

## RECONSTRUCTING SPATIO-TEMPORAL TRENDS IN BOG EXPLOITATION AND RECLAMATION IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

Author: Mr Paulissen, Maurice - Wageningen University (Presenting author)

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Large parts of the Dutch sandy soils and adjacent parts of the Northwest European plain were once covered by raised bogs. In particular in the Netherlands, most of these have disappeared since the Medieval Period due to reclamation and peat exploitation. What remains is natural and cultural heritage under pressure. Given the rarity of bog remnants, current environmental pressures on them, and the unique character of bog reclamation landscapes from an international viewpoint, there are important knowledge gaps relating to the history of human bog use and conversion. Research has traditionally focused on data collection and description, mostly in regional studies. There is a need for contextualisation and interpretation from a wider spatial and temporal perspective. As environmental and cultural data on bog use have hardly been integrated, an interdisciplinary approach is essential. Moreover, no proactive strategies have been designed for sustainable management of bog-related cultural phenomena and historical bog reclamation landscapes. Fortunately, the potential of the available datasets is high. Dutch data on archaeological finds, habitation patterns and reclamation history are relatively detailed. This paper introduces a new project that aims to (1) analyse spatio-temporal trends in bog reclamation and exploitation in the 'upland' parts of the Netherlands and adjacent areas since the Middle Ages; (2) analyse the survival of remains from different 'time-layers' in the modern-day landscape; (3) contribute to proactive strategies for the sustainable management of bogs and their cultural heritage. We will apply a multiproxy approach including analysis of archival and literature sources, physical-geographical databases and fieldnames, and will focus on three to six study areas. The study will provide the first detailed overview of bog reclamation developments in the Netherlands and adjacent areas, from a novel landscape-oriented and interdisciplinary approach.