

GIORGIO DE CHIRICO
AN INTERPRETIVE KEY: THE LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF THE ARTIST
SEEN THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF HIS HANDWRITING (1911-1971)

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The present study was carried out using Moretti's graphological method in which the graphological "markings" are manifestations from which one must draw clues, meanings, concrete and abstract deductions. In Moretti's view, handwriting is a symbolic language whose signs, strictly personal and produced by cerebral stimulus, communicate messages as if in code which the graphologist must decipher.

The content of the writing is not taken into consideration, as it does not influence the graphological examination. Instead, great importance is given to the execution and construction of signs.

- Twenty-six examples of handwriting dating from 1911 and 1971 were examined including many original specimens and others in photocopy. These writings are written on unlined white paper without fixed margins.
- Presenting clearly legible content, the handwriting is always orderly and progressive with harmonious rhythm in its execution. Some were written with ballpoint pen and others in black ink with a fountain pen.
- The handwriting is fully developed with some elaboration in the letters. At the beginning of a paragraph, strokes are at times personalised with preparatory gestures. For the most part, the writing occupies all the available space.
- Crossings out, corrections and alterations are practically inexistent. No typographical characters are present and the handwriting as a whole is essential.
- The writing is of medium calibre and constant, tending to small and is carried out in continuous strokes with light but decisive pressure. It becomes more decisive in quicker, more spontaneous texts.
- Slant is accentuated to the right. The writing is curvilinear with a preference for arched strokes, although there is also a fair quantity angular marks, chiefly in changes of direction.
- Oval forms are mainly closed. Dots on the "i" are always regular and the "t"-bars absolutely evident. The letters are joined one to the other.
- Spacing between the lines is normal with the lower and upper extensions slightly accentuated.
- Variable signature: Giorgio, Georgio, G., g.- Given name always before surname.

All Giorgio de Chirico's handwritings show a delicacy of mind and considerable refinement of thought. Vitality and the desire to manifest it emerge throughout.

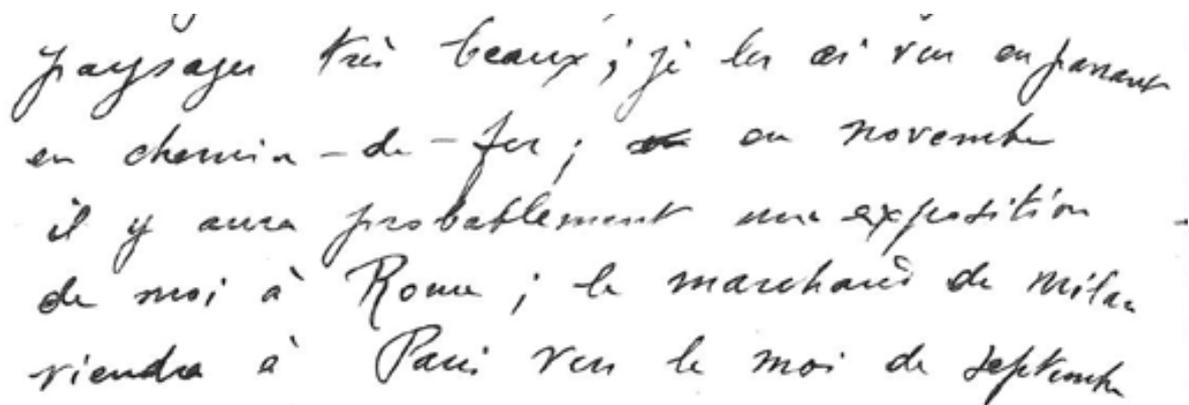
Excellent intuitive and associative rapidity are evident along with a natural dynamism. He swiftly

embraces ideas and develops them with equal promptitude, assimilating the stimuli and grasping subtleties in the words and thoughts of others.

Willingness to examine matters at hand with a desire to consider facts, people and questions in a complete, non-sectorial manner. Reliable and scrupulous, he prefers to work autonomously.

Giorgio de Chirico's personality comes forth as someone who loves to be clear and understandable, without any possibility of equivocation. He reveals a fineness of perception in which delicacy and sophistication of thought are constantly demonstrated, especially in the emotional sphere. He is never ambiguous and is open-minded and stylish. Since he is transparent, and not given to concealment or dissimulation, he expects the same behaviour from others.

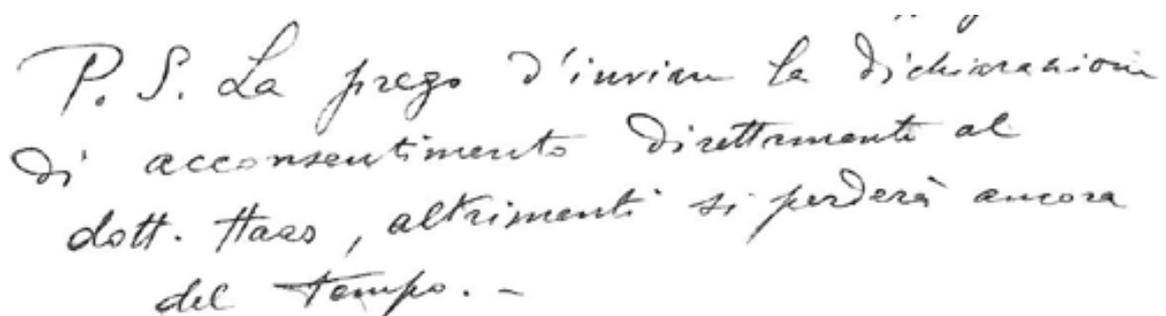
He likes to have a deep understanding of all aspects of life and he rejects inaccuracy and superficiality. His sensitivity allows him to perceive even subtle details in manner, voice and gesture in others and absorbs their effects emotively. On these occasions, he becomes silent and withdrawn. He has a particular inborn sense for emotional aspects that allow him to grasp and internalise even the slightest stimulus.



J'apprécie très beaux; je les ai vus en passant
en chemin-de-fer; ~~en~~ en novembre
il y aura probablement une exposition
de moi à Rome; le marchand de Milan
viendra à Paris vers le mois de septembre

fig. 1 Handwriting sample 1931

In social environmental situations, de Chirico's self-preservation instinct is sufficiently filtered by cognitive evaluations in such a way that his attitude stands as a legitimate defence of the ego. In spite of his initial open attitude, he tends to avoid intellectually limited people and is selective above all with regard to friends and emotional attachments. This is particularly evident in the handwriting of 1936 and 1937. He is usually open to other people, but only provided that their attitudes are mutual, and this is one of his human limits.



P. S. La prego d'inviare la dichiarazione
di accoglimento direttamente al
dott. Hass, altrimenti si perderà ancora
del tempo. -

fig. 2 Handwriting sample 1937

He is able to deduce logically, he summarizes and simplifies concepts and quickly verifies what he has undertaken. His memory is supported by associative capabilities and he has the gift of synthesis.

Two characteristics stand out in Giorgio de Chirico: the first one, ever present and very clear in the handwriting between 1911 and 1953, consists in a keen and fineness of spirit, in which a mobility of intelligence is coupled with action.

fig. 3 Handwriting sample 1932

The second one comprises associative rapidity and an excellent visual grasp of things, evident in all his handwriting from 1911 to 1973.

fig. 4 Handwriting sample 1916

He is constantly guided by both intuition and common sense: it is possible to detect this in the handwriting referred to the period between 1911 and 1928.

fig. 5 Handwriting sample 1916

His character then became a balance between originality and transparency, keenness and versatility, exploiting the abilities acquired in his first 30 years.

Giorgio de Chirico is precise in practical and organisational activities. He is highly reliable from an executive and qualitative point of view and conscientiously carries through his undertakings. He scarcely tolerates unexpected events and is usually pretty much a creature of habit.

In 1914 and 1937, accentuated self-control is evident, together with a certain dependence on the evaluation of his surroundings.

His judgements are the expression of a careful evaluation of facts and circumstances.

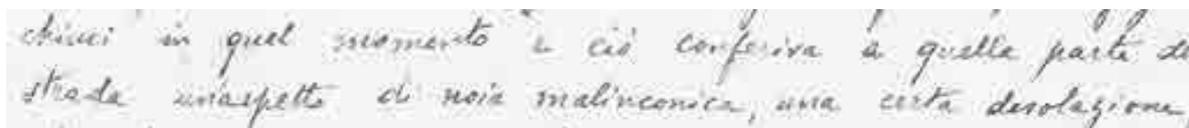


fig. 6 Handwriting sample 1936-1938

Giorgio de Chirico always had a clear vision of his past, aware of a close bond with his family of origin, with whom he maintained a constant and intense connection. However, especially from 1947 to 1971, he showed a desire for clear-cut autonomy.

Up until 1916, one notes a considerable attachment to the maternal figure who exercised ongoing power over him. He always had a strong relationship with his mother. Throughout his life Giorgio de Chirico was affected by his mother's extreme authoritativeness. His experience with her triggered a desire to love and be loved, which is continually evident in all his emotional relationships and clearly legible in his handwriting between 1942 and 1944.

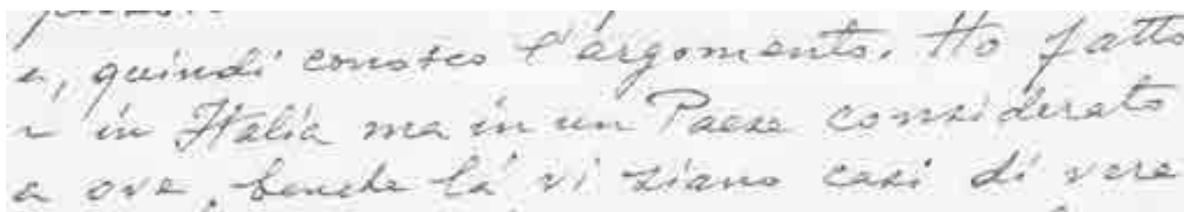


fig. 7 Handwriting sample 1936-1938

His father, whom he respected and loved, had always been present since childhood and constantly encouraged his inclinations. Giorgio was strongly affected by his early death. This is clearly borne out by the handwriting up to 1947. De Chirico inherited his sense of taste from his father, a highly cultured man with a resolute personality, in some ways a complicated man who held to the canons of his epoch. He inherited constancy in commitments, and intellectual and behavioural honesty. His father was a highly sensitive man, both humanly and artistically, qualities that he passed on to his son Giorgio with dedication and great love.

In the handwriting of 1934-1936 emerges an intimate and sentimental life and will be manifest in all the subsequent writings. He is a passionate person and his intimate relationships are resolute, showing him to be demanding in romance. He distinguishes true, deep and genuine feeling from occasional passions, and he is always dedicated to his partner. He observed women, often praising them, and easily became prey to a passion he could scarcely contain. He enjoyed being flattered and reacted graciously to the attention paid him.

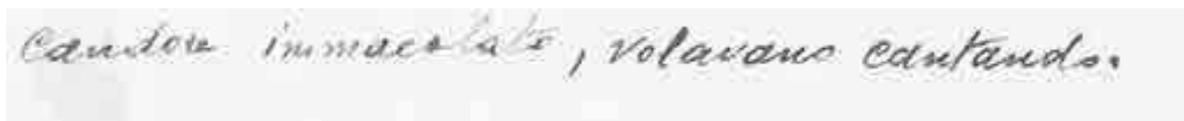


fig. 8 Handwriting sample 1936-1938

In the handwriting between 1963 and 1971 there is an even more accentuated weighing-up in evaluating facts and situations prior to taking action than in the past.

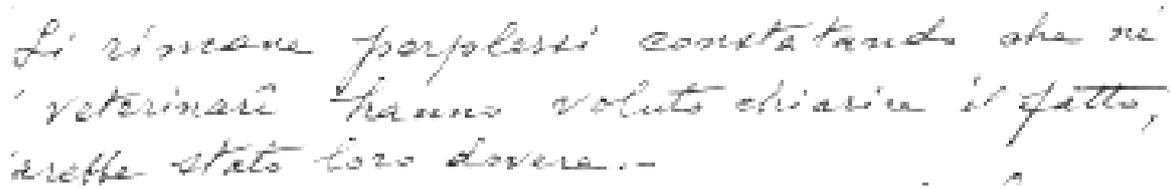
A sample of cursive handwriting in Italian. The text is written on a light background and shows a fluid, somewhat slanted script. The words are: "Li rimase perplessi constatando che ni", "veterinari hanno voluto chiarire il fatto,", "inoltre stato loro dovere. -".

fig. 9 Handwriting sample 1916

His thought has always been creative and original. In the handwriting of 1911 and 1912 we see clear notes of de Chirico's first style. What emerges is the desire to give vent to sensations theretofore unknown.

From 1914 to 1919 his handwriting evinces anxiety and a condition of restlessness and loneliness. A dreamlike existence that has little to do with reality. The handwritings of that time reveal a period in which his psychic energy is insufficient for tackling physical and mental efforts, with a loss of security in his own resources for withstanding and overcoming the various obstacles that life threw at him. He dealt with this state by showing audacity, a quality he usually tended not to show. Moreover, melancholy and lack of self-confidence may have induced him to give up, but his strong will, inherited from his father, allowed him to adopt a strong method that he then abided by.

Translated in collaboration with the author Cristina Hesse

	1911	1914	1916	1919	1928	1932	1937	1944	1947	1953	1963	1971
1	x	x	increase	decrease	x		increase	x	ascending	ascending	ascending	ascending
2	8	3	5	7	7		3	6	6	5	6	5
3	2	7	5	3	3		7	4	4	5	4	5
4	7	7	7	6	6		5	5	5	7	5	5
5	3	3	3	4	4		5	5	5	3	5	5
6	5	5	5	irregular	5		6	4	6	5	6	5
7	7	6	7	7	6		6	6	7	7	7	7
8	7	7	5	7	6		7	5	5	6	5	6
9					7					7		7
10	medium	medium	small	medium					small	medium	medium	
11	no	no	no	no	x		x	x		no	no	x
12	7	3	3	3	4		3	3	3	5	3	3
13	3	7	7	7	6		7	7	7	5	7	7
14	5	5	5	5	5		5	5	5	5	5	5
15	5	5	4	no	no		no	no	no	5	no	no
16	3	no	no	no	no			3	no	no		4
17	6	6	6	6	5		4	6	6	6	7	6
18	4	4	4	4	4		no	no	5	no	no	4
19	no	no	no	no	no		5	no	no	no	no	no
20	reduced	reduced	reduced	increase	poem		increase	increase	increase	large irregular	none	increase irregular
21	normal	normal	normal	normal	poem		normal	normal	normal	irregular	ample	irregular
22	good	good	good	threadlike	thread-like		filiforme	filiforme	filiforme	buona	filiforme	filiforme
23	no	no	no	no	no		no	si	no	no	no	no
24				long	long		long	long	long	no	increase	long
25										absent	well defined and long	
26	no	no	no		no		6	no		no	no	
27		GIORGIO	GIORGIO	GIORGIO		GIORGIO	GIORGIO		G.	g.		g.

Graphological evaluation chart of the analysis of Giorgio de Chirico's handwriting

LEGEND:

1. baseline: maintaining a straight line
2. natural writing: spontaneous accuracy
3. form level: accomplished accuracy
4. angles: sharp-cornered handwriting
5. roundness: round handwriting
6. LDL: width inside a single letter
7. LTL: width between two letters
8. LTP: width between two words
9. LTR: width between lines
10. letter size
11. tiny handwriting
12. detached letters
13. linked letters
14. cropped letters
15. stroke: downward stroke more marked than upward stroke
16. decreasing letters: letters decreasing in size within a word
17. flexibility: flowing handwriting
18. dynamic: dynamic connection between some specific letters
19. resting dot: hesitant handwriting that stop somewhere leaving little ink spot on the line
20. left margin size
21. right margin size
22. handwriting pressure
23. open letters: o, a, g, q, p, d when top of curve is not closed
24. t crossing
25. letter g
26. letter extension: eventual horizontal extension of final letters such as a or e
27. signature