The Mourners of Oss: Reconstructing the social circumstances of the Chieftain's grave of Oss using subjectivity, the emic approach and abductive reasoning.

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*Reconstructing the social circumstances of the Chieftain's grave of Oss
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Chapter one: Introduction - Problem and Research

In my first year of my BA Archaeology, one of my professors told me that 80% of our job as archaeologists is interpretation. That number should probably be debated, but his point was made clear. While excavations and fieldwork are the foundation of our discipline, interpretation has steadily gained importance and critical study over the last few decades (Hodder, 1985. P. 10). The theories we build and the conclusions we draw are all based on these interpretations. In other words, interpretation makes the building blocks of archaeology.

This means that it's incredibly important to understand that the act of interpreting should not be taken lightly, and what it *means* to interpret something. One must be made aware that oftentimes, multiple interpretations are possible; that some of them can even coexist at the same time without contradicting one another. One must also be aware that there are several different ways to go about the *act* of interpreting, and which factors play into doing so, or may affect the outcome.

In this essay, I'll explain that we can approach any object of study in two ways; objectively and subjectively. Archaeology deals with humans, who have complex thoughts and feelings and often act irrationally. When researching cultural phenomena—which can be anything from burial practices to how people decorated a pot—you will find that we deal with things that are inherently subjective: these choices weren't made with survival in mind, or out of simple impulses like "hunger" or "safety". They require their own contextual explanations (Tarlow, 2012. P. 172). Therefore, the ever-present objectivity we strive to apply—to categorize and classify—simply isn't enough to explain the things we observe.

1.1: Research Problem and Goal

In short terms, the problem is the lack of subjectivity within our field. True, we must strive to be as objective as possible when examining and analyzing data in order to avoid mistakes, but I argue that we cannot leave subjectivity out of the question. In fact, there is room to argue that subjectivity is vital to our field of study. I say this for two reasons. Firstly, certain elements that make up human culture-- art, religion, poetry, music, values, traditions, and more-- are not formed by rationality or necessity. We make music because it sounds pretty, art because it looks pretty, the notion of an afterlife because we're scared of death. Emotion is intertwined with our past, has influenced our choices every step of the way (Tarlow, 2012. P. 176). Secondly, in line with a post-processual approach (which will be elaborated upon in this essay), it must be recognized that the circumstances of archaeological material as we find them could have been preceded by a multitude of possible events (Fahlander, 2014. P. 2). The past is not one linear narrative of absolute truth; it is dependent on its depositional context, its archaeological context upon discovery, and the interpreter's own personal context. I will argue that it is *vital* to be aware of each of these factors.

To do so, I will demonstrate in this essay just how impactful a minor change of perspective can be, and how it influences how we look at the past. The point is to show that multiple approaches are possible, and that they can co-exist without immediate contradiction. Instead of showing raw data and findings, and drawing conclusions thereupon, I will take known data and shed it into a different light. *Another* light, which will not outshine the other lights, but add to the illumination of our subject.

The subject in question will be the Chieftain's grave of Oss. It will serve as my base upon which I will apply several research methods, which will be elaborated on below. The grave's popularity in Dutch archaeology and its many grave goods will help familiarize the reader and aid in proving my point. There are methods and approaches in archaeological theory-- some of which I have mentioned already- that help cast an object of study in a subjective light. And lastly, there are factors that must be

kept in mind when trying to interpret any object or part of history. Below, these points are formulated and arranged neatly into research questions:

1. What are the physical, archaeological, and historical circumstances of the Chieftain's Grave of Oss and its immediate surroundings?
2. What subjective approaches exist and how are they applied in archaeology?
3. What factors must be taken into account when interpreting archaeological data?

Afterwards, all of the discussed material will be combined to create a subjective interpretation of the Chieftain's Grave of Oss. The conclusion will highlight the original research goal once more and summarize the findings of this thought experiment.

1.2: Research Methods

In order to provide an interpretation, I will need something *to* interpret. This, as mentioned, will be the well-known Chieftain's Grave of Oss, located in the Dutch province Noord-Brabant. The grave and its surroundings have been thoroughly excavated and researched, and have been subjected to several theories and interpretations over time. Still, my second chapter will provide context to the grave: first its physical and archaeological landscape, then the contents and circumstances of the grave itself, and finally a broader historical context. All of this will be entirely objective, it is simply to provide a canvas upon which to apply the archaeological theory that will follow.

Next, the available approaches for a subjective, archaeological interpretation will be discussed. There are many different approaches that can be used to analyze data, all of which have their own virtues and faults. Post-processualism, the emic and etic approaches, and abductive reasoning will each be explained and applied. Through post-processualism, I can also begin to explain the factors that must be taken into account when interpreting data. One must be aware of one's own biases and prejudices, which may influence how we look at the past.

Then, using both the contexts of the Chieftain's grave and the archaeological theory I have explained, I will attempt to create an interpretation of the Chieftain's Grave of Oss. I will attempt to show a glimpse of the minds of our ancestors, what they *may have* thought and done, and most importantly, *why* they may have made those choices. I say "may have", both because I can obviously prove none of this, and because there are many different reasons as to why they may have done something. But while I cannot prove it, I can use reason and arguments to support my claims. Subjectivity and subjective topics like emotion, can be approached analytically, as I will demonstrate in this paper (Tarlow, 2012. P. 172).

Our past is more than a test subject, our past is *alive*. We work with people, reconstruct lives and cultures, we must remember that. That isn't just important, it is wonderful; it is the beauty and privilege of archaeology. *That* is why I chose this subject for my thesis. Because I want to show the humanity behind the grave, behind the data. That is the power of subjectivity, and I intend to show it.

Chapter two: Context for the Chieftain's grave

In order to help any reader understand my interpretation of the Chieftain's grave, I will first provide some context for the grave itself. I will do this on several levels. First, a general impression of the physical and archaeological landscape of the grave; where is it and what surrounds it? What does the area look like physically and what have we found there?

Next, I will detail what we have found in the grave itself. The remains, the objects, and the general circumstances of the Chieftain's final resting place will be discussed.

Finally, I will give a broader context of what the area looked like in its time. Not so much physically, but culturally and socially. Connections and trade routes, other similar graves, and surrounding cultures which may have had an influence on the burial.

2.1: The Physical and Archeological landscape surrounding the Chieftain's grave

The Chieftain's grave is located on the Maashorst plateau, an area in the south of the Netherlands. It is far from the only burial there; the plateau is home to several Bronze- and Iron Age cemeteries and barrows. The Maashorst is part of the Beneden-Rijnslenk, which makes up the bulk of the southern part of the Netherlands (Jansen and Van der Linde, 2013. P. 35). The Maashorst lies in the Peelblok, a higher plateau in the east of Noord-Brabant, which is locked in by two valleys. On the north-east side lies the Venloslenk, and on the south-west side lies the Roerdalslenk. The areas are separated by fault lines created by tectonic activity that is still ongoing today. The fault lines themselves run in a northwest-southeast direction. The Peelrand Breuk is the largest fault line in the area and lies between the Peelblok and the Roerdal Slenk (Jansen and Van der Linde, 2013. P. 35).

The Chieftain's grave was excavated near Oss, a city south of the Rhine River and some 32 kilometers southwest of Nijmegen. The soil in the area consists mostly of clay sediments close to the river and heavy sand deposits further up the plateau. In addition, the Beneden-Rijn Slenk system is covered in heathlands. In Dutch, they are referred to as "Woeste gronden", which means as much as "savage lands", as they contained not just heath areas, but also peat and marsh terrain (Jansen and Van der Linde, 2013. P.17). Over the centuries, the majority of change that has taken place is man-made. Deforestation and agricultural use have both been large contributors to the area's alteration (Jansen andVan der Linde, 2013. P. 38).

As mentioned, the Beneden-Rijnslenk has several burial sites. The Chieftain of Oss was buried at the northernmost part of the Maashorst plateau. His burial lies just north of an Iron Age urnfield, the size of which can no longer be accurately determined due to the many landscape reclamations during the 1930's, the time in which the Chieftain himself was discovered. There were, however, a number of ring ditches that could still be uncovered. They contained both cremation remains and flat graves (Fontijn and Jansen, 2013. P. 27). The Oss-Zevenbergen mounds lie some 450 meters to the Chieftain's east. A total of ten burial mounds have been recorded and repeatedly excavated, two of which will be discussed in more detail below. Another burial site can be found in the Slabroekse Heide, roughly 14 kilometers to the Chieftain's south-east. This burial, too, will be discussed later. A Bronze Axe was found deposited some 300 meters northwest of the grave. On the opposite end of the Roerdal Slenk, there are two more barrow groups: The Klokbeker-cluster and the Vorssel-cluster. The Vorssel cluster had a barrow containing an urn, a barrow containing a possible inhumation, and four more barrows, while the Klokbeker cluster had a Late-Neolithic barrow and two more Bronze Age barrows. In one of the graves, a bell beaker, cremation remains and a spearhead were found (Van Wijk and Jansen, 2010. P. 24-25).

As for settlements, the research is incomplete, but surface finds reveal that settlements would have been to the east of the mounds, placing them high and dry on the plateau. We also know that the

nearest confirmed settlements were closer to the aforementioned Vorssel mounds, which is further westward. It concerns a Bronze- and Iron Age settlement, judging by the surface finds, and some 250 meters further west lies another Bronze- and Iron age settlement (Van Wijk and Jansen, 2010. P. 25). Now that a general picture of the Chieftain's surroundings has been made clear, we can move on to the burial itself.

2.2: The findings of the Chieftain's grave

The chieftain's resting place is a Bronze Age barrow located in a cemetery. He was buried in the original barrow and covered with a new, Iron Age one; one of the largest in the Netherlands at roughly 53 meters in diameter. He was buried slightly off-center, likely out of respect for the original Bronze Age deceased to whom the barrow belonged. The man is estimated to have been in his 30's or 40's when he passed away and after his death, a cremation ceremony was held. His remains were recovered and deposited into a bronze situla—a type of vessel or urn. The chieftain of Oss has one of the most "complete" burials. That means that ashes and remains recovered represented –at least in part- every one of the deceased's body parts and were placed in the situla. Remains of every part but his teeth were found, which means the mourners were incredibly thorough in their collecting of his remains from the pyre (Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 13). However, the situla was a resting place for more than just the Chieftain. He was laid to rest with a number of different objects, both local and foreign. This includes the dismantled remains of a yoke, of both bronze and iron pieces. A yoke is a crosspiece attached to the necks of usually two animals, in order to pull a cart or wagon of some kind. Also found were two bridles with iron horse-bits and bronze trappings, an iron knife and axe, two razors and some dress pins, a ribbed wooden bowl, animal bones likely from food offerings, precious textiles and most impressive of all: a Mindelheim sword which had been intentionally bent round so it could no longer be used (Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 13).

Every item found and listed above was found inside the situla, along with the chieftain's remains. Essentially, the situla itself was transformed into and functioned as a small burial chamber in which the Chieftain was laid to rest with his belongings. It makes it all the more interesting, then, that this relatively small package was buried underneath one of the largest barrows in the Lower Countries. The barrow would easily have been large enough for a wagon burial, but clearly that is not what the mourners decided to do. What circumstances could have lead them to make that choice? Was it even a deliberate choice at all?

2.3: The wider historical context surrounding the Chieftain's grave

As mentioned in chapter 2.1, the Chieftain's grave is by far not the only burial located in the Maashorst area. We will expand on some of these, particularly to highlight similarities and differences between the burials and how they might fit within the narrative of a much wider historical area. In order to truly highlight that last point, I have also included two German burials that seem to follow similar trends as the Dutch burials.

The Oss-Zevenbergen Excavation: Mounds 3 and 7

The Oss-Zevenbergen excavations feature a total of ten burial mounds, two of which are worth noting here. The first is mound 7, which is particularly striking. The cremated remains of a young man were found buried in a barrow created over a natural dune. By the time the man was laid to rest in the Iron Age, the dune had become part of a Bronze Age barrow landscape. From the outside, the dune

would've looked quite similar to its neighboring barrows, and the Iron Age mourners may have accidentally seen it as one of the barrows (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 133). The man was cremated on a pyre, the dismantled parts of a bronze studded yoke lay nearby. After the pyre died down, it was searched. The remains of the man were recovered and in part placed in an urn, while the rest of his remains were left on the pyre. His burial goods were similarly divided: the yoke was left by the pyre, together with fragments of bronze rings, likely also once belonging to the yoke, and bone fragments. Everything was covered by a barrow of 36 meters in diameter (Van der Vaart-Verschoof, and Schumann, 2017. P. 16, 133-134).

The second mound of interest within the barrow group is mound 3. The barrow was some 30 meters in diameter and was surrounded by a post circle consisting of 48 double posts, of which 7 were double posts. In the center of the mound was found a charred plank, cut from a tree whose diameter must have originally been at least 2 meters. With the plank, a fragment of a deliberately broken sword, an iron pin, two unrecognizable metal fragments, and a single piece of cremated human bone. Due to the excavation method, which was also applied in the excavation of mound 7, the researchers could say with certainty that *everything* that was there was recovered. Ergo, for both of these mounds, absence of evidence really does mean evidence of absence. If it was not recovered, we know for a fact it wasn't there to begin with. This means that both mound 7 and mound 3 were deliberate *pars pro toto*[1] burials (Jansen and Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 135).

The Slabroekse Heide

The *Slabroekse heide* is home to a large burial site. The area was first excavated in 1923, and in that time the burial mounds were still clearly visible. After the excavations, however, the heathland was converted for agricultural purposes and the mounds were erased from the landscape. From the excavation notes made in 1923, we know that a total of 38 barrows were -at least in part- excavated, which yielded the result of 22 urns being found (Jansen and Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 135). In the early 2010's, the site was excavated once more, as the area would be turned into a forest and heath landscape. Heavy agricultural activity had erased most of the features, but in an attempt to salvage what was left, another eight cremation burials were uncovered. The majority of the 30 cremation burials were relatively modest, with just a few grave goods, and most of the cremated remains were buried either in urns or in cloths. The barrows were surrounded by ditches, and a single post row consisting of 32 posts divided the cemetery into compartments. In total, the cemetery counts at least 110 known graves (Jansen and Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 136-137).

One burial, however, stands out from the rest. It was surrounded by a ditch, and while likely a flat grave[2], might have been marked somehow above the surface. At 1.20 meters deep, the outline of what was once an inhumation burial was discovered. The accompanying grave goods were in equally bad shape and X-rays were needed to identify most of them. But the finds were truly remarkable: an amber bead, toiletries, bracelets, anklets, hair rings, a fragmented bronze pin and an iron pin. Several tiny textile remains were also discovered; some may have been fragments of the deceased's clothes, while others may have come from a cloth to cover the body (Jansen and Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 138). Despite the relatively simple grave – a rectangular pit of approximately 3 by 1 meters – the soil conditions would have made it quite the effort to dig. The pit itself was laid in with wooden blocks and planks, which had been charred in a controlled manner. The reason for this is unclear, but we do know it was done deliberately. The sex of the individual could not be determined as only an outline of the body remained, but fragments of fingerbones helped indicate the deceased's height. They were roughly 1.60 meters tall, which is relatively short. Their arms and legs were decorated with bronze bracelets and anklets (Jansen and Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 138).

There are two more burials to be discussed, which are both located in Germany. The first is the Frankfürt-Stadtwald burial. Buried in a Bronze Age barrow, which was then covered by an Iron Age barrow of 36 meters in diameter, an inhumated individual was found. Their grave goods included a bronze Mindelheim sword, a bronze situla, fragments of a decorated yoke, drinking vessels, animal bones and a knife, toiletries in a leather pouch sealed off with an amber bead, and pins (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 17). In Otzing, another inhumation burial was discovered. The deceased was a man, lying on a wooden furniture-- likely a wagon of sorts—inside a 3.6 by 3.6-meter burial chamber. The wooden furniture was decorated with bronze studs and his grave goods included a bronze vessel, a decorated yoke, a set of pottery, leather horse gear panels which were also decorated with bronze studs, an iron dagger with decorated sheath and belt, tools, pins, animal bones, and two iron spearheads (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 17).

Similarities and differences

Let's start off with some similarities between the graves. For a start, each of these burials were Early Iron Age burials, all found in a similar region (four of these in the Netherlands, only a few hundred meters apart). Our Chieftain of Oss, the cremated individual of Mound 3 and the inhumated man in Frankfürt-Stadtwald all had parts of swords among their grave goods, the first and third of which both had Mindelheim swords in particular. It must be said that while the Chieftain's sword was whole but bent, the other burials only had pieces of a sword. Three of six were cremated, the other three were inhumated, of which the individual in Slabroek was the only Dutch outlier. The Chieftain, the individuals from Mounds 3 and 7, and the Frankfürt-Stadtwald individual were all buried in existing Bronze age barrows (or in Mound 7's case; a natural dune, but the intent was likely the same) which were then covered by much larger Iron Age barrows. The Dutch burials were all found within or nearby an Iron Age cemetery.

The grave goods of the burials also share similarities. Four out of six contained fragments of a yoke, sometimes accompanied by horse gear. Pins, rings and toiletries are also found at least to some degree in most of the mentioned burials. Textile remains were found at both Oss and Slabroek, and ribbed vessels and bronze situlae were present at Oss and Frankfürt-Stadtwald.

Finally, for most, if not all, of these burials the *pars pro toto* element appears to be present.

Of course, each of these graves is unique; they have their own differences too. As I've mentioned, the individual at the Slabroekse heide was inhumated, rather than cremated. Theirs was the only Dutch burial of those mentioned where this was the case. Inhumations are not necessarily common in the Dutch Iron Age, but they also aren't all that rare. *Some* seem to be non-local, but by far not all; in total, there are 48 confirmed inhumations, at least one of which is confirmed non-local (Jansen and Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P. 140).

Textiles only appeared in two of the six burials, as did bronze situlae and ribbed vessels. Neither the individual at Slabroek, nor the individual in Otzing were buried in barrows, but rather in burial chambers. Of those with barrows, the Chieftain of Oss is clearly an outlier: while the other mounds are some 30-odd meters in diameter and thus still considerably bigger than "normal" burial mounds, which are usually only around 5 meters in diameter, the Chieftain's mound is 53 meters in diameter. That is well over 10 times the size of a normal mound. That begs the question: why is his so much bigger?

Possible external cultural influences

The shared practices may hint at a connection, perhaps a network of sorts (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 12). This principle could very well extend to burial practices, such as the

ones described above. The authors link some of the burial practices observed in the Dutch and German elite burials back to early Hallstatt Culture. If the burials can be connected through their similarities, both in objects and in practices, it may hint at a more complex cultural exchange. Perhaps it wasn't just objects that traveled between the Alpine region and the Lower Countries, but people and their customs, too (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 12). In any case, there appears to be a possible connection between Early Hallstatt culture and the Chieftain's grave of Oss and other, similar graves throughout West- and Central Europe. The Mindelheim sword, which was found in the Chieftain's grave, was likely imported and shares a link with a sword found in one of the Hallstatt graves. The same goes for the yoke and bridles. The textiles were likely imported from either Central Europe or Italy, where similar textiles appear (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 13-14).

This, in combination with the similarities between several Dutch and German graves discussed above, already seems to suggest at least a possibility of a connection. That would mean the different regions in Europe might have been in contact with each other, and may have formed networks. That would place the Chieftain's grave in a much larger social context than just his own community, and his community may have adopted influences from other regions. The observation that some of the practices and items involved in the Chieftain's burial may be imported, does not necessarily mean that the Chieftain himself was non-local, the same way inhumation burials do not necessarily make the deceased non-local (Van der Vaart-Verschoof and Schumann, 2017. P. 13-14).

To summarize, The Chieftain's grave is located in the Maashorst, a plateau between two valleys in a wider region of fault lines caused by ongoing tectonic activity. It's directly surrounded by an Iron Age urnfield and more largely surrounded by several other Bronze- and Iron Age barrow clusters. The grave goods and practices seem to share similarities with both the other local graves, and graves located on a wider scale in West- and Central Europe.

Chapter Three: Post-Processual Approaches explained

There are several factors that must be kept in mind when analyzing and interpreting data. How to approach the matter, for example, and what your research aims are. This is even more important when applying the subjective approach, as it is influenced by how we think. That means that one must be made aware of what may influence the way we think, what we think and how we think. That is what will be explored in this chapter.

Next, we will return to the different approaches. The difference between emic and etic approaches, and the difference between induction, deduction, and abduction will be explained. I will also explain which of the approaches will be applied and how. Of course, the methods to approach emotion in archaeology will be explained as well. When all this is done, I will have supplied all the necessary information to help build a series of events surrounding the Chieftain's burial.

3.1: Post-processualism and the modern lens

First and foremost, it is important to understand the place subjective reasoning has within archaeological theory. Subjective reasoning has a large role within post-processual archaeology, which has been on the rise since the early nineties of the last century (Fahlander, 2014. P.1). The approach hinges on multivity and plurality; there are multiple ways something could've happened, and the motivations, circumstances, and reactions to each of those ways can take any form. There is, however, one thing to keep in mind. Accepting that multiple interpretations are possible, and the idea that there are an infinite number of possible, equally valid interpretations, are two different concepts (Fahlander, 2014. P. 3). For this paper, I shall stick to the former concept. While multiple options will be explored-- which *could* be equally valid-- they will be selected from a variety of other options that did not appear equally plausible. This will be continued in the next chapter.

As we are all products of our own upbringing and culture, we are bound to look at the world around us with a lens shaped by that environment. So, too, do we look at history. Therefore, it is *vital* to understand our own biases when interacting with the past; to be aware of how we are influenced when studying it, for its effects can range from simple misunderstandings to harmful misinformation. Because our lens will always be different from that of our ancestors, we will never interpret things quite the same way as they did (Fahlander, 2014. P. 2). Indeed, cultural lenses *today* aren't uniform either, therefore it would be absurd to assume they would be across time. This means that we can never truly find out "the truth"-- assuming there is one-- because *our* interpretation of the truth would be fundamentally different from that of humans of the past. Under the post-processual approach, the interpretation of history is context-dependent, and the contexts of those who lived it and those who study it, simply aren't the same. Therefore, there is no way to truly reconstruct how things "really" were, which leaves space for alternate interpretations (Fahlander, 2014. P. 2).

Post-processual archaeology, as opposed to its predecessors, acknowledges that there is no way to truly find out "the truth" of history-- not because there is no such thing, but because there is no one *singular* truth. History should not be seen as one grand narrative, but should instead be seen as a collection of individual, lived experiences spanning thousands of years (Fahlander, 2014. P. 3). The grand narrative is broken down to its essentials and each element can be analyzed with a broader, or even altogether different lens. This way, history is presented for what it truly is; a collective of individual occurrences and experiences-- not all of which are connected or fit together neatly (Fahlander, 2014. P. 4).

This, too, accounts for the burial of the Chieftain of Oss. The burial itself has a neat, constant place within history. But the events leading up to the burial and the motivations of the people who buried him, do not. These are open for interpretation, and each interpretation presented has its effects on how we view the Chieftain, his burial, and the people around him; this is an example of the context-dependency that was mentioned earlier. But if we are to break down this little part of history to its bare essentials, what does that mean in practice?

I propose that the identity of the Chieftain himself is entirely irrelevant. This may appear far-fetched, but who and what he may have been truly isn't the point. After all, he didn't bury himself. The primary actors in this tale are the people that *did* bury him, for they arranged the ceremony, the materials, the grave goods and everything else in a particular manner. Even if they had been left strict instructions by the Chieftain-- which in itself is mere speculation-- there is no absolute guarantee that they would've followed his instructions. They chose to bury him the way they did, and although we can never confirm precisely why or what image they had in mind, we can use reason to reconstruct a few possibilities.

In traditional processualist thinking, it is assumed that the grave goods and circumstances of the grave reflect the social identity of the deceased; how they were perceived in life by the people around them. There are, however, two problems with this line of thinking. The first is that this is often proposed as a singular, fixed identity. In reality, one person can have many different social identities, at different points in life and around different people (Fowler, 2013. P. 513). The second problem is that this perception of identity is often posed as *the deceased*'s identity. The reasoning is essentially: "This is how they were perceived, so that's who they must have been." But this line of reasoning fails to take into account first the aforementioned multiple roles a person can have in one lifetime, and second that their perception may be changed by the funerary rituals performed (Fowler, 2013. P. 512). Post-processualist reasoning, on the other hand, recognizes that there is no singular correct answer. In fact, we ought to keep in mind that we are looking at *our* interpretation of an image of the Chieftain created by his mourners. It's more like a game of Telephone, rather than directly looking at the Chieftain himself. Thus, I repeat my original statement: the Chieftain's identity is irrelevant, for we cannot reconstruct it. We can only attempt to decipher the image his mourners tried to create.

3.2: Induction, deduction and abduction

Secondly, there are three approaches applicable in analyzing accumulated data: the inductive approach, the deductive approach, and the abductive approach. All three are applied in archaeology, but in different areas and for different reasons.

Deductive reasoning is used in predictive modeling, among other things. It is applied to gathered data to create a prediction. For example, when multiple artifacts have been found in a certain region, one can create a map in which all those sites are represented. Researchers can then use that map to predict where else in that region they are most likely to find more artifacts. This is a deductive approach. Induction, on the other hand, is to analyze the data at hand and draw a conclusion, rather than create a prediction. It concerns explaining what has been observed. An example is concluding that you've stumbled upon an Iron Age cemetery when you've found a multitude of Iron Age burials accumulated in one place.

The third approach, abduction, will be applied here. Rather than predicting or concluding, the abductive approach is applied to explain how a certain phenomenon came into being. Applying it is to recreate a series of events or a history to explain how something happened. This is what I will be doing.

3.3: The Emic and etic approaches

Within archaeological and psychological research like this, there are several ways of approaching said research. An important factor to consider is the angle from which to aim your light: whether to approach the subject as an outsider or to start from within and work outward. Within research, the former is referred to as "etic" and the latter is referred to as "emic". While it is the etic approach that is more commonly applied in research (Seawright, 2015. P. 7), this paper will combine both with a slight emphasis on the emic approach, instead.

The way the emic and etic approaches are generally applied within archaeology is by combining emic phenomena with etic conditions; that way an etic statement can be made, which can be scientifically tested and judged. This concept was proposed first by Marvin Harris, and appears to hold up today (Seawright, 2015. P. 3). To clarify, in our case this would mean looking at the emic choices made for the Chieftain's burial from an etic viewpoint-- using logic and methods to explain those choices.

Over the last decades, the use and relevance of the emic and etic approaches have been debated heavily, and even though the etic approach is used more often, both should be used with some level of caution (Seawright, 2015. P. 1-7). Having said that, it is vital not to underestimate the importance of reasoning why our ancestors may have made certain choices. While it's true that for the most part, we may not and likely will not ever find out what reasons our ancestors may have had, the fact remains that they *did* make certain choices. Attempting to reason why they may have done so brings us a step closer to understanding them, and thus our past. It's not merely frivolous philosophizing, we are dealing with complex creatures whose choices influenced each other, the world around them, and their developments on cultural, social, and intellectual levels.

Emic approach: cultural lens

So what does the emic approach look like for the Chieftain and his burial's circumstances? In his case, we should look through two lenses: the cultural lens and an emotional lens. The first is achieved by taking the data provided in chapter 2 and using it to create a base. Several elements of the Chieftain's burial appear to be—at least to some extent—similar to other burials in the vicinity. The inclusion of pieces of yokes and toiletries among the grave goods, for example, or reusing a Bronze Age barrow and constructing a larger barrow on top. One could argue that these elements are a custom or tradition; perhaps not *universally* employed, but often enough to stop being a coincidence. Certain choices for the burial rite may have been made because that was simply a tradition, something the Iron Age mourners were used to doing when burying someone like the Chieftain.

Then secondly, there's the emotional lens. This is where subjectivity really starts to come into play. Death and death rites involve emotions, no matter the circumstances and whatever those emotions may be (Kus, 2013. P. 58-75). Unfortunately, without written records, emotions are very difficult to retrace, let alone prove beyond a reasonable doubt. This doesn't mean, however, that there aren't patterns to human behavior or actions that hint towards certain emotional motivators.

Emic approach: emotional lens

Emotion and motivation are complex concepts, and when recreating an emic interpretation, we must beware not to confuse our own feelings with the proposed feelings of our ancestors. This could lead to misinterpretations, both innocent and harmful. Although psychologists can't quite agree on how to define and explain these concepts, there are some general theories we can use for this paper. In his book *Psychology; fifth edition*, Gray explains motivation as:

"In psychology, the term ***motivation*** is often used to refer to the entire constellation of factors, some inside the organism and some outside, that cause an individual to behave in a particular way at a particular time." (Gray, 2007. P. 179)

He goes on to explain that two main facets of motivation are drives and incentives. Drives are internal factors, like hunger or curiosity. Incentives are outside factors, or goals: for hunger that might be the pizza you're about to order and for curiosity, that locked chest you just found. The strength of a drive varies—sometimes you're hungrier than other times—and drives and incentives can influence each other (Gray, 2007. P. 180). These are the things that have influenced more rational choices; looking for shelter, creating fire, developing tools. They are more easily explained.

Emotion, on the other hand, is not so easily described. Psychologists are yet to agree upon a definition and an amount of primary emotions. Gray's preferred definition describes emotion as containing two components: the subjective feeling and an object that feeling is directed towards. The feeling, independent of the object, is called the affect. Very simply put, the affect can vary from pleasure to displeasure, and from activation to deactivation. The emotion love is pleasant, whereas sorrow is unpleasant, for example. In that same vein: tenseness is active, calm is inactive (Gray, 2007. P.213). Despite there being no agreed-upon way to classify emotions, most base models follow similar patterns. For the purpose of this paper, we will be using Robert Plutchik's method.
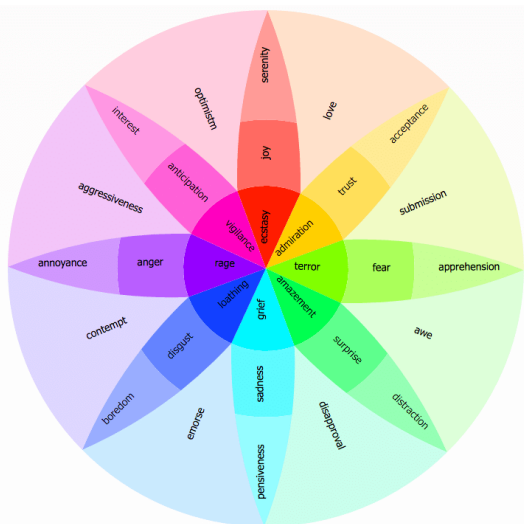
The emotions in the center of the wheel are what Plutchik considers to be the eight primary emotions. These emotions can mix, just like colors, to create a seemingly infinite number of possible feelings. The more saturated the color in the wheel, the more intense the emotion in question is. "Annoyance" is a much lighter lilac than the deep purple "rage", for example (Gray, 2007. P. 214).

Using our understanding of motivation and emotion, we can analytically approach the thought process that may have been present during the Chieftain's burial ceremony.

3.4: Emotion through an Archaeological Lens

But how does emotion tie back into archaeology? It is nigh impossible to study the psyche of someone long passed, after all. For this purpose, I turn to Sarah Tarlow's (2012) works. Essentially, emotion can be scientifically approached in two ways: psychologically and constructivist. What was described above is the psychological approach; the assumption that emotion is biological-- caused by chemical components in the brain (Tarlow, 2012. P. 170-171). In this manner, emotion is more or less universal among humans, and perhaps even other mammals. The constructivist or anthropological approach

assumes emotion is locked in a specific cultural context, which is instrumental in determining *how* emotions are expressed and felt. Most researchers agree that it is most likely a combination of both (Tarlow, 2012. P. 171-172). The further back in time we go, however, the more we have to rely on the psychological approach. Because the further back we go, less and less is known about the cultures we study; either because they left little to no written or drawn record, or because those records have been lost over time. With very little cultural context to base our theories on, we will have to work with the assumption that *feeling emotion* is universal, even if it manifests itself in different ways across time, space and context (Tarlow, 2012. P. 173).

But while emotion cannot be physically preserved for us archaeologists to find, its *expression* can be-- especially in a mortuary context. Death is a disruption of the status quo, one that we deal with through rituals (Kus, 2013. P. 61). Rituals allow us to express our emotions, to turn them into something tangible. In turn, the added emotion makes the rituals themselves more meaningful and powerful (Tarlow, 2012. P. 173-174). This applies to objects placed in a burial, how a person is laid to rest, and where a burial is located. All of these things-- these manifestations of feeling-- can be excavated and discovered by archaeologists.

Chapter Four: Using post-processual approaches on the Chieftain's grave

Now that all the necessary information has been relayed, we can begin our subjective analysis of the social circumstances of the Chieftain's burial. We've discussed what the area looks like; both in physical terms and other archaeological finds, we know that was found in and about the Chieftain's grave itself, and have discussed its similarities and differences to other graves and how it fits within the wider historic culture of Iron Age Europe.

After, I related the meaning and placement of subjective archaeology; how it relates to post-processual archaeology and what to keep in mind when examining the past. I also discussed exactly what the emic and abductive approaches are respective to each their counterparts, and how they work. Now the way has been paved to start implementing the theory discussed in the previous chapter onto the Chieftain's grave of Oss. What can the grave and its contents tell us-- not of the Chieftain, but of the people that buried him, and the circumstances that lead to our finds thousands of years later.

4.1: Post-processualism: What socio-political image is created?

As we discussed, there is no way to confirm who the Chieftain was in life, despite his burial. Kus (2013) uses the example of Michael Jackson's death to illustrate this. Jackson is buried in a golden casket and people all over the world were stunned and heartbroken by his passing. His funeral attracted the eyes of thousands, if not millions. If excavated in a few thousand years, it would suggest Jackson was enormously wealthy and well-loved. In reality, his debts were estimated to be between $300-500 million and the musician himself was subject to many controversial rumors-- not to mention the fact that this is a black man mourned in a society plagued by both systemic and individual racism (Kus, 2013. P. 62). In short: the circumstances of someone's burial need not accurately represent their person, merely their image.

Let's turn to the Chieftain's grave. He was buried in one of the largest Iron Age burial mounds in the Netherlands, its size roughly the equivalent of two tennis fields. In his entirely bronze situla were found expensive, imported textiles; the image of someone wealthy, perhaps elite. Buried with him, too, was a sword; the tool of a warrior. A warrior who slaughters, or protects, or conquers, or perhaps all three. Toiletries and jewelry may suggest an image of hygiene and care for looks, or perhaps vanity and self-centeredness. The yoke and horse gear call to mind a rider, someone who would have or should have possessed a horse, perhaps for transport of goods or persons. In conclusion: the image created is a man of wealth and skill in battle, who pays attention to personal hygiene. And then, he dies.

4.2: Abduction: What happened during the Chieftain's burial?

Now, the question is: where do we go from here? Since the body is cremated, we can't positively conclude a cause of death. All we know is that the Chieftain was in his 30's or 40's when he passed (Van der Vaart-Verschoof, 2017. P.13). Therefore, it may be wisest to start our journey at the moment of his death. Preparations for his funeral and burial begin. A Bronze Age barrow is selected as his final resting place, and some start building a pyre to burn his remains. Others may be choosing and fetching the bronze situla that is to contain his belongings, while another group begins to gather and pick them. As is the custom—as indicated by the repetition of this process in other nearby graves—they take only pieces; only parts of a dismantled yoke and horse bridles are included, rather than the whole set. They gather imported, valuable textiles in which they wrap his toiletries, some food and his tools. Finally, they carefully bend his iron Mindelheim sword. A process which would have cost both time and effort to minimize damage to the weapon. Finally, as all his belongings had been selected, the mourners gathered around the pyre; watching as the flames consumed the Chieftain's body. When the fire died down, they gathered his remains. They were meticulous in their task, making sure as

much as possible of the Chieftain was at least represented within their gathered remains. Finally, the Chieftain's remains and his selected belongings were placed together in the situla. He was then placed, slightly off-center out of respect for the Bronze Age deceased, into the existing barrow. Afterwards, a new gigantic barrow was constructed on top. The Chieftain now resting among the dead, the mourners returned home and time moved on.

4.3: Emic approach: culture and emotion

As I mentioned previously, some elements of the burial may have been included because that's what the mourners felt they were supposed to do. They might have been tradition or customary. Reusing a pre-existing barrow and building a new one on top might be a good example. It's a process we see repeated in the area. The same goes for the selection of grave goods: toiletries, tools, vessels, food offerings and textiles are all found in other graves. What makes the Chieftain's somewhat unique is that he had them all. Cremating remains was also customary in the area in the Iron Age; out of the six graves I discussed in chapter 2.3, four were cremated. Some of them were found surrounded by entire Iron Age urnfields.

The same way we bury or cremate our dead today, place flowers upon their resting place and mark their graves with tombstones and crosses; the same way we hold ceremonies in crematoriums and churches; they are all the same reason the Iron Age mourners built a pyre and selected a barrow and gifted their dead with pretty and/or useful goods. This was their farewell ritual, like we have ours today.

But to truly find out why the Chieftain's mourners chose those customs, what motivated them to act as they did, we will need to employ an emotional lens. The amount of detail, time, effort and care that was put into this burial—from its size to its contents to its rites—indicate that a great deal of emotion was involved. Perhaps the Chieftain was wealthy, and he could afford such care, but then *still* the mourners could have chosen to ignore his wishes and bury him as they saw fit. Once the man is gone, he can't do anything to stop them from carrying out his burial as they please. So, despite what the Chieftain's wealth or status might have been, these mourners *chose* to put this much effort into his burial. That indicates emotional involvement. But which emotions?

Obviously, this will have varied for each individual involved in the Chieftain's life and burial, but we can make a general estimation. Let's go over Plutchik's primary emotions one by one. Vigilance, ecstasy, admiration, terror, amazement, grief, loathing and rage make up the center of his wheel. First, burying the Chieftain off-center is generally interpreted as an action of respect towards the Bronze Age deceased already buried in the selected barrow. Bending his iron Mindelheim sword ensured that the weapon could not be used again. Grave robbing was likely a common practice, but what use is a bent sword? It would likely take more effort, time and risk to carefully bend it back than it would take to simply make a brand-new sword. Therefore, bending the sword would ensure that the weapon remained with its owner. It would ensure the image of a warrior—of someone who is to be respected. The imported precious textiles were buried with him as well, rather than being redistributed. Perhaps as a testament to the Chieftain's wealth, perhaps they were personally important. Either way, he commanded enough respect to have these precious materials buried with him. And then finally, once again, his barrow is one of the largest—if not *the* largest in the area. It would've been impressive to behold, which once more shows an element of respect.

When keeping the element of respect in mind, a few of Plutchik's primary emotions begin to stand out. Respect is incited in two ways: by admiration or by fear. Finally, as this is a burial, the presence of grief is to be expected. The mourning of the lost takes the center stage in a funerary context, even if

not all people present feel it in the same degree or manner (Tarlow, 2012. P. 174). This outcome is supported by other literary works; funerary archaeologists, when examining the emotion surrounding a burial, focus particularly on grief and fear (Tarlow, 2012. P. 174). The rituals surrounding the burial are, as mentioned, used as manifestations of either emotion; they translate long forgotten feelings into something tangible.

I propose that while the actions during the funerary proceedings happened only one way, the *motivation* for those actions could have been formed in two ways. What I mean by that is that either the motivation was one of admiration, or one of fear. And while the burial rite itself may not change, the light in which those actions are painted affects our interpretation of those actions. Allow me to demonstrate.

4.4: Emic & abductive: love versus fear

Imagine, for a moment, to be one of these people. Try to see the world around you: the clay and thatch buildings of your settlement. You know there's an urnfield cemetery with barrows further to the east. Perhaps your neighbors tend to cattle. There is a man among you who's deemed rather important. A warrior, someone skilled and well-liked, a defender of your settlement. He's wealthy; he can afford to import these precious, beautiful cloths and has pretty pins in his neatly-arranged clothes and hair. He greets you sometimes, when your paths cross. Then one day, he passes away. Perhaps in battle, perhaps of disease, but he's still too young to die of old age. News travels fast in a small community; in no time, everyone knows. The whole settlement seems stricken, frozen with grief, but everyone knows what to do. A somber silence settles on your community as you get to work. Perhaps you help build the largest pyre this side of the plateau has ever seen, or you get to work on preparations for the barrow, which you know will take much time. Or you help select his finest, softest cloths, prepare some food for him to take into the afterlife, select his best and prettiest toiletries. Maybe you set upon the tedious, risky task of bending his sword. This way, the impressive blade will remain with its rightful owner forever.

The fire burns, bright flames illuminate the night's sky as the Chieftain's presence once illuminated the settlement. Dozens of faces grieve together, surrounding the pyre. Perhaps you sing or talk, perhaps there's only respectful silence. Once the flames die down, several of you search for hours among the remains to find as much of your beloved Chieftain as you can. Not everything can be retrieved, of course, you know that.

There may be some conversing over how to best deposit him. Obviously, his remains will rest in a bronze urn, but what of his goods? You want to ensure that his items, which you so carefully selected, remain with him. That they aren't taken by some savages or become lost to the movements of the soil. The decision is made to deposit them in his situla with him, to have his situla be transformed into a small burial chamber. Once everything is placed neatly inside, you and your community carry the situla to the selected Bronze Age barrow in the urnfield, where your kinsmen have been laid to rest before. In the barrow, the Chieftain will slumber; and a large number of your community works hours, if not days, to construct the largest burial mound you've ever laid eyes on. He deserves no less. Perhaps you'll stand for a while, after your work is completed, with friends and neighbors. Perhaps you'll give a final nod of respect, and as dusk settles silence over the cemetery, you return homeward. A time of mourning will come and go, but the Chieftain can finally rest.

Beautiful, isn't it? Let's replay that, but slightly different this time.

Imagine, once more, to be one of those Iron Age people. You see the houses, the cemetery, the people, the hills and cattle. But there's a shadow over your community. Perhaps he lives a bit further away from you lowly peasants, perhaps he lives dead in the center of your settlement to remind you

who's boss, but wherever he goes people reek of fear. People bow their heads when he passes, they make way. They don't dare look at him. He's an imposing figure to behold: fine, well-tailored cloths from far places, ornaments in his hair and clothes. He seems like a magpie, collecting and hoarding pretty things and showing them off to those who can't possibly have them. A heavy, iron Mindelheim sword rests on his hip. You know he's used it many times before, and that he might again. He's skilled at many things, wealthier and more influential than most. No one dares to go up against him, for fear of what he may do. Then one day, it suddenly stops. The Chieftain dies, a bit too young for old age. Perhaps someone finally got the better of him on the battlefield, or the Gods decided to lend your settlement a hand. You thought you'd be more relieved.

The truth is, as scary as he was alive, his ghost seems to lurk. Not really, of course, but the *thought* of him is enough to give you chills. There is some deliberation over how exactly to put him to rest. Some want to leave his body out to rot—he deserves it, they say—but an overwhelming majority finds themselves far too scared of what might happen if they do that. Perhaps the Gods might see how you treat your dead and teach you a lesson. Perhaps the Chieftain himself will meet you in the afterlife and enact his revenge. Some are too empathic—they just can't *not* give a man a proper burial, no matter how terrifying he might have been.

The decision is made. A barrow is selected, each of you silently apologizing to the previous deceased. The Chieftain will be buried off center, as to not impose on his predecessor. You select his finest cloths and ornaments; none of you want anything to do with them for fear of what the Chieftain may think, so they're better off with their owner. Perhaps you believe he lives on in the afterlife, and he may need food, drink and his tools to get by. The Gods know what he may do to your community if he finds he doesn't have them. His urn is chosen, a pyre is built, his wagon and horse gear dismantled, all with methodical precision. You try not to think about it too much. Finally, his body is placed on the pyre. There's a tense silence as you watch the flames consume his body, no one dares to utter a word. It feels like an eternity before the flames die down, it feels like it takes even longer to gather his ashes. You're thorough, more thorough than you think anyone has ever been—you make sure at least each body part is represented in the remains. His sword, that terrified so many, is bent round. No one will ever be hurt with it again. It is placed, along with his ashes and the other goods, into the situla. There's something ironic about it, you think as your kinsmen begin to construct the gigantic barrow: such a large mound, only for it to contain a singular urn barely large enough to hold with both hands. It's a final defiant act hidden in respectful deeds, perhaps he won't notice it that way. The dusk begins to settle, and silence falls over the cemetery as you turn your back on it to turn home. This feeling of fear will go, eventually, and then the settlement can finally rest.

Odd, isn't it? The actions remain consistent in each story, but the difference in motivation behind it can suddenly paint them in an entirely different light. If you are of a particular empathic disposition, it may even affect the way you look at the Chieftain's grave— or his grave gifts, if you were to visit the RMO in Leiden. Are they the final parting gifts of a grieving community, or are they drenched in their fear and suffering?

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated, changing one minute, seemingly inconsequential detail-- the motivation behind the actions, in this case-- will fundamentally change how one looks at the Chieftain's grave. It shows beyond a doubt that multiple interpretations are possible, which do not conflict with the objective findings and circumstances of the archaeological material. In fact, both of the interpretations I proposed in the previous chapter have their fundaments built entirely off of objective examinations of the Chieftain's grave. And *because* these two radically different interpretations have such an impact on how one views the Chieftain today, subjective approaches such as these simply cannot be cast aside as useless or futile.

When studying cultural phenomena, especially in the mortuary arena, processualism and its accompanying objectivity simply aren't enough. Categorizing materials and pushing data into statistics cannot adequately describe or contain the complex layers of tradition and emotion that are involved in these processes. There is a demand here for more open, interpretative approaches (Kus, 2013. P. 65). Post-processualism, by denouncing the idea of one singular truth, provides room for such approaches. It's important to keep in mind, however, that while one is no longer burdened with proving that a presented theory is correct, they *must* still provide valid and adequate arguments to support their theory. In other words, the presented theory must always remain plausible (Tarlow, 2012. P. 172). In keeping all the details in my two interpretations true to what was found in the grave, and demonstrating that the emotions I described are the most likely candidates for motivation, I have ensured both my interpretations remain within the realm of possibility.

Emotion, and especially grief, is always present in a funerary context. The amount and its expression vary between individuals, time and space, but at the core of every confrontation with death lies emotion (Tarlow, 2012. P. 176). We deal with emotions through rituals, traditions and faith-- they are what we fall back upon when vulnerable, they become an expression or manifestation of our feelings. They are a way of dealing with the disruption caused by death. So, these traditions, these rituals that form the backbone of cultures are formed by something that is inherently subjective. The very same rituals and traditions we use to identify and categorize different cultures and eras today. But by objectifying these habits, we erase the key component that formed them in the first place. By adding subjectivity back into the mix, we can regain access to part of our past previously considered lost to time. When keeping with the teachings of post-processual archaeology, as I described above, but allowing anthropology and psychology to take the proverbial wheel, we can steer towards a more complete understanding of past cultures; combining objective findings with subjective interpretations. It was considered futile to try to decipher epistemologically "difficult" things like emotion and motivation, since they are nigh impossible to confirm (Tarlow, 2012. P. 172), but by approaching them analytically they can be argued for. But complex as emotions may be, it cannot be denied that they are the foundation of our culture and our development as a species. Art styles, traditions, adornments and faith are all markers us archaeologists use to identify cultures across time and space, but they came into being *because* of emotion. These things were not used for survival, they exist because we thought they were pretty, or because they felt appropriate, or because we wanted to feel seen, adored, remembered, feared, or who knows. Not to try to decipher our ancestor's emotions and motivations at all would be an insult to our field and our goal as archaeologists. And remember, it is alright to not know the truth. Such a thing, I would readily argue, is impossible; there will always be a lack of data. The passage of time both provides us our field of study and destroys the very things we examine. It is vital, however, to keep in mind that the interpretations proposed *are*, themselves, subjective. Multiple answers are possible, plausible, perhaps even likely. Sometimes they intertwine or run parallel; they can co-exist without contradicting each other. We will always, even if

subconsciously, create a certain image in our mind when examining archaeological material. Images that will almost certainly not be universal, and may not even be accurate. Personal preference does not make absolute truth, and as long as we know this and adhere to it, a whole new dimension of archaeological study is made available to us.

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