Let us elaborate the specific temporal structure implicit in a philosophical archaeology. What is at stake in it is not properly a past but a moment of arising; however, access to such can only be obtained by returning back to the point where it was covered over and neutralized by tradition (in Melandri's terms, to the point where the split occurred between the conscious and the unconscious, historiography and history). The moment of arising, the arche of archaeology is what will take place, what will become accessible and present, only when archaeological inquiry has completed its operation. It therefore has the form of a past in the future, that is, future anterior.

Here it is not merely a matter, as has been suggested, of "an appeal for the alternative developments that had been condemned in the first trial" nor of conjecturing possible alternatives to the actual state of things. Benjamin once wrote that "in remembrance we have an experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally archeological," because memory somehow modifies the past, transforming the unrealized into realized and the realized into unrealized. If memory thus constitutes the force that gives possibility back to what has been (and nevertheless confirms it as past), forgetting is what incessantly removes it (and yet somehow guards its presence). Instead, the point of archaeology is to gain access to the present for the first time, beyond memory and forgetting or, rather, at the threshold of their indifference.

Precisely for this reason, the space opening up here toward the past is projected into the future. In the introduction to Le Rive et l'existence, Foucault observes (contrary to Freud) the intimate tension of the dream toward the future: "The essential point of the dream is not so much that it resuscitates the past as that it announces the future. It foretells and announces the moment in which the patient will finally reveal to the analyst the secret [he or she] does not yet know, which is nevertheless the heaviest burden of [his or her] present.... The dream anticipates the moment of freedom. It constitutes a harbinger of history, before being the compelled repetition of the traumatic past."

Leaving aside the accent placed here, perhaps too ingenuously, on the future as the "first moment of freedom that frees itself," we must specify that the future at issue in archaeology becomes intertwined with a past; it is a future anterior. It is the past that will have been when the archaeologist's gesture (or the power of the imaginary) has cleared away the ghosts of the unconscious and the tight-knit fabric of tradition which block access to history. Only in the form of this "will have been" can historical consciousness truly become possible.
Archaeology moves backward through the course of history, just as the imagination moves back through individual biography. Both represent a regressive force that, unlike traumatic neurosis, does not retreat toward an indestructible origin but rather toward the point where history (whether individual or collective) becomes accessible for the first time, in accordance with the temporality of the future anterior.

In this way, the relation between archaeology and history becomes transparent. It corresponds to the relation that in Islamic theology (and, though in a different way, in Christian and Jewish theology, too) at once distinguishes and joins redemption and creation, the "imperative" (amr) and "creation" (khalq), prophets and angels. According to this doctrine, there are two kinds of work or praxis in God: the work of redemption and that of creation. To the former correspond the prophets, who serve as mediators in order to affirm the work of salvation; to the latter correspond the angels, who mediate the work of creation. The work of salvation precedes in rank that of creation, hence the superiority of the prophets over the angels. (In Christian theology, the two works, united in God, are assigned to two distinct persons within the Trinity: the Father and the Son, the all-powerful Creator and the Redeemer, in whom God emptied himself of his force.)

The decisive aspect of this conception is that redemption precedes creation in rank, that the event that seems to follow is in truth anterior. It is not a remedy for the fall of creatures, but rather that which makes creation comprehensible, that which gives it its meaning. For this reason, in Islam, the light of the Prophet is the first of all beings (just as in the Jewish tradition the name of the Messiah was created before the creation of the world, and in Christianity the Son, though he was generated by the Father, is consubstantial and coeval with Him). It is instructive that in Islam and Judaism the work of salvation, while preceding in rank the work of creation, is entrusted to a creature. This confirms the paradox, which should by now be familiar to us, that the two works are not simply separate but rather persist in a single place, where the work of salvation acts as a kind of a priori that is immanent in the work of creation and makes it possible.

To go backward through the course of history, as the archaeologist does, amounts to going back through the work of creation in order to give it back to the salvation from which it originates. Similarly, Benjamin made redemption a fully historical category, one opposed in every sense to the apologia of bad historians. And not only is archaeology the immanent a priori of historiography, but the gesture of the archaeologist constitutes the paradigm of true human action. For it is not merely the work of an author's-or of anyone's-life that determines his or her rank, but the way in which he or she has been able to bring it back to the work of redemption, to mark it with the signature of salvation and to render it intelligible. Only for those who will have known how to save it, will creation be possible.

Before entering a stage of decline, the history of the human sciences saw, during the first half of the twentieth century, a decisive acceleration, with linguistics and comparative grammar assuming the roles of "pilot science" in the field. The idea that it might be possible, through a purely linguistic analysis, to return to more archaic stages (or ultra-historical stages, to once again take up Dumezil's expression) of the history of humanity had been put forth by Hermann Usener at the end of the nineteenth century in
his work *Gottennamen* (1896). At the outset of his investigation, he asked himself how the creation of divine names had been possible, and that in order to attempt to find an answer to such a question one that is absolutely fundamental for the history of religions— we have no other "evidence" (*Urkunde*) than that originating from an analysis of language.\(^4\) However, even before him, though with much less rigor, comparative grammar had inspired the investigations of scholars ranging from Max Muller to Adalbert Kuhn and Emile Burnouf, all of whom had attempted to provide a foundation for comparative mythology and the science of religions in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. But just when comparative grammar, in its effort to reconstruct not only the "divine names" but the general outline of "Indo-European institutions" themselves through the analysis of purely linguistic data, was reaching its apex (with the publication of Benveniste's *Indo-European Language and Society*), the project started to decline in conjunction with linguistics' turn toward a formalized model à la Chomsky, whose epistemological horizon made such an endeavor inadmissible.

This is not the place to ask about the function and future of the human sciences today. Instead, we are interested once again in how the *arche* that is in question in archaeology is to be understood. If it is indeed true that inquiry had made a significant advance when it abandoned, in the fields of linguistics and the history of cultures, the anchorage in a language that was supposed to be real and in the people who spoke it ("the academic Indo-European language spoken, so one thought, 'at the moment of the dispersion"\(^5\)), and if scholars had understood that it was not as important to reconstruct an unverifiable prototype as it was to explain comparatively the known languages, nonetheless it was not possible within that perspective to completely cut off all the links to the ontological support implicit in the hypothesis. Thus, when in 1969 Benveniste published his masterpiece, it was by no means clear how the epistemological *locus* and historical consistency of something like an "Indo-European institution" was to be understood. And it is quite probable that Benveniste would not have been able to suggest a solution in this regard, even if he had not been struck by a type of total and incurable aphasia.

From the perspective of the philosophical archaeology proposed here, the question regarding ontological anchoring must be completely revised. The *arche* toward which archaeology regresses is not to be understood in any way as a given locatable in a chronology (even with as large a frame as prehistory); instead, it is an operative force within history, like the Indo-European words expressing a system of connections between historically accessible languages, or the child of psychoanalysis exerting an active force within the psychic life of the adult, or the big bang, which is supposed to have given rise to the universe but which continues to send toward us its fossil radiation. Yet unlike the big bang, which astrophysicists claim to be able to date (albeit in terms of millions of years), the *archē* is not a given or a substance, but a field of bipolar historical currents stretched between anthropogenesis and history, between the moment of arising and becoming, between an archi-past and the present. And as with anthropogenesis, which is supposed to have taken place but which cannot be hypostatized in a chronological event – the *arche* alone is able to guarantee the intelligibility of historical phenomena, "saving" them archaeologically in a future anterior in the understanding not of an unverifiable origin but of its finite and untotalizable history.
At this point, it is also possible to understand what is at stake in the paradigm shift in the human sciences from comparative grammar (an essentially historical discipline) to generative grammar (ultimately, a biological discipline). In both cases, there remains the problem of the ultimate ontological anchoring, which for comparative grammar (and for the disciplines grounded in it) is an originary historical event and for generative grammar (and for the cognitive disciplines associated with it) is the neuronal system and genetic code of *Homo sapiens*. The current predominance in the human sciences of models originating from the cognitive sciences bears witness to this shift of epistemological paradigm. Yet the human sciences will be capable of reaching their decisive epistemological threshold only after they have rethought, from the bottom up, the very idea of an ontological anchoring, and thereby envisaged being as a field of essentially historical tensions.

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