

# Cannibalism found in germany



Evidence of cannibalism In Europe's early Neolithic period. Hypothesis- Ritual cannibalism whether for religious purpose or war, is suggested from the 2009 study that the humans at the site of Herxhelm were butchered and eaten. Our knowledge of ancient rituals and customs will be greatly enhanced. Presenting a unique look Into the ritualistic burial ceremonies of the ancient Europeans. The exact origin of cannibalism is a mystery and will most likely remain so.

Some anthropologists believe that cannibalism began in earliest human history and proliferated with man's Increasing attempt to appease the gods, survive famine, or exact revenge on or control his enemies. To date, archaeological evidence suggests that cannibalism was practiced as far back as the Neolithic Period and Bronze Age in what is now Europe and the Americas. In some societies, especially tribal societies, cannibalism Is a cultural norm. Consumption of a person from within the same community is called endocannibalism; ritual cannibalism of the recently deceased can be part of the grieving process.

The Archaeological dig site in Herxheim Germany has unearthed a 7, 000-year-old burial ground with evidence of mass cannibalism. Archaeologists from the University of Bordeaux said they found the remains of almost 500 people who possibly eaten during ritual burials In Europe's early Neolithic period. Herxheim was first excavated from 1996 to 1999, yielding remains of a large structure, pottery and what appeared to be two parallel ditches encircling the settlement.

Closer inspection revealed that the ditches had been formed by overlapping pits that had been dug over several centuries, apparently not exclusively to hold the dead. The structures at Herxheim suggested that of a large village spanning up to 6 hectares surrounded by ovoid pits dug over several centuries. These pits eventually cut into one another, forming a semi-circular enclosure ditch split into three sections. The structures within the enclosure eroded over time, and "yielded only a small number of settlement pits and a few graves".

These pits were either trapezoidal or triangular in nature. Team leader Archaeologist Bruno Boulesun, from the University of Bordeaux in France, told BBC News that he and his colleagues had found evidence the human ones were deliberately cut and broken indicating cannibalism. Herxheim offers rare evidence of ritual cannibalism during the early Neolithic period. In most of them the human remains appear as a scatter of bone fragments, as many as 2000. The skulls seem to have been treated specially, seldom being found intact but often as calotte intentionally grouped to form a kind of 'nest'.

Other, much less numerous, deposits have yielded intact bones from partially dislocated bodies which still show some anatomical connections (torsos, limbs or parts of limbs). Usually come from the extremities (skull and legs). Dog bones are quite numerous, and several deposits also yielded horn-cores from bovine. The artefacts found with the human remains are generally also intentionally mutilated. Cut marks found on the skeleton suggest dismemberment and filleting process. Bones were also crushed for the purposes of marrow extraction, and chewed.

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Besides the fresh-bone fractures present on many bones, "processing" for marrow is also suggested by the presence of scrape marks in the marrow cavity on two fragments. Skeletal representation analysis revealed that many of the "spongy bone" elements - such as the spinal column, patella, ilium, and sternum - were underrepresented compared to what would be expected in a mass grave. All these observations are similar to those observed in animal butchery. Additionally, preferential chewing of the metapodials and hand phalanges "speaks strongly in favour of human choice rather than more or less random action by carnivores".

Due to the dental scrapes left in the bone by human incisors the supports the theory of cannibalism. Bruno Boulestin, the team's leader, told the BBC: "We see patterns on the bones of animals indicating that they have been spit-roasted. We have seen some of these same patterns on the human bones." The people of Herxheim lived by the Linearbandkeramik Culture (LBK). Styles of LBK pottery, some of a high quality, were discovered at the site from local populations as well as from distant lands from the north and east, even as far as 500 kilometres away from the excavation site. Local flint as well as flints from distance sources was also found.