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Romans and the dark arts?

**The influence of changing jurisdiction on the deposition of bodies in North
Western European bogs**

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Figure 1: 'Detail of hand from 'Old Croghan Man', a bog body on display in the Kingship and Sacrifice exhibition'. Hand of an Iron Age bog body. (National Museum of Ireland, Kingship and Sacrifice, <https://www.organisatiegids.universiteit leiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/archeologie/organisatie/examiners/2023-2024/guidelines-papers-faculty-of-archaeology-2023.pdf>).

Romans and the dark arts? The influence of changing jurisdiction on the deposition of bodies in North Western European bogs

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I would like to thank my family and friends for listening to me rambling like Fox Mulder about events which may or may not have happened more than a thousand years ago. I would also like to express my gratitude to professor Mark Driessen for supervising me during the writing of this thesis.

Table of contents

1.1 Introduction.....	7
1.2 Main objective and secondary goals.....	8
1.3 Strategy.....	11
1.4 Theoretical framework.....	12
2 How did the legal system of the Roman State (Principate) function in terms of death penalty and human sacrifice, and how was Roman society's moral framework regarding these matters?	16, 48
2.1 An overview of Roman law and punishment in the middle to late Iron Age	16
2.2 The appliance of law in the frontier zone.....	17
2.3 Cultural synthesis and law emulation in the frontier zones.....	18
2.4 Death penalty in the frontier zone:.....	19
3 What is the chronological and geographical dissemination framework of bog body mummies, and what are their find contexts like?	21
3.1 Where and how?.....	21
3.2 Chronological dissemination	22
3.3 Find contexts and unusual burial	25
3.4 Why the bogs?.....	27
4 Which bog bodies might be victims of offering in the research area?	31
4.1 The sacrifice theory.....	31
4.2 Possible victims of the practice of sacrifice.....	33
5 Is there a decrease in the amount of bog bodies (and thus bog body deposition, within and near the frontier zones occupied by Roman forces) after the conquering of Northwestern Europe in comparison with the Pre-Roman Iron Age in the same area?.....	38
5.1 Within the frontier zones.....	39
5.2 Outside the Roman frontiers.....	40
6 Results and discussion	42
6.1 Legislative and cultural practices and their influence	42
6.2 Patterns of increase, decrease or stability?.....	42
6.4 Discussion.....	44
7 Conclusion.....	46
Abstract	48
Appendix.....	54
Reference list	49

1.1 Introduction

I always used to borrow thin, small books at the library with topics ranging from guinea pigs, to gymnastics, to cavities. One of these would always stand out to me however, because I never dared to take it home with me. I would only take small peeks between its pages. Why? Because it told about the Yde Girl, presented to would-be readers with a large picture on the front cover. Being confronted with her photo out of nowhere made my ten-year-old self frightened enough to never forget her open-mouthed expression and reddish hair. The curiosity that came with that new fear never left, and in the following years fright turned to fascination. Apparently, even more individuals like her existed: bog bodies.

A 'bog body' can be defined as the remains of a preserved human which were deposited in a peat bog. Based on the degree of preservation, partially because of the composition of the peat soil they were placed in, two types exist, namely bog mummies and bog skeletons (Van Beek et al., 2023, p. 121). An estimate of fifty peat bog mummies exist (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 405). Yde Girl is an exemplary peat bog mummy, as her tissue is so well-preserved that we can still look her in the face, as I did on that weekday in the library fourteen years ago. What was the most urgently on my mind however, was the question of who would have done this to her all this time ago. For this exact reason, the idea for this thesis was born. Not only the tissue is preserved. Sometimes clothing made from wool or leather, as well as brains and intestines are preserved together with the bodies. Most bog bodies were found in the 1800-1900s, and are often badly damaged. Isolated heads or limbs also occur (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 402 - 403).

I am not alone with my fascination, for extensive research has been done to understand the motivation behind the deposition of people in bogs. Investigations are also being performed to understand the cultures they lived in, and to find out the way these individuals died. In short: who were people such as Yde Girl? And what can their remains tell us about the societies living in the area of Northwestern Europe in the Iron Age before and during the Roman occupation? Problematic for research, is that bog bodies exist in scarce numbers. In addition, their find locations are often in remote areas, which may or may not have been completely excluded from Iron Age daily life. These were namely possibly considered liminal areas (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 44). Most often cremation was the regular choice for Iron Age funeral rites in North West Europe (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 44) which leads us to our last problem: bog bodies weren't given standard burial treatment. This has led scientists to guess about the motivations for doing so. These problems, combined with my main research questions, which I will introduce in the second part of this chapter, formed the motivation for writing this thesis.

1.2 Main objective and secondary goals

Because of there being gaps in our knowledge due to the problems of a limited assemblage, isolated find locations and the way of deposition seemingly not being a standard burial ritual, research of bog bodies is relevant. Although there are not many, there are bodies enough to see patterns in their characteristics. These may point us to a certain treatment of individuals happening over a large area from the Netherlands as far as to Estonia (Kama, 2016, p. 2), which started in the Late Bronze Age and continued into the Iron Age and Roman period (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, pp. 10, 35). The appearance of bodies didn't stop there, as there are also examples dating to the medieval and the post-medieval period (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 405). As mentioned before, there is debate about the reasons for the deposition of individuals in wetlands or bogs. Possible causes offered by a range of researchers are that deposition could be of an accidental nature, it being another form of burial treatment, or that it could be of a more violent nature. In case of the latter, for example, to get rid of the body after the person in question was murdered or even sacrificed (Giles, 2009, pp. 167 – 177). The motivations listed above will be further discussed in chapter 3 and 4 regarding the case studies from the Iron Age.

It is vital to keep in mind that forces under the flag of the Roman Empire arrived in Nordrhein-Westfalen and the Netherlands from circa 16 BC onwards. This changes our picture of what was possible in Northwestern Iron Age societies due to there being clear laws in the Roman Empire in concern to violence and murder. Besides this, Roman religion and its according rules were different than that of their Germanic contemporaries. Northwestern Europe falling under Roman legislation after a great part of it had been conquered would have made (some kind of) Roman jurisdiction valid there as well. We can therefore ask ourselves if human sacrifice - one of the interpretations for bog body deposition - was not in accordance with the Roman law system. Thus, it might be worthwhile to investigate if there was a continuation in this potential pattern after the arrival of the Romans in the research area, for example because Roman occupants looked at what they deemed to be human sacrifice with despidal (Schultz, 2016, p.71) and followed a law code including rules concerning homicide. This could have resulted in a decrease in bog depositions of individuals after the fusion of Roman culture, and corresponding values and norms, with Germanic ones. It could also have had an opposite effect, or have influenced bog deposition in a totally different manner, such as by an increase. The rate of bog deposition could have also stayed even. If so, then this might mean that the form of jurisdiction applied in these border regions was insufficient, or adapted differently compared to the law as exerted closer to Rome.

By investigating this matter, this thesis hopefully contributes to the field, albeit it in a humble manner. My goal is to do this in such a way that I will cover my three formerly mentioned problems by gathering as much information on these matters as possible. This will subsequently enable me to combine all three gained perspectives. By doing so I will create a new, larger, overlapping overview on the phenomenon of bog body deposition as a whole. For this purpose, I compiled a database with an overview of bog mummies limited to the Iron Age and Roman period. I lastly hope for this database itself to be relevant by forming an easy reference point for other students interested in the same phenomenon, time period, and research area.

Through the strategy discussed above, I will aim to provide a solution to the main research question:

Did the fusion of Germanic and Roman norms, and legislative practices have influence on the nature of, perspective on, and as a consequence deposition of mummy's in bogs in the area of Northwestern Europe?

To answer this question, this thesis consists of the next five parts:

Chapter 2 will give a concise overview of how the Roman state operated in terms of law regulation concerning death penalty and human sacrifice. This will be limited to describing the situation during the period around the beginning of the Common Era, which means the jurisdiction of the then current political system called the Principate will be discussed. The first sub question will therefore be as follows: *How did the legal system of the Roman State (Principate) function in terms of death penalty and human sacrifice, and how was Roman society's moral framework regarding these matters?*

The second sub question, which will be treated in chapter 3, reads as follows: *What is the chronological and geographical dissemination framework of bog body mummies, and what are their find contexts like?* To investigate if we can see any patterns in bog body characteristics, such as time of death, traces of violence, and location and age, I created a database including all bog mummies dating back to the Iron Age and Roman period. This is limited to these periods as it allows us to be able to make comparisons between cases from the pre-Roman occupation and post-Roman occupation, making Neolithic and Bronze Age bog bodies irrelevant. Only bog mummies are included in this database. Bog mummies still have tissue, which makes them more accessible to research. It also causes them to attract more attention. As a result they tend to play a more important role in the scientific debate (Van Beek et al., 2023, p. 121). The main reason skeletons are not included in this research is that those would make it more suited for a master thesis, as they would make the assemblage exponentially larger. Bog skeletons namely form the bulk of the bog body assemblage, as they greatly outnumber the number of bog mummies (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 404). By mapping all Iron Age and Roman period bog mummies from Northwestern Europe, it may be possible to overcome the problem of knowing if this was a deviant way of burial. We also might be able to point out behavioural patterns this way, in terms of body treatment and deposition location.

Which bog bodies are victims of human sacrifice in the research area? Is the third sub question of this thesis, which will be answered in chapter 4. By selecting case studies from my bog bodies excel database, in combination with the corresponding sources of for this matter relevant bodies, I will provide the reader with an overview of possible sacrifice victims, and will try to explore this possibly existing Iron Age phenomenon more. My method to do so will be by assigning cases to the four main theoretical frameworks. These will be highlighted in the chapter 'theoretical framework' before being elaborated on in chapter 4. In this chapter I will make use of the main theoretical frameworks in the overall bog body discourse, which will first be briefly introduced in chapter 1.4 to answer the third sub-question. The theoretical frameworks are based on characteristics which can be observed on a relatively large amount of bog mummies. Combining these with find contexts makes it possible to hypothesize that certain case studies of the assemblage could have been a ritual offering victims.

The answers gained in chapter 2, 3, and 4 will be combined to try and answer the fourth sub question in chapter 5: *Is there a decrease in the amount of bog bodies (and thus bog body deposition, within the frontier zones occupied by Roman forces) **after** the conquering of Northwestern Europe in comparison with the Pre-Roman Iron Age in the same area?* By counting and comparing the periods of deposition of each bog mummy, this matter will be answered. I will dedicate attention to each of the four countries so that it will be possible to examine if the increase/decrease/static is the same in each region in Northwestern Europe.

In chapter 6 we will conclude by trying to see if we can come to a result. This results of course depends on the fact if we see a decrease or increase of deposition in chapter 5, and if this could have been caused by Roman (influenced) jurisdiction, another cause, or a combination of multiple factors. This will make the last sub question: *Did the fusion of Germanic and Roman norms, legislative and*

cultural practices have influence on the nature of, perspective on, and as a consequence deposition of bodies in bogs in the research area?

I will aim to answer this question by seeking sources on Roman, Celtic and Germanic interactions. These exchanges can be either on jurisdictional or cultural and religious basis. From these I will draw an answer.

1.3 Strategy

Research Design (what is my plan) and methodology (a strategy used to implement that plan)

This thesis will encompass a broad comparative analysis based on literature research to reach the main objective, namely shedding light on the question if a Germanic and Roman cultural fusion (in terms of jurisdiction) did have an effect on the deposition of bodies in wetlands. This makes the research design qualitative.

It will not be possible to do fieldwork in relation to the topic, or visit museums and work with data there, since there have recently been no bog body finds (the majority of the total assemblage was found in either the 19th or 20th century) and bog bodies are very rare. There are very small numbers in faraway museums, the bodies are fragmented, or they are forbidden from the public; because of this, I had no other method than literary research regarding this topic. I wanted to go through with it still, since I have such an interest in it. Because of the rarity of bog bodies and the extremely low odds of being able to investigate/extract data from such individuals in a lab or collection, I cannot provide the reader with any primary scientific data such as samplings. Instead, literature and corresponding data were gained from accessing sources through the library of Universiteit Leiden, the University of Amsterdam library, and the archives of the RCE (Rijksdienst Voor Cultureel Erfgoed). I also made use of other online databases such as Academia. Thereof, literature research was also performed for the gathering of data to set up the attached bog bodies excel. The bog body excel was also built up by the use of data from other lists/databases. I extracted only relevant cases from these, as my database only contains bodies dating back from the Iron Age and Roman period. It does not include any from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. This all summed up means that all gathered data is a combination of primary- and secondary data, as each source used differs. This research on its own would of course be considered secondary data.

I analysed the information found in relevant sources and compared these to each other. I did so per body to see if all existing sources on it presented consistent information. If so, I could then use this data to add to my database. I furthermore critically viewed multiple written sources, to see if it was possible to point out patterns in bog body characteristics and deposition locations/periods; this was especially useful for the bog bodies database, as this document will be used to ascertain if we see an overlap in bog body characteristics and patterns over multiple regions within Northwest Europe. In short, I formulate theories on the basis of multiple case-studies which I include in my database.

1.4 Theoretical framework

The scope of this research will lie on North-West Europe. In case of this thesis, this area will be limited to the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, with a lesser focus on the UK and Ireland. Our main focus however will lie on the territory which is now the Netherlands.

The periods of the Iron Age will be defined as the following and maintained this way throughout the whole of this work:

- Early Iron Age (800 – 500 BC)
- Middle Iron Age (500 – 250 BC)
- Late Iron Age (250 – 19/16 BC)
- With the 'Roman period' I mean to indicate the era with Roman influences in the Lower-Rhine region of the Netherlands and Nordrhein-Westfalen (19/16 BC – 410 CE). This starting date – based on Kemmers' numismatic dating (2005, pp. 48-49) of the Augustean legionary base of Nijmegen – is relevant for these regions.
- In Denmark, the Netherlands above the Limes, Scotland and Ireland the Romans never conquered territory. In case of these countries, we speak of the Roman Iron Age (Glob, 1965, p.136). In this thesis this will be defined from 19/16 BC onward.

The periods before I will call the pre-Roman Iron Age if this is discussed in relationship to the Roman Period.

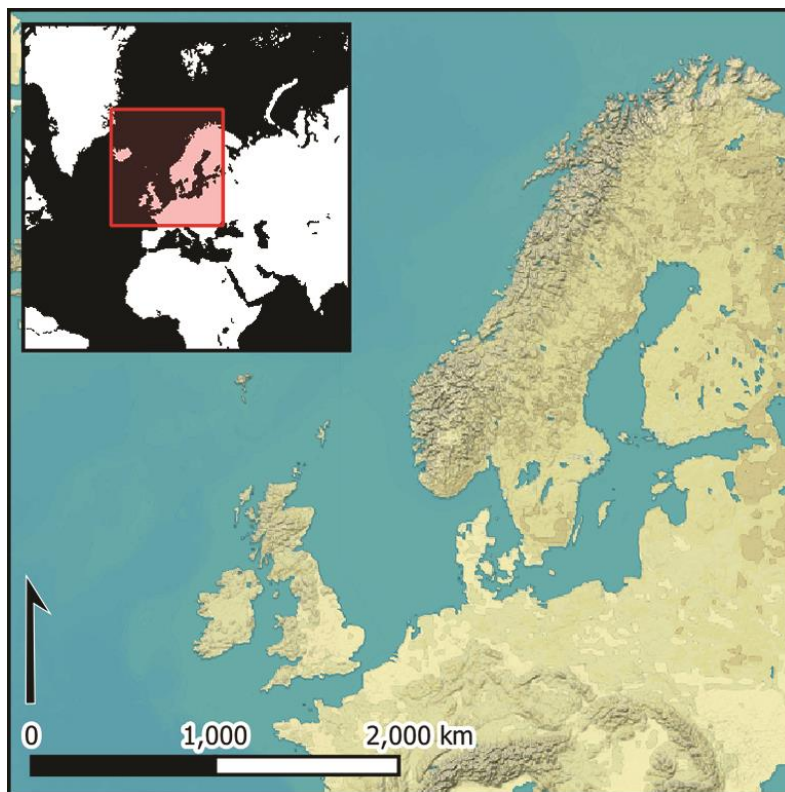


Figure 2: Northwestern Europe as defined by van Beek (2023, p. 121, figure 0).

As I am aware that the authors of the sources used for information treated in the upcoming sections possibly use different spans of time to indicate these periods, I will refrain from using these to keep a correct, consistent timeline.

During this research, I took into account the main theoretical frameworks concerning the motivation behind the phenomenon of bog bodies as already mentioned in 1.2. These are the punishment theory or *'Strafopferthese'* (Jankuhn, 1967, as cited in Van der Sanden, 1996, pp. 167 – 168), the sacrifice argument including overkill, the *'Wiedergänger'* theory (Struve 1964/1967 as cited in Van der Sanden, 1996) and the unusual burial and/or accident theory. The punishment theory will be more extensively treated in chapter 3.4. The complete sacrifice-, *'Wiedergänger'*- and unusual burial/accident theory will be further elaborated on in chapter 4.

The *'Strafopferthese'* (Jankuhn 1967) argues that individuals having demonstrating deviant behaviour or have committed crimes against their society, were sentenced to a death in the bog. Executions may have found place at location, or victims were first moved there and then deposited there. This theory is largely inspired on chapter 12 of Germania by the Roman historian Tacitus (Van der Sanden, 2013, p.406 ; Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 80 and pp. 83 – 84), which describes deserters, cowards and *'corpore infame'* or as Birley (1999, p. 43) has translated, *'those who have defiled their bodies'*:

'One may also bring in an accusation in the assembly, including capital charge. The penalty varies according to the crime. Traitors and deserters are hanged on trees. Cowards, those who will not fight, and those who have defiled their bodies, are plunged into a boggy mire, with a wicker hurdle pressed on top of them. The difference in penalty is evidently according to the principle that, in general, crimes should be punished in public, to make an example of them, but that deeds of shame should be hidden away.' (Tacitus Germania, 12).

The concept of the sacrifice argument encompasses that the bodies were the result of cultic human sacrifice, which was invented by Thorvildsen (1952, p. 47) but popularized by the work *'The Bog People'* by Glob (1965; Ravn, 2010, p. 110). There is debate on why people would have qualified as sacrifices. Glob focused on other parts of Tacitus work, namely chapter 39 and 40. These describe sacrifices to the goddess Nerthus by a tribe called the Semnones. By using this theory to draw parallels between traces of violence on bog bodies, such as noose being still present, and remains of their diets if still present in their guts, Glob supported his theory. The sacrifice theory was further distributed by finds such as Lindow I, II and III: II, known as the famous Lindow Man, had many extremely violent wounds and together with Lindow III had traces of blue paint on him (Van der Sanden, 2013, pp. 406-407). As for the motivation behind conducting human sacrifice it is only possible to discuss, as there are only Roman sources available on the matter which can be coloured due their barbaric preconception of the people of the Northwestern frontier (Woolf, pp. 212 – 213). On the basis of at least five Iron Age cases I collected from the Netherlands, Ireland, Germany and the UK, it can be argued that people who were visibly different from the average person were chosen as sacrifices. Van der Sanden (2013) already stated this by giving an explanation of the placing of five Dutch cases from the Bronze to Iron Age in the context of other bog finds in the North of the Netherlands. By doing so it became possible to interpret these physically disabled people as sacrifice victims (Van der Sanden 2013, p. 408). A select amount of bog bodies have been classified by scientists as having been involved in a cultic ritual because of the (many) intense injuries that they suffered. This phenomenon is labelled as overkill. I would argue there is a chance that some cases of overkill are closely related to the *'Wiedergänger'* theory, which will be discussed below.

The *'Wiedergänger'* theory stems originally from medieval Germany, meaning *"Those who walk again."* (Curry, 2020, para. 17). The English translation of the term would be *revenant*, a risen corpse.

It is during the Middle Ages that we see the idea of the risen dead being used frequently in accounts of saints and other stories (Livermore, 2021, pp. 2-3). It is from these narratives that the theory got its namesake. It namely argues that some bog bodies were treated as they were, to prevent them from coming back from the dead. Revenants are however already a motif appearing since writing came into being; they appear in Roman texts already, such as Virgil's the Aeneid from between 29 and 19 BC (Livermore, 2021, pp. 1-5). Factors involved in the '*Wiedergänger*' theory are the manner and severity of body modification (such as mutilation and/or cutting off the hair) and the use of branches on top of the victim (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 406). The choice of burial location may have also been involved in preventing someone from rising again, as bogs may or may not have been far removed from life in Germanic settlements (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 44). We know this is at least true for Dutch bog bodies, which may indicate regional differences (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 413). The '*Wiedergänger*' theory has gained support from multiple German 20th century historians and archaeologists (Van der Sanden, 1996, p. 167-169).

We must of course not discredit the option that some of the people retrieved from the bog accidentally fell in. The same applies for some individuals simply being buried in bogs because of a wide scala of reasons, and I would argue, only becoming cases of unusual burial due to the choice of location. Van Beek et al.'s (2023) body database OSM1 contains six such individuals whose deaths were likely accidents, which were dated back to the period of 1100 – 1900 AD. Possible suicides among these cannot be discounted. Because of these it is argued that such cases in earlier periods may have been more common (van Beek et al., 2023, p. 138).

Lastly I will decide if cases were deviant burials, normal burials or sacrifices by noting down the characteristics of each bog mummy case in the database. These will be, in order:

- Name
- Location
- Year of deposition
- Early/middle/late Iron Age
- (Paper)Bog mummy
- Multiple individuals
- Age
- Romans period began yes/no
- Km away from settlement
- Traces of violence yes/no
- Physically handicapped yes/no
- Naked yes/no
- Strangulation yes/no
- Excessive violence yes/no
- Details of violence
- More details

Included in the database are the academic references for each body.

I also attempt to point out behavioural patterns this way, in terms of bodily treatment and deposition location. For example the presence of branches (under the category 'More details') may indicate '*Wiedergänger*' fear, which may point us to beliefs in communities, or nature of the deeds of the victim in question. With 'Roman period began yes/no' I do not mean to indicate that they necessarily conquered the homeland of the bog individual in question. If yes, this indicates that the body was

dated back to 19/16 BC onwards. All these categories answered and combined, these can demonstrate us patterns as discussed in chapter 1.2.

The database itself is too large to be included in a word document. Therefore it has been added as supplementary material. The smaller datasets accompanying it are included in the Appendix. All sources relevant for chapter 3, 4 and 5 concerning bog mummies have been included in the database.

2 How did the legal system of the Roman State (Principate) function in terms of death penalty and human sacrifice, and how was Roman society's moral framework regarding these matters?

2.1 An overview of Roman law and punishment in the middle to late Iron Age

The core reason for the existence of Roman law was the pursuing of crime in the interest of the community to positively further it. This could be translated as: *'utilitas rei publicae, utilitas publica'* (Bauman, 1996, pp. 1 – 2). When North-Western Europe was largely conquered or at least affected by arrived Roman Forces in circa 16 BC and onward, the Roman Empire was in a political stage called the Principate, meaning a new founded empire still possessing certain traits of the former Roman Republic in which classical period law went on being used (Anderson, 2018, p. 14). In the Principate and partially during the Republic before, there existed multiple permanent courts. These consisted of approximately jurists (the jury) with a magistrate at the head. During the Republic, fixed penalties did not yet exist. In the Principate however, the concept of the fixed punishment, or *'poena legis'*, came into being (Bauman, 1996, p. 4).

In the ending days of the Republic, there was a decrease in the use of the death penalty. However, during the onset of the Principate, there was a fast re-emergence of this type of verdict. There wasn't any known large scale mass objection against the more often deployed death penalty (Bauman, 1996, 125 – 126), although the severity of some of these punishments caused criticism (Bauman, 1996, p. 115). Not enough, or in such a manner, however, that it put a stop to harsh death penalties. It is arguable that this can lead us to make the conclusion that the moral framework during the Republic, but especially during the duration of the Empire, was very different compared to ours, as Bauman (1996) states: "We conclude, then, that the material on punishment does not give any sign of a socially aware evaluation of the death penalty." (p. 117). Yet simultaneously, following the set up laws was held in very high regard. In addition, the philosophy of *'humanitas'*, very simply defined as civilised behaviour and benevolence (Woolf, 1998, pp. 55 - 56), held an important position in the back of the Roman mind during decision making regarding the structure of the state and community (Bauman, 1996, p. 5). By the first century BC, Romans found *'humanitas'* a hallmark for mankind in general (Woolf, 1998, p. 55). It was what made Roman citizens in the Late Republic want to reduce the amount of death penalties (Bauman, 1996, p. 5). The matter on how this type of punishments was viewed gets complex again when we remind ourselves that *'humanitas'* was applied very flexibly, depending on its interpreter. For example, the arena's kept being in need of new human supply for the games (Bauman, 1996, pp. 123 - 124). Then again, the upper class (*'honestiores'*) were more likely to receive verdicts of exile, or death by sword (Lintott, 2015, p. 325). During the same period however, the Principate, the *'humiliores'*, or poorer classes, however could expect a likelier chance on punishment by rope, axe, vivicombustion or crucifixion (Lintott 2015, p. 325). The fatal punishments however were all penalties for acts which were considered crimes under Roman law. As these impacted Roman society negatively, them having been committed was seen as damaging to the community; its interests were harmed.

In the Roman mindset presented in literature, there existed a spectrum of practices which weren't seen as socially acceptable. Cannibalism was included in this spectrum, and close to it was the

practice of human sacrifice in degree of disapproval (Stern, 2020, p. 363, Schultz, 2010, p. 515). In the Empire animals and vegetal materials were sacrificed in religious rituals. There are rare Roman exceptions however, for example the killing of Vestal Virgins who had broken their vow, although these were not seen as being human sacrifice because of them breaking their rite opposed the interests of the Roman community (Schiavone, 2011, pp. 137 - 140). This in turn made executing them an acceptable practice. This meant there was a distinction between ritual sacrifice and so-called ritual murder (Schultz, 2010, pp. 515 - 516).

If we are to believe Roman sources, Germanic tribes and Gauls killed humans to appease their gods in religious rituals, making this the practicing of human sacrifice. As a reaction, such groups doing so allegedly met their end by eradication by Roman forces, as was the case of the Gauls and their druids on Mona Island. The island, now modern Anglesey, was first and foremost attacked for strategic reasons. The destruction of the Mona druids becomes all the more peculiar when we remind ourselves that the Romans generally respected native religions and sanctuaries. The druidic religion must have been seen as a threat to *'humanitas'* (Aldhouse-Green, 2010, p. 37). That's why Aldhouse-Green (2010) argues that destroying the sacred grove on Mona was an act of subversion (p. 37). Maybe alleged practice of sacrifice was another motivation behind the reason for destroying Carthage as well, as Carthaginians likely offered their children to their gods (University of Oxford, 2014). Roman literature may be biased in the way that accusing Gauls and Germanic peoples of human sacrifice made it easier to proclaim that they were completely barbaric (Stern, 2020, p. 363). I would argue that this exact narrative made it acceptable for them to be slain. The association between the barbarity and human sacrifice made it all the more a taboo. Most important was that practition of the act went against *'religio druidarum'* having been forbidden after Mona, and against the *'lex provinciae'* or provincial law (Isserlin, 1997, p. 97).

2.2 The appliance of law in the frontier zone

Roman law spread from Italy in the course of the first three centuries AD. The imperial bureaucracy expanded, while the developments in fiscal and administrative law took place at a rapid rate. The maintenance of public order and law together with taxation were part of the ideology of Empire-building. These namely aided in unifying the empire and, according to Humfress (2013), helped 'universalize' (p. 76). Therefore we can assume that in the Northwestern provinces these systems, and with them principles, were applied as well. There were no correcting forces such as the police as we know them in the Roman sphere with regard to law enforcement. Convicts were identified, arrested and brought to court by victims themselves. The Latin for this kind of private denunciation is *'delatio'*. Punishment also was part of the act during some of these processes. Roman policing however did exist to impose the will of the state, although this is hard to define because of the relevant institutions developing irregularly, and the evidence being overall scattered. The arrangements civilians made to ensure their security are regrettably obscure as well, although organised force was allowed when a critical threat had approached. Magistrates furthermore were allowed to authorise any legal action if a town required so (Fuhrmann, 2016, pp. 297 – 299). *'Lictors'* appointed by town majors were allowed to arrest people, in the case the respective town shared Rome's magistracies (Fuhrmann, 2016, p. 300). Army forces were used to restore order as well if considered necessary, and emperors sometimes involved themselves in provincial disputes. Governors ruling provinces oversaw at least a few hundred of such said soldiers who could be deployed to carry out police work (Fuhrmann, 2016, pp. 302 – 304; Apul, Met., 2.18).

The Germanic border zones, as well as Gaul, were under divided in *civitates*. These were juridical areas and with that political units, with less of an emphasis on them defining a territory. Each *civitas* had its own government in the form of institutions, including their associated administration. In the territories of the northwestern borders especially, agglomerations of smaller settlements politically depended on the administrative centre of their *civitas* due to the size of territory (Pellegrino, 2020, pp. 51-52). Pre-existing indigenous communities were dubbed Latin colonies; they went through reorganisation but did not come under full Roman rule. The indigenous community held their authority while being granted this status. This mainly occurred in Gaul but could have been a phenomenon in the Germanic frontier zones as well (Pellegrino, 2020, p. 52).

2.3 Cultural synthesis and law emulation in the frontier zones

Before the Roman interference, society was ruled by druids and warrior elites according to Caesar, as described by Woolf (1998, p. 8). This was the situation in Gaul further south, but we can assume that a similar power setting was also present in Northwestern Europe, only with a lesser focus on warrior culture reflected in funeral objects, as was the case for the Gallic '*la Tène*' period nobles (Woolf, 1998, p.11). This changed when Roman law was introduced after the conquering of these areas. Roman jurisdiction was well emulated in provinces which had been always under Roman rule or had been over a long time, such as modern Italy. In such areas cultural conformation to Italian models was much more evident than in inland areas far removed from Rome (Woolf, 1998, p. 19) To what degree the law was enforced, or was possible to enforce, in later acquired border provinces can be called into question. An example is the existence of the severed head cult in the Celtic world, which is often related to crania found in wells and waters which were possibly considered sacred. This practice was not uncommon in the south of Britain for largely the whole duration of the Roman Period (Isserlin, 1997, p. 97; Merrifield, 1987, pp. 45 - 46). There are multiple examples of this in the UK, namely in wells in London, Northwood and Headington, of which the last two were deposited as fully decapitated heads with the flesh still on them (Merrifield, 1987, p. 45 – 46). In the Netherlands we also see behaviour concerning the handling of human skulls, but in terps and not in water: in Englum, human skulls from 398-164 BC and animal remains were found in a semicircle. On a terp in Ezinge, singular bones were found under byres and worked human skull bowls were also located. These dated from the Iron Age and Roman period (Nieuwhof, 2015, pp. 194 – 198). These remains were not necessarily the result of human sacrifice, as the skulls from Englum for example were retrieved from somewhere else than the terp, and showed no signs of violence (Nieuwhof, 2015, pp. 130 – 131). It however can't be denied that the use of human remains in rituals or for other uses wasn't considered strange on these terps. But to conclude, practices like these still happened under Roman Rule, even though it was probable that these could have either been disliked by Roman instances or have fallen under the Roman definition of human sacrifice. In areas above the *limes* such as on the Ezinge terp the influence of Roman jurisdiction from under the *Limes* doesn't seem to have spread. Or at least, not to such an extent that the handling of human remains halted. Subsequently, we can ask ourselves if the extent of the enforcing of the law can be observed regarding the deposition of human bodies in bogs and wetlands in Northwestern Europe under Roman reign. Unfortunately it is hard to present concrete data on the level of law enforcement and thus political integration of the frontier zone provinces, which is as a consequence still under heavy debate (Pellegrino, 2020, p. 53). But we can try and create a, may it be a fragmentary, idea of its appliance in the Northwestern frontier zone by inspecting differing sources on the topic to create a comparative framework. For instance, it was implicated by the Graeco-Roman Menander of Laodicea that cities in the Eastern provinces had lost their autonomy as lawgivers due to the cities inhabitants following 'the universal laws' of the

Romans. They had completely abandoned their own lawmaking and creating of legal procedures by likely the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. According to the same orator, not cities but emperors made the laws. This suggestion is supported by inscriptions shifting from honouring local officials to being dedicated to the emperors (Humphress, 2013, pp. 73 – 77). Taking this in consideration, it might be possible that Roman jurisdiction was at some point as well-integrated in the Germanic societies in the Northwestern European provinces due to the same shift. Roman jurisdiction was never completely enforced but available for use, on which claims and suits officials and emperors could then respond (Millar, 1983, p. 78).

From accounts of Tacitus on the general Agricola, who oversaw Britannia, we learn that he undertook 'civilizing efforts' on the Britons by public speeches and private conversations. Through criticism and praise he attempted to make the natives compete for his approval. From these texts it is hard to deduct if a similar tactic was applied to Romanize the peoples of the frontier zones in the shape of monetary investments to fund civilizing processes. We do however know that Roman forces, and thus also generals, corrected and set up the Roman laws and institutions from all their posts throughout the Empire. Governors tried to Romanize natives through education and civil societies. Such a general who was stationed in Germania, Varus, undertook such activities, meaning this Romanization strategy was used in the research area as well (Woolf, 1998, pp. 70 – 71). A more natural synthesis between Roman and Germanic culture, in this case on the terrain of religion, can possibly be witnessed through the deposition of war booty in bogs such as in Illerup Ådal. Triumphal processions, thus ceremonies, were very important in the Roman Empire. Conquered enemies and spoils of war were put on display to celebrate in the capital. This way the current ruler could also demonstrate power. Jørgensen (2003) argues that large weapon depositions within Germanic territory could be the end results of similar triumphs. The weapons in lakes and bogs could be based on the Roman model, only adapted to the native tradition. This kind of sacrifice might have been taken over because of the many Germanic mercenaries in the Roman army (Jørgensen, 2003, p. 16).

2.4 Death penalty in the frontier zone

According to Isserlin (1997), criminals who had received a death penalty who were not Roman civilians could be handed over to the British natives to receive a cruel death such as crucifixion (p. 92). This brings us back to '*delatio*'; the individual was in charge of protecting their own interests, community regulation and protection, and not directly the local instances (Fuhrmann, 2016, pp. 297 – 298). According to Fuhrmann (2016) condemnations not in accord with the Roman laws also took place: some instances managed to evade the restrictions put up by local Roman authorities, and exacted death penalties after arrests which were proper. The first example he uses is the closed communities of Qumran, where it was possible that civilians were executed after transgressing *its* codes of religion. The second is possibly relevant for Northwest Europe, as he describes groups rooting out 'bandits' in the countryside, and parties in search for missing individuals; both groups practice law enforcement, and the first even delivers executions. If this was self-initiative or officially sanctioned remains unclear (p. 300).

What I take from this is that the official law regarding ritual behaviour was followed up to an extent everywhere in the Empire, as these examples show us it (not) being applied in provinces further away from Rome. Jurisdiction was although generally followed adapted: instead of the local Roman institutions taking care of the execution, responsibility for a process and optional punishment was handed over to the natives. In turn a punishment in the British tradition was carried out in the case of

the crucifixion. For a possible scenario of a sentenced Roman soldier, see (Driessen/van Driel-Murray, in press).

Lastly, governors could not secure all parts of their province because of there not being enough soldiers at their disposal. This led to some executions being extreme and public to show a strong statement against criminality, and thus preventing it by using a system of inducing fear (Fuhrmann, 2016, p. 302 - 304). Cruel punishments organized by Roman provincial authorities themselves was therefore also a possible scenario during the times of Roman Northwest Europe.

3 What is the chronological and geographical dissemination framework of bog body mummies, and what are their find contexts like?

3.1 Where and how?

It might first be useful to ask ourselves in what kind of areas the majority of bog bodies were found within Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and the UK. After all, they demonstrate an extremely high level of tissue preservation which is a rare phenomenon, as the limited assemblage shows.

There are two necessary prerequisites for a body to become mummified or dissolved to only skeletal remains in peat. Firstly, deposition in an oxygen-free environment has to have happened in as short a time span as possible. This means full submergence. If a body does not get isolated fast enough, micro-organisms can start the decomposition processes due to them needing oxygen to do so, and scavengers can damage it by feeding on the remains. A deposition in a deep pit which is almost immediately covered would be a way to avoid this, or by the bodyweight of the individual dragging it vertically down fast. This sort of vertical displacement should be possible, but only in the wettest peat bogs (Van der Sanden, 1996). The time of the year and corresponding temperature lastly have an influence on the level of preservation (Van Beek et al., 2022, p. 122).



Figure 3: Illustration of Europe showing the area within the lines indicates where the formation of raised bogs is possible due to climatic circumstances. (Van der Sanden, 1996, p.25, figure 22).

Secondly, very specific soil attributes have to be met. The extraordinary levels of preservation of tissue are gained by submergence in a completely oxygen-free environment; this is however not the only ingredient necessary for the incredible condition bog mummies are found. This property we only find in raised bogs (*hoogveen*), leading to most finds having been done in this type of habitat; a moss species called *'sphagnum'*, which contains a polysaccharide called *'sphagna'*, which allows a tanning process of organic matter (including tissue) can thrive here. In addition, it creates a very acidic and oligotrophic (nutrient-poor) environment. As *'sphagnum'* moss holds water, the raised bog is also very saturated due to its dependence on rainwater; these kind of mosses possess the ability to turn normally nutrient rainwater oligotrophic through a chemical process on which other sources do elaborate. Which furthermore prevents organic matter from decaying, is the stagnant, chemical, and physical state of the bog in combination with biological activities reduced to a minimal amount (Van der Sanden, 1990, p. 29). The acidic water dissolves bone due to its pH level, while skin gets tanned (Van der Sanden, 1990, p. 30).

3.2 Chronological dissemination

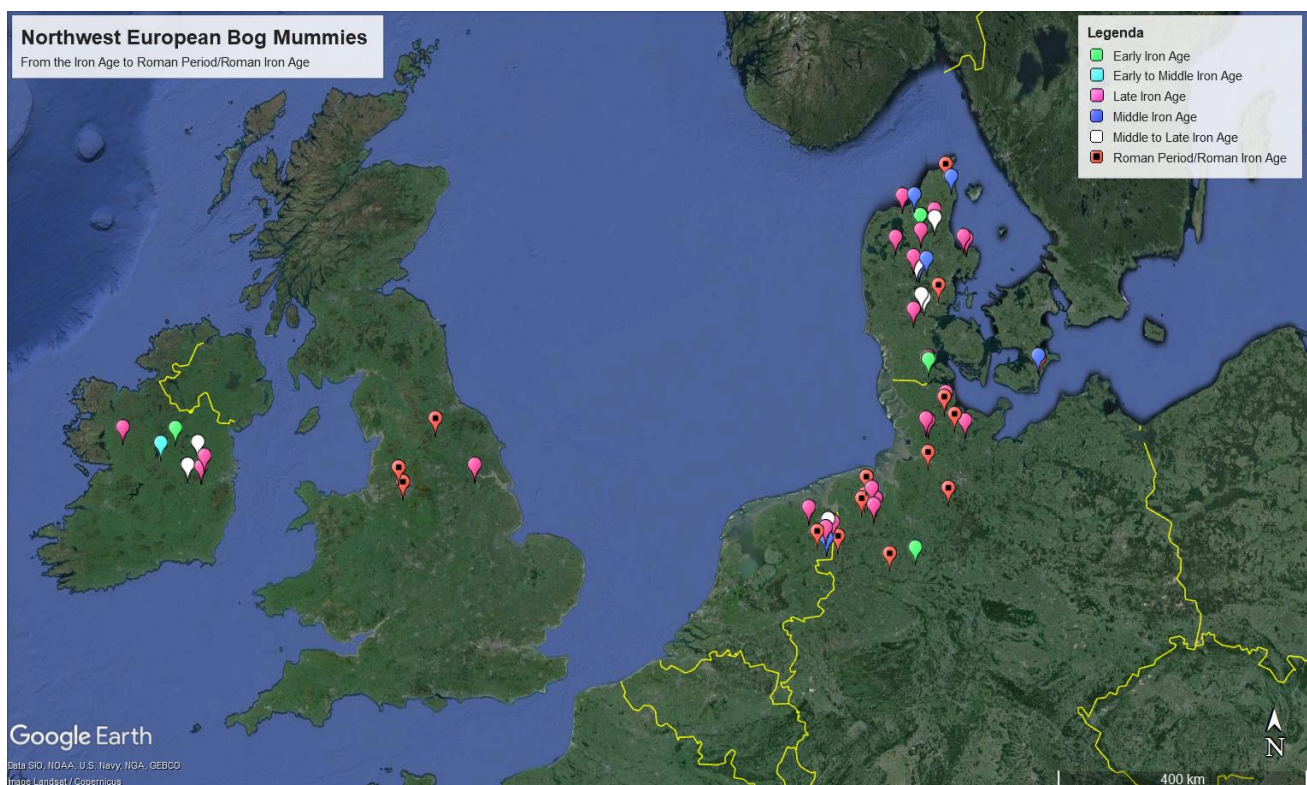


Figure 4: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age bog mummies of Northwestern Europe¹, chronologically ordered. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

The majority of Northwestern European bog bodies which were confirmed to be from the Iron Age hail from Denmark. The total of Danish Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies comes to 26 individuals. In the majority of cases they were found to be adults, deposited alone, and often covered

¹ Sadly it was not possible to place the legend labels into the right order. Apologies for the Late Iron Age coming third.

or wrapped in capes. An estimate of ten of these people date back to the early and middle Iron Age. The people dated back to the middle to late Iron Age were not included in this number. Thirteen of the people of the complete assemblage lived in the late Iron Age to Roman Iron Age, of which at least four were alive during the Roman occupation of what is now modern Germany, the lower part of Britain and the Netherlands. Dating results of four of the people from the total Danish assemblage were so broad that we can only say that they lived in the middle to late Iron Age.

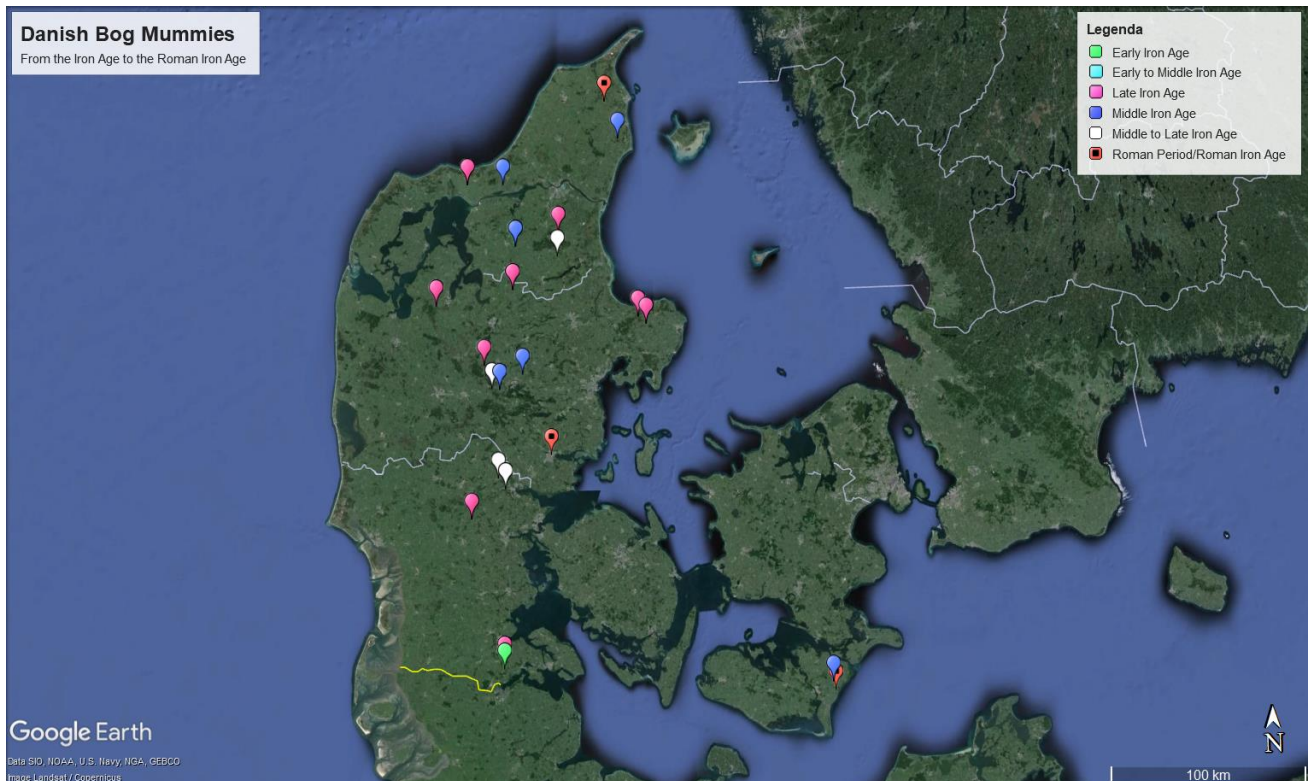


Figure 5: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Iron Age bog mummies from modern day Denmark. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

In Germany bog bodies were especially found in the districts Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen. We see a situation similar to that of Denmark, as the majority of cases there were found to be adults and deposited alone. Only here most of the bodies were nude. Of the nineteen exemplars, sixteen date back to the Late Iron Age, of which eleven for sure were alive during the time in which there was a Roman presence. This is a great difference with Denmark where only thirteen individuals out of twenty-six lived during the late Iron Age. Here we have one case whose designated Iron Age living period could not be determined more specifically by dating.

Of the six Dutch Iron Age and Roman Period bog mummies, there are four who have lived during the Roman period. One may have come from this chronological period, as he was dated to the Middle to Late period. Five were found in the province of Drenthe, and one in the province bordering it, Groningen. This limits the find area of the Iron Age assemblage to a small part of the Netherlands, namely the Northeast.

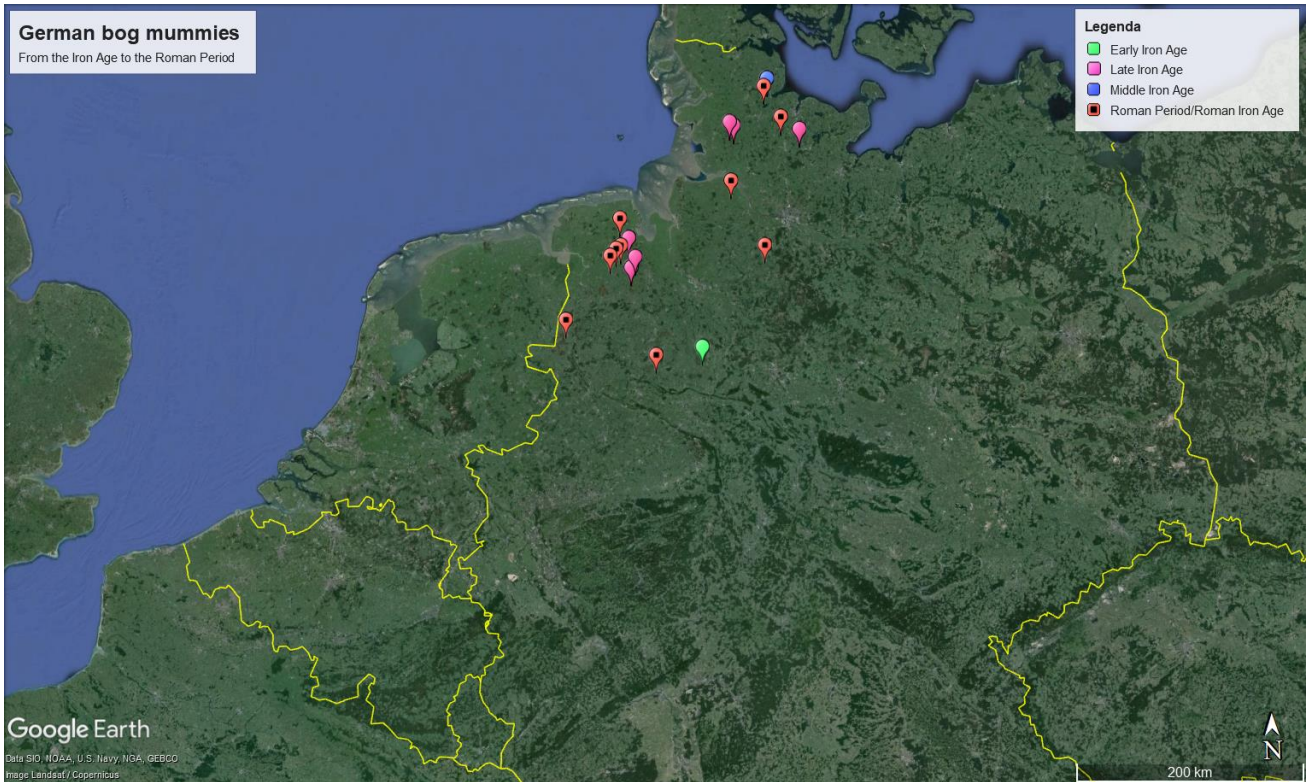


Figure 6: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies from modern day Germany. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.



Figure 7: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies from the modern day Netherlands. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

Of the seven bog mummies from Ireland, three date from the Late Iron Age. Two are dated back to the Middle to Late Iron Age, and the remaining two hail from the Early, and Middle to Early Iron Age. Two lived while the South and Middle regions of Britain were occupied by Roman forces. The complete Irish Iron Age assemblage hails from what is roughly the middle part of Ireland.

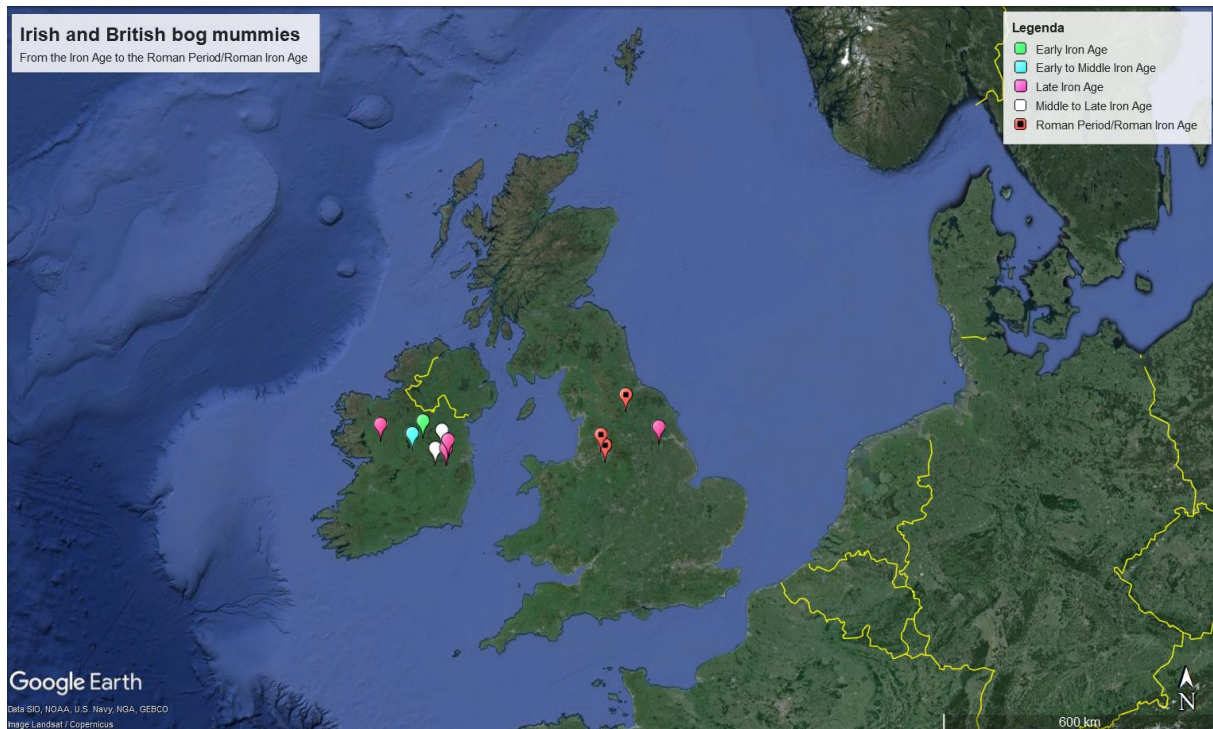


Figure 8: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies from Ireland and Britain. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

To conclude with, there are five Iron Age bog mummies from Britain. Four of the total British assemblage, including the famous Lindow Man (II), were alive during the Roman occupation of Britain. One individual was possibly alive during this time, as their carbon dates weren't narrowed down any further. Two bodies show signs of violence. No relevant bog mummies from this area date back to the Early Iron Age. The British assemblage was found in the areas near or surrounding Manchester, meaning roughly the Middle to North of Britain.

3.3 Find contexts and unusual burial

In case of the area of the Netherlands in the period of the Early Iron Age, Urn fields (cemeteries with urned cremations) often existed for longer periods of time, while settlements didn't. Both moving to another location simultaneously was a rare event. These urns would be placed in grave monuments in the shape of mounds which were either round or elongated, or the choice went to flat graves. In all cases, the deceased weren't given many grave goods. The exception to the urn field tradition is the southern part of the Netherlands, for inhumations and cremation burials existed along one another on many cemeteries (Van den Broeke and Ball, 2012, p. 71). In the south we later saw Chieftain burials similar to those in 'Halstatt'-style in central Europe. These elite graves also contain rich amounts of grave goods; examples are the objects in the so-called Chieftain Burial located in Oss, containing a bronze 'situla' (or 'kurd') (Van derVaart-Verschoof, 2017, p. 26 – 27). Inhumations were

barely found in terps, which leaves archaeologists to guess if there was only one way of dealing with the deceased (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 48). In Denmark, cremation was the norm as well in the period from the late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age (Harvig, 2015, pp. 46 - 48). Here, we see a change from a very personal burials and later urned cremations, to an impersonal burial of cremation ashes in the Early Iron Age (Harvig, 2015, pp. 57 – 59). In Germany, cremation was the preferred mortuary ritual as well. In the Early Iron Age, urn fields could be observed too. Just like in the Netherlands, these were followed up by cremation burial (*'Brandgrube'*) in the later Iron Age. In Germany however, we see secondary burial in older barrows being relatively common as well.

In conclusion, the most common funerary rites were either cremation or inhumation. This makes deposition in bogs an exceptional practice, or at least seemingly so with the amount of data we have available to us. In the case of bogs, we usually see single burial in a single bog/fen/pool, although there are exceptions such as in Lindow Moss and Borremose. In most cases these are very sparsely in terms of grave goods.



Figure 9: The butterfly fibula of Zweeloo woman. It was fabricated in Northern-Germany. (Drents Museum, The Zweeloo princess, <https://drentsmuseum.nl/en/in-the-spotlight-top-exhibits/Zweeloo-princess>; Wikipedia Commons, Vergulde bronzen vlinderfibula 1952-III-26b, https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Vergulde_bronzen_vlinderfibula,_Drents_Museum,_1952-III-26b.jpg).

As my database will demonstrate, we do however see exceptions to this such as Obenaltendorf Man who had silver jewellery and elaborate clothing with him (Van der Sanden, 1996, pp. 80, 93, 128, 147) or Zweeloo woman who along with other luxurious items had a butterfly fibula brooch (Drents Museum, n.d.). In some cases it was also possible to observe only very few pieces of clothing, such as in the case of Tollund Man only wearing a belt and cap (Museum Silkeborg, n.d.).

3.4 Why the bogs?

If Tacitus was correct (Tacitus, *Germania*, 12). Germanic tribes did not build places dedicated to cult in the Roman way of constructing temples, but preferred open places in nature as their gods could not be contained in/confined to indoor structures due to their greatness. Given indications of these open air cult places especially point us towards bogs and lakes (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 49). Water sources could as well have been venerated, after for example a well had served its purpose (Merrifield, 1987, p. 48). The above arguments was based on the observation that there is a relatively large amount of water deposits, yet different ones, in the south of Britain. Examples are the earlier mentioned decapitated skulls in wells, but also the deposition of animal bones in wells (Merrifield, 1987, pp. 45-46), animal remains in streams and under bridges, and deliberately bent iron spears and swords being part of the large deposit of Llyn Cerrig Bach in Ireland (Merrifield, 1987, pp. 28-29).



Figure 10: Photography of *Bourtanger Moor* in Germany near the Dutch border. Here multiple bog bodies were found (Nationale Naturlandschaften, 2024, <https://nationale-naturlandschaften.de/gebiete/naturpark-bourtanger-moor-barqerveen>)

Water bodies and wetlands being regarded as spiritual or even mythic locations on the continent is supported by ancient historian Strabo as he wrote about the Gauls making large scale precious item offerings in lakes (Van der Sanden, 1996, pp. 171-172). Archaeological case studies which also seem to support this interpretation are wooden, humanoid shaped statues found in Northwestern Europe. All these type of figures date from the last centuries BC to circa 500 AD (Coles & Coles, 1989, p. 194, 196). There is the massive scale weapon deposition of Illerup Adal in Denmark in addition, which nicely illustrates the tradition of purposefully depositing weapons (Möller-Wiering, 2011, pp. 4-5). The choice of location may namely have been a reflection of the type of god that was offered to. If it was considered proper to offer to certain gods, or a god(dess) connected to water in some way, then that might be a possible explanation to why bogs, rivers, and other water related sites were chosen for deposition of objects and animal/human remains. There could of course have been multiple deities tied to other elements, or they could have had more 'general' functions. In case of a ritual offering going into the ground, or under the surface, we could possibly speak of an offering to

chthonic types of gods. We must however be careful not to think too much from the perspective of our own cosmology (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 103).

It could in addition have been possible that bogs were seen as liminal places. Even in modern popular memory bogs are still perceived as treacherous ground; they must have been regarded even more cautiously during dark nights when superstition and 'daily' life went hand in hand (Paulissen et al., 2022, p. 8). Simultaneously there was exploitation of the peat likely already starting in prehistory, which also gave a very functional meaning to the bog (Paulissen et al., 2022, p. 8-9). Bogs were also useful for the extraction of iron (Meredith, 2002, p. 114). Besides this they were also traversed, as the construction of roads and paths through bogs has gone on for a period of over 6000 years. There are an estimate of circa 1000 of such tracks in the Netherlands, Ireland, North Germany, Britain and Denmark. Which nicely illustrates this long use of bog trackways is the over 1000 metres long (very unstable) Neolithic road in Bourtanger Moor on the border of the Netherlands and Germany (Coles & Coles, 1989, pp. 154 – 155, pp. 162 -163). Three bog bodies from the Iron Age were meanwhile found in the same bog. In the Niedersachsen region in Germany, tracks have been recovered dating for the majority from the Bronze- and Iron Age, further demonstrating that this practice of traversing these areas went on in Northwestern Europe (Coles & Coles, 1989, p. 165).



Figure 11: Two wooden humanoid figures from Aukamper Moor in Germany. They date from the second to third century BC (Aldhouse-Green, 2004, p. 60) and each measure 2.75 metres and 2.25 metres (Coles & Coles, 1989, p. 194, 196, Figure 145).

Many bogs in which votive finds were done, were not far located from either cultivated or settled areas. Thus bogs have not necessarily been desolate places. But liminal or not, from almost every marsh or bog area finds have been extracted of a likely sacral nature, from which we in turn can draw the conclusion that bogs were seen as closer to perhaps the divine or an otherworld (Kaul, 2003, pp. 19 – 21). According to Aldhouse-Green, the idea of the liminal bog might have been reinforced back in the Iron Age by using these wetlands as repositories for the death that weren't allowed to join the ancestors community. She bases this theory on Tacitus words, who described people who were drowned in bogs as deviants having for example committed taboo sexual practices or expressed cowardice. He mentions the term *corpore infame* as well, which can be translated in multiple ways. Two translations are 'the disreputable of the body' and 'notorious evildoers' (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 80 and pp. 83 – 84; Church et al., 1942, Tac. Ger. 12). It can also mean "those who have defiled their bodies" (Bruun & Lund, 1974, p. 47 in Ravn, 2010, p. 109). This narrative of condemning people to the bog is the already treated '*Strafopferthese*' as discussed in the theoretical framework, first suggested by the German archaeologist Herbert Jankuhn (Jankuhn, 1967, as cited in Van der Sanden, 1996, pp. 167 – 168). Nieuwhof (2015, p. 84) proposes that liminal places, including among other locations bogs, borders, wells, pits and rivers, may have been thought suitable as places for contact between death and life as well, exactly because of them possibly being considered dangerous and ambiguous.

A second theory to explain the choice for deposition at a non-traditional location is the '*Wiedergänger*' theory. With the German term '*Wiedergänger*', or English *revenant*, we mean a risen corpse which for reasons of injustice of formerly committed sins can't find peace in death. In some narratives from the medieval period they terrorize everyone in the nearby area in which they were buried. We see '*Wiedergängers*' appearing in medieval narratives in the UK and Europe, but undead are already described in sources from Mesopotamia and for example appear in the poem '*The Aeneid*' from between 29 and 19 BC (Ignatova, 2021, pp. 419-423; Livermore, 2021, pp. 3-4). Interestingly enough, in pre-Christian stories revenants do not run havoc and putrefy. In some these are risen spirits which return to their bodies to tell about their journey to the afterlife (Livermore, 2021, pp. 4-5). Would this idea about the once again living revenant have also been an existing idea in Iron Age Northwestern Europe however? Grave goods throughout the Iron Age and earlier periods to accompany the dead are an indication that belief in a life after death was widespread (Burmeister, 2005, p. 98). A parallel can be drawn between the concept of the '*Wiedergänger*' and bog bodies'. We can do so by noting that victims of bog deposition were buried in areas generally removed from settlement life (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 41). Furthermore, they were sometimes mutilated to various degrees and undressed (see chapter 4). In a number of cases they were also pinned down in the bog by wooden branches to stay in place. These could have been actions to render them harmless so that they wouldn't be able to haunt their respective community (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 406). The first notion by Aldhouse-Green (2015, p. 41) can lead us back to bogs being seen as liminal, otherworldly places. Life and death connect in the way that the decaying environment has qualities that are seen as strange phenomenon, and in the way that people traversing it, or winning peat and ore there could accidentally pass from life to death (Giles, 2009, p.92). Time 'standing still' in bogs due to their connection to certain deities and their preserving capabilities, might have also contributed to them being seen as locations where someone could be prevented from coming back from the dead. Or taking this quite literally, from floating up (Struve 1964/1967 as cited in Van der Sanden, 1996, p. 169; Giles, 2009, p.59). We at least know for sure that Iron Age communities were aware of the properties of the bog, as they preserved large vats of butter in them (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p.44). This may mean that bodies were also understood to remain intact. Many bodies in the relevant assemblage for this thesis have been restrained from 'moving' by branches, or other

methods. I would argue that in some cases body position was regarded as a way to stop an individual from rising again. The Weerdinge Men for example lie next to one another with their legs entangled and their arms hooked. In the case of Windeby Man, multiple measures seem to have been taken, as his arms were crossed and he was held down by eight sharpened branches. I would propose that Huldremose Woman was possibly prevented from walking again by the straight cuts being inflicted on her legs and feet. These are all cases in which violence was inflicted on the victim, and which I suspect of having been involved in ritual offering (see chapter 4.2, p. 31). Examples of individuals without signs of violence having been committed to them would be Rieper Moor Man (who was held down by one thick branch), or the Skærum body/foot who was likely pinned into the bog by four stones and branches.

All restrains cases							
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Signs of violence	Branches	Bound	Other possible restraining measures
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	No	Yes, arms/legs hooked
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Windeby Boy (formerly girl)/I	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 1	No	No
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	Yes, 8	No	Yes, crossed arms
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 4	No	Yes, beheaded
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	Yes, 1	No	Yes, cuts on legs and feet
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, arms perforated to put rope through (bound)
Gallagh Man	Ireland	Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Borremose Man I	Denmark	Early	No	Yes	Yes, a layer	No	No
Damendorf Man/II	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Possibly	No	No	Yes, knees bent but body fully flexed. One arm extend
Jühdenerfeld/Bockhornerfeld M	Germany	Late	Possibly	No	Yes, 5	No	No
Borremose II	Denmark	Middle	No	Yes	Yes, three	No	No
Skærum body/foot	Denmark	Late	Yes, Roman Iron Age	No	Yes, 1	No	Yes, three to four large stones
Clongownagh body	Ireland	Late	Yes, Roman Iron Age	No	Yes	No	Yes, beheaded
Rieper Moor Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes, 1	No	No

Table 1: Instances of all restrained bog mummies These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Now that we have established where all individuals of the database were found, what their find contexts were like and why these bogs could have been chosen for the deposition of bodies, it is time to focus further on the possible sacrificial nature of the bog mummies. I will do so by treating the cultic activity in bogs, and by introducing five theoretical frameworks which help indicate if a person might have fallen to human sacrifice.

4 Which bog bodies might be victims of offering in the research area?

4.1 The sacrifice theory

In '*civitates*', other pagan religions were accepted unless it hindered integration of a social (religious) group or was not in accordance with Roman view. Or in other words, religions weren't accepted if they harmed the Empire's interests, which is reminiscent of the perspective on the implementation of (punitive) jurisdiction (Goodman 1995: p. 20-37). This means that on paper, human sacrifice would not be allowed as a religious practice or part of a ritual if it did exist. Because of (biased) works of classical authors existing on the topic, such as Tacitus speaking of Germanic priests performing human sacrifice, or Strabo describing Germanic priestesses of the Kimbren tribe reading innards and blood patterns as a form of divination (Van der Sanden, 1996, p. 179), modern scholars began taking sacrifice as the reason for bog deposition into consideration in the 20th century. In the case of Strabo it must however be noted that he never went to the frontier zones himself and that the practices may have taken place in the past, as he based them on Posidonius writings, who lived 72 years earlier. This makes the information he gave possibly outdated and unreliable (Aldhouse-Green, 2010, p. 67). The first to break with the punishment theory was Thorvildsen (1952, p. 47) by making the connection between the sacrifice of objects, faunal remains and human remains in bogs, which was then supported by Wilhelm Glob, who wrote the popular book '*The Bog People*' in 1965 (Ravn, 2010, p. 110; Store Norske Leksikon, 2024). The sacrifice theory is now well known, although it is interpreted differently depending on the scholar supporting it. After all, the sacrifice of a human being can be done with different functions in mind.

What we can state with certainty is that there existed cult sites in Northwestern Europe, as well as in central Europe. As mentioned above in par. 2.2, the (Germanic) tribes preferred open places in nature such as lakes and bogs, because according to Tacitus they did not think they could lock their gods up (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 49).

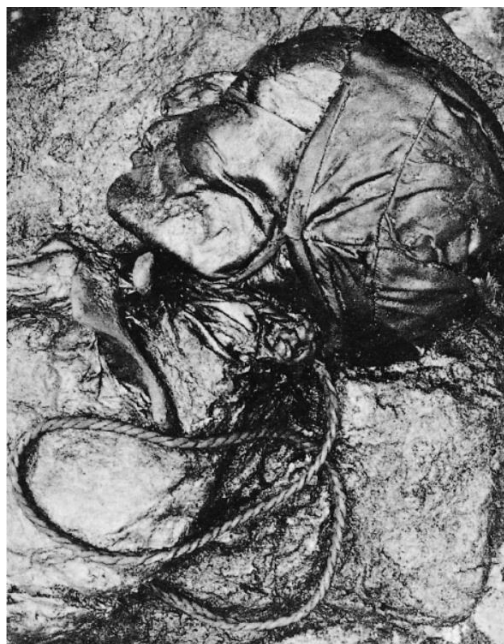


Figure 12: In situ photograph of the bog person Tollund Man. He was murdered by hanging, the noose still clearly visible around his neck. His cap is also excellently preserved. (Museum Silkeborg, 1950, n.d. in Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p.68, figure 69)

Germanic and Gallic cultic behaviour we know about is however written from a Roman perspective, meaning there's a chance that they are influenced by Roman preconceptions (Woolf, pp. 212 – 213).

Based on archaeological evidence, such an open air location that has had a likely cult function is Risleve in Denmark. German examples would be Opfermoor Oberdorla and Possendorf in Thüringen. As mentioned on page 27, many object offerings ranging from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age were associated with water (Ravn, 2010, p. 110). The deposition of metalwork in wet locations or dry land which peaked in the Late Bronze Age, saw a decrease as the Iron Age progressed (Fontijn, 2013, p. 152). It seems that the same zones were chosen to repeatedly deposit the same kind of objects (Fontijn, 2013, pp.144-147). In Denmark however we can see this tradition of purposefully depositing weapons in wetlands continue in the Iron Age and even mainly happening in the Roman Iron Age (Christensen, 2003, p. 347). Cultic behaviour can also be seen reflected in the deposition of everyday objects, human remains and animal remains in pits, ditches, under building foundations and under hearths throughout Northwestern Europe (Therkorn et al., 2009, p.180; Nieuwhof, 2015, pp. 55- 56), but also further south in Gaul (Woolf, 1998, p. 211). This did not necessarily happen at designated cultic locations, but also in inhabited areas in which daily life took place. Examples are the remains of children having been found under a hearth such as in the Feddersen Wierde terp in Germany, and under the central aisle of one of the typical byre/farm houses located at the same settlement (Nieuwhof, 2015, pp. 63 – 64). In the Netherlands one of the sites on which we can see mixed depositions taking place in or near habitation areas is Schagen Muggenburg-1, dating from circa 300 AD (Therkorn, 2004, p. 17). Here among other deposition finds were features with imported metal, Roman pottery and horse bone in them, together with shallow pits with human remains in them. Near these were separate deposits of removed foot bones belonging to one of the bodies itself, but also to an older dog and horse buried on the same site (Therkorn, 2004, pp. 21 – 27). This is all reminiscent of the Iron Age to Roman Period finds done on the terp of Ezinge as described by Nieuwhof (2015, pp. 194 – 198). Habitation on the Feddersen Wierden Terp also dates to the Roman period, namely between the first century BC and fifth century AD (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 63). No matter their type of object and location, I would propose that all of the above finds have in common is that they seem to have been offered in a ritual sphere. This might lead us to hypothesize that there is a parallel between the sacrificing of objects (in watery environments) and humans.

Taking into consideration that the common burial custom in the Iron Age was cremation, and in less cases inhumation, it makes us able to state that bog body deposition was not a normal burial treatment (see pages 14 to 15). Of course we must not forget that individuals of higher ranking or other exceptional status may have been subject to differing burial treatments as they were not 'common' folk (Ravn, 2010, p. 110). This would however mean that we are dealing here with a very large amount of nobles, warriors, or priests/magicians having been deposited in bogs. This I find a doubtful take, since these individuals only form a small demographic group throughout time. This does not mean that this couldn't have been a reality for a smaller part of the Iron Age communities. The possibility that human sacrifice was in some cases the reason for a person being discarded in a bog must not be rejected however, for we can point out a few interesting cases which could be explained by the sacrifice theory due to their violent, and as a consequence often unnatural feeling nature.

4.2 Possible victims of the practice of sacrifice

I have set apart five categories representing theoretical frameworks which can possibly indicate a person having fallen to human sacrifice. I will furthermore present these to support this theory for some of the bog bodies in the Northwestern European assemblage. These categories gave me an indication as standalones, but in many cases can be combined together. I will discuss these factors which may point us to the practice by giving examples of the bog bodies I recorded who displayed the right characteristics for that category. For more details and the sources regarding each bog mummy, see the appendix (p.54 – p. 61) and/or database.

First of all we have the total overview of bodies which could be possible ritual offerings. This table encompasses all bog mummies who will appear in the following tables this chapter, having not been assigned to a sub-category based on the theoretical frameworks yet. We can count twenty-one in total, of which eight date back to the Roman period. Two may possibly be Roman but their dating results were too broad to narrow down the time frame during which they lived. Eleven individuals did not live in the Roman period, but in the varying periods throughout the Iron Age.

It must be noted beforehand that often the theoretical frameworks as each discussed below overlap within one particular case study. Examples would be the occurrence of the phenomenon's overkill and humiliation In Old Croghan Man and Clonycavan Man, or Huldremose Woman fitting all theoretical frameworks except that of otherness. The advantage is that theoretical frameworks overlapping give us more handholds regarding the interpretation of the post-, peri- and ante-mortum stages of the deposition.

Possible ritual offering instances								
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Traces of violence	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation	Excessive violence
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes	Yes
Zweeloo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No	Yes
Ter Haarsterveen Man 2 (1891)	NL	Late	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Kayhausen Boy	Germany, Roman terr.	Early to Late	No	Yes	Yes, deformed femur	Yes	No	Yes
Damendorf Man/II	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Possibly	No	Yes	No	No
Windeby Boy (formerly girl)/I	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	No	No	No	No
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Grauballe man	Denmark	Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Elling Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No/Unknown	No	Yes	No/Unknown
Tollund Man	Denmark	Middle	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Borremose Man I	Denmark	Early	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Gallagh Man	Ireland	Late	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Lindow II (Man)	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lindow III	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Unknown	Yes, vestigial thumb /polydactyly	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Worsley Man/head	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, deformed ear	N.d.	Yes	Yes

Table 2: All possible ritual offering instances. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

First we have maybe the most obvious sign of violent or deviant behaviour, namely that of **overkill**. I define the concept of overkill here as victims displaying either multiple grave injuries on top of one another and signs of other violent treatments such as torture, or having received one extremely vicious wound while another mode of death could have sufficed. Sometimes it can be observed that people received a fatal injury or injuries on top of the one already committed to them. The most

painful and clear examples would be the Irish Clonycavan man and Old Croghan man, as they sustained high numbers of injuries of which multiple would be considered fatal. An example demonstrating multiple non-fatal but highly traumatic wounds would be Huldremose woman, whose right arm was chopped off, and lower legs, arm and wrist sustained cuts and chopping wounds (Van der Sanden, 1996, p. 163). These reached as far as to the bone in the lower legs.

Overkill cases						
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes
Zweeloo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes, deformed femur	Yes	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes	No
Grauballe man	Denmark	Middle	No	No	Yes	No
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	No	No	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No	Yes	No
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No	Yes	No
Lindow II (Man)	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Instances of possible overkill. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Grauballe man fits the category of having sustained one gruesome injury which would have almost literally resulted in a blood bath, namely his throat being slit to such an extent that his oesophagus was severed completely, and his larynx partially. The slicing began almost immediately behind his right ear. Both the largest arteries of the head region were cut in the process as well (Asingh & Lynnerup, 2007, pp. 246- 257).

It leaves us with the question how many perpetrators would have been involved in all mentioned overkill cases, and why they committed the acts. Late anthropologist René Girard explains the concept of overkill by the whole community being involved in the killing of a scapegoat (Girard, 1977, as cited in Sitch, 2009, pp. 156 - 158). This may give us a clearer idea on the reason for the many wounds being afflicted on victims, and their severity. Sitch (2009) argues that people such as Lindow Man were killed by their own community and not outsiders (p. 168). Overkill can also be explained as a physical manifestation of the in Germanic and Celtic myth recurring 'threefold death'. These deaths would be hanging, piercing or exposition to fire, and drowning. The first mode of death can be observed in Norse-Germanic religion by the 'god of the Hanged', a shape of Odin-Wotan. The second is demonstrated through Celtic religion by sacrifice to Taranis as mentioned by Lucan in the first century AD, and the third mode of death can lastly be seen reflected in Germanic religion by drowning sacrifices to the goddess Nerthus as reported by Tacitus in Germania. An interesting detail about the drowned is that they are described to be slaves (Mallory, 1997, pp. 577-578). The concept of threefold death could be the most clearly applied to the bodies of Old Croghan man, Yde Girl, and Lindow man, as they were (in no determined order) cut, slashed and stabbed, then strangled and lastly drowned in the way that they were placed under the surface of a bog. Worsley man could also be relevant despite being beheaded, because he was first strangled with a cord, and then placed in a bog. Although beheading is not exactly piercing, it was nonetheless done with a sword or other sharp bladed instrument which Mallory (1997) associates with a warrior's death fitting for this, as described by him, second mode of death (p. 578). This passage however does not wish to convert that all modes of triple death were always met; some people may also have been sacrificed in the name of

only one of these deities, in the way which corresponded to the tradition being attached to that deity. For example, Fischer (2007) proposed that Tollund man, Borremose Man and Huldremose woman (who has wounds in the shape of grooves in her neck) were killed as a sacrifice to the Odin of Ase or "God of the Hanged" cult, as they were all hanged or strangled (p. 180 - 181).

Humiliation cases												
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Traces of violence	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation	Shaven/cut hair	Nipples slit	Bound	Missing genitalia	
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes	Yes, half	No	No	No	
Zweeloo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	
Windeby Boy (former)	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	No	No	No	Yes, half	No	No	No	
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, on the forehead	Yes	No	No	
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No, but 1 m 98 (rare)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	

Table 4: Instances of possible humiliation. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Secondly, in some bog bodies we can observe the traces of actions which could be interpreted as unpleasant, or even shameful. A link can be drawn with **humiliation**. An example is the shaving of the head as a visible sign that someone could have endured before or during a sacrifice ritual. In some bog bodies we see that their hair is either completely cut off to a short length, or only partially. According to van Gennep (in Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 82) the cutting of hair is one of the forms of a rite of separation to close off the past. If we follow this theory, this may mean that the hair of some of the bog individuals was cut off to indicate that their old life had come to an end. Cases with partially shaven heads are Clonycavan man from Ireland, Yde girl from the Netherlands and Windeby boy from Germany. Windeby boy did not demonstrate any signs of violence, but Clonycavan man and Yde girl have in common that they were both murdered; Yde girl was strangled, and Clonycavan man disembowelled and killed with axe blows to the head and face. People with freshly cut hair to a very short length are Windeby man from Germany, Zweeloo woman from the Netherlands, and Huldremose woman from Denmark. who had even gained what we would consider a buzzcut. These listed individuals share with each other that they each show signs of violence. Windeby man still wore a hazel noose around his neck, Zweeloo woman had peri- or post-mortum non-fatal cutmarks, and Huldremose woman's arm was cut off before her death. Does this mean that their haircut was a preparation for the fate waiting for them, the ritual in which they were to participate? In case of the people with evenly short hair it may also be a coincidence or the normal way of hairstyle during the period they lived. We can say this with more certainty about Clonycavan man, who besides having had his forehead region shaven further backwards, wore his hair in a mohawk resembling style with 'gel' in it (Owen, 2006). Cutting of the hair was at least performed in a probably ritualistic manner in the Netherlands; Nieuwhof (2015) describes hair cuttings having been found in a platform on which a house on the Englum terp was built. She argues that this was done during a ritual of passage (p. 149). There is also a mention of human hair found in the terp in Ezinge which is now described as being part of a rite of separation, as it was found together with personal belongings (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 189). These examples demonstrate that cutting of the hair was not necessarily about humiliation. Other potential signs of the victim being humiliated before, during or after death is the slicing of the nipples. Both Irish Clonycavan Man and Old Croghan Man underwent such mutilation. Lastly fitting this category is Dätgen man who besides being beheaded had his genitals cut off. I would argue that this was a way to dishonour him by removing the representation of his manhood.

Otherness cases								
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation	Excessive violence	Other traits
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes	Yes	No
Zweeloo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No	Yes	Luxurious grave goods
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes, deformed femur	Yes	No	Yes	Bound
Lindow III	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, vestigial thumb /polydactyly	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No
Worsley Man/head	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, deformed ear	N.d.	Yes	Yes	No
Lindow II (Man)	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Manicured hands
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No, but 1 m 98 (rare)	Yes	No	Yes	Manicured hands
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Wore 'hair gel'
Grauballe man	Denmark	Middle	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Unblemished hands

Table 5: Instances of otherness. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

The third category of victims of possible sacrifice **can be labelled as otherness**. This category can be defined by individuals who were of a suspected different social high ranking, who visibly stood out from their peers by being physically disabled. In the assemblage five individuals suffered visible conditions or afflictions during their lives, which range from them being harmless to life affecting. Zweeloo woman would have had very short arms with possibly limited movement abilities for her whole life, and little Kayhausen boy would have moved with a limp due to the too small head of his femur, while Worsley man's ear was only deformed. What these four (including Yde girl) individuals however share was their disability being visible to their community. From the Early Iron Age there are no other known examples of visibly disabled individuals being deposited of in a bog. Nieuwhof (2015) proposes that it might have been possible that people with such disorders had a higher chance of being selected for bog deposition (p. 59). They could have even been seen as touched by the gods and therefore fated to be sacrificed, according to Parker Pearson (2003, p. 71). This category brings us back to Girards teaching again, as he argued that people get chosen as scapegoats by their respective societies due to 'victimary signs'. Victimary signs are anything which sets certain persons apart from the average members of their society; examples of signs may be the mirroring appearances of identical twins (which could remind us of the bog body duo called the Weerdinge men), beauty, physical visible handicaps such as a different gait or scoliosis, higher leadership positions or any other traits which causes someone not to be average. People who are different are targeted according to 'the scapegoat theory' due to crises wiping out all roles in society, causing the social structure to fall apart. Because becoming the same causes feelings of confusion, anger and in turn frustration, Girard discusses that in these are taken out on people displaying victimary signs as a form of catharsis to solve the crisis (Girard, 1977, as cited in Sitch, 2009, pp. 156 - 158). Interestingly, this theory seems to be confirmed by the classical Greeks only sacrificing the most perfect animals instead of the more average ones (Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p. 174).

All restrains cases								
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Signs of violence	Branches	Bound	Other possible restraining measures	
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	No	Yes, arms/legs hooked	
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Windeby Boy (formerly girl)/I	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 1	No	No	
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	Yes, 8	No	Yes, crossed arms	
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 4	No	Yes, beheaded	
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	Yes, 1	No	Yes, cuts on legs and feet	
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, arms perforated to put rope through (bound)	
Gallagh Man	Ireland	Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Borreman I	Denmark	Early	No	Yes	Yes, a layer	No	No	

Table 6: Instances of restrained bog mummies which are suspected of being related to ritual offerings. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Very much related to the 'Wiedergänger' theory -but nonetheless applicable to victims of human sacrifice as their death was possibly not voluntary, and thus anger inducing- is the **branches and other ways of restraints category**. I included 'other ways of restraints' to the name of this factor, as there are a few other cases in my assemblage who were immobilized in other manners: the Weerdinge men with their arms crossed through those of one another and their legs intertangled, Kayhausen boy who was bound, Derrymaquirk woman who had a large, flat stone on her waist accompanying a large piece of wood near or on the head, and Windeby boy who was not only punctured by a wooden branch but also had a large stone located near the left hip. Branches and other ways of normally immobilizing a living person may be signs that someone wished these individuals would stay under the surface. The placement of these objects must have been chosen for with ulterior motive. This theory also overlaps with the punishment theory. In some cases it is hard to point any possibly ritual behaviour out, yet the placement of branches or sticks still took place.

5 Is there a decrease in the amount of bog bodies (and thus bog body deposition, within and near the frontier zones occupied by Roman forces) after the conquering of Northwestern Europe in comparison with the Pre-Roman Iron Age in the same area?

A total of 63 bog mummies were included in the database which can be found under 'Appendix' and as supplementary material. In this database, more specific categories can be found such as 'find location' and 'year of deposition'.

Period	Amount
Early Iron Age	5
Early to Middle	1
Middle Iron Age	8
Middle to Late	7
Late Iron Age	11
Roman Period	16
Roman Iron Age	6
Possibly Roman period	6
Possibly Roman Iron Age	3
Total	63

Table 7: the total bog mummy assemblage of the database. It is chronologically ordered per period. (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

As can be observed in table 1 above, 22 individuals were with certainty dated back to the Roman Period or Roman Iron Age, of course depending on the research area within Northwestern Europe. The complete Iron Age (Early to Late) encompasses 32 individuals. 14 date back to the Early Iron Age, Early to Middle and Middle Iron Age. 18 date back ranging from the Middle to Late and Late Iron Age. From the Late Iron Age to Roman Period and Roman Iron Age combined, we can see a total **increase** of 100%. If we would compare the complete Iron Age with the combination of the Roman Period and Roman Iron Age, there would have been a decrease of 31,25%.

In comparison to the Late Iron Age (even with the Middle to Late Iron Age numbers included) we can say that there has been an increase in bog body deposition in Northwestern Europe, as we can count eleven more individuals. When we look at another factor however, the extent of the Roman frontiers, the matter becomes more complex. Here we have to make the distinction between areas lying inside of the Empire, and just outside of it, and see if the rate of numbers of bodies is comparable. After all, the presence of Roman occupation and the direct enforcement of law would logically result in a different situation regarding norms and habits than that of an area which was only affected by more sporadic interaction. In addition, these areas are necessary to be included in this investigation because they also form a part of Northwestern Europe.

5.1 Within the frontier zones

The German province of Niedersachsen and find area of British bog mummies all lie within the Roman border zones. Compiling the relevant bodies resulted in table 2.

Period	Amount
Early Iron Age	1
Early to Middle	0
Middle Iron Age	0
Middle to Late	0
Late Iron Age	2
Roman Period	12
Roman Iron Age	0
Possibly Roman period	2
Possibly Roman Iron Age	0
Total	17

Table 8: the bog mummy assemblage from within the Roman Empire's borders. It is chronologically ordered per period. (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Within the Roman borders we certainly see an increase of bog body deposition in the Roman Period, as only three bodies form the entire representation of the complete Iron Age in Northwest Europe. From the Late Iron Age to Roman period there is an **increase** of 500% in bog body deposition without including the bodies possibly dating from the Roman period. The complete Iron Age to Roman Period saw an **increase** in deposition of 300%. Depending on the exact year of deposition of the mummy's possibly dating back to the Roman Period, which dating methods weren't able to narrow down, this overrepresentation might be even greater for inside the border zone as this would mean an addition

of two cases. We have to be careful with this percentage, as it is highly likely biased due to there not having been done more discoveries of Iron Age bog bodies.

If the dates of the *possibly* Roman Iron Age bog bodies were to become further narrowed down and we would include them in our calculation, we instead would see an **increase** of a maximum of circa 600%. (Late Iron Age versus Roman Period/Iron Age) and an **increase** of estimately 366,7% (complete Iron Age versus Roman Period/Iron Age).

5.2 Outside the Roman frontiers

In the case of Ireland, Denmark, the German province of Schleswig Holstein and Friesland, and lastly the Dutch provinces Drenthe and Groningen, we are dealing with territories that never fell within the borders of the Roman Empire. Still we speak of the Roman Iron Age as Germany and the Netherlands under the river Rhine (*'Limes'*) did experience Roman occupation contemporaneously. Economic and cultural links were not hindered by the Rhine even though that was the political frontier in the Lower-Rhine region and Nordrhein-Westfalen (King, 1990, p. 156). A similar effect must have been happening on the frontier in Northern Germany. In short, the effects of the Roman presence in these nearby areas could be noticed in non-conquered regions as well. We can observe this in the form of material and symbolic influences. Danish (or even Scandinavian) examples are the use of bulls as symbols in Southeastern Funen, the use of Roman drinking bowls and small figures of power elite coming in series which resemble Roman god statues (Jørgensen et al., 2003, p. 14). The most evident illustration of the Roman presence having an effect on Denmark, and in this case also northern-Germany (under which Schleswig-Holstein falls), would be the 24 bogs in which war-booty sacrifices have been found. A number of these namely consisted of Roman army equipment. Again it is useful to mention Illerup Ådal because its 15,000 items are a great demonstration of how enormous the resources of the Empire were, and that these resources managed to get in the hands of Germanic magnates (Jørgensen et al., 2003, pp. 14 – 16). The conflict between the Roman armies and Germanic forces reached its peak in the third century AD if we judge from the number of objects of war being offered dating back to this period. In Ireland contacts with Roman groups can be seen by coin finds being done in Ireland, such as in Newgrange. The coins from the latter could be dated back to the period when Britain was conquered by the Romans (Carson & O'Kelly, 1977, p. 35). In the province of Drenthe in The Netherlands Roman contacts can be supported by the large find of coins in the town of Beilen from the late 4th to 5th century AD (Waterbolk & Glasbergen, 1955, pp. 81 – 84; Zadok-Josephus Jitta, 1955, pp. 103 – 107). Summarized, although not conquered, the areas outside of the Roman borders also experienced varying effects of influence. Therefore it is better to look at the number of bog bodies from this area separately to be able to make a good comparison to get an insight in the rates of deposition.



Figure 7: Roman 'Solidi' from Beilen, the Netherlands, province of Drenthe. The dating range is 364 – 383 AD. (A.N. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, plate XXVIII).

Period	Amount
Early Iron Age	4
Early to Middle	1
Middle Iron Age	8
Middle to Late	6
Late Iron Age	11
Roman Period	4
Roman Iron Age	5
Possibly Roman period	0
Possibly Roman Iron Age	7
Total	46

Table 9: the bog mummy assemblage from outside the Roman Empire's borders. It is chronologically ordered per period. (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

In comparison to table 2 we see a different process outside the Roman frontiers. The vast majority of bog bodies was dated back to the Iron Age, the most having their origin in the Late Iron Age. The increase from the Middle to Late Iron Age was gradual, with a slight decrease in the Roman Iron Age as there are nine bodies dating back to this period; the differences in numbers aren't high, and especially not if we compare the Late Iron Age and Roman Period with each other. From the Late Iron Age to Roman period and Roman Iron Age combined we see a **decrease** of 18,8% in bog body deposition outside of the frontiers. Bog body deposition **decreased** by 70% if we look at the difference between the complete Iron Age, and Roman Period and Roman Iron Age. If the dates of the *possibly* Roman Iron Age bog bodies were to become further narrowed down and we would include them in our calculation, we instead would see a **decrease** of a maximum of circa 45,5%. (Late Iron Age versus Roman Period/Iron Age) and a **decrease** of circa 46,6% (complete Iron Age versus Roman Period/Iron Age).

I would propose that there is an increase in bog body deposition, and not a decrease, but only in certain areas and depending on the spans of time which are compared with one another: in short, there is regional variability. To investigate this regional variability, we will focus on the increase, decrease or even rate of bog deposition per region in Northwestern Europe.

6 Results and discussion

Did the fusion of Germanic and Roman norms, legislative and cultural practices have influence on the nature of, perspective on, and as a consequence deposition of bodies in bogs in the research area?

6.1 Legislative and cultural practices and their influence

Although there was a clear revulsion towards human sacrifice from within Roman culture, and a well-functioning established law-system within the Empire, this research did not yield any results regarding the appliance of Roman jurisdiction in Northwestern Europe on the Roman frontiers in regard to ritual behaviour and human sacrifice.

Research into the fusion of native and Roman law however yielded some results, although no direct information on how this combination expressed itself. What is known however is that Roman authorities in the provinces allowed for the maintaining of the law by civilians themselves in regard to court processes and criminality. This means that local people in Northwestern Europe's provinces also should have had the autonomy to carry out judgements and punishments themselves, if still in accordance with the Roman laws on the matter they were convicting a person on.

6.2 Patterns of increase, decrease or stability?

Twenty-one of the in this work included bog mummies in total (63), show signs of violent circumstances. I propose that nineteen individuals of the twenty-one individuals with traces of violence, show signs that they might have been part in a ritual offering.

As demonstrated in chapter 5, areas which did see a decrease in bog mummy deposition would be the regions of Northwestern Europe outside the Roman borders. Only in the Northwest European zones within the borders of the Empire we can see a clear increase, as the assemblage deposited before the Roman Period consisted of two individuals in the Late Iron Age and the Early Iron Age. This forms a stark contrast with the twelve bodies deposited while there was a Roman presence in the UK and Niedersachsen region. The areas outside the frontiers saw a clear decrease if we were to compare the periods of Roman presence with the preceding Iron Age years. It is however important to be aware that these numbers might not give a good representation of deposition in the Iron Age and Roman Period/Roman Iron Age, as there is only a very limited bog mummy assemblage. For this reason, and the numbers changing depending on the time periods which are compared with one another, it is not possible to give an exact percentage on the rate of deposition of bog mummies.

If we focus on the total assemblage we can clearly see a small increase in numbers in the Late Iron Age and Roman Iron Age (100%). If we dissect the total assemblage into two categories, namely within the frontier zones and outside of them, we get different insights into the rate of deposition, as was demonstrated in chapter 5. Within the frontier zones an increase of 500% from the Late Iron Age to Roman Period can be noted, and a decrease in the same period outside of the borders (18,8%). From this we can logically conclude that despite the Roman influence, deposition of individuals in bogs did not halt. That leaves us with the question if the majority of bog mummies per area in Northwestern Europe were human sacrifice victims.

Country	Total number of bog mummies	Number of violence victims	Number of ritual offering suspects	Ritual off. Within Roman frontier	Ritual off. outside Roman frontiers
The Netherlands	6	2	4	3	4
Germany	19	5	5	2	4
Denmark	26	9	6	0	6
UK	5	2	3	3	0
Ireland	7	3	3	0	3

Table 10: an overview of violence victims and ritual offering suspects categorised by country and position in respect to the Roman frontiers (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

In the Roman Period/Iron Age we have a total of 21 violent cases. It is important to note that not all of these are suspected ritual cases. Within the frontiers 8 possible ritual offerings were found, and outside the frontiers a number of 17. These numbers seemingly clash with the by the data observed increase in ritual offering depositions within Roman provinces, and the decrease outside of the borders. If we look at this data it seems more evident that the situation was the opposite way around: with an increase outside the Roman frontiers, and thus a possibly more established tradition of human ritual sacrifice being present there. Therefore it might help to focus on the research areas within Northwestern Europe separately to get a better insight on the matter.

Of the twenty-six Danish individuals in my database, nine throughout the complete Iron Age and Roman Iron Age show signs of violence. Six of the total Danish assemblage are suspected of having been involved in ritual offering. This means a total of 23.1% might have been sacrificial victims. Nineteen mummies for sure date back to the pre-Roman Iron Age, and four from the Roman Iron Age. From the complete Iron Age to Roman Iron Age, we thus can observe a deposition **decrease** of circa 78,9%.

Five of the total of nineteen German bog mummies show signs of violence, while two (not included in the former number) show possible signs of trauma by human hand. Five mummies are suspected to have been involved in ritual offering, meaning a total of circa 26.3%, 3,2% higher than that of Denmark assemblage. Five individuals were with certainty dated back to the pre-Roman Iron Age. In the Roman Period there is an **increase** of 100%, as ten individuals of the assemblage have certainly lived during this time. All bog mummies from Germany come from either Schleswig-Holstein, Friesland or the Niedersachsen regions. The latter one fell into Roman territory, the first two regions didn't. As a consequence we can make separate calculations. Friesland wasn't possible to include in our count, as the individual belonging to that period was either from the Late Iron Age or Roman Period. In Schleswig-Holstein there are three individuals dated back to the complete Iron Age, and three to the Roman Period. This means that the rate of deposition remained **stable**. In the Niedersachsen there are two individuals from the Iron Age (One Late, one Early), and eight dating back to the Roman Period. This means an **increase** of 300% within Roman territory.

What is of interest to note is that there are two cases of excessive violence in combination with visible impairments in the Netherlands. One of the six in total lived during the Roman presence in the Netherlands, only above the Rhine frontier. The other individual comes from the same province (Drenthe), and possibly lived during the Roman period. Five of the six bodies were clothed. Four of the six bog mummies I suspect to be connected to ritual offerings, which means estimately 66,66% of the complete Iron Age to Roman Period Dutch assemblage. From the complete Iron Age (three individuals dated with certainty to this period) to the Roman Period (one, Zweeloo woman), we see an **decrease** of circa 66,6%.

Two of the Irish bog mummies are dated back to the Middle to Late Iron Age, and the remaining two hail from the Early, and Middle to Early Iron Age. Two of these Middle to Late cases are overkill examples, them even being the most clearest examples of the concept. Two date from the Roman Iron Age. This means that we can see a **decrease** of 60% in bog body deposition from the Iron Age to Roman Iron Age.

Included in the assemblage of five British bog mummies are Lindow II and III, which show traces of ritualistic behaviour such as blue paint. Two bodies show signs of violence. Four of the five bog mummies were dated back to the Roman period. As the remaining one has been dated too broadly and could either have their origins in the Iron Age or Roman Period, I will not make a calculation and will simply state that the majority of British bog mummies represents the Roman Period, meaning the practice was seemingly not decreased if we only look at these results.

With this information we could draw parallels between the appliance of jurisdiction in the frontier zones; the appliance of law was flexible and adjusted per province of the Empire, but as the assemblages of bodies from the Iron Age and Roman Period are small, these numbers might still not give us a proper insight into the reality of the past situation; in other words, the limited numbers of mummies create a biased vision. If we are to make conclusions based on the above treated and calculated numbers, **I would propose that the practice of bog deposition was prevented to a lesser extent in the Niedersachsen region of Germany, and the United Kingdom.** These are the only two regions included within the formal borders of the Roman Empire of this complete bog mummy assemblage. In the areas falling outside of the Roman frontiers, we see a decrease in of deposition in Denmark, a number that has remained stable in the non-Roman German provinces and a decrease in the Netherlands and Ireland.

6.4 Discussion

Multiple hypotheses can provide insight on why human sacrifices seemingly continued under Roman rule in primarily the Niedersachsen region and the United Kingdom.

The first is that the Romans simply didn't recognize them as such due to a narrative being built around them. Hutton (2011, p. 142) proposes that in the case of Lindow man, the individuals having killed him might have justified their actions by communicating that they punished a wrongdoer by death. Hutton's second theory (2011, p. 142) is that the Romans having been present in Lindow Man's community might have been content to look away from sacrificial practices and customs performed by the natives. A similar type of situation, namely Roman instances looking away, might have also been applicable to other suspected sacrifice cases treated in this dissertation (Hutton, 2011, p. 142).

Secondly we can revisit the topic of punishments in the frontier zones; we do know that natives were allowed to perform capital punishment on other non-Roman citizens in the provinces (chapter 2.2, p. 16). If the subject was a Roman citizen however, then they had to be tried according to the principles of Roman jurisdiction. Both theories might implicate that it might have been possible for natives of the Roman border zones provinces to ritually sacrifice someone, as long as their convict was not a Roman citizen and the killing itself was justified as being an execution for a crime against the (norms of the) community (Sitch, 2019, p. 15), which echoes Hutton's (2011) proposal of a warped narrative (p. 142). Judgement being carried out by individuals or groups not part of the local instances makes more sense if we remind ourselves of '*delatio*'; there were no correcting forces (such as our modern day police) in the Roman provinces, and convicts were identified, arrested and brought to court by

victims themselves. Punishment also was part of the act during some of these processes (Fuhrmann, 2016, p. 297 – 298).

Thirdly, the forces of the governor of the said province not being able to keep an eye on populations everywhere might also be the simple reason for why some alleged ritual sacrifices were able to take place. The hundred men assigned to a governor's province to cover it entirely was impossible (Fuhrmann, 2016, p. 304).

In addition, I would argue that the showy executions by Roman governors to deter criminality (Fuhrmann, 2016, p. 304) might be the reason provincial local authorities would sometimes allow bloody, native punishments to be committed. It isn't hard to imagine that doing so would aid with the deterrence of criminality. The economy of fear that was being established by the sporadic public punishment organized by a provincial governor already existed after all (Fuhrmann, 2016, p. 304).

All four mentioned causes for the phenomenon of ritual offering of humans to continue, could explain the theoretical frameworks of the '*Strafopferthese*', overkill, humiliation and branches/restraints. These overlap with each other as can be observed in many bog mummy cases included in the database. The '*Strafopferthese*' or punishment theory could be feasible in case of the local Roman authorities allowing native inhabitants to carry out private denunciation according to local traditions. As a consequence, excessive violence and humiliation practices could take place against victims in case of an execution after the process. After the victim had died, natives might have treated the body in any way they saw fit, which in turn would allow the appliance of stones, branches or even preventive body positions. The formerly described factors also remains valid in the cases of the authorities having decided to look away, them being unable to notice a ritual offering, or if a community justified their actions by using a punishment narrative to hide the actual sacrificial motivation behind their act. It is harder to justify the possible execution of disabled individuals in the database, if the conviction of such a person was noticed by Roman authorities (see chapter 4.2). The Roman view on people with a visible handicap was complex. There for sure was a stigma on these individuals which they could not remove, according to Rose (2003, p. 39). On the one side they were seen as not to be raised, but yet simultaneously as popular entertainers (four groups performed, the blind, people with dwarfism, hunchbacks and the lame), and even gifted by the gods as compensation (Lodder, 2017, pp. 23, 27, 54 – 55). As there are no records of Roman authorities being involved in a court case surrounding a convict with a disability in Northwestern Europe, it is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding their attitude towards the condemnation of a disabled individual. Human sacrifice was however loathed, which automatically excludes this group from such a fate. That was, if Roman authorities noticed and intervened.

If we focus on the assemblage as a whole we can conclude that bog body deposition continued outside and inside the Roman borders no matter the decrease in Denmark and the Netherlands above the Rhine. Therefore I would like to conclude that were multi-causal factors at play which influenced the rate of deposition during the Roman Period, as well as in the Iron Age, but in case of the latter for possibly different reasons due to the Roman influence not yet having been integrated in Northwest Europe.

7 Conclusion

The main research question of this dissertation is: *Did the fusion of Germanic and Roman norms, and legislative practices have influence on the nature of, perspective on, and as a consequence deposition of mummy's in bogs in the area of Northwestern Europe?*

The answer to this question is that the deposition of bog mummies was likely influenced by the Roman jurisdictional concept of *'delatio'*, or private denunciation, but also by other effects of which we do not know the nature or grounds. The results originally aimed for thus weren't completely gained.

Around the ending days of the Republic the use of the death penalty decreased due to the effects of the ethos of *'humanitas'* gaining popularity in the Roman world (Woolf, 1998, pp. 55 – 56), which stood for civil behaviour. Roman governors and generals undertook civilizing efforts to Romanize the provinces after their conquering (Woolf, 1998, pp. 70 – 71). This can likely be explained by the way Roman law enforcement was organized: there were no modern correcting forces such as the police present. Instead civilians being Roman and non-Roman were allowed private denunciation. If these processes did not hinder the principles of the Roman state, individuals could bring down justice themselves, and could even punish victims. Besides *'delatio'*, governors and generals could enforce jurisdiction. (Fuhrmann, 2016, pp. 297 – 299).

Yet ritual offerings were still prevalent in Northwestern Europe, such as foundation offerings, skulls in wells, and buried faunal and human remains offerings in settlement spaces (Merrifield, 1987, pp. 45 – 46; Therkorn et al., 2009, p.180; Nieuwhof, 2015, pp. 55- 56; Therkorn, 2004, pp. 21 – 27). We also have a bog mummy population, of which seventeen have been found within Roman borders. Among these seventeen, twelve actually date back to the Roman Period. Bog bodies in general, and thus possible human sacrifices, were likely rare (Nieuwhof, 2015, p. 60). Yet with the limited assemblage relevant for this dissertation, I would propose that the practice of bog deposition was prevented to a lesser extent in the Niedersachsen region of Germany, and the United Kingdom. In the Niedersachsen we namely see an increase in the transition of the complete Iron Age to the Roman Period, and in the United Kingdom the majority of mummies was simply dated back to the Roman Period compared to the Iron Age. This forms a surprising contrast with the aversion of Roman society towards the practice of human sacrifice (Schultz, 2016, p.71).

That is, if these individuals were victims of ritual offering. It is possible to try and recognize the nature of bog mummies by applying the four theoretical frameworks. The appliance of these frameworks is relevant, as the increase in the Niedersachsen and the UK do not necessarily illustrate a sudden surge in ritual offering victims, as all bodies from the relevant time period were included in this number. These deposited individuals could also be the result of being condemned victims as the theory the *'Strafopferthese'* pleads (Jankuhn, 1967, as cited in Van der Sanden, 1996, pp. 167 – 168). Natural, sacrificial and punishment deaths could have resulted in a *'Wiedergänger'* burial according to the theory of the same name in the bog (Van der Sanden, 2013, p. 406). Lastly we have the theory that a part of these people can also have been accidental deaths.

If we assume that a large number of the bog mummies within the Roman provinces of Northwest Europe were either punished or sacrificed, that leaves us with the question why the Roman instances did not intervene in those cases. There are four hypotheses to explain this. The first would be that the Roman instances in question were content to let the punishment or sacrifice (or both simultaneously) happen, or that they were convinced that the natives performing the process were performing an execution, and not a ritual due to a misleading narrative having been communicated to them (Hutton,

2011, p. 142). The second is that non-Roman citizens were allowed to punish their fellow brethren as they wanted if in accordance with the Roman law. '*Delatio*' namely applied to them as well. This would have resulted in traditional murders still being carried out. Thirdly, bog depositions might have continued because the Roman's governors attention couldn't span the entire province at the time. Native ritual offerings could secretly have taken place without the instances' notice. And lastly, I would argue that gruesome punishments and/or rituals could have continued as to aid in the deterrence of criminal activity by the Roman governors of Northwestern Europe.

Of course these are presumptions based on research, which cannot possibly have answered the research question of this dissertation completely. After all, we see bog body deposition happening outside of the Roman borders as well, although in decreasing numbers in the Roman Period and Roman Iron Age. This still doesn't take away that the practice continued. To make matters worse, there are no detailed ancient sources of Roman and Germanic norms fusing. From these observations I would like to conclude that there must have been multi-causal factors at play which could explain the influence on bog mummies in Northwestern Europe in its entirety. There is however still potential for the research into bog bodies and the cultural mixing of both Germanic and Roman society: there is a large quantity of bog skeletons which outweighs the amount of bog mummies (Van Beek et al., 2023, p. 122). I would therefore like to end this dissertation with the remark that this field of research would benefit from even more research, in for example the form of a master dissertation.

Abstract

This bachelor dissertation has aimed to answer the main research question: *Did the fusion of Germanic and Roman norms, and legislative practices have influence on the nature of, perspective on, and as a consequence deposition of mummy's in bogs in the area of Northwestern Europe?* To do so successfully and shed more light on the Germanic-Roman cultural fusion (in terms of jurisdiction) and possible sacrificial nature of bog mummies, sub-questions were included. By answering these, the legal system of Rome in the frontier zones and associated punishment was treated, the chronological and geographical dissemination of bog mummies was showcased together with their find contexts, handholds were offered to help identify possible victims of offering, and insight was provided on an increase, decrease or stable bog mummy deposition rate. By having answered the sub-questions, a general overview of the Iron Age and Roman Period/Roman Iron Age in Northwestern Europe in relation to the subject was presented. To gain results, this research encompassed a broad comparative analysis based on literature research. The gained data on bog mummies was compiled in a database which can be found in the supplementary materials of this dissertation, and partially in the appendix. The results of this research were mixed. The deposition of bog mummies was likely influenced by the Roman jurisdictional concept of '*delatio*', or private denunciation, but also by other effects of which the nature or grounds could not be established in this dissertation due to missing original sources and the database only relying on bog mummies. This indicates that further research is needed, and relevant as well, as this would mean that the more neglected human bog depositions should become a larger subject of research. Including these could namely result in a more complete context of the Iron Age and Roman Period/Iron Age, and with that the motivations for (and effects) on bog deposition.

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Figures:

Figure 1: 'Detail of hand from 'Old Croghan Man', a bog body on display in the Kingship and Sacrifice exhibition'. Hand of an Iron Age bog body. (National Museum of Ireland, Kingship and Sacrifice, <https://www.organisatiegids.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/archeologie/organisatie/examiners/2023-2024/guidelines-papers-faculty-of-archaeology-2023.pdf>).

Figure 2: Northwestern Europe as defined by van Beek (2023, p. 121, figure 0).

Figure 3: Illustration of Europe showing the area within the lines indicates where the formation of raised bogs is possible due to climatic circumstances. (Van der Sanden, 1996, p.25, figure 22).

Figure 4: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age bog mummies of Northwestern Europe, chronologically ordered. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

Figure 5: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Iron Age bog mummies from modern day Denmark. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

Figure 6: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies from modern day Germany. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

Figure 7: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies from the modern day Netherlands. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

Figure 8: A map of the total assemblage of Iron Age to Roman Period bog mummies from Ireland and Britain. Background imagery © Google Earth Pro & Landsat/Copernicus. Figure: Anne Van der Spoel.

Figure 9: The butterfly fibula of Zweeloo woman. It was fabricated in Northern-Germany. (Drents Museum, The Zweeloo princess, <https://drentsmuseum.nl/en/in-the-spotlight-top-exhibits/Zweeloo-princess>; Wikipedia Commons, Vergulde bronzen vlinderfibula 1952-III-26b, https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Vergulde_bronzen_vlinderfibula,_Drents_Museum,_1952-III-26b.jpg).

Figure 10: Photography of Bourtanger Moor in Germany near the Dutch border. Here multiple bog bodies were found (Nationale Naturlandschaften, 2024, <https://nationale-naturlandschaften.de/gebiete/naturpark-bourtanger-moor-bargeveen>)

Figure 11: Two wooden humanoid figures from Aukamper moor in Germany. They date from the second to third century BC (Aldhouse-Green, 2004, p. 60) and each measure 2.75 metres and 2.25 metres (Coles & Coles, 1989, p. 194, 196, Figure 145).

Figure 12: In situ photograph of the bog person Tollund Man. He was murdered by hanging, the noose still clearly visible around his neck. His cap is also excellently preserved. (Museum Silkeborg, 1950, n.d. in Aldhouse-Green, 2015, p.68, figure 69)

Appendix

All restrains cases							
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Signs of violence	Branches	Bound	Other possible restraining measures
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	No	Yes, arms/legs hooked
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Windeby Boy (formerly girl)/I	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 1	No	No
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	Yes, 8	No	Yes, crossed arms
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 4	No	Yes, beheaded
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	Yes, 1	No	Yes, cuts on legs and feet
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, arms perforated to put rope through (bound)
Gallagh Man	Ireland	Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Borremose Man I	Denmark	Early	No	Yes	Yes, a layer	No	No
Damendorf Man/II	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Possibly	No	No	Yes, knees bent but body fully flexed. One arm extend
Jühdenerfeld/Bockhornerfeld M	Germany	Late	Possibly	No	Yes, 5	No	No
Borremose II	Denmark	Middle	No	Yes	Yes, three	No	No
Skærum body/foot	Denmark	Late	Yes, Roman Iron Age	No	Yes, 1	No	Yes, three to four large stones
Clongownagh body	Ireland	Late	Yes, Roman Iron Age	No	Yes	No	Yes, beheaded
Rieper Moor Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes, 1	No	No

Table 1: Instances of all restrained bog mummies These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Possible ritual offering instances								
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Traces of violence	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation	Excessive violence
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes	Yes
Zweelo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No	Yes
Ter Haarsterveen Man 2 (1891)	NL	Late	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes	Yes, deformed femur	Yes	No	Yes
Damendorf Man/II	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Possibly	No	Yes	No	No
Windeby Boy (formerly girl)/I	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	No	No	No	No
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Grauballe man	Denmark	Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Elling Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No/Unknown	No	Yes	No/Unknown
Tollund Man	Denmark	Middle	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Borremose Man I	Denmark	Early	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Gallagh Man	Ireland	Late	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Lindow II (Man)	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lindow III	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Unknown	Yes, vestigial thumb /polydactyly	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Worsley Man/head	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, deformed ear	N.d.	Yes	Yes

Table 2: All possible ritual offering instances. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Overkill cases						
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes
Zweelo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes, deformed femur	Yes	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes	No
Grauballe man	Denmark	Middle	No	No	Yes	No
Huldremose Womar	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	No	No	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No	Yes	No
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No	Yes	No
Lindow II (Man)	GB	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Instances of possible overkill. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Humiliation cases											
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Traces of violence	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation	Shaven/cut hair	Nipples slit	Bound	Missing genitalia
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes	Yes, half	No	No	No
Zweelo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Windeby Boy (former)	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	No	No	No	Yes, half	No	No	No
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Huldremose Womar	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes, on the forehead	Yes	No	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No, but 1 m 98 (rare)	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Table 4: Instances of possible humiliation. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Otherness cases									
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Physically handicapped	Naked	Strangulation	Excessive violence	Other traits	
Yde Girl	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, Scoliosis	No	Yes	Yes	No	
Zweelo Woman	NL	(Very) Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, dyschondrosteosis	No	No	Yes	Luxurious grave goods	
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes, deformed femur	Yes	No	Yes	Bound	
Lindow III	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, vestigial thumb /polydacty	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	No	
Worsley Man/head	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes, deformed ear	N.d.	Yes	Yes	No	
Lindow II (Man)	UK	Late	Yes, Roman Period	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Manicured hands	
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No, but 1 m 98 (rare)	Yes	No	Yes	Manicured hands	
Clonycavan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Wore 'hair gel'	
Grauballe man	Denmark	Middle	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Unblemished hands	

Table 5: Instances of otherness. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

All restrains cases							
Name	Location	Iron Age period	Roman period/Roman Iron Age	Signs of violence	Branches	Bound	Other possible restraining measures
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	No	No	Yes, arms/legs hooked
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	Early to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Windeby Boy (formerly girl)/I	Germany	Late	Possibly Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 1	No	No
Windeby Man	Germany	Middle	No	Yes	Yes, 8	No	Yes, crossed arms
Dätgen Man	Germany	Late	Yes, Roman Period	Yes	Yes, 4	No	Yes, beheaded
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Late	Possibly Roman Iron Age	Yes	Yes, 1	No	Yes, cuts on legs and feet
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	Middle to Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	Middle to Late	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, arms perforated to put rope through (bound)
Gallagh Man	Ireland	Late	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Borremose Man I	Denmark	Early	No	Yes	Yes, a layer	No	No

Table 6: Instances of restrained bog mummies which are suspected of being related to ritual offerings. These date from the Iron Age to Roman Period/Roman Iron Age. (Microsoft Excel Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Period	Amount
Early Iron Age	5
Early to Middle	1
Middle Iron Age	8
Middle to Late	7
Late Iron Age	11
Roman Period	16
Roman Iron Age	6
Possibly Roman period	6
Possibly Roman Iron Age	3
Total	63

Table 7: the total bog mummy assemblage of the database. It is chronologically ordered per period. (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Period	Amount
Early Iron Age	1
Early to Middle	0
Middle Iron Age	0
Middle to Late	0
Late Iron Age	2
Roman Period	12
Roman Iron Age	0
Possibly Roman period	2
Possibly Roman Iron Age	0
Total	17

Table 8: the bog mummy assemblage from within the Roman Empire's borders. It is chronologically ordered per period. (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Period	Amount
Early Iron Age	4
Early to Middle	1
Middle Iron Age	8
Middle to Late	6
Late Iron Age	11
Roman Period	4
Roman Iron Age	5
Possibly Roman period	0
Possibly Roman Iron Age	7
Total	46

Table 9: the bog mummy assemblage from outside the Roman Empire's borders. It is chronologically ordered per period. (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Country	Total number of bog mummies	Number of violence victims	Number of ritual offering suspects	Ritual off. Within Roman frontier	Ritual off. outside Roman frontiers
The Netherlands	6	2	4	3	4
Germany	19	5	5	2	4
Denmark	26	9	6	0	6
UK	5	2	3	3	0
Ireland	7	3	3	0	3

Table 10: an overview of violence victims and ritual offering suspects categorised by country and position in respect to the Roman frontiers (Table: Anne Van der Spoel).

Iron Age to Roman Period-Iron Age bog mummy database

General NW EU database

The most important bog mummy database which forms one of the basis principles for this dissertation is too large to be included in a word document. Therefore it has been added as supplementary material.

Datasets not included in this dissertation, but part of the database:

All Late Iron Age mummies plus the Roman period/Roman Iron Age mummies. Middle to late IA included				
Name	Location	Roman IA/Period	Violence yes/no	Likely ritual offering
Exloërmond Man	NL	No	No	No
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Yde Girl	NL	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Zweelo Woman	NL	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ter Haarsterveen Man 2 (189)	NL	No	No	No
Kayhausen Boy	Germany	No	Yes	Yes
Neu Versen Man (Roter Franz)	Germany	Yes	Yes	No
Damendorf Man/II	Germany	Yes	Possibly	Yes
Bunsoh Body	Germany	Yes	No	No
Obenaltendorf Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Neu-England Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Windeby Boy	Germany	No	Yes	Yes
Rendswühren Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Hunteburg Men/I and II	Germany	Yes	No	No
Husbäke Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Jühdenerfeld/Bockhornerfe	Germany	Possibly	No	No
Bareler Moor Girl	Germany	Yes	No	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes
Röst Girl	Germany	No	No	No
Rieper Moor Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Bentstreek foot	Germany	Yes	Yes	No
Marx-Stapelstein body	Germany	Yes	No	No
Elling Woman	Denmark	No	Yes	Yes
Vester Thorsted Man	Denmark	Possibly	No	No
Auning Woman	Denmark	No	No	No
Møgelmoose body	Denmark	Possibly	No	No
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Baunsø Man	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Roum Man Head	Denmark	No	Yes	No
Nørre Knudstrup body	Denmark	No	Unknown	No
Haraldskaer Woman	Denmark	No	Yes	Yes
Thorup child	Denmark	No	No	No
Arden Woman	Denmark	No	No	No
Skærum body/foot	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Søgård I/Søgårds Man	Denmark	No	No	Yes
Søgård II	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Rønbjerg II	Denmark	No	No	No
Fræer Man	Denmark	No	No	No
Corselitze Woman	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Lindow II / Lindow man	GB	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lindow III	GB	Yes	Unknown	Yes
Grewelthorpe Man	GB	Yes	No	No
Amcotts body	GB	Yes	No	No
Worsley Man/head	GB	Yes	Yes	No
Old Croghan Man	Ireland	No	Yes	Yes
Clonycavan man	Ireland	No	Yes	Yes
Gallagh Man	Ireland	No	Yes	Yes
Derryvaroge Man	Ireland	Yes	No	No
Baronstown west Man	Ireland	Yes	No	No

All late Iron Age bog mummies plus the Roman Period/Roman Iron Age mummies. Middle to late IA (Iron Age) included.

All Roman period or Roman Iron Age bodies. Possibly included (broad carbon dating range)				
Name	Location	Roman IA/Period	Violence yes/no	Likely ritual offering
Weerdinge Couple/Men	NL	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Yde Girl	NL	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Zweelo Woman	NL	Yes	Yes	Yes
Neu Versen Man (Roter Franz)	Germany	Yes	Yes	No
Damendorf Man/II	Germany	Yes	Possibly	Yes
Bunsoh Body	Germany	Yes	No	No
Obenaltendorf Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Neu-England Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Windeby Boy	Germany	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Rendswühren Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Hunteburg Men/I and II	Germany	Yes	No	No
Husbäke Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Jühdenerfeld/Bockhornerfeld M	Germany	Possibly	No	No
Bareler Moor Girl	Germany	Yes	No	No
Dätgen Man	Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rieper Moor Man	Germany	Yes	No	No
Bentstreek foot	Germany	Yes	Yes	No
Marx-Stapelstein body	Germany	Yes	No	No
Vester Thorsted Man	Denmark	Possibly	No	No

Møgelmose body	Denmark	Possibly	No	No
Huldremose Woman	Denmark	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Baunso Man	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Skærsum body/foot	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Søggård II	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Corselitze Woman	Denmark	Yes	No	No
Lindow II / Lindow man	GB	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lindow III	GB	Yes	Unknown	Yes
Grewelthorpe Man	GB	Yes	No	No
Amcotts body	GB	Yes	No	No
Worsley Man/head	GB	Yes	Yes	No
Derryvaroge Man	Ireland	Yes	No	No
Baronstown west Man	Ireland	Yes	No	No

All Roman Period or Roman Iron Age bodies. Possibly (Roman) included (due to broad carbon dating range).