(Un)familiar and (un)comfortable - the deep history of Europe

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Mijnheer de Rector Magnificus, dames en heren

1. Intro

There was something unusual going on. Everywhere in the village, people came out of their houses. Nobody spoke. The young girl did not understand what was going on, when she saw that some of the people started to grab and collect all sorts of valuables: jewelry, metal implements and weapons. The jewelry was glimmering and beautifully reflecting the sunlight. The elegant shape of the decorated bracelets immediately caught her eyes. She was again impressed by the beauty of these objects, and by how skillfully these ornaments were made. She could very well remember how this jewelry was once worn during marriages by the elder people. She could remember when she first saw these objects, as a young child, how she and her friends wondered how it was possible that such precious materials from far-away could have been in the possession of the people from their small and insignificant village. But then something happened. Two people came out of the crowd and took the jewelry, and all of a sudden started to smash it. The terminals of the bracelet were violently torn off, and they took a large pin and pushed it into the centre of one of the terminals. Then, they took one of the weapons, and just smashed it so hard to the surface that it bent. Apparently, even that was not enough, because they also delivered additional blows until it finally broke into pieces. No object could escape the rage of the people, and in a new outburst of violence the other objects were also attacked until finally no more was left than a heap of miserable fragments of what once were useful, beautiful and meaningful items.

Ladies and gentlemen, what I just told you is *not* a description of the violent destruction of villages in the war in Syria. It is *not* a description of an event in the awful war in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. What I told you is a reconstruction of something that might have happened 3000 years ago in the East French Lorraine, in a place we now call Crévic.[1] The order of events and the feelings and thoughts of the people are of course entirely made up, but what happened to these valuable objects is based on archaeological evidence. 3000 years ago, people in Europe deliberately destroyed what was valuable to them. Not once, not twice, but this was done on a massive scale, for thousands of years, everywhere in Europe.[2]

Ladies and gentlemen, together with many students and colleagues I am investigating the life of people who lived thousands of years ago in Europe - in prehistory, long before people started to write down their own histories. The "deep history"[3] of Europe.

2. Deep history fascinates

This "deep history" of Europe fascinates us. Today, thousands of visitors look in awe at the magnificent construction of Stonehenge, wondering how it is possible that people without any sort of machines were able to lift stones that weigh thousands of kilograms, and *why* they bothered to do it in the first place.[4] In countries like Ireland, Denmark or Romania, objects and monuments made thousands of years ago are symbols of national pride and identity.[5] In Denmark, the bank notes are decorated with magnificent objects from prehistory. Even in The Netherlands, surely not the country that is best known for the pride it puts into its past, the more than 5000 year old megaliths, the Hunebedden, seem to belong to the iconic monuments every inhabitant should have seen once in her of his life.[6]

3. Deep history matters

But it is not just that many people 'like' the objects and monuments from Europe's deep history; *Europe's deep history also matters.* I am standing here in front of your wearing a cloak of wool. The creation of wool textile is an invention from the Bronze Age, over four thousand years ago, related to the breeding of a new kind of sheep.[7] And for all of you who came here without exactly knowing why, I will now give you a good reason: we are family. Well, sort of. Research of ancient DNA

has shown that most people who live in Europe nowadays share a genetic component that can be traced back to people living in Europe many thousands of years ago.[8] This requires some discussion, and I will return to it later on. For now, please remember that with our genes, we seem to be linked to people who lived thousands of years before us. I am now talking to you in English. Linguists have argued that English, Dutch and most other European languages once developed out of just one single 'Mother language', the Proto-Indo-European.[9] A single language that emerged in the Pontic-Caspian steppe in Russia and the Ukraine, somewhere between 6500 and 4500 years ago.[10] Out of this single language, an entire family of related languages developed that are now being spoken by over three billion people on the planet.[11] This all started with a prehistoric group of people living in what is now the Ukraine and Russia.

But there is more. In Leiden, we study the archaeology of Europe - and Western Europe is pivotal in the history of the world.[12] From the 16th century onwards, Western Europe colonized huge parts of the world and at some stage came to dominate world history in an unprecedented way. In the course of history, many people have wondered how it is possible that Europe became so powerful, whereas it was originally just one out of many civilizations in the world. Why not China? Why not Persia?[13] Needless to say, here we enter a dangerous discussion, as this sort of questions is prone to lead to Eurocentric views and self-glorification.[14] For us here today, a vital point is that the answer to the question why 'the West dominates'[15] is looked for in Europe's past. There are basically two schools of thought here.[16]

The first, and most dominant one is represented by people who argue that the answer to the question why this tiny continent of Europe became uniquely powerful lies in its recent history, going back to a unique combination of cultural traits that developed since the 16th century. In his widely acclaimed recent book "Civilization"[17], Niall Ferguson, for example, argues that a special brand of "winning tools" like emerging competition and capitalism, and scientific innovation gave Europe the defining advantage.

But there is also a second school of thought. It seems much less popular than the 'recent history' school, but has representatives from a larger range than disciplines than just historians.[18] These people argue that if we are to understand the special position of Europe, we have to do more than just investigating its very recent history. We have to deal with what the Indian historian Chakrabarty[19] has termed its "deep history". They argue that we cannot restrict ourselves to just the modern period, but as for example Ian Morris[20] has so forcefully argued, what we should do is to consider the entire stretch of time, as every development that took place is rooted in another. We cannot afford to just ignore thousands years of human history.

Now if you are using the past to say something about the identity of Europe or to explain 'Why the West rules', as Ian Morris[21] has phrased it, what seems to happen is this. People look at the past to create a grand narrative in which the roots of today's dominance can be traced back to cultural traits that developed in a more remote past.[22] Another thing that often happens is that people use the past to create a "sense of belonging"[23], by for example searching for our supposed 'ancestors' in that past.[24] Needless to say that European politicians tend to like this, and in the past indeed a few epochs in Europe's deep history have been promoted as quintessential to Europe's identity, especially the Bronze Age, the Roman Period, and the Early Medieval Carolingian Period.[25] Fortunately, at Leiden we study all these periods. But I am afraid that the results of our research will not make it easier to understand why Europe became so powerful. Particularly for the Bronze Age, I am afraid our results even will go against political self-glorification and eurocentrism. They may rather invoke some modesty or at least critical self-reflection.

But let me start with deep history perspectives on Europe that at first seem to corroborate the 'unicity' and special role of

Europe. Already in 1930, the famous archaeologist Gordon Childe saw the rise of the Bronze Age as such a defining stage in the history of Europe.[26] In the Bronze Age, for the first time in history, people started to use metal: bronze, an alloy of copper and tin.[27] This is a truly ground-breaking technological change, allowing an entirely new range of objects to be made, but also radically changing the relations between people and materials.[28] After all, unlike stone, bronze could be melted into a huge range of shapes, and it is the first material that could easily be 100 % recycled.[29] Thus, with the adoption of bronze, humankind came closer to something we may call 'economic rationality'[30], or 'primitive capitalism'.[31] So, some 80 years before Niall Ferguson's book[32], Childe already isolated some of the "winning tools" that according to Ferguson gave Europe a crucial advantage, but then based on evidence from a period thousands of years *before* the Renaissance.[33] There is another factor that Childe saw as crucial: with the large-scale adoption of metalwork, people had to establish structural long-distance trade connections, as copper and tin were absent in large parts of Europe.[34] With the rise of such Pan-European trade systems, Childe seems to imply that 'Europe' as an entity came into being already thousands of years before the European Union. Childe's theories are today as vivid as ever. In the late 1990s, the Council of Europe supported a major European exhibition in which the Bronze Age was presented as the period in which Europe 'awoke'.[35]

So, we *could* see it like this: already in Europe's deep history, some of the 'special qualities' emerged that supposedly gave Europe the defining advantage over the world, like 'science', 'economic rationality', and perhaps even some sort of 'primitive capitalism'.[36] So looking back in time, we might be inclined to see something of ourselves in the people of prehistoric Europe who lived 4000 years ago. It may also be no coincidence that this same Bronze Age is the period that is often seen as the first phase in prehistory in which we find some of the characteristics of a Europe that is familiar to us.[37] People on the continent lived in three-aisled longhouses that are basically comparable to the farms of historical periods.[38] The landscape was divided in plots and fields with ditches and fences, very much like our own farming landscapes are.[39] A number of articles that appeared in Nature last year even seem to give people much more reason to look for our 'origins' in this particular period.[40] Large-scale research of ancient DNA suggests that the genes that many of the modern Europeans have can ultimately be traced back to people who lived more than 5000 years ago in eastern Europe and migrated into Europe. You may recall from what I said before that these people are also seen as the ones who have brought the Indo-European languages to Europe.

4. Deep history confuses

But ladies and gentlemen, *deep history can also confuse us.* Indeed, one could argue that in the Bronze Age, for the first time in history, Europe became a connected whole. One could also argue that the Bronze Age was the first period in history that we have some familiarity with, for example because of its ingenious, successful and rational Pan-European metal economy. It might even be that, generally speaking, the Bronze Age people are also genetically much closer to us than all the people who lived in Europe before that time.

But is this really all there is to say? I strongly doubt that. There may be alternative interpretations of the same evidence and these are really confusing. They are confusing as they sit uneasily with everything that I told you so far about Europe's deep history.

Let us, for example, consider all that metal that was so crucial to Europe's early economies.

Yes, it was circulating in vast quantities, often coming from distant areas. And yes, some of these objects are masterpieces of crafting. However, once people had this material, what did they do with it?

They threw it away. Everywhere in Europe, a part of this metalwork was taken out of circulation. It was buried in the ground, and it was placed in inaccessible places like in peat bogs, or in rivers, allowing none to ever retrieve it anymore.[41] Think of the story with which I started my talk, in which Bronze Age people really destroyed valuable objects. It is an example of something that could have happened in The Netherlands, Germany or in France many times.[42] Thus, valuable and scarce material was consciously taken out of society, which becomes even more bizarre if we realize that they could simply recycle it entirely.[43] Economically, it seems pure madness and completely at odds with the economic rationality that we like to see as the hallmark of this period. It is not just that the material was removed from society forever, sometimes people even literally destroyed it: they bent, burnt, broke or smashed the objects.[44]

As you can see, the president of our University, our rector, is wearing a ceremonial chain of office. By wearing this chain, the rector embodies the University. The chain in a way *is* the Leiden University. Imagine that our rector would now stand up, took his chain off, and started to smash it in public and then throw it in the canal. That would be bizarre! Yet, this is the sort of treatment that ceremonial items in Europe's prehistory often received.

So our European past is not simply a 'familiar' past - it is also a profoundly *unfamiliar* past.[45] A past in which people on the one hand achieved power and prestige by metal trade, but in which they on the other hand systematically destroyed the very items that made them powerful.[46] How are we to make sense of that? This is the topic of my current VICI project 'economies of destruction'[47], and it leads us to many intriguing questions. Was this destruction of wealth a religious practice? Are we dealing with excessive sacrifices? Some sort of 'over the top' "gifts to gods"?[48] In other words: were Bronze Age people - our supposed 'ancestors' - imbued with a strong religious zeal? And did their 'religion' go so far that it motivated people to destroy the same valuables that empowered them?[49] I hope to answer some of these questions with my VICI research group in the following years. What should concern us here today is this: the deliberate destruction of wealth in the European Bronze Age is an interpretative problem because it *seems* alien and irrational to the logic of a western economy and western thought.[50] We are used to associate this sort of 'strange' practices with non western societies living in Africa, indigenous America or Papua New Guinea[51], but apparently we have more problems when we have to deal with it in European societies we consider closer to ourselves.

But if we want to understand who we really are, we cannot ignore such unfamiliar practices. After all, there is another point that can be confusing to eurocentrists. In spite of the fact that Western Europe came to rule the world in recent history, in spite of the excellent geographical situation of Europe and its fertile soils, outside the Mediterranean, a true complex civilization never developed in Europe, until the Romans introduced it by colonial power.[52] Complex, hierarchical states emerged in China, the Near East, Africa and the America's but *not* in Western Europe before the Romans.[53] If anything, in the deep past Europe was a continent peopled by small, politically unstable and relatively simple social organizations.[54]

In the Bronze Age, bronzes were valuable ceremonial items, insignia of power and scarce and important material resources. Couldn't it be that it was precisely this widespread destruction of wealth that kept European societies from accumulating wealth and power, thus continuously creating unstable and fluid power relations?[55] So if we study Europe's deep history looking for the 'origins' of western society, archaeology can show us some 'familiar' traits, but we also encounter highly unfamiliar ones. Deep history is not the key to Europe's development. Deep history is just as much the problem. Archaeology even has the potential to go one step further. Archaeology can show us highly unpleasant features of our past. *Deep history can hurt.*

5. Deep history "hurts"[56]

Archaeologists study things and landscapes from the past. Although the past may easily be abused to glorify the present[57], if studied properly, the power of archaeology is that it may also confront us with aspects of our past that we are not aware of, that we do not like and do not wish to be confronted with. Sometimes, archaeology can show us a past "that hurts".[58] But as we all know: if something hurts, this has a function. Pain serves to make us aware of something else. If it is the past that hurts, it makes us aware of something in the present.[59]

My own promoter, professor Louwe Kooijmans experienced this himself. We may feel some familiarity with and perhaps even sympathy for prehistoric farmers. But Louwe Kooijmans learnt that these people were certainly no peaceful hippie communities. In Wassenaar, only a few kilometers from where we are now, Louwe Kooijmans found the remains of an awkward massacre that took place 4000 years ago, in which 12 individuals, children, females and males were violently killed.[60]

And archaeological evidence shows that the Pan-European Bronze Age economy co-existed with a widespread habit to deliberately destroy the same scarce bronze that they worked so hard for to obtain. Why is it actually that we find the destruction of valuable items in the Bronze Age so irrational? For people in the past, living in a huge swath of land, from Ireland to the Caucasus, it apparently made perfect sense to systematically give up large amounts of valuable economic resources.[61] And it is us who find this 'irrational', but I am asking you: is our own economy really so rational? In a way, when we donate money to charity we also 'sacrifice' our wealth without any clear benefit for ourselves.[62] The throwing of coins in the Trevi fountain in Rome alone, apparently already yields 1.26 million euro a year.[63] And what about the burning of one million pounds by the members of the British pop group KLF in 1994?[64] How 'rational' is a world economy that ignores sustainable energy sources like sun energy and is uniquely dependent on oil, a rapidly disappearing energy source?

Above all, the past can hurt in a terrible way if it is used to identify people living in the present with specific ancestors from a remote past. This is particularly so, if this form of identification includes certain groups of society, and excludes others.[65] Unfortunately, European archaeology has a very dark history when it became an instrument to look for 'ancestors' that could serve as the basis for land claims in the 1930s, culminating in Heinrich Himmler's *Ahnenerbe*.[66] But even today, in a much more subtle way, archaeology still plays a role in the search for so-called ancestors in for example the strengthening of regional and national identities, as the research of young scholars like my new postdoc Catalin Popa has forcefully shown.[67]

It is especially in this search for so-called ancestors that archaeology in Europe is now faced with perhaps its biggest challenge. How are we going to deal with the results of a huge research project on ancient DNA research that was published in two articles in Nature last year?[68] The title of one of the articles is telling: "Massive migration from the steppe was a source for Indo-European languages in Europe".[69] On the basis of ancient DNA evidence, the authors argue that Europe underwent a "massive migration" from the steppes some 5000 years ago that had a huge impact on the history of Europe and implicitly on that of the entire world.[70] In these articles, the authors go at some length to show how different European nationalities today are genetically linked to people from prehistory. Some north Europeans, like "Norwegians", are in their DNA much closer to these prehistoric immigrants from the steppes than for example "the Greeks", who are genetically more affiliated to the earliest farming people who inhabited Europe before the so-called "massive migration".[71] These articles are extremely interesting and the research was carried out objectively and in a careful way. Yet, to cite Latour and Niklasson[72], the outcomes of this research are not just "matters of fact". As sometimes happens in science, "matters of fact" could also become "matters of concern". The BBC website, for example, summarizes the results of these articles

in Nature as follows. It says that "Europeans" stem from "three ancient 'tribes' ". It goes on to mention that there were "blue-eyed hunters", "brown-eyed pale-skinned farmers" and "mysterious" people who came from the steppes and ultimately have "Siberian affinities".[73] But does the DNA of people who lived thousands of years ago really has anything to do with the *identity* of Europeans today? There are compelling reasons why 'a sense of belonging' is a much more complex social and cultural construct than just an overlap of genetic components.[74] I will return to that in a minute. For now, I wish to remark that the train of thought that looks for 'identity' and 'origin' solely through genetics can end up at a station where our claimed ancestors will *divide us*. And that may really open the door to a past that hurts.

6. How are we to deal with the evidence from Europe's deep past?

So, Europe's deep past fascinates, the past matters, the past confuses, but the past can also hurt us. So how are we to deal with Europe's deep past?

At this stage in my talk, you are perhaps expecting me to come up with some sort of agenda for the teaching and research that I will do in the future. But dear students, do not be afraid: I will not present an agenda, because research and teaching agenda's are the killers of creativity. What I find more important is to tell you how I wish to deal with the past when I teach or do research. In my view, our engagement with the past should be based on four pillars: 1. unconventionality, 2. sharing, 3. skill and 4. societal responsibility.

I will now comment upon each of these pillars

I will start with *unconventionality*. Dear students. I suggest that you need not follow me or believe me when I teach, except for one thing: I am asking you to be creative and unconventional. The world you are educated in is a straightjacket of rules, institutions and an over-the-top system of ordering disciplines and money. Forget about disciplinary boundaries and be curious for everything. Read, read, read! Do not stick with the archaeological literature, but get inspired by anything that might feel completely useless in the beginning but might inspire you to some creative work in your archaeological study later on. I am very happy to see this attitude in the work of my postdocs Maikel Kuijpers, Quentin Bourgeois, Marieke Doorenbosch, and Catalin Popa, as well as in my PhD students Arjan Louwen, Sasja van der Vaart, Roosje de Leeuwe, Leah Powell, Marieke Visser, Karsten Wentink and Sabrina Autenrieth. In particular, I feel network science and network thinking can be an extremely helpful tool for creative thinking in archaeology, as it makes implicit cultural notions testable and has the potential to get us out of categorical thinking that pervades so much of our arguments on past behavior.[75] And with regard to successful unconventionality - I am very happy that professor Richard Bradley from Reading University is here with us today. He is not only widely recognized as one of the leading archaeologist in European prehistory. I also consider him as one of the most original thinkers in our profession, and the funny thing is that he did not even study archaeology at all. He studied Law. So I congratulate my colleagues and friends from our Law Faculty on this success of the law education!

The second pillar for a successful study of the deep past is *sharing*. I believe that science is now at a stage where it is virtually impossible to do anything by yourself. The implication of this is not only that we need to be highly inter-disciplinary[76]; it is also that we need to radically alter the way we collaborate. True chemistry between researchers will be crucial, and this requires strong social skills that are not necessarily the same ones you select upon in grant applications like VENI-VIDI-VICI that are focused on the individual excellence of the principal investigator. I think we must be heading towards joint projects without a clear omnipresent "architect", actually a little bit like people in the Middle Ages built cathedrals.[77] So students - acquiring such social and collaborative skills will be quintessential in your study, and I

already know one field where we can develop and train this and that is in our archaeological fieldwork. I can think of no better environment to train this than an excavation where we can only be successful if we all sacrifice ego's and all have to bring out the best of ourselves in difficult situations where inventiveness, improvisation and smart collective decision making are key to success.

The third pillar for archaeology is *skill* - and has to do with archaeology as 'craft'.[78] Even though our world is getting increasingly inter-disciplinary and even if the boundaries between archaeology and other disciplines are fading, there still is something of an archaeological 'craft'. You cannot really learn archaeology from a text book. Learning archaeology is an embodied practice. As an archaeology student, you have to learn to recognize soils or geological sediment. You have to develop an eye for materials and you can only learn that through trial and error, through intensive practice in fieldwork or lab work, where an experienced teacher is always there to guide you. I have been so lucky to get this sort of training when I was a student, and now I am a teacher myself, I will see to it that acquiring of practical skills will be an essential part of student education and your identity as a Leiden-trained archaeologist.

Finally, there is the fourth and perhaps most important pillar of all: *societal responsibility*. Perhaps the most essential question that we have to deal with is to realize why we are studying the past and how our study of the past links up with the concerns and challenges of the present.

In Holland, the system asks for clear 'products' that should result from research. At our University, we do deliver such 'products'. We feel we have a special responsibility for Dutch archaeology. Together with our colleagues from the municipalities of the Veluwe like Masja Parlevliet, we are for example busy trying to protect entire prehistoric burial landscapes as cultural heritage. We provide professional writers like Evert van Ginkel with information for the great books he writes for a broad public of non-archaeologists. Our own colleague Richard Jansen did a magnificent job by creating the archaeological park in Oss that visualizes the results of university research in an attractive way.[79] But ultimately, such 'products' relate to 'big issues', and the 'grand narratives'. I see dealing with, and communicating about, these 'big issues', as one of the most vital tasks academic archaeology has.[80] Good research ultimately goes back to fundamental questions. Who are we? Where do we come from? How do societies function and change? Is the image we have of ourselves really supported by our deeds from the past, this huge reservoir of evidence on human behavior? As such, archaeology is much more like astronomy: a science that tells us about where we came from, a science that tells us about our (humble) place in the big scheme of things. A science that fascinates many people "for its own sake", without any clear translation to a 'product'.[81]

However, unlike astronomers, biologists or modern historians, unfortunately archaeologists so far rarely write about the consequences of our studies for that 'big narrative'. We rarely use our insight in the deep history and nature of the big questions like those on cognition, migration or the identity of Europe, to engage in those major societal debates.[82] Yet, this is what I think we should also do. For every topic we teach our students in Leiden, we should discuss how knowing about it relates to issues in our own society and to the big questions of being human. I entirely agree with Criado who argues that in our society, we need to communicate, write and interact in the broadest sense on these 'big topics' and 'big histories'.[83]

However, as scientists, we have a special obligation to do this in a responsible way. If the media report on archaeological research, I have the impression that it is very often about "spectacular finds" from excavations, about finds that are 'the oldest', 'the biggest' or the 'best preserved ones'.[84] But finds are only relevant in relation to good research questions. To cite the work of Daniel Kahneman[85], what really matters is that we

should not communicate on "fast thinking", but concentrate on what Kahneman calls "slow thinking". We should communicate in a clear way how archaeological research *really* works, that outcomes are rarely black or white, and that much of the 'spectacular' outcomes reported on in the media require critical reflection.[86] We should emphasize that the archaeological evidence really does not support *each* outcome.

Let me once more go back to the results of the ancient DNA research published in Nature last year, to the theory that Europe underwent a massive migration in the Bronze Age. This surely is a fascinating outcome of ancient DNA research, but once this sort of results enter the media, it is also our job to communicate that a 'European identity' can certainly not be reduced to the DNA of people living in a deep past.[87] It is our job to show that the spread of material culture in prehistory shows a much more complex process of social and cultural change, and that 'belonging to something' is first and foremost a matter of perception.[88] This is Kahneman's "slow thinking" and for that reason much more difficult to explain.

When I started my talk, I said jokingly that we are all family, because we probably share the same genetic component derived from people who inhabited Europe thousands of years ago. Yet, the same line of reasoning could also define many of us as different from each other. Undoubtedly, there will be people in this room who are genetically closer to the prehistoric inhabitants of Europe than others.

Suppose that right now a super volcano would erupt in Leiden, and cover this building here with thick layers of lava. Imagine that 1000 years from now, future archaeologists of Leiden University will excavate our remains. These people would find something very interesting. Scanning our skeletons with their i-phones, they would immediately see that genetically, some of the people in this room share genetic components, whereas others are slightly different. These future archaeologists would also note, however, that all of us had apparently gathered here to perform some sort of a ritual, in an ancient ceremonial building that already was very old when the volcano erupted in 2016. They would also see that many of us were wearing very similar ritual costumes, like ties, suits and strange black ritual gowns. The future archaeologists would see that we were all engaged in one and the same ceremony. In other words, the future Leiden archaeologists would discover that regardless of genetic codes, all the individuals present in this building defined themselves as a community by the material culture that they were wearing and by what they were doing here in this room.

Ladies and gentlemen, fortunately, the Leiden volcano did not erupt today, but this imaginary example hopefully makes the point that identity involves complex, cognitive, social and cultural processes in which it is particularly things (our suits, or gowns) and environment (the context of this special, historical building) that are also involved in the construction of identity.[89] As archaeology is strong in acquiring knowledge of things, landscapes and practices, archaeology is a powerful way of knowing about the past, and therewith, about ourselves.[90]

Investigating Europe's deep past, we will find traits that are both familiar and unfamiliar.[91] We will see that the past is both comfortable and uncomfortable. The unfamiliar things may confuse us, and can even be unpleasant.[92] We might find that in some aspects, the prehistoric inhabitants of Europe are just as different from us as some of the non western societies are that were colonized and wiped out by Europeans in more recent history. If we begin to accept the 'unfamiliar other' in our own *history,* it might also help us to accept differences in our own *society.*[93] It might help us to accept 'the other within ourselves', to quote Yovel.[94] After all, differences and contradictions are an integral part of human society, then and now.

The archaeology of early Europe can show how the creation of Pan European connectivities and trade co-existed with

endemic warfare. The archaeology of early Europe can show us how complex economies could be efficient and destructive at the same time. The archaeology of early Europe can potentially show us how a massive migration might have been accompanied by adaptation and the emergence of new cultural identities through widely shared material culture.

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Thanks to all my students. Teaching is about interaction and reciprocity. I have been so fortunate to have so many bright, collaborative, unconventional and critical students in my classes. I learnt as much from you as you may have learnt from me.

I already mentioned one of our guests, professor Richard Bradley. I now wish to thank another guest who is important to me: professor Svend Hansen of the Eurasia Department of the German Archaeological Institute. Your work has an immense impact on mine, and I am very grateful that you are here with us today. I worked with you in Berlin for a year, which I liked enormously. Your research opened my eyes for the immense potential of the archaeology of East Europe and the Eurasian Plains and I am looking forward to the future Leiden-Berlin collaborations!

Thanks are due to professor Leendert Louwe Kooijmans, my promoter. You are truly my archaeological father, someone who educated me and whom I still fear and love at the same time. Even while preparing this talk I was thinking: what would Leendert think of it?

I would also like to thank the prehistory staff member with whom I worked for many years: Harry Fokkens, Corrie Bakels, Alexander Verpoorte, Richard Jansen and Marie-Louise Sørensen. A special word of thanks is for Harry. Harry: the group you chaired is a very successful one, and to an important extent this is due to the way you created synergy, collaboration between us and how you always cared about every one of us.

The faculty of Archaeology is a fantastic place to work and I have many great colleagues and friends there. I would like to mention one in particular: Miguel John Versluys. Miguel-John, we started to study together, but in what were then very different groups of archaeologists. You were working among the sharply dressed, 'civilized' classical archaeologist, and I in the group of 'barbarian' excavation punks of prehistory. But now I am wearing suits and Classical Archaeology is doing great excavations and we both have a VICI project and work together! In a way, the two of us embody the successful integration of archaeologies in the Faculty.

I am also a member of the Faculty Board and I much enjoyed working with Kees Pafort, Peter Akkermans, Jan Kolen, Svenja Kerkhof, Carlo Manuels, Claudia Regoor and Anneke Hendriks. Thank you!

A special word of thanks is for Corinne Hofman, our dean. I can now say that I have met at least one truly visionary person in my life, and that is you. You are always five steps ahead of everybody, and I learnt a lot from you. You always had faith in me and pushed me to do things I did not consider myself capable of: I am immensely grateful for what you did and it was an honour to work with you.

To my dear friend Ruurd Kok. Ruurd, we survived the excavations in Midden-Delfland and Syria and became friends for life. For more than 20 years, we have been discussing the good things of life and archaeology in our favorite hangout 'de Uyl van Hoogland'. Thank you. This must never end.

I wanted to be an archaeologist since I was four years old, as my parents know. Today I am standing here, and dear papa and mama, I wish to thank you for everything you did for me.

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Notes

1 Hänsel 1990; Nebelsick 1990, 160, Fig. 11.1.
2 E.g. Bradley 1990; Fontijn 2003 and 2014; Hänsel/ Hänsel 1997; Hansen 1994; Nebelsick 2000.
3 For the notion of 'deep history': Chakrabarty 2009 (p. 212) and Gamble 2014; cf. the notion of 'deep time' in Robbins 2016.
4 Parker Pearson 2013.
5 For Ireland and Romania: Popa/Ó Riagáin 2012.
6 Van Ginkel/ Jager/ Van der Sanden 1999, 7-8.
7 Sofaer/ Jørgensen/ Choyke 2013, 479.
8 Manco 2015, 145.
9 Anthony 2007; Beekes 1995.
10 Anthony 2007.
11 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-European_languages.
12 Davies 1998; Ferguson 2011; Morris 2011
13 Cf. Morris 2011, who especially compares the western and eastern ends of the Eurasian landmass.
14 Cf. Goody 2012a.
15 Morris 2011.
16 See Morris 2011, 11-21 for an overview of a number of theories and ideas. Morris (2011, 13) speaks of the "short-term accident" and the "long-term lock-in" schools of thought. For the present discussion, my distinction is rather between scholars who go back to periods (long) before the Late Middle Ages and those who focus on post-Medieval history (European colonialism, globalization, rationalism and industrialization).
17 Ferguson 2011.
18 E.g. Diamond 2005; Goody 2012b; Landes 1998; Morris 2011. For a discussion on European identity narratives cf. Kolen/ Egberts 2015.
19 Chakrabarty 2009, 212.
20 Morris 2011, 22
21 Morris 2011.
22 Morris 2011, 13.
23 Tuan 1974 and 1977.
24 Lowenthal 2015, 100-2.
25 See below and Kolen/Egberts 2015.
26 Childe 1930. See Rowlands 1984 for an excellent analysis of Childe's view on the Bronze Age.
27 Roberts/ Thornton/ Piggot 2009.
28 Childe 1930, 4.
29 Roberts/ Thornton/ Piggot 2009; Bray/Pollard 2012.
30 Childe (1930) does use the term 'science' (p. 4), but not 'rationality'.
31 Rowlands 1984, 149.
32 The notion that Europe became so powerful in world history due to trade, competition and science has a lengthy history (f.i Morris 2011, 13-18; Rowlands 1984, 147). As Rowlands (1984) set out, Childe was the first to explicitly locate the emergence of these skills in the Bronze Age.
33 An important point made by Rowlands (1984) is that Childe explicitly compared the Bronze Age in Europe to contemporary societies in the Near East, in order to isolate what he saw as "progressive" characteristics in European societies (ibid, 148).
34 Rowlands 1984, 148.
35 Hvass *et al.* 2000, xi. The fifth section of this exhibition was entitled "The Awakening of Europe". Also Niklasson 2014, 61 for a more recent, comparable example where the Bronze Age is linked to a European identity.
36 Rowlands 1984, 149.
37 Cf. Arnoldussen/ Fontijn 2006; Roymans/ Fokkens 1991 on longhouses as a long term element of the North European landscape. Kienlin (2015) remarks

that Kristiansen and Larsson's (2005) argument for a Bronze Age 'other' comes down to locating aspects of Homeric society in the European Bronze Age cultures. By drawing parallels to Homeric society, it can be argued that Kristiansen and Larsson actually make the Bronze Age a more 'familiar' society, as Homer's poems are usually seen as the starting point of European written culture (cf. Kienlin 2015). For the recognition of 'familiarity' in the past: Lowenthal 2015, 86-8.

38 Huijts 1992.

39 Arnoldussen/ Fontijn 2006.

40 Allentoft et al. 2015; Haak et al. 2015.

41 F.i. Bradley 1990; Fontijn 2003; Hänsel/ Hänsel 1997; Hansen 1994; Levy 1982; Nebelsick 2000. For the 'otherness' of Bronze Age economy, see also Goody 2012a, 38.

42 F.i. Fontijn 2003; Nebelsick 2000.

43 Which they also did: see Bray/ Pollard 2012.

44 Nebelsick 2000.

45 Cf. Thomas (1999, 3-6) who uses Ricoeur's distinction between the 'past as same', 'the past as other' and 'the past as analogue' (Ricoeur 1984). An interesting elaboration for archaeological research can be found in Roymans/ Theuws 1999, Fig. 5. For clarity's sake I use the terms 'familiar'-'unfamiliar' (following Lowenthal's phrasing (2015, 86-8)).

46 Bradley 1990, 135-42.

47 Fontijn 2014.

48 Hänsel/ Hänsel 1997.

49 Hansen 1994, 372-81.

50 Brück 1999; Fontijn 2003, 19-20.

51 Like the potlatch ceremonies of indigenous Northwest America (Mauss 1990) or the Malangan in New Ireland (Küchler 1997).

52 Rowlands 1984, 148; Goody 2012a.

53 When it comes to deep history, Europe is usually not the place where it all started. Cf. Chakrabarty 2008.

54 Kristiansen 1998, 418-9; Sherratt 1994.

55 Cf. Brück/ Fontijn 2013; Levy 1982; Kristiansen 1998; Rowlands 1984; Sherratt 1994.

56 The expression "Archaeologies that hurt" is from McDavid 2002.

57 Popa/ Riagain 2012.

58 McDavid 2002; also Robbins 2016, 180-1 for examples where an unpleasant past is ignored.

59 See McDavid 2002, whose own example is on the public interpretation of African-American archaeology in 18th century plantation life.

60 Louwe Kooijmans 1993.

61 Cf. Fontijn 2003; Hansen 1994; Reinhold 2005.

62 Cf. Bloch/ Parry 1989 for a theory that argues how such gifts can be integrated in a broader economy of morality.

63 http://luxeadventuretraveler.com/legend-of-the-trevi-fountain.

64 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K_Foundation_Burn_a_Million_Quid.

65 Jones 1997.

66 Jones 1997, 2-3.

67 Popa/ Riagain 2012.

68 Allentoft *et al.* 2015; Haak *et al.* 2015.

69 Haak *et al.* 2015.

70 As Indo-European languages are now spoken by billions of people.

71 Haak *et al.* 2015, Fig. 3.

72 Latour 2004. In a similar vein: Niklasson 2014, 60.

73 http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-29213892.

74 Hofmann 2015; Müller 2013.

75 Fontijn 2014.
76 Kristiansen 2014.
77 McGuiness 2013.
78 Sennett 2009.
79 https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC55P2R_paalgraven?guid=f1dd1abf-c735-4f88-9815-5de28a141353.
80 For a comparable plea: Criado-Boado 2015, 3; Kristiansen 2014.
8 The quote is from Sennett 2008, 9 when he speaks on craftsmanship. In my view, having a genuine interest in something and crafting go back to the same principle: a commitment to something without an expectation of immediate economic gains.
82 Morris 2011 being a notable exception.
83 Criado-Boado 2015.
84 This is merely an impression, and therewith an example of "fast thinking" that should be avoided. However, to my knowledge, there is no up-to-date research on how archaeology is reported on in the (Dutch) media.
85 Kahneman 2011.
86 Cf. Niklasson 2014.
87 Previously, Müller (2013) and Hofmann (2015) already called for such a critical stance when it comes to aDNA research in archaeology.
88 On the fluidity and contextual nature of identities in the Bronze Age: Brück/ Fontijn 2013. On the significance of material culture, as opposed to a heavy reliance on genetic evidence: Hofmann 2015.
89 Brück/ Fontijn 2013; Insoll 2007.
90 cf Anthony 2007, 4
91 The two pre-suppose each other, but the point made here is that the familiar and unfamiliar are part and parcel of the same past. Cf. Robbins 2016, 183, citing Walter Benjamin's famous remark that the concept of 'civilization' always implies that 'barbarism' exists as well (Benjamin 2007).
92 A plea to be open to the 'otherness' of the Bronze Age can also be found in both the recent work of Kienlin (2015, 183-4) and that of Kristiansen and Larsson (2005, 367-8). The former, however, is critical of the work of the latter.
93 Cf. Robbins' (2016) plea for a cosmopolitanism in geography and in deep time. My interest, however, is more in simply accepting differences within cultures in general and in our own society in particular.
94 Yovel 2009.