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DECIPHERING OF ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS AND ITS PITFALLS: THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH VENETI INSCRIPTIONS

ABSTRACT

When asked to have a look at the author's documentation of his translation of the ancient Venetic inscriptions, that discovered they were in a Finnic languge, linguists will immediately dismiss it and mock it because it does not use the linguistic approach. But the linguist fails to realize that linguistics cannot decipher an unknown written language because, although it might be able to identify from repeated patterns word stems and grammatical endings, it cannot directly determine meanings. Determining meanings is the primary objective of deciphering an unknown language, and it is done by immersing oneself in the language and observing it in actual operation. This immersion approach is first used by us as babies learning their parents language, but can also be used as an adult learning another language. Linguistics can only decipher an unknown language if there exists a closely related known language. It basically infers meanings and grammar in the unknown language from the known language which may or may not work, depending on the closeness between the two languages. If the languages are not close, or optimistically thought to be much closer than they really are, the linguistic approach leads to something crazy. For example, traditional deciphering of Venetic has assumed Venetic was archaic Latin, ancient Slavic, and other hypotheses, but if those assumptions were wrong, linguistics cannot get beyond coincidences and aspects in which all languages are similar. Success has eluded the translation of the Venetic inscriptions for close to a century probably because with a false hypothesis, the good convincing results simply do not come. For the Venetic inscriptions the author took a more correct approach that avoided assuming relatedness to known languages and linguistics, and instead uses the approach of IMMERSION, that brings into play all our evolved instincts for language. Drawing from the author's own experience with Venetic inscriptions – and taking examples from his book , *THE VENETIC LANGUAGE An Ancient Language from a New Perspective: FINAL** - The following discussion can be applied to any ancient inscriptions that have plenty of archeological context.

INTRODUCTON: Linguistics by itself cannot decipher an unknown language

A false impression exists that unknown languages - whether recording in ancient inscriptions like Venetic inscriptions found in northern Italy, or some unknown language in a jungle somewhere - can be deciphered with linguistic methodologies. But linguistics is the rationalization of how languages work. Linguistics requires the language to be known, or else it is nothing but noise. While it is possible, just from patterns being repeated, to guess what parts

are word stems or grammatical elements, it is impossible to know what these patterns mean, and from that develop a lexicon and grammar. That there is a code at work is clear, but meanings remain unknown unless meanings are discovered in some alternative way. It is anlogous to how scientists studying sleep can determine, from electrodes attached to the subject's head, when the subject is dreaming; but in order to determine what the dream is about, the scientists have to awaken the subject and ask: “What were you dreaming about?”.

For the very same reason, when a child hears his grandfather say a strange word, he asks “Grandfather, what does that word mean?” Linguistics and its methodology uses meanings but meanings ultimately must come from asking an informant or inferring meaning from watching the language in actual use.

In the real world of linguistics, facing an unknown language (such as spoken by a tribe in a jungle) a linguist must first decipher the content of meanings and have at least a partial language before being able to apply any linguistic analysis. In order to understand the language, the linguist has to first of all look for an "informant", a person who knows the unknown language and also a known language to use to speak to the linguist. It is also possible of course for the "informant" to only know the unknown language, but communicate with the linguist by pointing, gesturing, miming - to explain the meanings and usage by demonstration. In short, facing an unknown language, the linguist is like the child asking his grandfather what certain words mean.

But the linguist can simply live among the speakers and learn the language by observing it in use and joining in. This is known as ‘immersion’. The linguist simply has to learn the language in the same way they learned their first language as a baby - to simply live in the middle of the speakers of the language and observe it in use. Anyone can learn it that way, but not necessarily be able to consciously understand its inner workings. The only advantage a trained linguist has over a baby, is that he or she is able to rationalize grammar as they go, and therefore learn more quickly. But linguistics, or even the simple rationalization of a lexicon and grammar in a language, is a relatively new development in humankind. In the early days of colonization of North America, fur traders, missionaries and colonial officials simply learned the most useful phrases and some interchangable words in the languages of the Natives they dealt with, and used them as needed, without having any idea how the language worked. Among the first to identify grammar in Native languages was ethnographer Henry Schoolcraft. In the early 1800's, he married the granddaughter of an Ojibwa chief, and through her, he learned some Ojibwa (today called “*Anishbabe*”), and he began to grasp some of the internal rules within it and wrote about it in his journals.

Humans have not needed to understand consciously how language works. They learn a language unconsciously by imitation and feedback from first the parents and then the community that speaks the language. Henry Schoolcraft’s Ojibwa themselves, who had spoken it all their lives, were surprised when he pointed out some of the apparent rules at work in it. It is clear that humans have an innate skill with language, and this is no more evident than how a baby can learn to speak and a child to quickly speak it well, and yet know absolutely nothing consciously about how it works. Languages are active from actual use, passed down from mothers to babies, and if babies are taught a different language the unused one will become extinct. That is why there is continuity in the descent of surviving languages, and the idea of any language being born fresh at any point of time is wrong. There can be few or many changes occurring in the used of languages, but since only superficial changes are passed on to babies, all languages arise from previous languages.

So what is linguistics in the context of this thing that passes down from generation to generation, and if not passed down, dies?

Linguistics is the rationalization, intellectualization, becoming conscious of, how language works. It can range from our learning words and grammar in school, to training for years to understand more deeply how languages work, how languages change over time, how languages evolve in lexicon, grammar and phonetics from earlier forms to newer forms.

Language consists of sounds made by the speaker, which are then interpreted by the listener. But what sounds? The human can produce all kinds of sounds. Among the thousands of kinds of sounds that a human can make, what sound patterns carry the language? Languages could even incorporate sounds made outside the mouth. It could be a snap of a finger, whistling, burping ... anything. But languages tend to be governed by what is easiest, most economical. Language originated from the sounds the human vocal apparatus made most easily - they are generally mostly those sounds that every baby makes in their baby-babbling. About 20-30 sounds made by moving the tongue around, are a practical amount in languages, but societies of speakers can distort the way they speak in different directions. For example, everyone could start to whisper the words, or everyone could start to speak in a squeaky voice, or everyone could start making hard consonants soft, or increase the number of relevant vowel sounds... and so on. What exactly is the collective psychology at work causing such shifts? For example, maybe a people who live in constant danger of being heard by an enemy will develop a soft manner of talking. Ultimately, because the human form changes at an evolutionary place, the natural sounds made by babies and which remain easiest to pronounce, tend to act against bizarre distortions in language.

Linguistics notes such shifts and when they see different shifts in two similar languages, they can propose what the parent language, before the shifts, sounded like. This hypothesized parent language is called a "proto-language". Of course the reconstruction is more of an art than a science.. For example, what if some of descendant languages from the parent are extinct? The extinct languages are excluded from the analysis. What if they were significant? With any extinct languages missing from linguistic analysis, the "proto-language" will be computed from just the surviving languages, and could be quite wrong.. For example, there is reason to believe that there were originally more Finno-Ugric languages towards the west Baltic and into Scandinavia, which went extinct when replaced by Germanic in the last couple millenia. The current “Proto-Finnic” is based on surviving Finnic languages around the Gulf of Finland. What if there were more towards the west, now extinct? Not knowing them skews the existing reconstruction. Given that the tribes along the south Baltic coast and Jutland Peninsula were called “Suebi” by the Roman historian Tacitus, we could propose there was a Suebic language. Since it does not exist, historic linguistics excludes it. In the deciphering of the ancient Venetic inscriptions found in northern Italy, archeological information showing there was a north-south amber route an strong trade connectons between the location of the inscriptions and the Jutland Peninsula source of amber. That made me interested in the language at the Jutland Peninsula. Historical evidence from Roman times revealed there were tribes collectively called “*Suebi*”. What was that language like at the time of the Venetic inscriptions. By default scholars assume it was a Germanic, but there is no evidence of Germanic expansions from the central Germany region until Roman times. If Venetic was Finnic, what use would it be to do historical linguistic analysis to use only the surviving Finnic languages found around the Gulf of Finland. The unknown Suebic, thus becomes significant – if you use historical linguistics (which I didn’t as you will see)

But to what extent is linguistics relevant in an analysis pertaining to languages?

The amount we might employ linguistics depends on what we wish to achieve. If our purpose is to merely determine meanings to words and phrases, then we do not need any linguistics at all - as the case of the baby mentioned above; but determining meanings directly from how the language is used in practice, requires immersion in the language. And if the language we are trying to learn is in written form, we immerse ourselves in its use in written form. Imagine you are deaf and in a foreign country and wish to only learn the written language. You can observe all the ways the language is used in signage, product packages, billboards, captions under pictures, headlines in newspapers - and from comparing the use of certain patterns in different contexts, gradually learn the written language. For example you notice a word above a bin of apples, guess that it means 'apples', and then, for confirmation, look for that word also on a jar of apple juice, or a sign in front of an apple orchard.

The deciphering of the Venetic inscriptions can be approached as a deaf person would – by immersing oneself in all the contexts in which the Venetic writing appeared. This then serves at least as a guide to signal if choices made do not seem believable relative to the context. Traditional deciphering of Venetic inscriptions left any considerations of context secondary, and that allowed proposed translations to be accepted based only on whether the translation was possible for the object and *not* whether it was probable and believable. I will discuss later, assessing results from it being merely possible, versus being probable, based on archeological context,

BACKGROUND: The challenge of interpreting ancient Venetic inscriptions

INTRODUCTION: FINDING STRUCTURE VS FINDING MEANINGS

In the case of the Venetic inscriptions in northern Italy, made in several centuries after about 500BC, which I will be using for examples, the alphabet these people used was borrowed from the Etruscan alphabet and modified. Scholars have had no trouble identifying the sounds of the unmodified Etruscan alphabet from use by Etruscans, and the Roman alphabet that decended from it. The issue really is in the modifications made by the Veneti. The main modification was to write continuously and add dots usually on both sides of some letters. Since the letters were run together, without putting dots or spaces (like later Etruscans and Romans did) to serve as word boundaries, in the past, analysts assumed these dots were syllabic punctuation that in some way revealed word boundaries. Worse still, in the silly realm of Slovenian 'hearing things' interpretation, Slovenian analysts claimed the dots were decorative and must be ignored! My own analysis determined quite clearly that the dots were a general phonetic marker, added in every location in which there was a palatalization or similar tongue modification of the letter sound. (Pääbo, 2002-2013). The writing is analogous to modern phonetic writing, where marks are added for pauses, length, emphasis, etc. except the Veneti greatly simplified it by only using dots to mark all locations that departed from the standard alphabet sound – just enough to signal to the reader that the sound involved was altered from its natural relaxed form. But my analysis found that mostly the dots indicated palatalization like we see in Livonian or Danish today. In today's Estonian, palatalization is not significant in the language and does not have to be explicitly marked. But in related Livonian to its south, the palatalization is strong and significant, and so Livonian explicitly identifies a great variety of palatalzed sounds. Indeed Livonian was my inspiration towards discovering that Venetic dots mostly marked palatalization.

The Venetic inscriptions, before any meanings are determined, are initially not entirely opaque to some linguistic analysis. First of all, since the alphabet borrowed the Etruscan alphabet, and the Etruscan alphabet sounds are known, we can presume Venetic used similar sounds. However, if we do not know that the dots more or less mark palatalization, in reality many of the sound with the dots, are different. It affects phonetic interpretation of the language. If traditional interpeting of Venetic did not know that the dots alter the sounds of the letters, then all proported linguistic analysis that does not recognize the altered sounds, will be skewed. On the other hand, if the dots are recognized to be mostly palatalization, then it is possible for linguistics to actually notice systematic shifts in sound relative to the environment. My objective was mainly to find meanings; but it is possible for linguists to identify systematic phonological shifts.

Regardless of how Venetic sounded and the potential for linguistic analysis of phonetic patterns, the primary aim of interpreting unknown ancient writing, is to determine meanings. Without meanings of stems and grammatical elements, there is nothing for linguistics to grasp, beyond the phonological shifts suggested by the dots mentioned above, and the repetition of patterns connected to word stems and grammatical elements.

Since today we are so used to writing using word boundaries, it is useful in deciphering Venetic to insert word boundaries into the Venetic continuous inscriptions. Even without any translation at all, it is possible to identify many word boundaries from repeating patterns. For example, the Venetic word (converted to lower case Roman text as is the convention) **dona.s.to** or **.e.go** are two that are repeated many times, so we know these are words - but we do not know the grammatical elements attached unless we find other words with other endings on a seeming stem.. For that determination, we need to find a **dona** with another ending, or an **.e.** with another ending. (We did). Once we have identified word boundaries and the repeated word stems and grammatical endings, we can have a good sense of what patterns are the words, word stems, and grammatical elements. But we still do not know what it all means. It is a situation similar to dream scientists knowing exactly when a person dreams, as I already said. and how their brain was active, but still know absolutely nothing about the content of the dream.

It is important to understand that the structure of language, and the meaning in that structure are two completely different things. While linguistics is good in identifying the structure, it is incapable of discovering the content. Content can only be determined from how the language is used in the real world. Even if the linguist correctly identifies a known language that is related to the unknown language, this is still true. By using a related language, one is simply using content already discovered in the known language to project onto the unknown language. And if the wrong known language is assumed to be related to the unknown language, then wrong meanings will be transferred from the known to the unknown.

Given that meanings ultimately come from actual immersion in the use of the language – which for Venetic means complete immersion into the archeological story around all the objects with writing on them - it seems that trying to determine related known languages is essentially ignoring the primary way in which meanings are determined: observing the language in actual use. The traditional approach of trying to project Latin or Slavic or general Proto-Indo-European onto the Venetic, essentially ignores the fundamental way in which meanings are determined! Given that ALL languages are determined from observing them in use (starting with a baby acquiring his parents' language), it seems immersion and observation of Venetic as it was actually used, should be the primary methodology if the purpose is to determine meanings. Any linguistic methodology – from identifying repeated patterns, to looking for related known languages – comes after there are some meanings. Meanings allow partial construction of

sentences, which then begin to reveal grammatical forms, and suggests meanings for words for which we still do not have meanings. The pursuit of some good, probably correct, meanings is paramount.

It all begins with immersion in the archeology in which the writing occurs, and getting a sense of what meanings are probable and believable, or at least what meanings will be imporbably and unbelievable in order to narrow down the good possibilities. Contrary to what linguists want to claim, deciphering an unknown language must begin with immersion if it is possible. Knowing the nature of the context, at least it gives a sense of what is probable, what is possible, and what would be unbelievable or absurd.

THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETING THE VENETIC INSCRIPTIONS

The traditional linguistic approach has been to simply assume Venetic originated from a common language family found in the Italic Peninsula, such as a predecessor to Latin, and then use words and grammar from that language family to test on the Venetic inscriptions. If the analyst pays little attention to the archeology, then there is no awareness of even when the results are completely unbelievable. It has been archeologists, who naturally immerse themselves in context in which archeological objects appear, who have been the fiercest critics of past translations of inscriptions.

In the early days of investigation of Venetic inscriptions, some centuries ago, the first scholars simply assumed, because they used the Etruscan alphabet, that it was a northern version of Etruscan and never pursued trying to interpret it. Then when actual interest in deciphering began, it was assumed to be Illyrian (the ancient language to the east of the Adriatic and north of Greece) probably because Greek historian Herodotus made a quick mention of "*Eneti of Illyria*". There were some inscriptions from east of the Adriatic to compare with; but there was no success (too few inscriptions to compare with.) Then the scholars threw up their hands in frustration and said: "Since Venetic is in the Italic Peninsula, let us simply assume it is in an archaic Latin - after all we can see some words that seem close in form to Latin, like **dona.s.to** and **.e.go** to Latin *donato* and *ego* - and go with that hypothesis." Since every linguist in the universe will have learned Latin, many linguists jumped into the game, and set out to interpret the Venetic inscriptions with Latin. The result of this binge of analysing was summarized by the large book cataloguing it all with plenty of illustrations (Pellegrini, & Prosdocimi).

I give one example of a past deciphering from the Latin perspective. This was found written in tiny letters on fragments of the rim of a container.

.e..i.k.go.l.tano.s.dotolo.u.dera.i.kane.i
Venetic, divided by analyst : **eik goltanos doto louderai kanei**
Latin (literal): *hic Goltanus dedit Liberae Cani*
English translation: *Goltanus sacrificed this for the virgin Kanis*

Note that the literal Latin barely resembles the original and requires the invention of two proper names *Goltanus* and *Cani*. In general, the tradition of interpreting with Latin has been to find something Latin-like in the Venetic, divide it into words accordingly, and then propose that the pieces for which there is no ready Latin, are proper names. (Forget that in ancient times names were descriptive, as any mother knows when looking up possible names for her baby.)

Where is the closeness in form? Why are so many words interpreted as meaningless proper names? Why does the sentence not seem believable relative to the archeological context? Why

do the translations ignore the object and context, as if these people put arbitrary poetry on their objects?

Many of these questions arise as we learn more about the archeological context so that we are able to see when the translations do not seem correct. Therefore, this methodology actually promoted ignoring the objects and their contexts themselves. It is easier to avoid contradictions with context by ignoring context and working on sentences separated from their context as archeologists have found them. The better analysts, those who were more aware of the archeological context, were not so bold as to declare a translation, and instead filled up their documents with much discussion of how this or that word could relate to this or that word in an archaic Latin. More and more linguistic angles were introduced, without anyone ever questioning the basic hypothesis. The idea that the archaic Latin hypothesis was originally a hypothesis and that rejection was a valid option, was forgotten and remained forgotten. It is far easier to pretend that there has been enough success to keep the original hypothesis, when there really isn't.

But scholars did not find the Venetic inscriptions truly looked Latin. It was time to simply accept it was some form of archaic Indo-European, and to look for patterns in all the inscriptions - less than 100 complete short sentences - and relate them to linguistic reconstructions of ancient Indo-European words (ie the "proto-Indo-European") and grammar. The result of this new direction, and a desire to summarize all the work done so far, was a 1974 book (Lejeune, 1974). It basically organized and catalalogued all the work done by linguists throughout the period of looking at Venetic as an archaic Latin period, including what scholars said and were saying about each inscription. At the end the book we find a lexicon – which unfortunately is dominated by the imaginary (in my view) proper names of deceased, relatives, and deities; and a grammar that is skeletal and mostly only gender markers based on needing to identify gender, and and a dative case assumed presumably from sentences of the form **mego dona.s.to re.i.tiia.i.** that from Latin point of view was 'I give to Reitia' makiing the **–a.i.** look like a Dative. Such a simple lexicon and grammar could be created even by assuming Venetic was, say Chinese, and then projecting Chinese onto the inscriptions!!

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS WITH VENETIC TRANSLATIONS

Despite the effort, nothing progressed other than better cataloguing and organizing. It was and is useful to anyone interested in navigating the world of Venetic inscriptions. I found the cataloguing in Lejeune's book useful for assembling the body of inscriptions I would study. The photos in Pellegrini, & Prosdocimi, were invaluable in actually seeing how the original inscriptions were written and the appearance of the object.

In spite of there having been almost no strong interpreting of the inscritions, the academic world is now so saturated with the belief that the ancient Veneti were Indo-European, and that somehow linguistic analysis had proven it - when it really has failed - that there are linguists who entertain a sense of certainty, with even profound linguistic rationalizations for sentences that are still either untranslated or absurd-sounding. It proves that it is possible to invent linguistics around very little linguistic information - the less information the easier to invent something.

It is because the deciphering of the Venetic inscriptions did not produce any strong results, that there was a void into which, around the 1980's, some Slovenian scholars could step. They would propose that the Venetic was in an ancient Slovenian, and generate all kinds of 'proofs' for that hypothesis. Had the Latin academics succeeded, and produced neat believable translations, there would not have been any room for the Slovenians to enter the field. But the Slovenian approach is much like the tradition of toponomy, like the example of Celtic scholars imposing

Celtic meanings to British place names. It has as much scientific method as trying to see shapes of animals in clouds. It is not even worth acknowledging, but Slovenian nationalism is promoting a national frenzy about their assumed Venetic heritage. (Truth be told, Slovenian men probably originate from Veneti, but they then assimilated into Slavic in the same way that north Italic Veneti assimilated into Latin, or Brittany Veneti into Celtic, or Vistula Venedi into East Slavic. etc) There is a 100% opaque blind spot to the notion Slovenians may indeed have Venetic roots, but they assimilated into Slavic just like occurred everywhere else recorded in history!!!

So how does one interpret the ancient Venetic inscriptions? If there had been 1000 sentences not 100, the original academic approach would have discovered that the Latin or Indo-European hypothesis was wrong. But with so few inscriptions, it is easy to not arrive at any conclusions, and to preserve the hope that the hypothesis is still true.

Is it even possible to achieve any deciphering of ancient inscriptions from less than 100 complete sentences? Is it essentially a hopeless cause?

Returning to the argument with which this article began – if our purpose is to find meanings, then we have to begin with the approach by which ALL languages are deciphered, starting as babies – to be immersed in the actual use of the language. If the purpose is to learn the meanings of words, then observing the archeological contexts in which the inscriptions appear should be the primary methodology, and other methods should be secondary. The following will present some of the possible methods. Bear in mind that often all the methods are applied at the same time.

SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

THE TRADITION OF LEVERAGING TRANSLATIONS FROM AN ANCIENT PARALLEL TEXT IN A KNOWN LANGUAGE

Ancient inscriptions have been approached most successfully, where archeology has found examples of the unknown language, accompanied by translations in a known ancient language like ancient Greek or ancient Phoenician. Even if the translations provide only a handful of words that appear elsewhere, it may be enough to establish the linguistic affiliation of the unknown language. In addition, even if the linguistic affiliation is unknown, knowing the meaning of a few words, can serve as leverage to interpret other sentences without translations. By this I mean that if you have a sentence of three words and two words are known from the ancient translation, then you can infer the unknown third word from the context suggested by the two known words, and then see if the inferred meaning works in other locations the word appears. By comparative analysis across the entire body of inscriptions, most of the meanings can be inferred to a highly probable degree.

As I said at the start, linguistics cannot find meanings, but once some meanings have been found, once the unknown languge is partially known, then it is possible to introduce linguistic wisdom to assist making further choices. Thus nowhere do we exclude linguistics insights.

As more and more words are translated, it is possible to begin looking for linguistic patterns which can then aid in making further choices. For example, once we have determined a case ending, we can look for that case ending and that will help in finding meanings in sentences.

But for this method, archeology has to be lucky enough to find an inscription that has next to it a translation in a known ancient language. This was not the case with the Venetic inscriptions. Had archeology found any examples of Venetic inscriptions accompanied by translations in

Latin, Greek, Phoenician, then the traditional successful methodology I just described could have quickly proceeded to a good deciphering of Venetic.

Do we need translations in a known language? What about non-linguistic information? The Venetic writing are short and on objects with clear context. It is therefore possible to infer meanings of some words directly from the object and context, and then proceed in the same manner as traditional deciphering if some of the words are inferred from a parallel translation.

LINGUISTIC APPROACH: DETERMINE THE RELATEDNESS OF THE UNKNOWN LANGUAGE TO A KNOWN LANGUAGE A SERIOUS FIRST STEP, NOT AN ASSUMPTION.

This article stresses that while linguistics can identify repeated patterns in a language and infer what patterns are words and grammatical elements, linguistics cannot directly determine anything about content. Ever since the beginning of language, aside from universal emotional sounds, the content of speech has to be determined, directly or indirectly, from being immersed in it – observing it in use, inferring meaning, and testing to confirm the inferences. This is how babies learn their first language, and when older can even learn another language by immersion in the use of the language.

For an adult who can read and think, it is also possible to learn grammar, but when dealing with deciphering or learning a completely unknown language, nothing is known at all to start, and so there is no grammar to help learning. That having been said, if we know for sure that a known language is close to that of the unknown language then we can 'borrow' aspects of the known language to apply to the unknown language. This is, in basic terms, the linguistic approach that has been applied in the past many decades; however at no time has there been any desire to confirm that Venetic is related to Latin, Slavic, or any other known language. Thus ALL the work done should be viewed as 'testing a hypothesis'. The trouble is that when linguists have spent years testing a particular hypothesis, they are reluctant to throw up their hands and say "The hypothesis wrong. Let's try something else." Instead, they hang onto some linguistic concepts that seem to have some solid logic to them and keep building on them, which is something like building a pyramid the wrong way – up from its point – and buttressing the whole thing from toppling over.

It follows that if comparative linguistics is used, then the first aim should be to determine to a high degree of certainty that the known language to be used for the interpretations is the correct one. It is necessary to focus on a few good sentences, and test them with a host of languages with which Venetic could have been in contact – not just archaic Latin or Illyrian/Slavic, but Greek, Etruscan, Ligurian, Rhaetian, Germanic, Celtic, and – considering the Veneti were agents of trade amber from the Baltic – even Finnic. Testing a few sentences with a host of languages, it should become evident which languages produce closest similarities to the Venetic (which work well with the context too), and only then, do linguists begin to devote their lives to attempting to further translate and rationalize the Venetic.

If we know for certain that Venetic is related to a particular known language, then that will avoid 1000's of man-hours of worthless analysis along a wrong path. There are analysts in the world who have jumped on the Latin/Indo-European bandwagon and possibly wasted their lives away in the belief that the hypothesis is correct, when the very first step, of proving the hypothesis is correct has not even been done!!

How would you begin? If the ancient sentences being tested with a variety of languages is completely unknown to begin with, how can we test our hypothesis?

TEST ONE. Linguistics CAN look for patterns that suggests word boundaries, and then divide words into stems and grammatical endings. Since Venetic was written continuously, determining word boundaries is a very important first stem. Otherwise the analyst will divide the sentence up wherever they please, increasing the probability of producing false interpretations. Once we have the word boundaries, further investigation of repeated patterns, will reveal word stems and grammatical endings, since the word stem will be the portion that does not change, and grammatical endings will appear attached to many different word stems. It is then possible to select the word stems, and look for similar word stems in the languages being tested for similarities. Then it is a matter of finding words similar to the ancient word in languages A, B, C, D etc and assessing the closeness. For example Venetic often uses the word **.e.go** and **dona.s.to** , and because Latin has *ego* 'I' and *donato* 'to give', this was taken as evidence for pursuing Venetic as an archaic Latin. But what would other languages produce? I don't know of any formal investigation that evaluates all the linguistic possibilities. Latin was assume correct probably because Latin is well known. It was a sexy choice. The number of scholars who endeavoured to use Latin was very high. On the other hand, the Etruscan language should have been investigated since Etruscan was next door, preceded Latin, and the Venetic even borrowed their alphabet. BUT, the Etruscan language is a mystery, and at most some lexicons have been produced using a few instances of translations in Phoenician. Lack of scholars, lack of pursuit. With failures to get satisfying results, the tradition of investigating Venetic was generalized in the last decades to 'an ancient Indo-European'. This allowed analysts to consult all the European Indo-European languages, and espectially linguistic reconstructions of ancient words and grammar. And so, the investigation of the Venetic inscriptions has been entirely in the Indo-European universe, whereas the NON-Indo-European perspective has always been the stronger probability due to Venetic arising long before the Romans, being neighbours with Etruscan and borrowing their alphabet, and strong associations with the amber trade, which brings into play Finnic boat peoples at the sources of the amber. The whole NON-Indo-European universe has been completely ignored for the simple fact that the field of studying Venetic was enormously dominated by Indo-European language speakers, especially those who learned Latin in school.

Thus, to summarize, Venetic should have been tested by all languages with which history, archeology and geography suggests Venetic had strong interractions (since linguistic and cultural similarity is a strong basis for contact) and to look at NON-Indo-European (or PRE-Indo-European) languages as equal of even stronger possibilities. But above all, it was imperative to realize that the objective was to test hypotheses and that it was possible to find the hypothesis to be incorrect instead of trying to force the Venetic into the wrong mold (like trying to hammer a square peg into a round hole)

TEST TWO: While test one involved looking for linguistic similarity between Venetic words and grammar and that of candidate languages in the quest for relatedness, test two assesses results according to our intuition with respect to dialects of our own language. This method uses the analyst's intuitive familiarity with their own language to intuitively process what they hear.

Humans have developed instinctive skills for understanding their own language even when distorted. In human evolution, this allowed us to process the words of individuals with natural differences in speech (babies, vs aged, men vs. women, etc); or to process the words of other tribes who had not been seen for years, and who now had developed some kind of shift in their pronunciation. This ability was a clear evolutionary advantage and those who could understand major distortions and accents, were more successful, especially as the populations increased and there was more divergence in language.

However this natural skill – which can be thought of as intuitive (as opposed to a linguists rationalized) linguistic analysis – breaks down as the other language increases in its difference from one's own. The following tests cn be performed on ANY pair of languages, where the analyst tries to hear the first language within that of the second – which works if the two languages are related and not if the two languages are not. The following examples are arbitrarily chosen at random. The reader can test the truth of this themselves with any sentences with common normal speech such as we might find every day in the streets.

Let us begin with English and Swedish.

English and Swedish have Germanic roots from during and after the Roman Age. This means they are related languages, and this is what happens:

The Swedish sentence taken at random from a travel phrasebook, is "*Vär är bussen , som går till centrum.*"

The English speaker would correctly hear "*Where are buses*" and "*until the centre?*", and with some intelligence may actually interpret it correctly as *"Where are the buses which go to the town centre (downtown)?"*

While there will be better results for some sentences and worse in others, generally English will form sentences that are sensible for the simple reason that most of the words will be roughly of the same meanings and will have a logical relationship from which a logical thought can be derived. If most of the words are independently interpreted correctly then a logical total concept can be formed and adjusted according to other wholistic factors and context. By 'wholistic factors' we mean that the whole sentence provides feedback that allows fine tuning. In the above example, the feedback suggests that *som* does <u>not</u> mean 'some', and the person can propose an alternative meaning that fits, such as 'which'. Because English and Swedish are close, Swedes find it surprisingly easy to learn English. English speakers should also be able to learn Swedish easily. You just have to take note of the exceptions, where the words differ.

What happens now if English is used to interpret a sentence in a more distant language? Let's choose Finnish. Finnish, part of the Finno-Ugric linguistic universe, is completely different from the Germanic Indo-European linguistic universe in which English is situated.

The Finnish sentence of the same meaning and from a Finnish version of the tourist phrasebook is: *"Mistä lähtee bussi keskikaupungille?"* The English speaker might only correctly identify the loan-word "bus". Anything more will be a false interpretation. After some struggle, the English ear might hear the following, <u>after breaking all rules about respecting word boundaries</u> which itself is an issue – but assume the sentences are spoken and not written. The listener may finally decide he heard "*Missed the lattice bus's sick pesky cow, Pungilly*" Note that to even create a sentence we had to introduce a proper name "Pungilly".

The reader can try their own versions. Note how difficult it is. It is even impossible if we must respect word boundaries of the original!! The reason for the difficulty is simple. Linguists are correct when they say that one can often hear a word of any language in any other; but when the words have to be combined into a rational and intelligent thought, the process fails because <u>the imagined words do not have meanings that logically relate to one another in a sentence.</u> For example in the above, we have a lattice then a bus and a pesky cow. We cannot form a non-absurd sentence because the concepts do not have real-world relationships. The words heard are random in meaning, and do not combine into a logical total meaning. This is what happens in the past methodology of looking at Venetic with Latin, Slavic, etc. – the challenge becomes one of finding a meaningful sentence to tie together unrelated ideas. Slovenians make absurdity poetic.

We will repeat the two experiments again, this time using Estonian as our instrument.

Estonian, is related to Finnish, and Estonian is about as close to Finnish as English is to

Swedish. So let's see how Estonian will do, interpreting this same Finnish sentence (Once again we assume that the subject, in this case the Estonian, does not know the target language, in this case Finnish.)

The Finnish was: "*Mistä lähtee bussi keskikaupungille?"*

The Estonian will immediately detect "*Mis* (what?) - *lähe* (goes) – *buss*(bus, a loanword) – *kesk*(center) *kaubang*(business-place)*ille*(to)". Only the last interpretation – 'business-place' instead of 'town' is somewhat off. Although modern Estonian practice does not express it in an exactly parallel way to Finnish, nonetheless a parallel 'Estonianization[1]' of the Finnish version is still comprehensable—

"Mist (=mis kohast) läheb buss kesk-kaubangille".

The interpretation is correct except that the last word is incorrectly interpreted as 'center of the business-place' or 'the central business-place' instead of 'center of town'. Like *som* in the previous example, *kaubang*, represents the occasional departures that can lead a basically correct interpretation only going slightly astray.

Now to complete our investigation, let's see how Estonian would interpret the Swedish, Swedish being now in a completely different linguistic universe.

Swedish sentence was *"Vär är bussen , som går till centrum."*

The Estonian ear will struggle and in the end the analyst might come up with (also ignoring word boundaries) "v*ara bussina, s' on kaardil seente ruum*" with the absurd meaning 'as an early bus, it is on the map a mushroom room'. The Estonian reader may try something else, but all results will be absurd even when word boundaries are ignored.

Here once again we have an absurd sentence, just like English interpreting the Finnish, because the words we hear have unrelated meanings. Still, the obsessed scholar can explain the absurd meaning of 'as an early bus, it is on the map a mushroom room' as "The early bus shown on the map is incorrectly shown as a mushroom growing place. Maybe someone was using an old bus for growing mushrooms and the mapmaker erroneously marked it as the early bus."

NOTE: The above examples were arbitrarily taken from tourist phrasebooks. The reader can try their own examples. Aside from unknown words varying a little – sometimes more sometimes less – the conclusions will always be the same: that <u>if the languages are unrelated the results will be absurd.</u>

If the analyst is convinced the two unrelated langauges are related, they will try their best to make the absurd results look better, The absurd results are first massaged to appear poetic, and then have to be explained to make it less absurd. If we point this out to the analysts, they may claim that ancient Veneti had a custom in which scribes liked to write such poetic nonsense, and maybe the absurdity is poetry and was intended. We have to judge according to what is probably and believable, and not simply a ridiculous possibility.

If the analyst's interpretations are absurd, unbelievable, or ridiculously poetic, and with no connection to the object and context, then that is already evidence that the interpretations are wrong. But to those who truly believe they are right, unfortunately, their scientific objectivity is lost.

The above truths about our abilities to understand languages related to our own can also be exploited - if we know that the unknown language is really related to a known language (IF our interpretations so far are probable and believable). Then we might try to listen to sentences of the language as if spoken in an unusual dialect. The Venetic inscriptions did provide some examples

[1] "Estonianization" means it is a valid sentence, but by being put in parallel with Finnish is not in the current Estonian style and idiom.

in which, when spoken, the sentence resonated with the author's familiarity with Estonian (from learning it as his first language as a child.) I offer it in the third example in the later examples. Thus if we can successfully determine the linguistic affiliation of the unknown language, we can not just employ comparative linguistic analysis successfully, but also directly understand some of the sentences of the unknown language through the intuitive talent we all possess. In practice, if repeatedly the results we arrive at are not strange, not absurd, then that can be evidence of the language being similar. Once we have established non-absurd results arise from treating the unknown language as a dialect of our own, then we can employ it for getting good ideas. For example, in my interpreting, I found that the use of **.e.go** in Venetic was much like the use of *jäägu* in Estonian vernacular, and that provided insights. But even if the unknown language seems to be related from a dialectic perception, there are always those false interpretations (like *som* in the example above) and we need further comparative analysis, etc. to find the true meanings of these words.

The above is a very good way of determining if a language is related to the unknown ancient language or not. If the resulting sentence seems unbelievable, or even absurd relative to what we would normally expect on the object, then that is strong evidence that the language tested is not releated to the unknown language (like Venetic).

CONCLUSION: THE BASIC NEED FOR IMMERSION VIA ARCHEAOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Ancient inscriptions have been approached most successfully, where archeology has found examples of the unknown language, accompanied by translations in a known ancient language like ancient Greek or ancient Phoenician. Even if the translations provide only a handful of words that appear elsewhere, it may be enough to establish the linguistic affiliation of the unknown language. In addition, even if the linguistic affiliation is unknown, knowing the meaning of a few words, can serve as leverage to interpret other sentences without translations.

It is therefore the best path to see if in one way or another we can arrive at the handful of solid translations. If we cannot find a parallel translation for any inscriptions. then is there another way of getting a few solid words without any reference to any known language.? I have already mentioned the ideal of immersion. But not all ancient inscriptions provide enough archeological context to get results from immersion. But let us assume it is possible.

If we consider the fact that, in a foreign country, a tourist can learn a great deal of words in that foreign language from signage, words on food packaging, road signs, and captions under pictures, it follows that if the unknown ancient language was written on all kinds of objects, and was not confined to long paragraphs in books, etc, then we could similarly immerse ourselves into its world, as revealed through archeology, history, etc and look at the objects with inscriptions in the same way. Furthermore, we only need a few certain translations to begin before we can leverage more words as described earlier.

The following section explores the methodology of immersion more clearly. It is no different from a tourist immersing themselves in a foreign country, and inferring meanings from how the foreign language is used in written form. This methodology is the basic one, the on we all used as a child to learn the language around us, except we are dealing with the written language..

This methodology can be assisted by any of the successful techmiques described earlier. If there is much archeological information surrounding the writing, immersion should form the primary methodology. It has parallels in archeological analysis and even modern crime scene investigation, and will be best understood by scholars already using this approach.

PRIMARY METHODOLOGY: IMMERSION IN THE ARCHEOLOGICAL CONTEXT & INTERPRETING FROM OBSERVATION OF USAGE

THE NATURAL WAY OF LEARNING LANGUAGE: IMMERSION

I have mentioned above, how if you are in a foreign country, and do not know the language, you can infer meanings of words from their contexts: a carton of milk probably has the word for 'milk' on it; a sign above a bushel of apples in a grocery store, probably says 'apples'; an octangular red sign at the end of a road, probably says 'stop'. A deaf person could learn the written language in a foreign country simply by taking this approach to a high level. Whenever a word meaning is inferred in one situation, it is then tested in other situations. If for example an ad promoting the drinking of milk also has the same word as on the milk carton, then one can conclude the hypothesis from the milk carton was correct. Soon one is reading captions under photos in magazines, speech balloons in comic books...all the while doing constant cross-checking to check accumulated inferences. This is how babies learn language. If a baby is told a dog is called "doggy", and the baby later calls a cat "doggy", his mother corrects him, saying "no that is a kitty" or the child himself notices that nobody calls a cat "doggy" but "kitty" instead. In the natural learning of a language from emersion, we make hypotheses that are either confirmed by speakers of the language, or we can test in other situations, and the hypothesis is either confirmed or we modify the hypothesis. It is how the human acquisition of language works.

In the case of the Venetic inscriptions, they are all very short sentences, some only a single word, on objects with a clear purpose and context in their ancient use. There are no cartons of milk, but there are some objects, where a particular word meaning is strongly suggested. Of course no inferrence is 100% certain, and that is why it is necessary to do all the cross-referencing across all the incriptions to see how the inferred meaning works everywhere else. For example, if we infer that **.e.go** means 'let rest, endure' in the context of a tomb marker where the idea of an eternal rest is natural, how does it fare on an object that is <u>not</u> a tomb marker? In other words is it a term exclusive to tomb markers, or does it have broader usage, such as in English "rest" which does not occur only in "Rest in peace" but also "We, rest our case" or "Give it a rest" It is simple logical analysis that is used by anyone, including babies, who learn a language from immersion. It is the way we learned languages going back to the beginning of language. Linguistics merely rationalizes what we already do instinctively. This means it is, theoretically, possible for anyone do comparative linguistic analysis instinctively. It is like how as a child we learn to walk, and then the science of human physiology rationalizes the activation of muscles in certain sequences to achieve that walking.

The methodology used here could be achieved by anyone, from babies to seniors because it is an inherited ability developed through evolution. It applies to written language as well as spoken, to modern languages we are learning as a second language, as well as ancient extinct languages.

In the case of deciphering an ancient language, it does not require any *a priori* assumption of linguistic affiliation for the language being deciphered – especially if there are short sentences captioning pictures or on diverse objects with clear purposes and context, as determined by archeology and history. Linguistic wisdom, can of course be applied as the language if partially deciphered. For example, the analyst can infer the meanings of grammatical endings from what appears to best suit the locations where it appears, and then is able to apply those grammatical endings to other stems. Of course, the more the linguistic relatedness to a known language is apparent, it is also possible to consult that known language.

All methods may come into use, where applicable, but the primary methodology, of immersion through archeological reconstructions and the nature of the objects, remains the core. The meaning suggested from the object and context is always present to constantly serve as a guide to making correct decisions.

NO A PRIORI ASSUMPTION NECESSARY OF LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION, BUT LATER LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION MAY BECOME APPARENT AND USABLE SUCCESSFULLY

Without bringing known languages into the analysis, it is surprising how much this direct analysis reveals the language, because the more words are known, the easier it is to infer meanings from the remaining words from the obvious intended meanings in the inscriptions on the objects.

Just as a baby's language learning starts slow (the first year) and then accelerates, so too if the analysis is on the right track: it speeds up. I discovered this myself when it took me months to get it started, and then the more words were known the faster it became, all roughly translated before the end of the second year, In fact, I actually used this property to determine when I was going in a wrong direction: I backtracked often to revise the earlier decision until the process was able to continue forward again.) In the end, I discovered that Venetic, although Finnic, was highly palatalized and direct linguistic comparative linguistic approaches with Estonian or Finnish would not have taken the analysis far, unless one first identified the systematic shifts due to palatalization. Once it became evident the initial quite certain results looked Finnic-like, taking in account the 'raising' of vowels (u>o, o>a, etc) and palatalization, then references to Finnic could become an additional tool to use to help choose a more precise meaning, when the context only offered a rough meaning. (For example Venetic **nerca** appeared to suggest a humbling towards the deity *Rhea*, the Estonian parallel *nõrk* offers a narrowed meaning physically 'weak' but Finnish actually demonstrated a broader meaning that includes emotionally weak, as in feeling humble (ie the English term 'weak-kneed') towards the deity.

What prevented me from discovering Venetic in even more detail – especially grammatically – than I was able, was that there are less than 100 complete sentences. (200 more are on fragments which are useless for this methodology. Fragments provide no evidence from object context, nor from the logic within complete sentences.)

The following pages present some examples of the interpretation of some Venetic sentences by this methodology. Even when the connection to Finnic was clear, I never projected a Finnic word meaning onto the Venetic, but rather I determined what the Venetic meaning should be, at least roughtly, and then only referred to Estonian or Finnish words is I needed confirmation or a narrower meaning. There was no rule against looking elsewhere for confirmation of meanings. For example the archeology that confirmed the Veneti handled amber helped me ascertain that the word SOCCI was the Venetic word for 'amber' (As in Latin *succinum*, Egyptian *saccal*)

EXAMPLES: THE AUTHOR'S CHALLENGES IN FINDING AND EXECUTING A SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGY

It was around 2002. By then it seemed obvious to me that the ancient peoples at the southeast Baltic major source of ancient trade amber appearing in historical texts as "Venedi" were traders because their name was exactly "venede" a word translating in Finnic (and actually used by Livonians) as '(people) of the boats'. Thus when I saw an article that suggested peoples with such a name were Indo-European, and when I discovererd the Adriatic Veneti created inscriptions with their language, I was inspired to find books that showed the original inscriptions so I could see if they were Finnic.

I could have simply copied the traditional methodology of forcing a language (Latin, Slovenian, etc) onto the Venetic inscriptions and trying to come up with a translation. Could I do the same? Proper historical linguistic methodology demanded reversal of Finnic languages back to a form contemporary with Venetic (2000 years ago). But there was a large geographical gap between the locations of surviving Finnic languages and the Adriatic location. But I realized this was problem similar to the one experienced by Hungarian today: how did this language, originating in arctic Siberia, get displaced to the location of Hungarian? (In the case of Hungarian, because of the fur trade in historic times.)

My hypothesis was that Venetic was displaced as well. The error made by linguists is to look for significant migrations. No consideration if given to trade because it is assumed the impacts of traders is small. However, archeology tells us that fur trade from the northern peoples to southeastern Europe via the Volga, Dneiper, Vistula, Oder, and Elbe began 5,000 years ago or even more. Fur disintegrates in the ground, as do many other northern products, but amber survives, and archeological finds of dropped amber, is a good indication of north south trade routes for not just amber but furs and other goods that perished in the ground. What linguists (and population geneticists too) fail to consider is that if there is a steady, systematic, north-south trade going on, that even if there were only 100 traders/shippers per year travelling up and down the trade rivers, then in a period of 1000 years, that amounts to a migration/contacts with 100,000 men. With this in mind, if we think instead in terms of a trader people at the source of the amber, developing colonies and markets at the south end of trader routes, then over 1000 years, that is equivalent to a single migration of thousands of men, establishing major colonies and markets all at once.

In general, linguistics has not given much attention to the migration of languages from a long history of trade. In Uralic linguistics, for example, linguists completely ignore the pursuit of furs by fur traders operating up and down the Volga, or Ugric fur traders carrying wares south on the Ob River, or crossing over to the Volga to carry furs to the markets of southeast Europe. This behaviour could have had an impact over 1000 years, producing colonies at both southern fur trade colony locations – the Huns at one destination and the Magyars at the other.

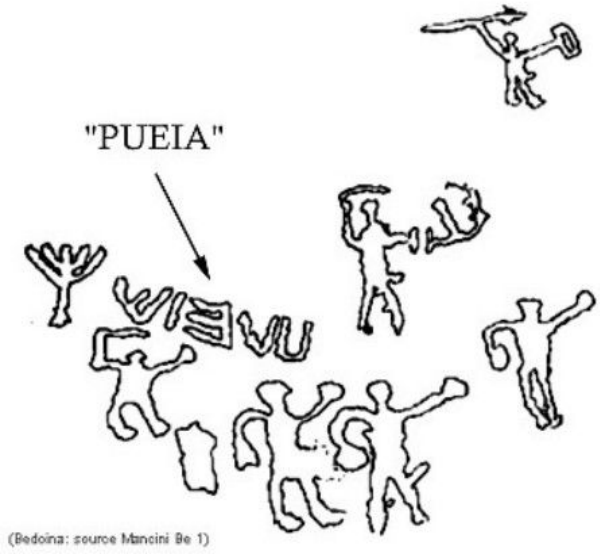
It is best to view the Venetic colonies in ancient northern Italy, in a way similar to Hungarian – a displaced language or isolate, Had the Venetic inscriptions been closer to the location of surviving Finnic languages, I might have used the linguistic approach. What could I do? I next investigated how ancient languages had been previously deciphered. The successful deciphering began with often a single significiant translation in another ancient languge, which allowed the analyst to obtain a few solid translations. These solid translations could suggest linguistic affiliation, and allow the partial translation of other sentences which included those translated

words. What if we could discover such solid translations in another way – directly from the inscriptions and their context, themselves.

DEMONSTATION 1. Interpreting an image with a single word.

Figure 1. below represents an isolated find on a rock face in a mountainous area (Bedoina) in north central Italy. The image shows five men with fists raised shouting "**pueia"** while a man in the distance seems to be running away. The treelike symbol with the five branches in my opinion says five foreground men shouted it in unison.

...**Figure 1**



The illustration shows one man with a spear and shield, in the distance, and all the foreground men are angry – as indicated by raised fists. The foreground men do not have shields or spears, so they are not soldiers. Two of the foreground men are holding something which could simply be sticks. (If the artist properly puts a point on a spear, he would have added more detail if the men held swords.) What it looks like is that a soldier appeared in a normal peaceful community, and assaulted or stole or acted like a spy, or something to raise anger.

This is a good example that can be used to explore possible linguistic affiliations. One can search all candidate languages for a similar word to PUEIA, and see if there is one that is closest in form, and when the meaning is applied to the illustration, sounds most suitable to the situation depicted. We can go through many languages, and even more than one candidate per language. We are looking for a word that is very close in form, and the meaning fits.. I will only give one test example: Latin offers *pugno* 'fight,contend, clash' which isn't too bad. The men could be shouting "Fight!". But then we discover that Estonian *püija!* matches the PUEIA exactly (UE= Ü) and the meaning is imperative, giving 'Catch (him)!' While the Latin meaning of 'Fight!' is possible, is it probable? The Latin *pugno* only resembles the Venetic in its first two letters. The reader can investigate other languages for words similar to PUEIA. Sometimes the same language may have two candidates. Even Estonian has an alternative – *poja* 'of the son'. If the story told by a picture and the context is clear, then choose the word that most closely fits the Venetic word, and the meaning that most closely fits the context in the image. While sometimes there are true random coincidences, but the laws of probability, if we find more inscriptions with Finnic resonances in the area, then that increases the probability of correctness.

DEMONSTRATION 2. Demonstration of direct deciphering of a Venetic sentence without any presumption of linguistic affiliation

EXAMPLE 1: PEASANT GIVES A DISTINGUISHED ELDER A DUCK FOR THE JOURNEY

Figure 2

pupone.i.e.gorako.i.|e.kupetaris - *[**MLV**- 130 **LLV**- Pa1*

This item was found among a number of other similar relief images surrounded by text, and which appear to celebrate and event that took place, that is illustrated in the image.

The first challenge is to identify the words in this continuous text. We can find in other inscriptions the repetition of **.e.go** and **.e.kupetaris**. Therefore we can break it up as follows:

pupone.i. .e.go rako.i. .e.kupetaris

NOTE: READING THE VENETIC IN THE EXAMPLES. By convention introduced by Lejeune, the original Venetic alphabet is converted to small case Roman alphabet, and that generally produces the correct sound – keeping the dots found in the Venetic. But the dots modify the standard sound, mostly with palatalization. Most of it is probably not necessary since when Venetic was later expressed in the Roman alphabet with the Roman convention of dots or spaces to indicate word boundaries, the original dots within words were no longer used. However there are some special dot uses to be notes. The **.s.** is "SH" or "ISH", **.r.** is a trilled R, **.i.** is an H produced from palatalizing an i. Vowels with dots generally can be reproduced by putting a "J"(="Y") in front. For example **.e.i.k** = "EHK", or **la.g.sto** = "LAHKSTO" (Est. *lahkustus*) or **.e.go** = "JEGO = YEGO" (Est *jäägu*) The dots mainly serve to reproduce the actual sound of the speaker, and much of what is given is not necessary, not phonemic, but simply the manner of speaking – accent, dialect. If you ignore the dots, other than the H or J(=Y) appearing around dotted vowels, you will be fine. For example **rako.i**. would sound like "RAKOHY"

The easiest word to identify is **.e.kupetaris** because it occurs repeatedly in the other similar memorials captioning an event described in the image. In these inscriptions the **.e.kupetaris** was attached to the end of the inscriptions. Since many of the images show horses, traditionally, from the Latin perspective this word is assumed to be related to the Latin word for horse *equus*. But the above example does not show any horse. That undermines the hypothesis. Still, because it is tagged to the end, it could generally mean a 'farewell' which would apply regardless of whether a horse is used or not. We could thus assume it means something like 'bon voyage', 'good journey'and does not directly relate to the use of a horse.

The next easiest word to decipher would be **.e.go**. (Note the dots in the Venetic mark palatalization, where palatalization on initial vowels appear as if adding a J sound – or the Y sound as used in English, so **.e.go** sounds like "yeh-go".) The word **.e.go** appears on all the obelisques marking tomb locations. Traditionally, using the Latin approach, it was assumed **.e.go** was the same as Latin *ego*, meaning 'I', and the analyst assumed the deceased was speaking in first person and all the inscriptions were assumed to say 'I am [*NAME*]' This is of course improbable. Ever since Neanderthal man, death has been viewed as an eternal sleep, so the most logical meaning should be something along the lines of the common 'rest in peace'.

Since the **.e.go** here is not on a tomb marker, and shows an ordinary man handing a distinguished elder a duck, is it 'rest in peace'? What about simply 'rest'? Let us assume 'rest'.

The next word that can be inferred is **pupone.i.** It is a reasonable assumption that it refers to the distinguished-looking gentleman, and the PUPO structure is a quite universal one for 'father' and in the traditions of the Italic Peninsula, it is used for the pope. Since such a memorial, laboriously carved into stone, suggests this man was very important, a religious leader that could be a precedent for the later institution of the pope?

That leaves us with the word **rako.i.** Since an image with a duck as the central item is unusual, it is likely the caption includes the word for duck. Maybe **rako.i.** means 'duck'. Let us assume it is. What do we have? Without dealing with case endings or verbs:

The Father – rest – the duck - happy journey

What we can do now is to interpret the endings marked by (vowel)**.i.** The context suggests the ordinary man is giving the elderly man a duck. (Maybe a live duck for the journey – in ancient times without refrigeration, people going on a long journey will carry a live duck or chicken in a cage to kill and eat on the way.) In any event we are inclined to add the direction 'to'

How about 'to the Father, rests a duck – happy journey' A better English word would be 'remains' so we have **'to the Father, remains a duck – happy journey'** This also suggests the ending on **rako.i**. is a Partitive.

As the analysis continues into other inscriptions, the analyst will find several instances of the ending **–ne.i** There may be two different case endings here.

The analyst will also find evidence that **.e.go** may be a verb form with the stem being **.e.** This may indicate that **.e.** is a verb of being, in this case to 'continue, endure' as opposed to simply 'be'. Indeed we found instances of other endings, and so the stem was indeed **.e.** The duck is given to the Father to have and continue to have on the journey – as opposed to being given only for the present moment.

The meaning of **.e.kupetaris** as a 'farewell' tag can remain.

The above is what we can achieve without any reference to any language – whether Estonian, Latin, Slovenian, Germanic....Now as we continue tackling other inscriptions, and form the conclusion from the results that the language is Finnic, we can begin to make some additional proposals:

The word **.e.go** is a third person imperative, giving the meaning 'let rest, remain, endure, continue' , as proven by several other verbs having the **–go** ending and the sentences interpreting well with the third person imperative. This also agrees with Estonian using the ending *–gu* and the stem **.e.** seems to be a word that has survived in one of the most common Estonian words *jää* 'remain' and so *jäägu* means in Estonian 'let remain' 'let it be (endure)'. This agrees with the most probably requirement at the front of tomb marker inscriptions.

Also, the **.e.ku-** in **.e.kupetaris** is easily interpreted now to be **.e.go** in a hard consonant environment. This makes the word sound like Estonian *jäägu pida(ma) reisi* 'Let it be, to engage the journey' Additional evidence that it was a tag, is on the one hand the common Estonian way of breaking up a discussion, etc with *jäägu ni* 'let it be so' 'so remains it' and on the other hand, in some inscriptions the expression is further reduced to **epitaris** suggesting frequent use. Of course one can debate this Estonian interpretation, and there are plenty of negative scholars bent on disagreeing with anytthing new, but that does not change the general meaning interpreted directly – that is was a 'goodbye' tag.

Next I wanted to get confirmation that **rako** meant 'duck'. On impulse I checked Slovenian, and found it did have *raca* for 'duck'. I did not find the word in other Slavic language, so I concluded it was a holdover from Venetic times, before the Veneti in the Slovenia region assimilated into Slavic at the end of the Roman era.

Next it took me a long time to figure out the Venetic **–ne.i.** It seemed to work everywhere it appeared if I assumed it was similar to Estonian Terminative case *–ni* It describes the situation in which something moves physically to someplace, as an endpoint. The man is physically giving the duck to the elder as a destination.

So the final refined translation would be

Till the Father, let remain, a duck; happy journey ('let engage the journey')

EXAMPLE 2: ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF INTERPRETING AN IMAGE: THE CHARIOTS

Another stone with an image in the same category is the following: This inscription too offers plenty of opportunity to make direct interpretations from the context. If we work on all the stones with illustrations at once, we will notice that the images show some kind of action and the tag ending 'ECUPETARIS' which appears to mean something analogous to 'bon voyage'. We conclude that the image depicts a departure, and the text therefore described the event and then adds the 'goodbye' at the end.

An image of the stone is shown below. Note that it shows mean, seemingly heading off to war, in chariots. Will we find the inscription describing a departure of an army?

Figure 3

(?.i.)plete.i.ve.i.gno.i.|kara.n.mniio.i.|e.kupetari.s. e.go *[MLV-131, LLV-Pa2 image with horses, chariot and warriors]*

The beginning of the sentence was worn but the rest is clear. As we saw earlier, we have determined **e.kupetari.s. e.go** and it means 'let remain, happy journey'. From other inscriptions we found **voltio.m.nio.i.** meaning 'to go up to the heavens-above' but here we have **kara.n.mniio.i.** The Carnic Alps are located to the north, and we could use that information. We can also later notice Finnic *kare* meaning 'rocky land'. So **kara.n.mniio.i.** could be interpreted as 'to the (Carnic) mountains-going'. So now we realize the chariots and warriors should be mentioned in the text. We can conclude that the inscription should contain a meaning like 'charoits', 'warriors', or 'army'. The event is they are heading into the mountains. and expressed within **(?.i.)plete.i.ve.i.gno.i.** names the army portayed. Thus we have, without any reference to any known language, the translation '*The chariots/warriors/army is to the mountains-going, bon voyage, let it be so*.

Here is an example of how we can now bring in known language. In the previous example we found *raca* to confirm **rako-** meant 'duck'. Here we can see that Estonian *vägi* 'army' sounds like it is dialectically reflected in **ve.i.gno.i.** We leave the worn beginning undeciphered (It is probably a descriptive name) So what we have is (literally)

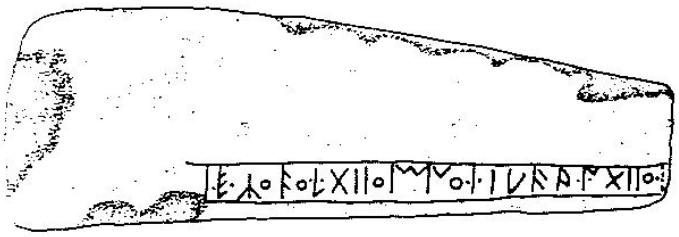
(?.i.)plete.i. (undecipherable) *army, to the (Carnic?) mountains-going, happy journey, so-be-it*

EXAMPLE 3: WHAT IS MOST BELIEVABLE ON A TOMB MARKER?

A common archeological object with inscriptions were the obelisques stuck vertically into the ground above the location of tombs, much like modern tombstones. When there are many examples of writing on the same object, we want to look for common patterns in words and meanings. Once we notice them, we can use them as a guide for them all.

In this case, all the obeliques had the word **.e.go** at the front. The traditional erroneous interpeting using Latin has been to consider **.e.go** to be the same as Latin ego and translate them as 'I am [NAME]' While it is possible, is it probably tombstones have the dead person say 'I am [NAME]'. To me it is absurd, and the converting of the rest of the inscription into a meaningless name makes it all very questionable.

Figure 5



.e.govo.l.tiiomno.i.iuva.n.tiio.i *[MLV-59 LLV-Es4]*

It beaks into words obviously as **.e.go vo.l.tiiomno.i. iuva.n.tiio.i**

I chose this one to demonstrate, because we have already discussed **.e.go** and **vo.l.tiiomno.i.** What remains is **iuva.n.tiio.i** Its stem from repetitions elsewhere with other endings is **iuva.n.t** The ending **iuva.n.tiio.i** is found repeatedly in **re.i.tiia.i.** and other locations, and I have interpreted it – based on it working well everywhere – as a dynamic partitive meaning 'become part of, join with, unite with' . **iuva.n.t** from everywhere it occurs means something like 'eternal direction' Since there is also **va.n.t** meaning 'in the direction of', the **iu-** looks like a prefix meaning 'eternal'. (Finnish actually has such a prefix). The simple result (as literally as possible) is 'Let remain to the heavens-going, to unite with the eternal direction'

Here is an instance, **va.n.t ,** in which case the Venetic will not find a parallel in Estonian. However linguistically speaking, we can propose that the stem **va-** appears in Estonian **vastu** 'against'. On the other hand, the prefix **iu-** resembles Finnish *iia-* for 'eternal'.

Thus, the meaning appears to be:

Let remain, to heavens-going, to join with the infinite-direction

Not only did the word **.e.go,** appearing on all the tomb-markers agree with the idea of 'rest', but also all the sentences following **.e.go** proved to be consistent with describing the deceased travelling to eternity, the heavens above, etc.

DEMONSTRATION 3. Interpreting as a dialect relative to Estonian

The third demonstration reflects some rare instances in which the language turned out to be so close to Estonian idiom that it could have been a direct ancestor to Estonian. It is important at this point to point out that in the nature of ancient practices, there was no central government. Each community was like a city state. That is the reason the Venetic in different areas are a little different. These were communities I believe were established from the north, to establish southern terminals for certain peoples - tribes or just families - engaged in north-south trade.

These are round river stones with writing on them that archeologists found at the bottom of tombs at Pernumia, near Padova. That suggests they were added more informally by friends and relatives - which suggests that the messages may be quite informal and personal. They are a little different from the Venetic sentences on tombs and cremation urns towards the Este region.

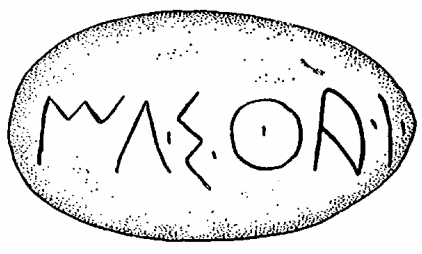
There are a few words among these stones that are found elsewhere among the Venetic inscriptions, but a great number of words did not occur elsewhere, so I was initially afraid I would not succeed in interpreting them. But to my surprise I was able to interpret all five adequately and the correctness was confirmed that all of them, other than the one in Figure 6, had the same message – encouraging the deceased to fly up out of the tomb into the heavens

above. One would not get the very same message four times if it were pure coincidence.

EXAMPLE 1: A SINGLE WORD THAT MATCHES A FINNIC WORD IN INFINITIVE

I present the stone with only one word.

Figure 6



mu.s.ta.i. *[MLV 140, LLV Pa10]*

This word does not appear anywhere else, and this would be impossible to translate directly from the context, other than to propose it might have the 'rest in peace' sentiment like **.e.go**, or maybe the other one that Romans used *in memorium*.

If you did not know Estonian or Finnish you would not arrive at any thing more than this. But the other examples prove that this Venetic is close to the Estonian idiom and one can try it intuitively. What do we find? We find the Finnic verb *muista* . The Estonian meaning has narrowed a little as expected in languages with more history. But Finnish offers 'to remember'. We eventually determined that in Venetic, when a *(vowel)***.i.** ending appears on a verb, the verb form is an infinitive. Thus we translate the Venetic very easily as

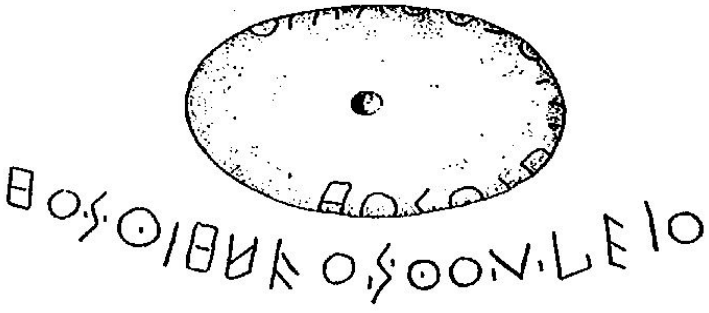
to remember

The other inscriptions on round stones are longer sentences, and in the end ALL of them are sentences advising the spirit of the deceased rise up into the heavens.

I will present the one which allowed me to recognise how to read it via Estonian. This is the best example of how the translation is greatly helped by dialectic resonance.

EXAMPLE 2: ENOUGH RESONANCE WITH ESTONIAN TO SUGGEST A TRANSLATION

Figure 7



ho.s.tihavo.s.to.u.peio - *[MLV-137, LLV-Pa7]*

The sentence, when spoken, actually sounds to the Estonian ear, like it is related to Estonian, that it may have been the language of a community from the north that spoke a dialect closer to

the east Baltic dialect of Finnic, closer to the origins of Estonian. The fact that the location where these iscrined stones have been found, Pernumia, is close to the name of an Estonian province Pärnmaa ('linden land') is a coincidence that supports such an interpretation.

None of the words are identifiable so we cannot even break it up with word boundaries, initially. However, we saw in some other inscription the obvious word **op** or **up**, which appeared to translate as 'up' (It was clear from the several instances in which it occurred – a tag meaning 'up to heavens, fly!') That means, following the pattern of such an ending, **.u.p eio** looks like a similar end-phrase. It will work best if we interpret **eio** as a dialectic variation of **iio.i.** ? But is this correct? Going against this idea is the fact that here we see dots around the U in **.u.p** while elsewhere **op** or **up** does not have the dots. Furthermore **eio** is too much a departure from **iio.i.** Note that on another round stone, the **–iio.i.** is correctly spelt. Therefore the idea that **eio** is a bad spelling, is not likely. We have to look for another solution.

Let us see what we can determine from the first part.

As stated above, these stones were placed at the bottom of tombs, and what is most striking about the above inscription is that to Estonian ears it seems to have the word for tomb, which in Estonian is *haud*. Specifically the word *havo.s.t.* resonates powerfully with Estonian *hauast*, 'out of the tomb'. If **havo.s.t.** is in the Elative case ('out of') and means 'out of the tomb', then from context, what might fit in the meaning of the remaining words?

We can insert a couple of word boundaries and get:

ho.s.ti havo.s.t o.u.peio

First of all, the concept 'From out of the tomb' demands an appropriate word like 'fly', 'journey', 'rise', etc. Let us consider the first word **ho.s.ti** It sounds surprisingly like English *hoist*, but it also resembles Estonian *tõsta* 'life'. Borrowings from Germanic are possible, since the amber route from the Jutland Peninsula passed through the Germanic interior of Europe. This can be explored further by those who wish, but our intent is to discover meanings, not to discover the linguistics.

So now we have:

Lift out of the tomb – **o.u.peio**

This affirms that we need the last words to refer to the place to which the spirit is lifted when out of the tomb. But what can we make of **o.u.peio?** If we used **.u.p** we would get something more complex to tackle.

Our methodology requires us to look at the most logical concept first. The spirit is asked to escape the dark tomb. Can **o.u.peio** actually refer to the open air in contrast to the confines of the tomb?

If we look at English, well, there is the word *open* and we can linguistically try to trace the origins of that word. But the dialectic resonance with Estonian that I hear comes from a slight similarity between **o.u.peio** and Estonian *õu'e* 'to the outdoors'. Perhaps *õu'e* is an abbreviation that dropped an original P where the P had an origin in the concept of 'day' which in modern Estonian is *päev*. I think there may have been an early Estonian expression *õu päev.*

Note that our objective is not linguistics, but to find meanings, and there is no need to find explanations of how words came about linguistically speaking such as which language borrowed from which.

Staying with the Estonian, we arrive at a sentence that has dialectic resonance with modern Estonian *tõsta hauast õu'e.* This translates in English as '*lift from the tomb into the open'.*

This is the result of a fairly straight interpretation with Estonian. Whether it contains a small mistake or not, the result is remarkably natural.

We note again that because the Venetic inscriptions have been frozen for 2000 years, the actual linguistic distance if we assume Estonian is somewhat of a descendant, would be similar to the linguist distance between Estonian and Finnish, where both languages have been changing in the past 2000 years. Two languages changing equals twice as much relative changing than if only one language changes and the other is frozen. Thus if it is possible to find resonances between English and Swedish, or Estonian and Finnish, without comparative linguistic processing, if the approximate linguistics distance between Estonian and Venetic is similar to Estonian and Finnish, then what we see here – of **ho.s.ti havo.s.t o.u.peio** sounding like *tõsta hauast õu'e.* is to be expected. In general, the fact that Venetic has been frozen for 2000 years, thus making the linguistic distance with a modern language half of the actual time-distance, suggests that once we have intuitively grasped the dialectic shifts, direct interpretation via dialectic resonance, is a valid approach. Comparing Venetic and modern Estonian is theoretically like comparing Finnish and Estonian. Any linguist claim that it is necessary to reverse Estonian to an earlier form is about as correct as claiming it is necessary to reverse Estonian to see parallels in Finnish! Because Venetic was frozen, Estonian is really about 1000 years distant,

EXAMPLE 3: ANOTHER WAY TO SAY THE SAME THING

Figure 8

pilpote.i.kup.rikon.io.i. - *[MLV-139, LLV-Pa9;]*

Here is a third example from the round river stones left at the bottom of tombs in Pernumia near Padua. It is very important to realize that for these river stones, the results were inspired more by dialectic resonance with Estonian (reading it out loud than Venetic words found elsewhere. For example, am I correct, below, to interpret **pilpot-** via Estonian *pilved* 'cloud'? In all cases in which we discover dialectic resonances there is still the context of the object to help in evaluation. In the case of the round stones, it is very significant in judging the result that the sentence is consistent with the context of placing them informally at the bottom of tombs and telling the deceased to fly up into the sky. We would expect that within a single catergory of object, the theme of the inscriptions should be the same. In the case of the inscriptions on the round stones, other than the **mu.s.ta.i.** stone above, using dialectic resonance with Estonian as a major help in translating, all the incriptions had the same message – (other than the one **mu.s.ta.i.)** conveyed in different ways.

Let us look more closely at the writing on this stone.

This sentence has the **.i.o.i.** ending we have recognized from before to mean 'infinity' (we note the dotted initial I, and can excuse it not looking exactly like **.i.io.i.** in other places.) Furthermore, it seems to have a proper **up** meaning 'up'. The Venetic **up** or **op** occurs several times, with obvious meaning same as English 'up', with meanings like 'up to the heavens, fly' (**.o.p voltiio leno**).

This allows us to add blanks to identify the word boundaries:

up rikon .io.i.

This suggests *up to the* RIKON *eternity*. What can RIKON mean? We know from other sources that words resembling RIKON have existed in Germanic as well as in Finnic *riik*, and meant 'nation'. It is very important to stress that the objective is to find meanings, and it does not matter if the word is borrowed or original. This is important because a noted linguist, not understanding the methodology, and expecting linguistic methods, immediately shouted to me in an email that *riik* was not Estonian! I tried to explain that I was not claiming it was Estonian, but simply pointing out the word existed in Estonian as well as in Germanic, and probably old, regardless of its ultimate origin. The same applies to **up** or **op**. It may come from Germanic, or Germanic may have inherited it from prior non-Indo-European. I also pointed out earlier apparent borrowing of a couple words from Etruscan, and *raca* in Slovenian. It simply does not matter where the word comes when the objective is to find meanings, whether the word is genetically inherited or borrowed at some point.

It is possible the original word rikon may not have meant 'nation' but simply the community. So that part would mean *up to the nation's eternity*

That leaves the beginning part which consists of **pilpote.i.k**

We need to interpret this in a way that leads smoothly into the second part as in

pilpote.i.k *up to the nation's eternity*

We have already determined earlier that Venetic appears to us **ke** or simply **k** as a conjunction (which is paralleled by Estonian *ka* 'also, and') The clearest example we find in the Rhea prayers where two concepts were repeated and separated by **ke** as in **dona.s.to ke la.g. s. to** 'offering and gift'

A conjunction is very believable here, giving us

pilpote.i. *and up to the nation's eternity*

Furthermore the ending **–e.i.** indicates the dynamic Partitive that means 'towards, join'. Do we see two similar thoughts expressed in two ways?

Sadly we cannot get any further directly from Venetic, because this word stem **pilpot-** does not occur anywhere else to allow us comparative analysis. But we can further identify the –T as a plural marker, so that the singular stem is **pilpo**. This sounds very much like Estonian *pilv* 'cloud' whose plural is *pilved*. We have an elegant solution, if we allow the word Venetic selected in Estonian:

To the clouds, and up to the nation's (community's) eternity

It conveys basically the same message in the other round stones – wishing the spirit rise up into the heavens.

There is one other inscription that was not as closely paralleling Estonian, which required the application of findings in other inscriptions. **iiuvant v.i.ve.s.t iniio.i.** and another one that was very much like the Estonian: **tivale.i. be.l. lene.i.** (EST: *tiivale peale lendama* - 'onto wing, to fly') The fact that all but **mu.s.ta.i.** have the same message, the spirit of the deceased flying up from the tomb into the heavens, is very powerful in confirming even the dialectic resonance approach, which we demonstated earlier in Estonian interpreting Finnish or English interpreting Swedish. (from earlier example: Finnish *Mistä lähtee bussi keskikaupungille?* suggests Estonian (literal parallel) *Mist (=mis kohast) läheb buss kesk-kaubangille?*)

The direct translations of Venetic sentences as if dialects, are possible only if you already speak Estonian (or Finnish) from childhood and have a sense of the basic core language, but this also creates a barrier for convincing scholars who do not have the Estonian language intuition to pick up on the Venetic dialect. In my view intuition with respect to dialect is in fact linguistics on an intuitive level – ie you sense the systematic phonetic shifts intuitively and become deaf to them, and hear the common language underneath.

From a scientific point of view, results from intuition is not good, as the general academic world will not sense the intuitive obviousness. Science tends to prefer explicit evidence and nothing based on intuition. However without using Estonian, these round stone inscriptions, lacking many words found in other inscriptions, would have remained less deciphered. (Of the words that appear elsewhere – **tiva/tiba** for 'wing', **len-** for 'fly', **iuvant** for 'towards infinity', **vi-** 'carry', **k, ke** 'also, and', and most of the grammatical endings.)

While all interpretations uses the context of the object as a guide to decisionmaking, and from the context alone, we can arrive with general meanings, often it is this dialectic resonance – actually hearing something Estonianlike in the inscription – that suggests the more precise meaning. If both the meaning suggested by the context, and the meaning suggested by Estonian, agree well, then by the laws of probability, the chances of being correct, is high. The following is an interesting one because the object can be analyzed to narrow down the meaning to only a few possibilities.

EXAMPLE 4: SUGGESTED BY OBJECT, PRECISE MEANING FROM DIALECTIC RESONANCE

Figure 9

lah.vnahvrot.a.h *[small container with round bottom- MLV 252-253, LLV Is -1,2]*

We note the small size, the hole for the thumb, and especially the round bottom suggesting it was probably only used by carrying, and not set down permanently.

A couple of small bronze containers had the same inscription on them. The inscription was probably added as part of the manufacture, and therefore had to be a universal inscription – as opposed to a custom-made inscription. Because it was small, did not have a flat bottom to be laid down, we could propose it was carried around and then put away. In this case, the meaning became clear when we added reference to Estonian and the words *lõhnav roht* 'aromatic herbs' which implies it was used for perfuming a house. In this case, we knew what inscription meanings would be suitable, but had no idea of what it could be. The resonance with Estonian crystalized it.

DEMONSTRATION 4. Multiple techniques to arrive at a result

In this section we look at some examples of ALL techniques being used to decipher an inscriptions.

EXAMPLE1: ACCOMPANYING OFFERINGS MADE TO RHEA AT SANCTUARY

This inscription was found among the objects found at an ancient Venetic sanctuary where prayers and offerings were made to the goddess Rhea.

megodona.s.tova.n.t.s.mo.l.donke|.o.kara.n.mn.s.re.i.tiia.i. -*[MLV-9, LLV-Es24]*

We determined from repetition and discovery of specific words, how to separate the continuoous writing with spaces for word boundaries.:

mego dona.s.to va.n.t.s. mo.l.don ke .o. kara.n.mn.s. re.i.tiia.i.

mego dona.s.to occurs often and my choice of interpretation is 'Our offering (lit. brought-thing) This was a difficult problem because traditional interpreting using Latin was so certain the word **dona.s.to** was compared to the Latin *donato* 'give, donate'. Traditional interpretation correctly interpreted the inscriptions associated with the Rhea sanctuary as being associated with visitors making offerings to a goddess. Thus the assumption that **mego dona.s.to** is 'I give...' is generally correct. I can of course accept this; however in the course of internal comparative analysis through all the inscriptions suggested that **dona.s.to** was not a verb, so I assumed it meant 'my or our offering, donation' which means often the verb is implied. In this case, I continued to looking at Estonian and Livonian. In Estonian one can say *toonustus* 'the brought-thing, offering'. As for **mego**, there are the Finnic pronouns for 'me' and 'we'. (Est. *mina* 'I', and *meie* 'we'.) Interestingly Livonian, which is highly palatalized, says *meg* for 'I', tending to suggest that the highly palatalized Venetic would also have added the G sound. The result is I interpret **mego dona.s.to** as 'My (or Our) brought-thing' It works well.

There is a separation with the word **ke**, which elsewhere proves to mean 'also, and', between and **mo.l.don** and **kara.n** We already determined that **kara** means 'mountains' or the Carnic Alps. The word **mo.l.d** , maybe means the opposite of 'mountains'. In any event where the word occurs elsewhere, it seems to mean the same as Esotnian *muld* 'earth, soil'. So it seems **mo.l.d** and **kara** are parallel and share the ending **mn.s** So we have **mo.l.donmn.s.** ('into earth-going') and **kara.n.mn.s.** ('into the mountains-going'). That leaves a mysterious **.o.** which inFinnic has to be 'be' (third person singular) The final word is well known from many of the

prayer inscriptions, which I determined is *Rhea* (**re.i.a**) with case endings meaning 'to unite with, become part of'. So what we have is

Our offering **(mego dona.s.to)** *in the direction of* (**va.n.t.s.)** *the earth-going* **(mo.l.donmn.s.)** *and* **(ke)** *is* (**.o.)** *to the mountains-going* **(kara.n.mn.s.)** *to unite with Rhea.* **(re.i.tiia.i.)**

What this seems to suggest is that these people saw *Rhea* being located high in the mountains. This idea seems suggested elsewhere too. The Veneti were contemporary with the ancient Greeks who saw dieties inhabiting the mountains (like Mount Olympus). The reference to the mountains here was as a metaphor for the eternal destination with the Goddess. In the earlier example, I think **kara** referred to the mountains, or the fact that the army had to go through the mountains to head to a war north of the Alps. (For example, according to history, Veneti allied with Romans in wars against Celts.)

EXAMPLE 2: WHEN ENOUGH WORDS HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED, THIS INSCRIPTION, LACKING ARCHEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INFORMATION, CAN BE ANALYZED

The following was interesting because it appeared to repeat the same concept in two ways, one way in a more original Venetic, and the other way using borrowings from Indo-Europeans. This is a good example of one of the longer, more difficult inscriptions. The object was found being used as a lintel over a window. Nothing is known about its context. However, in this case, most of the words are known from other inscriptions, and I did not find much difficulty interpreting it – since I had already determined the case endings being used; but the initial term **.o..s.t..s.** was very challenging, and my interpretation for that is bordering on guessing. Here is the analysis.

Figure 10

.o..s.t..s.katus.ia.i.io.s.dona.s.to.a.tra.e..s.te.r.mon.io.s.de.i.vos *[MLV- 125, LLV- Vi2]*

Using known words and grammatical endingsto divide up the continuous text we have:

.o..s.t..s. katus.ia. i.io.s. dona.s.to .a.tra.e..s. te.r.mon.io.s. de.i.vos

I chose this inscription as a 4th example because it actually includes a repetition of the concept in two ways. The two parallel word pairs seem to be **.i.io.s. .a.tra.e..s.** and **te.r.mon.io.s. de.i.vo.s.** The two versions seem to be Venetic in the first pair and loanwords from Indo-European in the second. Is the inscription saying the same thing in two ways, or describing two destinations - one in an inner eternity and the other in the eternity in the sky?

te.r.mon.io.s. de.i.vo.s. are probably Venetic loanwords from Indo-European. Estonian has the 'terminus' loanword only from recent association with English, but **de.i.vo.s.** is found in

Estonian in *taevas* 'sky, heaven'. The meaning with its **-.s.** (Inessive) is 'in(to) the terminus in heaven'.

.i.io.s. .a.tra.e..s. could be the same thing spoken in a synonymous way at a time when Indo-European words were available too. The **.i.io.s.** is based on the stem **.i.io-** which we considered above to mean 'infinity, eternity'. The other word **.a.tra.e..s.** is based on the stem **.a.tra-** and combines AT (Estonian *ot* as in *ots* 'end') and RA ('route, way'), thus giving the meaning 'end of the route'. It is the basis of the town in Latin called *Atria*, as well as the name "Adriatic Sea"; and indeed the Etruscan *Etruria*, too, comes from the same elements. Here, my arguments suggest **.i.io.s. .a.tra.e..s.** means 'in(to) the eternal, in(to) end-of-road'.

Thus **.i.io.s. .a.tra.e..s. te.r.mon.io.s. de.i.vo.s.** could be expressed in **English:** 'Into eternity's road-end, into the terminus of the heaven' .

dona.s.to is our familiar 'offering, something-brought' Note that the word order in which **dona.s.to** separates **.i.io.s.** and **.a.tra.e..s** is poetically suitable because **.i.io.s.** also serves the preceding words:

.o..s.t..s. katus.ia are difficult words. Here is a more detailed analysis/argument:

.o..s.t..s. we believe is the verb 'to be' plus case endings. For example in Estonian *ole* 'be'(imperative) is a stem for both verb and noun forms. Thus it is possible to propose that in Venetic the stem word was simply **.o.** and the rest of the word is suffixes/case endings. We thus interpret **.o..s.t..s.** by O + ST ('out of')+S ('in') based on Elative case (*-st* 'out of') and Inessive. The meaning then is something like 'in arising from being'. But what does that mean in modern speech? Estonian has a similar graduation in meaning relative to vowel in some word structures – for example *olu* 'being', *elu* 'life (continuing being)', and *ilu* 'beauty (a higher state of being?) This graduation in meanings of 'being' is strong in Venetic, but now only embedded in words in Estonian.

The stem of the second word**, katus.ia** resembles the Estonian verb *kadu-* 'vanish, disappear'. Thus we can imagine the offering 'vanishing into the end of eternity, terminal of the heaven'. The ending **–s.ia** seems like a verbal ending, In Estonian *kadus* is a past tense, and perhaps there could be a passive voice in that by adding an *i* as in *kadusi* 'be disappeared'. Venetic does contain some complex grammatical elements which can only be guessed as they are represented only once in the limited less than 100 complete sentences.

Thus, for **.o..s.t..s. katus.ia** the meaning could be that the deceased person once was a being, so arose from being, to vanish into the ends of eternity.

'From out of being, would be disappeared, in(to) eternity, the offering, in(to) the road's end, in(to) the terminus of the sky-heaven'

The above examples demonstrate the methodology used to decipher the Venetic inscriptions, as documented in Pääbo (2002-2013). Our intention here was to keep the number of examples low, by way of introduction. There are other principles any scientific project must follow: one is to establish the inscriptions to be investigated at the start, and which cover as many inscriptions as possible. In the end, something must be presented for all, even if some of them could not be translated or had problematic sections. Traditionally the analysts of Venetic have selected only the 'best ones' to actually translate, and left the rest in linguistic limbo. The general public sees only the 'best ones', and assumes it is all like that. It is only when you look closely with scientific attentiveness, that it becomes clear that, although the descriptions of the inscriptions themselves are sound, all the interpretation work is, well, lots of opinioning and rationalization with little substance. Ultimately, one has to obtain translations.

CONCLUSIONS: FULL IMMERSION TO DERIVE MEANINGS

In a world in which there are a million possibilities that are false, and only one truth, anything that helps eliminate the most ridiculous false possibilities, is useful. While the methodology described here is about always making the most probable choices, it is also about rejecting the impossible and improbable choices. Traditional analysis, which essentially forced a known language onto the unknown language, tended to ignore the archeological information and as a result archeologists have been most aware of how absurd the traditonal analysis of forcing Latin, etc. onto the Venetic, has been.

Archeologists are trained to immerse themselves in the context of the people who produced the artifacts they find, and therefore are more sensitive to what is realistic and believable in an inscription.

But in the methodology presented here, the nature of the object, archeological context, etc is most central to the methodology – the more we know the better. This immersion acts as a guide. Even if studying the real world context in which the sentences appeared – as revealed by archeologists – only provides vague suggestions as to meaning, at least that allows us to initially toss away a million absurd choices. It also gives us general meanings that we can explore by other techniques in order to narrow down the meaning to what appears to have been intended.

The methodology not only embraces the context of the archeological object, but the archeological site, the general finding from the archeology of the peoples in general, the peoples with which they had contact – both neighbours and longer distance contacts in trade – and what was happening in general in the world of the time. In the cases of the Venetic inscritpions we immerse ourselves in the world of the Venetic people who made the inscriptions. It allows us to consider questions like: if the Veneti were amber traders, they would have a broad awareness of European cultures. They would not have invented their own deities, but recognize certain deities that were already established. For example, it is more likely they worshipped the widely established *Rhea*, rather than invented their own "Reitia" as the past false translations proposed. Was there evidence of *Rhea* in the north at the source of the amber? (yes.) Was there evidence of sacred groves or sanctuaries in the north? (yes.)

Working backwards from large scale to small, we can begin by information from ancient history, that amber came to Greece 'from the ends of the earth' or from '*Eridanus*' in the north, and some ancient literature indicating the *Eneti* were the source of amber in the Mediterrean. We then add to this archeological information: archeology has been tracing routes by which amber was carried down from the north, from amber having been lost en route (Since amber trade went on for some 2000 years, lost amber accumulates in the ground). There was an amber route that went down the Dneiper, another that went up the Vistula, another that broke from the Vistula, headed towards the vicinity of Vienna – both the latter headed to the northeast Adriatic coast and continued down the coast to Greece. Polish archeologists are continuing the study of the amber route from the amber source at the mouth of the Vistula. The amber source that reached the colonies of the Veneti who created most of the inscriptions was at the Jutland Peninsula.

Archeology has not just discovered in detail the amber route that begins with the Elbe, and ends travelling down the Adige River valley, but also in general evidence of strong trade contacts between northern Italy and the Jutland Peninsula in ancient times.

Trade as a medium for spreading language is generally ignored by scholars because it is difficult to think that trade can have much impact since it represents only small numbers of men linking the north and south; however, as I already pointed out, if it goes on for 1000 years, even contacts between the north and south with 100 men per year, by 1000 years is the same as a

single migration of 100,000 men. According to Baltic amber appearing in tombs in Babylon dating to before 5000 years ago, and in Greece before 4000 years ago, and continuing until the confusions of the late Roman Age, we are talking about north-south contacts with Finnic boat-oriented peoples, through amber trade, as much as for 3,000 years.

Working backwards to the location of the Venetic inscriptions. According to archeology, those specific colonies and markets northwest from where Venice is located today, developed since about 1000 years before the rise of Rome, "from northern influences". This now causes us to consider what language was at the source of the Jutland Peninsula amber trade. One can investigate what Roman historians wrote about the peoples called *"Suevi"* or *"Suebi"*. Roman historian Tacitus provided in his "*Germania*" names of the Suebic tribes that lived on the coast or in the Oder River valley. We can analyze these names for some information about what the traders from there were speaking (My studies revealed it was Finnic, but distorted in the direction of palatalization in the western locations where there would have recieved influence from Germanic languages.)

Like any wholistic investigation, we explore whatever seems relevant, and in doing so develop insights into how the Venetic peoples would have seen the world and behaved.

We now narrow our focus to the general locations in which the Venetic inscriptions were found, and how they borrowed the alphabet of Etruscans to their south. They would have also borrowed some Etruscan conventions in the use of inscriptions. It all adds up to a breadth of knowledge that helps make decisions first into what the inscriptions cannot possibly say, and then into what the inscriptions probably say in general, and then from internal comparisons across the body of inscriptions, and other tools, we arrive at more precise meanings.

This is a general wholistic analysis not unlike archeological investigations, that also explore all evidence. This methology is about looking at the inscriptions in an intelligent sequence too where initial analysis provides solutions for more difficult later analysis – short sentences before longer, sentences with words repeated often before sentences in which words appear only once and cannot be cross-checked, checking a new hypothesis across all inscriptions before settling on a final meaning. It is a slow accumulation of words and grammatical elements. Every determination becomes a stepping stone for more insights, more results.

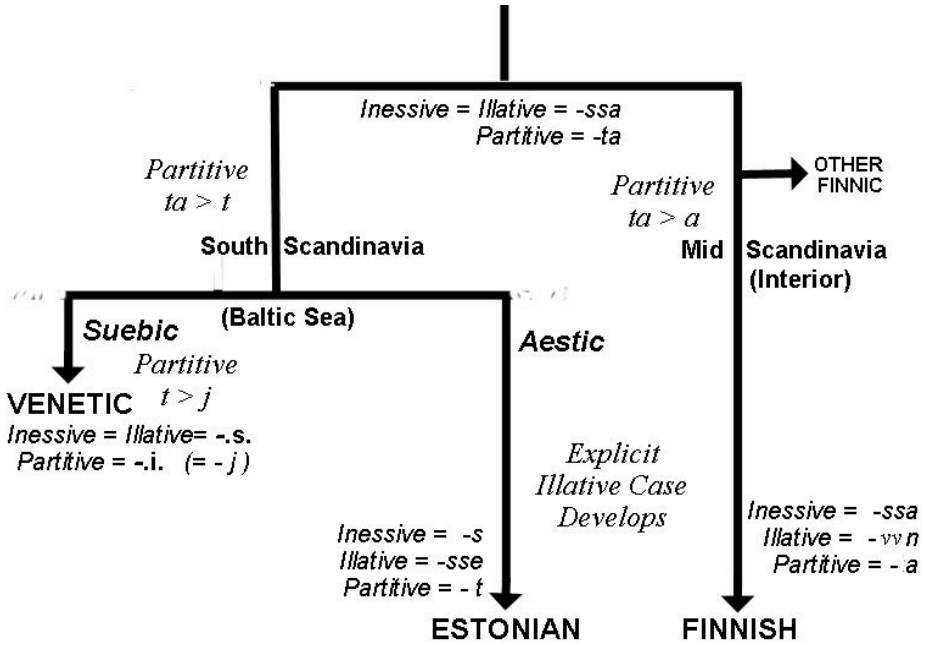
VENETIC FROM A LINGUISTIC POINT OF VIEW: SOME HIGHLIGHTS

The evidence for genetic connections to a language family lies in the deepest aspect of the languages in the family, namely grammar. After finding translations for most of the inscriptions, I set out to more clearly identify the grammar. If Venetic was Finnic, then I should be able to describe the grammar in parallel with grammar of Estonian and Finnish. Because Venetic survives in less than 100 complete sentences, naturally much of the grammar is not represented.

It is possible to propose how the partitive cases changed among Venetic, Estonian and Finnish. (See figure 11) Note in Estonian it is *–t* and in Finnish *–a*. This could mean the ancestral partitive was TA, as in TALOTA, and in Finnish it became *taloa*, while in Estonian it became *talot*. The Venetic dots, can be interpreted with a J or H, so Venetic on *talo* would be TALOJ (**talo.i.**) The descent can be described as follows: the original Finnic split between the northern language that became Finnish, and a Baltic Sea language that had an Estonian-like language, and which then split between east Baltic Finnic ("Aestic") and west Baltic Finnic (could be called "Suebic"). Venetic developed via the amber route south from the Jutland Peninsula, probably establishing the "Suebic" dialect at the south terminus where most of the inscriptions were found. Figure 11 also shows the evolution of the Inessive and Illative. I

propose that originally Finnic did not have Illative, but it was a "dynamic" meaning from a static case ending, if suggested by context. See the full document for the complete rationalization of Lexicon and Grammar.

Figure 11



The above diagram structure theorized from the results of deciphering, suggests that the Venetic language is actually the original language of aboriginal Scandinavia, which we can call "Suebic", becoming replaced by Germanic military conquests in the first millenium AD.

Finno-Ugric linguistics has over the past century assumed a theory that they emerged near the Ural Mountains in a Uralic Language Family and spread west. However archeology suggests it all began in the west as the climate at the end of the Ice Age warmed rapidly and forced the reindeer hunters to convert to a boat-oriented hunter-gatherer way of life. Archeology has found these boat peoples expanded east as far as the Urals, where they then encountered surviving reindeer peoples from Asia. If the truth is as I describe in an article (Pääbo 2016), that the original Finnic was in northern Europe since the Ice Age, then the above tree diagram is acceptable. It suggests the entire north spoke the Finnic or "Proto-Finno-Ugric" language of the descendants of the "Maglemose Culture" boat peoples since the Ice Age, and were assimilated only since a couple millenia ago by the expansions of Indo-Europeans into northern Europe. By this argument, the surviving Finnic languages are a remnant in the northeast that was spared being assimilated by the Germanic and Slavic northward expansions.

The Venetic in most of the inscriptions appears to have features that are unique, but which are clearly Finnic. Since linguist critics can claim similarities in words may be borrowings from visiting amber traders. It was necessary for me to try to compare what I discovered about Venetic grammar, with the grammar of Finnish and Estonian today. The most successful comparison was for the case endings. The following table from my documentation in Pääbo (2002-2013) shows the comparison. It was enough for it to be possible to create original new Venetic sentences.

Table 1 – Venetic Case Endings Compared to Est. and Finn.

VENETIC CASE ENDING	STATIC MEANING (according to context of use) EST/FINN... PARALLEL..		DYNAMIC MEANING (according to context of use) EST/FINN... PARALLEL..	
Nominative	*Same or close to stem. (see section 14.2.1.3)*			
-***v*.i.** Partitive	'part of'	*-t / -a*	'becoming part of' 'uniting with'	*-t /-a (dynamic meaning rare)*
-**ii*v*.i.** Explicit Dynamic Partitive?	---	---	'becoming part of'' 'uniting with'	---
-**.s.** Inessive	'in' -as used to describe or name	*-s / -ssa*	'becoming in = into'	"Illative" case *–sse* / –v v *n*
-**.s.t** Elative	'derived out of' - used to describe or name	*-st /-sta (static meaning 'derived from'))*	'out of, exit from'	*-st / -sta*
--**n** or [stem] Genitive	'of'	-[stem] */ -n*	' becoming in possession of"	Finnish Illative -v v *n (?)*
-**na** Essive	'like,as'	*-na / -na*	'becoming of, like,as'	*-na / -na* (dynamic meaning rare)
-**na.i** Essive + Partitive	'like, as" in Partitive sense	suffix *-n*e (?)	'till, up to' (or similar)	Est. "Terminative" *-ni*
-**ne.i** Terminative	Like a Dative?	---	'till, up to'	Estonian "Terminative" *-ni*
-**l** Adessive	'at location of'	*-l / -lla*	'to location of' use Allative	'to location of' = use Allative
-**le.i** Allative	Use Adessive	Use Adessive	'to location of'	Est/Finn"Allative" *-le / -lle*
-**.l.t** Ablative	'arising from location of'	*-lt / -lta* (as a nominalizer)	'from location of'	Est/Finn"Ablative" *-lt /-lta*
-ii- "liative"	'extremely large, infinite'	---	'extremely fast'	---
-bo- "Bolative"	'on side of'	remnant in Est. word *pool* 'at side of' but not used as a suffix any longer	'to side of"	remnant in Est. word *pool*e'at side of' but not used as a suffix any longer

The above table summarizes what came out of the resulting sentence translations in Venetic. Notably, it appears, Venetic did not explicitly distinguish between case endings involving movement versus case endings that did not involve movement, as it was easy for the speaker or listener to indicate which applied from the context of the sentence and the stress or length on the case ending. I also hypothesize that Estonian and Finnish did not make the distinction originally and that 2000 years ago there was, for example, no Illative, except as a stressing/lengthening of vowels of a static case – Estonian building it from the Inessive (ie. > 'becoming in'), Finnish from the Genitive (ie.> 'becoming owning').

The above table represents the most significant result of my analysis of grammar, made possible by the fact that Venetic, like all Finnic, have a large number of case endings, and therefore many of them appeared in the limited number of inscriptions. I also identified with certainty the imperative and infinitive because they occur frequently enough. There was also some strong evidence for some prepostions and postpositions, some of the present indicative, active and passive past participle, active present gerund, etc. There were some mysterious verb

ending, without occuring elsewhere, which I guessed from context. You can see more of the grammar in Pääbo (2002-2013).

What I managed to identify is consistent with a typical separation of two languages of about 1000 years.(1000 years instead of 2000 because the Venetic was frozen in the inscriptions and did not change in the last 2000 years.) What we see is similarity between Estonian and Venetic, consistent with the similarity between Estonian and Finnish. The dialectic divergence between Estonian and Venetic, as Figure 11 suggests actually occured between the Finnic of east vs west Baltic. Venetic, then, is actually the west Baltic language, carried south via the amber route from the Jutland Peninsula amber source.

Thus Venetic is not really a new Finnic language, but rather various dialects of northern Finnic, according to where the traders originated from. The Venetic along different trade routes would be in slightly different dialects.

The Venetic in the inscriptions came from the trade route from the west Baltic area, that archeology shows came south up the Elbe and eventually down the Adige. However there are some inscriptions, notably those in the Piave River valley closer to the Roman Age, that have a dialect closer to Estonian characteristics and idioms. Originally the most Estonian language came directly from the southeast Baltic amber source, and went directly towards Greece. No culture of writing developed along that route. As we might expect, inscriptions along routes that would have come from the east Baltic, such as those coming down the Piave River in the early Roman period, should actually show the dialect at the southeast Baltic amber source.

In my book, the section on the dipper inscriptions of Lagole-Calalzo in the Piave River Valley, identifies a number of expressions that resonated instantly with the Estonian ear. They occur in the same formula sentence in which it seems departments of the spa or sauna facility express devotion to the world of marketing-men. The number of successful parallels in Estonian suggests it cannot be random coincidence.

Here are the most surprising: They all suggest, along with the actual archeological finds of great numbers of dipper handles, that this may have been a sauna used by merchants a day's journey from their destination, to get cleaned up and ask for luck from the merchant-god. All the translations are literal, and not in normal idioms either Estonian or English, in order to be as closely in parallel with the Venetic as possible.

ke.l.lo.s. ossoko.s. - *kelluse osakuse* **-** **'**bell (gong) division' (to signal beginnings and ends of each sauna session?)

ke.l.lo.s. pi.t.|ta.m.mniko.s. - *kelluse pidamisekuse* – 'bell(gong) maintainers' (the people who kept time, sundial, hourglass, etc. ?)

voto.s. na.i.son.ko.s. - *vedese naisekuse* - 'water-women' - (sauna women handling all the water used?)

ku.i.juta . ametiku.ss. - *kuivajate ametikuse* – 'dryers bureau workers' – (people taking care of the drying off of the sauna guests)

...several ,more had completely mysterious words and I had to make educated guessed.

Even more surprising to me was that there were a couple of instances in which a Latin word was used. This was period in the early Roman period when Latin was also in use.

In this first instance, the segment can be translated if we find **liber.tos.** to be Latin.

e.s.kaiva liber.tos. a.rs. petija|ko.s. - *eeskava-raamatu haruse pidajakuse* - 'schedule-book division maintainer'. (The people who maintain the scheduling- which group goes into the sauna at what time)

In this instance, the people referenced is identified if we find **aplisiko.s.** to be from Latin

o.p.po.s. aplisiko.s. *õppuse APLISIKUSE* - 'learning-devoted' (possibly there was a library where guests could linger an read after their sauna????)

...other instances of Latin borrowings in the Lagole-Calalzo inscriptions can be found, and also some borrowings, I believe, from some other language in use, to account for some other words I could not translate.

In general, the Paive River Valley inscriptions, although few, show some remarkable parallels to Estonian expressions. For example there is a sentence that appears to begin with the Estonian practice of saying *ehk* 'in case, should, (you want, etc)' as suggested by writing **.e.i.k.** and the Lagole-Calalzo sauna dipper inscriptions discussed above. These inscriptions occur later, shortly before and into the Roman Age. It is my belief that the Piave River became a new route for amber from southeast Baltic source, with the rise of Rome, and many merchants that normally went towards Greece, were now turning west and coming down the Piave to access the markets energized by the growth of Rome.

For more detail of case endings, and some other grammatical endings for verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. as much as could be detected from less than 100 Venetic sentences download *THE VENETIC LANGUAGE An Ancient Language from a New Perspective: FINAL** (can be found at http://independent.academia.edu/APaabo)

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The main documenting of the project of deciphering Venetic is done in:
Pääbo, Andres, 2002-2013, *THE VENETIC LANGUAGE An Ancient Language from a New Perspective: FINAL** (can be found at http://independent.academia.edu/APaabo)
Individual shorter Venetic papers at http://independent.academia.edu/APaabo are extracted from the book include a condensed version of the work, a paper on a description of Venetic pronunciation and grammar by itself, and a paper on the apparent presence of Rhea in the Finnic north, including remnants of boar-worship until a few centuries ago in Estonia

I have also prepared a paper that disputes the traditional interpretation of the history of the Uralic languages.