such a version that is developed through dialogue within the scientific community, and not mechanically implanted besides it, based on evidence-based knowledge (using methods and data from all humanitarian disciplines) and lying at the heart of teaching aimed at professionalism and critical methods of verifying information.

From the standpoint of theory and methodology of cognitive history the article represents the reconstruction of entire problematic area of the research area of VNIIDAD in document science, archival science, archives keeping and archivistics – their information potential, terminology and significant interdisciplinary relations. The parameters of the structural, methodological and applied contribution of the theory to the solution of issues central to VNIIDAD for the appraisal of the value of documentary heritage and its use, legal support of the scientific and commercial use of information, publishing and scientific and pedagogics practice, as well as optimization of information support for public service management, archives, expert consulting structures were established.

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