

The Interpretation of History. The Need to Work Transversally



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Opinion

The research and conservation of cultural heritage requires a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity. This is the only way, integral and holistic way, that the heritage has sustainability for future generations. When an archaeological or museological project is carried out, one of the main premises is to make a team with professionals from different areas. In our concrete case, which is the recovery of the heritage of the Spanish Civil War, composed of materials as sand, wood, concrete or iron (bunkers, trenches, etc.) scattered throughout the territory, requires numerous experts, such as, for example, archaeologists, architects, historians of military history (and/or army people, if it is possible), pedagogues, museologists, etc.

However, the reality is very different. This multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity has remained, in some cases, in a unidirectionality where the same expert performs the functions of the rest of scientific disciplines. This circumstance may be due to a lack of human and financial resources, which means that the same person must do the work of other experts. It can also be due to a lack of communication between disciplines, which means that the work of some and others is not valued. In any case, unidirectionality has consequences: erroneous interpretations, a single vision of a global phenomenon, etc.

Why treats this topic? Because the recovery of the heritage of the Spanish Civil War is a reality full of this unidirectional work. There are experiences where the teams are formed by a wide diversity of researchers, but in many other cases they do not. Here we show two examples of bad history interpretations that are the result of a single vision.

A first example is found in the Ruta del Frente del Agua, in Paredes de Buitrago (Madrid). In the course of a guided tour the guide made comments such as: "The houses we see with a collapsed roof is due to the bombing of the Spanish Civil War", "every day at the same time and throughout the war there were systematic artillery bombings", "The soldiers when they got bored were making gin in the trenches, since in this area there are many junipers", "from this sniper pit it was right in the head of the enemy 2000 meters away", or "in the excavation of that

'franco-tirador' well, a bottle of the 'Mirinda' soft drink appeared, which shows how well supplied that front was. We took the bottle to the laboratory to exhibit it in the interpretation center". After observing the houses and after consulting the aerial photos of the end of the war, we verified that the collapses are due to the aging of the beams since most of them did not exist in 1936-39. In the daily parts of the two sides of this area does not appear at any time a daily bombing. When asking the guide that where he had obtained the information of the elaboration of gin in the trenches, the answer was that it is the logical thing, since if there are junipers they make gin. In the Spanish Civil War hardly have been noted positions of frank-shooter; when we consult the maps prepared by the military engineers, the name of the shooter's well appears, something completely different with completely different functions. The refreshing drink 'Mirinda', like the current 'Fanta' (Coca-Cola), is still sold in other countries. The origin of the drink is Spanish, but it is from 1959.

A second example is in the archaeological excavations that have been carried out in Rivas Vaciamadrid (Madrid). The archaeological works have been developed on a place that has been called "Casa de Peña Blanca". The interesting thing is that it has been discovered that nobody has verified that place name, when we did it, we realized that it was "Doña Blanca", with which the history of the place changes substantially. Likewise, in other places where it has been worked, different materials have been found, such as: ammunition, impacted bullets awarded to the German army, light bulbs, etc. In the documents, it has been verified that in that place there was no combat, but that the Guardia Civil (kind of state police) used that place as a shooting range and that the caliber of the bullets that have been found correspond with those used by said police. In addition, we must remember that after the war the trenches were a place to visit, to collect scrap metal and shelter for the shepherds, which in a short period of time since the end of the war have been mixed different times and people.

In one of the writings of the research team said: "The food, although progressively scarce and monotonous, was not missing any day. And less alcohol. Nor the medications. They had

toothpaste and cologne, something that in many working-class neighborhoods and in many villages in the 30s was an almost unattainable dream. Some learned to read and write in burrows. More incredible still: at nightfall, the coats were illuminated with electric light. We have found cable and remains of a light bulb in its socket ". Light is the great enemy in wars, if you are detected the chances of being shot increases considerably, as well as revealing the position of your army. In no file of the military engineers it appears that a power line was made to or in the trenches, even technically it would be very difficult and costly to perform for the circumstances. In no photograph of trenches of the Spanish Civil War, and are plentiful, lighting appears by light bulbs, nor are there any testimonies of their use.

Some researchers and professionals have stated in their defense that: "An anonymous commentator of our blog told us

that we are very much given to the imagination, that what we have to contribute is information. Unknown to this kind reader, imagination is the most powerful historiographical tool". We do not doubt that something that moves human evolution is the imagination. Throughout history, when the human being has created something: a vaccine, a new technological tool, a piece of art, etc., first, he must imagine it. Imagination is essential for our survival, but in this case, we are talking about another think. It is about trying to get closer to our past and, in our concrete case, to a dark past, a war, we must have many professionals as possible to give all the visions on the same phenomenon. History is a contemporary reality that tries to read the past in a transversal way.



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