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The Use of the Historical-Intuitive Method in the Decipherment of the Phaistos Disc

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Abstract

In today's archaeological finds, there are many things that we cannot explain. This has many reasons, one being the difficulty of dating, and another being that it can be very hard to understand the message that people in the past wished to convey.

The difficulty of understanding lays both in the code of communication, which is no longer understood, and in the contents themselves, since neither of the two falls within our current wealth of knowledge.

This is a large void in classic historical-archaeological method; in its 'objectivity' it needs reliable, interpretable and verifiable objects, yet it must rely 'blindly' on the truth which is rarely demonstrable through the contents of the objects that are analyzed.

The methodological rigor can do little when the object found comes from far back in time, is only partial and encrypted, and has insufficient evidence to support logical and rational understanding.

The result can be nothing else but 'un-understanding'.

To overcome this 'lack of inquiry', we propose using a new method of analysis; a method supported by intuition.

Many images from ancient times, those found in archaeological digs, testify to the deep bond that ancient peoples had with the Unseen; bonds with that part of Creation which, although not visible, participates in

Creation itself and with which our ancestors were in dialogue.

Some artifacts, including those mentioned above, were not made just to communicate the thoughts of men, but to convey messages that the ancients received from Above.

In order to understand their significance, we have to be in the same modality of receptivity as the ancients. We do not need so much to understand the code of writing, but instead the content and meaning of the message.

We believe that intuition can be the tool that helps understand and, ultimately, create the same Connection that the ancients had with the Unseen, which was lost with the dawn of the purely rational method.

The methodological rigor of archaeologists and historians is joined by the powerful non-rational method of intuition in finding a method which, overall, we define as 'historical-intuitive'.

The non-rational intuition of the researcher, if well trained, can actually achieve interpretations that would otherwise be unattainable.

The Phaistos Disc belongs to the kind of objects which are not interpretable through the classic historical-archaeological method. It is a small disc of clay that has become a real headache for the archaeologists and

historians who place absolute confidence in human reason alone.

It is fascinating because of the mystery it contains, and for the throngs of tourists who visit Crete, it has become a symbol of the island.

The purpose of my lecture at the conference is to explain the results of the application of the 'historical-intuitive' method through the new and enlightening decipherment of the Phaistos Disc.

Paper

Historians and archaeologists are united by the same Destiny.

If our paths converge here today in this place and in this context, it is no coincidence.

- Who are we?
- Where are we from?
- Where are we going?

These are the questions that move us so deeply, that they lead many of us to dedicate our lives to the search for answers. We, as historians and archaeologists, have chosen the path of the past and its manifestations to find the key that allow us to open the door to a broader and deeper understanding of life and its development. Looking to the past to suggest a possible future.

Since ancient times, history has been defined as 'Magistra vitae'; a teacher of life.

History embodies a potential for the transformation which will take us into the future. History as a subject of study and reconstruction of the past, although academically defined as an 'objective science', is in reality a mediated experience and often subjective.

This means that historical interpretation is influenced by the guidelines, methods, tools and personalities of the performers themselves: the historians.

Historians and archaeologists are in turn influenced by the socio-cultural-economic area in which they act.

With this premise, we can recognize various guidelines in the historical-archaeological method that reflect the needs of the times in which they developed.

A short periodization.

If we look to the Occident, the purpose of history in ancient Greece was mainly to tell the 'deeds of heroes', like modern action films. In this phase, the historical narrative was more associated with a solicitation of emotions than with the objective story of events aimed at trying to learn a lesson; a lesson which was not just dictated by human thought, but also came from a higher meaning tied to the unfolding of life on Earth and beyond. Greek historiography gave rise to 'emotional history' and with this, history lost the sense that it had had before. History had been considered to be the development of a guided path which was held together by a higher meaning, and this was lost. History was not regarded by Herodotus as a mere series of events that followed one another chronologically in time, but instead as a set of facts connected by a network of logical relations, therefore resulting from a human way of thinking.

Although the development of world history is attributed to the gods, these gods were manufactured by the human mind and only knew how to be as emotional as humans are. According to Herodotus, the protagonists of history are the gods who are the guarantor of universal order. The very moment order is compromised, the gods intervene, based on the principle that the author defines as $\varphi\theta\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma \tau\tilde{\omega} \nu \theta\epsilon\tilde{\omega} \nu$ (envy of the gods).

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, history was often studied through the perspective of the Church. Although religious and sacred, it is always constructed by human thought.

The current historical-archaeological method derived from the Enlightenment (Age of Reason) belongs to a specific phase of our history and as such can only be understood in that context. The Enlightenment placed absolute trust in the direct observation of

phenomena and in the use of autonomous reason. Faith in reason, combined with the experimental model of Newtonian science, seemed to make it possible to discover not only the laws of the natural world, but also those of social development. It was believed then, as now, that if we use reason wisely, we could have unlimited progress in knowledge, technology and morality.

Following this rationalist wave between 1700 and 1800, the German historian Leopold von Ranke proposed a method that was prevalent up until the 1960s. Attention to documentary sources, rigorous study of the facts from these sources and criticism of the Hegelian and positivist visions were his main structure. The methodological doctrine had the task of showing the facts as they actually appeared, refraining from offering interpretations. The importance of Ranke in modern history is remarkable, since he permanently introduced the most rigorous method of establishing the historical facts on the basis of their direct documentation.

We can identify different phases in archaeology too, which are similar to those already described for history.

The first to make use of the term Ἀρχαιολογία was Thucydides, who coined this phrase in the title of the introduction to his paper about the Peloponnesian War. But in the chapter titled Ἀρχαιολογία, Thucydides also included a more specific reference to what is commonly considered 'archaeology' in the strictest sense. Here we can find an example of historical deduction from archaeological data.

He claimed that the Phoenicians and the Carians were the pirates who inhabited the islands of the Aegean because when the Athenians purified Delos and took all the tombs away from the island, more than half of the bodies appeared to be Carians through their armor and the method of burial. This episode is considered the forerunner of all archaeological excavations also because it illustrates the object, the method and purpose of this discipline: material products made by humans are discovered during excavations, which are then interpreted by historians. In 1400,

thanks to Ciriaco de' Pizziccolli from Ancona, rightly considered the first modern archaeologist, there was a renewed interest in 'antiquary', a discipline that integrates written sources with the analysis of ancient artifacts. It was he who first recognized works of Phidias in the Athenian Acropolis monuments, starting with the description of Pausanias.

The person best known and most significant in terms of intellectual progress is the German scholar Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who was the first to systematically organize all the material found up to that point, in particular with regard to Greek art.

However, in all these aspects we recognize a strong influence of human reason or emotion (collecting, social status, aesthetic satisfaction), or both, enclosed in a single act. And in all these aspects the deep sense behind the individual objects cannot be found, and more, is sometimes not even sought after. Emblematic of this rational-emotive approach is the case of Evans who, through excavations conducted by him on the island of Crete, revealed for the first time the existence of a hitherto unknown prehistoric civilization. Evans bought the land and entirely financed the excavation himself. However, his work has been much discussed since he partially reconstructed the walls of palaces and covered many paintings with bright colors and not always, it is believed, in a manner faithful to the original. Another example of the emotive approach corresponds to the new trend in the exhibition which I learned about a few months ago from Stephan Miles, University of Glasgow¹, who spoke about battlefield heritage in Britain at the 9th International Congress of History in Athens. I refer in particular to the sign, 'Please touch' at the Bosworth Battlefield Museum, intended to invite visitors to have direct contact with the objects in the exhibit. I also refer to the figure of Alice, the innkeeper's daughter, who is the protagonist of an audio-visual clip that accompanies visitors through the battle using the eyes, the emotions and the

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humanity of a person who personally experienced the dramatic event. But even this approach continues to be limited only as it relates to rational thought and emotion generated by and in humans.

Is there a solution to this approach, so human and partial?

Reflecting on what our present and our future as historians and archaeologists is, I find an interesting parallel between history and medicine, united by a fundamental point: the connection between object and subject of research. Man seeks man. And we don't realize that this is extremely reductive and often wrong.

It is as if history and medicine, more than any other science, are the most obvious mirror image of human evolution; in them and in their methods of research and investigation, man reflects himself and his evolutionary phase.

There is a view in medicine that we can recognize in the current approach which considers it important to divide and dissect the human physical body to understand how it works. The word autopsy, which is derived from the Greek words *αὐτός* 'same' and *ὄψις* 'sight', means "see with own eyes". Herodotus also acknowledged sight - as well as hearing and reason - as one of the tools of historical investigation.

According to this approach, if a disease occurs, the path to healing goes through drugs, operations and removal of the diseased part. In short, the disease is considered only on the physical level. Its recognition is accomplished by analogy through comparing the characteristics and symptoms of similar cases. When recognized, the process is already encoded and will follow the general lines that do not consider the individual in question but only the encyclopedic character of the information contained in science. The stratigraphical dating in archaeology works the same way.

This is the Kingdom of Reason and the Line, as linear as the 'cut' that removes and

separates, but does not cure. As we know, there are many cases of failure with this method and the number of orphan diseases that do not fall among the curable cases and cannot be explained by the great book of traditional medical science is increasing. Similarly, by analogy, following the traditional historical-archaeological approach, there are many artifacts that cannot be explained.

As humans increased their use of reason and their confidence in it, they gradually reduced their use and trust of non-rational intuition which allowed the humans of the past to solve the problems that they stood in front of. But this in fact also limited the scope of human knowledge, or reduced their possibilities, which became so much more precise but simultaneously less comprehensive.

But next to this we can see how to make another approach that I consider more wise and complete.

In fact, the diffusion of alternative medicine, homeopathy and natural therapies that consider the human being in a holistic, comprehensive and 'round' way is increasing. This is the Kingdom of the Circle and Intuition. The human is seen not only in his physical manifestation, but also in his other mortal and immortal bodies and his connections with that which is outside of him. He is a *ὅλος* (all, whole) connected to the environment in which he lives, his experiences past, present and future, his habits, his diet, his emotional life and relationships. The basic idea is that we are far more than our physical body and our reason, just as the invisible reality is much larger than the visible reality.

In the historical and archaeological context, this corresponds to the introduction of new tools such as historical sensation (1), the interdisciplinary approach (2) and intuition (3).

(1) The Dutch historian Johan Huizinga opened a window in the early twentieth century to the first opportunity to understand history through feelings. He affirmed the importance of the aesthetic

element, or of literary and artistic works, in the work of the historian. The idea that inspired him was the opportunity to learn about a society or a culture through the spirit of its artistic and literary production, thus bypassing rational thought. The 'historical sensation' for him was the moment when the historian feels an authentic contact with the past. This was to Huizinga "the real moment of historical knowledge".

(2) The subsequent work of Marija Gimbutas (1921-1994) pointed to the presence of ancient elements of mythology in archaeology. The basis of the archaeological and historical method of Marija Gimbutas is an interdisciplinary approach, giving rise to a new discipline: the archaeomythology. This is based on the comparison of mythologies 'unwritten' or popular oral traditions, folklore, magic-religious events and of course of archaeology, linguistics, religion and historical documents.

(3) The new historical-intuitive method is integrated in this context of the renewal of the traditional methods.

The methodological rigor of the archaeologists and historians is joined by the powerful non-rational mode of intuition in a method which, overall, we define as 'historical-intuitive'.

We need not deny the classical approach, neither in medicine nor in history, but instead integrate it with the new elements specifically required at this stage of the history of humanity. If we are willing to mix "the Sacred and the Profane", "the Rational and the Intuitive", and "the Scientist and the Artist", we can reach the unveiling of a meaning that would otherwise remain mysterious to the mind of modern man.

The non-rational intuitive capabilities of the researcher, if well trained and aligned, can actually achieve interpretations otherwise unattainable.

Etymology helps us, as a first step, in the search for a comprehensive definition of

emotion and intuition. Even if we only look at the prefixes of the words e-motion (e-moveo) and in-tuition (in-tueor), they suggest movements in opposite directions: emotion suggests a movement from the internal to the external, and intuition from the external to the internal.

Emotion is something closely related to the individual based on his entire personal cultural, social, ... emotional background. This is not something which can be generalized and which has a collective value. Emotion cannot be a paradigm of interpretation of historical and archaeological data.

And the historical sensation or intuition, whose origin is not the restricted emotional field of the individual, is very different. When humans are seen as part of a 'whole' which is a lot bigger and wider, it is possible that they receive signals, messages, sensations and intuition from outside themselves.

And if this 'Outside' has a much more expansive sight than that of humans, the message that it transmits can complete the message coming from the restricted sight of humans.

To go from emotion/reason to intuition, we are asked to make a 'quantum' leap, also from the evolutionary point of view, a leap that we are able to do well because most of the information we need now is already contained in numerous prehistoric artifacts which belong to the field of archaeology. With the traditional method we cannot explain them. This has many reasons, one being the difficulty of dating, and another being that it can be very hard to understand the message that people in the past wished to convey.

Some ancient artifacts were not made just to communicate the thoughts of men, but to convey messages that the ancients received from the 'Outside' we already mentioned. In order to understand their significance, we have to be in the same modality of receptivity as the ancients. We do not need so much to understand the code of writing, but instead the content and meaning of the message.

We believe that intuition can be the tool that helps us to understand and, ultimately, create the same connection with the Invisible that the ancients had, lost with the advent and the supremacy of reason and emotion.

The Phaistos Disc

The Phaistos Disc belongs to the kind of objects which are not interpretable through the classic historical-archaeological method. It is a small disc of clay that looks perhaps like a game for children but has become a real headache for the archaeologists and historians who place absolute confidence in human reason alone.

Through the historical-intuitive method we have come to a new interpretation of the Phaistos Disc and to the rediscovery of an ancient ritual that is proof that the ancients had knowledge of the spirit world in much more depth and less filtered by emotion and reason than we do now.

The ritual was one of the most important occasions that put their knowledge and their capabilities into practice.

The purpose of the ritual described by the Phaistos Disc was to connect with a specific part of our deepest World - a place beyond the duality that characterizes the world we normally know. In this place, we enter an area where we are 'one' with a part of Creation. For a few moments, the officiant, who was a priestess, experiences the 'Union' between human, animal, plant and beyond.

Many archaeological remains testify to the deep bond that the ancients had with that part of Creation with which they were in constant dialogue, even though it was and is not a visible part of Creation itself.

The ancients knew several ways to establish this Connection.

The Phaistos Disc was one of them.

At the moment the Connection was activated, duality was overcome through the Union of Masculine and Feminine. This corresponds to the moment in which the ritual reached the Flower, which is the central sign of side A of the Disc and is one of the patterns of Creation.

Conclusion

As a summary of my lecture today, I would like again to emphasize the fact that our present task is not to discover but to re-discover or to combine the knowledge and skills that our ancestors already had and used.

Many of these skills are before our very eyes, wrapped in historical and archaeological remains, and sometimes even in the deeper meaning of the words we commonly use. We only need to open our eyes - or perhaps close them! - And to see in a different way.

Yeah, see

The word 'history' comes from the Greek ὄϊδα , aorist of the verb εἶδον degree zero, which means 'I see'. The aorist is our perfect, so logically ὄϊδα should mean 'I've seen/I saw'. Instead it means 'I know', in the present tense. The verb ὄϊδα then gives us more indication of 'knowing': "I know because I saw", "I saw so I know". In other modern languages, like English, we use the expression "I see" as the equivalent of "I know".

Εἶδον in turn is derived from the Indo-European root $\sqrt{\text{Fid}}$ attested in the Latin word 'video', in English 'wit' (that is 'to know') in Sanskrit 'veda'. As we know, 'the Vedas' are the sacred texts of knowledge and wisdom for India.

So the wise man is one who has seen? Considering that, in the classical tradition, wise men, seers and soothsayers were generally blind, think for example of Tiresias - we can assume that the verb ὄϊδα and the word 'history', which is derived from it, contain a sense much deeper than we thought.

The wise man is he who, eyes closed to physical things, connects with the Invisible through a sight that is not physical, or through intuition (intuitus, us: sight).

The new definition of history and historian, on the one hand, is leading us to the end of this journey together, and on the other it is bringing us to the beginning of a fascinating new evolutionary phase of archaeological and historical method, or the historical-intuitive method, as is required by our times.

And if, as I mentioned earlier, humans reflect themselves in the methods of research and investigation, with the historical-intuitive method, we are also

facing a new evolutionary phase of the history of humanity.

It is my wish to see you again on this path.

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Curriculum Vitae

Roberta Rio became a historian in the traditional sense with a degree in History from the University of Trieste (Italy) in 1996. She presented her thesis entitled "Catalogue of Books in the Italian Middle Ages from the Fifth to the Twelfth Century", with which, for the first time since Gustav Becker, a work about the medieval catalogues was re-examined.

Her passion for medieval manuscripts and the ancient development of writing, Greek and Latin brought her to the State Archives in Trieste, where she obtained a degree (Ph.D.) in Archiving, Palaeography and Diplomatics. To complete her degree, she received two scholarships to attend the Association of Palaeographers and Diplomaticians in Fermo (Italy) and the Inter-University Centre for Franciscan Studies in Assisi.

She studied also at the University of Malta in La Valletta in 1994 and the year after at the University of Oslo (Norway).

She has published several historical articles and books: "The Sacred Prostitution" (2004), and "The Awakening of the Feminine" (2005).

Her subsequent life experiences made aspects of existence less rational and much deeper known to her, making her understand that man is more than reason and can go much further than the limits of rational understanding.

Her new book "New Light on Phaistos Disc" (2011) combines classical historical methods with a special intuition which catches missing information from an area that extends well beyond the physical.

She teaches at the Universities of Oldenburg in Germany and Klagenfurt in Austria.