

# Cannibalism

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In a lecture at the Twelfth Northwest Conference for Christian Reconstruction in Seattle May 2, 1992, Otto Scott stated, that wherever Christianity was spread, it stopped multiple cruel and bloody practices like human sacrifices, anthropophagy, head hunting, torture, etc.<sup>1</sup> But secular historians prefer to either ignore these achievements or to censure Christian historians because they have no evidence for these practices in pre-Christian times.

After Otto Scott's lecture I discussed the lecture with Rousas John Rushdoony and his wife Dorothy. They asked me, whether I would agree as a cultural anthropologist (my second profession). I heartedly agreed with Otto Scott, seeing the same unscientific behaviour among cultural anthropologists as among historians. I promised Dr. Rushdoony to put this into print.

But I had to admit that I was a bad example myself! Following the line of the American cultural anthropologist, William Arens,<sup>2</sup> I had published the result of my "research", that we have no real provable evidence for man-eating in history except by people regarded as criminals by their own people.<sup>3</sup>

I did not say the same about human sacrifices. But I believed that human sacrifices were part of past history, not part of the present, even though I had visited several historical sites of human sacrifices. In Tunisia I visited for example old Carthage with the ruins of the statue and the altar of Moloch, mentioned often enough in the Old Testament. In Indonesia I visited Mt. Bromo, an active vulcano, where the Tenggerese (today 400,000 members, the forth biggest people of Java) sacrificed human beings and animals to appease the demons of the vulcano. It seems that human sacrifice is still being practised

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1 The lecture was published as Otto Scott. "The Great Christian Revolution: Part One". *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 13 (1994) 2: Symposium on the Decline and Fall of the West and the Return of Christendom. pp. 1-10.

2 William Arens. *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy*. Oxford University Press: New York, 1979.

3 Thomas Schirmacher. "Die Kannibalen: Mythen der Wissenschaft 1". *Factum* No. 5, 1988: 184-188 ('researched' 1983-1986).

today, but cultural anthropologists and journalists do no research on the subject or claim the evidence to be merely rumor. (One exception is Patrick Tierney's book on ongoing human sacrifices in the Andes.<sup>4</sup> From time to time newspapers report on cannibalism and human sacrifices in Latin America and Africa.<sup>5</sup>)

Finally, when I recognized my errors, I began to gather evidence for man-eating and human sacrifices in history and published the results as a revocation in the same scientific journal.<sup>6</sup> (Perhaps sometime somebody will be able and willing, to translate these articles from German into English.)

I was particularly interested in collecting texts of cultural anthropologists which condemn missionaries and other Westerners for condemning human sacrifice and cannibalism. These texts condone such practices as elements of a different culture, which gives them meaning within a different system of different values! Many reports on head hunting, anthropophagy or human sacrifices are more or less apologies for these cruel behaviours.

The English discoverer Sir Richard Burton was against the abolition of the mass sacrifices of a yearly ceremony with 500 to 1,000 sacrifices for the production of a certain medicine in Dahomé (West Africa), because this would be destroying the country.<sup>7</sup> Is conservation of a culture consequently to be regarded as more important than the protection of human life? Should the culture of German National Socialism—which still captivated millions of people—have also been preserved by the Allies at all costs?

Let us take another example: According to the ethnologist Michelle Zimbalist Ronald,<sup>8</sup> the last decapitation in connection with headhunting among the Ingolotes was reported to have taken place in the year 1972. Nigel Davies comments: “The ethnologist declares that the execution was due to ritual reasons and not influenced by politics”.<sup>9</sup> Shouldn't one care about ritual, religiously-motivated murder, but only about murder with a political background? What sort of ethical standards lead such an evaluation?

The German professor of ethnology Hanns J. Prem writes: “Meanwhile the worldview which motivates human sacrifice is finding increasing sympathy”.<sup>10</sup> The theory of

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4 Patrick Tierney. *Zu Ehren der Götter: Menschenopfer in den Anden*. Droemer Knaur: München, 1989 (American original: *The Highest Altar*, 1989).

5 E. G. the AFP-news clip quoted in DIE WELT 2.9.1995, p. G1 on a priest sentenced in Gabun because he sacrificed 6 people and afterwards ate them at least in part.

6 Thomas Schirrmacher. "Ehrenrettung von Kannibalismus und Menschenopfer? 1. Teil". *Factum* No. 6, 1994: 46-50 and "Ehrenrettung von Kannibalismus und Menschenopfer? 2. Teil". *Factum* No. 7/8, 1994: 36-41.

7 See Nigel Davies. *Opfertod und Menschenopfer: Glaube, Liebe und Verzweiflung in der Geschichte der Menschheit*. Econ: Düsseldorf, 1981. pp. 173-178, esp. p. 176.

8 Michelle Zimbalist Ronaldo. "Skulls and Causality". *Man* (London) 12 (1977) 1: 168-169.

9 Nigel Davies. op. cit. p. 319.

10 Hanns J. Prem. *Geschichte Altamerikas. Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte* 23. E. Oldenbourg: München, 1989. p. 172. He uses esp. M. León-Portilla. "Die Religion". pp. 236-258 in: Hanns J. Prem, U. Dyckerhoff (ed.). *Das Alte Mexiko*. München, 1986.

evolution of course plays an important role in this interpretation.<sup>11</sup>

As a matter of principle, not even cannibalism may be called into question, for another religion may under no conditions be subjected to criticism. Nigel Davies writes concerning another scientist: "Ewald Volhard emphasizes, that if there had been any non-ritual cannibalism at all, it had been some ritual man eating of minor significance. Therefore one can not condemn the practice out of hand without condemning the religion and the rites based on it".<sup>12</sup>

Also typical are the different attempts at explanations for cannibalism. Michael Harner has rightly hinted that interest is normally concentrated on the human sacrifices of the Aztecs, whereas cannibalism going hand in hand with human sacrifices is only rarely reported or investigated. The fact that the heart of the victim was cut out and sacrificed to the sun god is generally known. Less known is what was done to the rest of the body. On the basis of modern Spanish sources, Harner concludes that both arms and legs were normally eaten.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly enough, his explanation of the Aztec cannibalism is as dreadful as wrong. Harner, who has made himself a name as an ethnologist<sup>14</sup> has formulated the thesis that the human sacrifices are the consequence of population density and lack of protein because of the absence of pets.<sup>15</sup> This is typical of an evolutionist.

On the other hand, one seems to want cannibalism to die out. Anthropologists attack Christianity for its enmity to cannibalism, but generally forget that this very enmity is leading to the suppression of the practice.

An early example is J. A. MacCulloch in the year 1932. He discusses all possible theories why cannibalism decreased in many places. In this context MacCulloch mentions the "presence of a higher developed civilisation and especially a higher developed religion". He hints at the fact that Islam made an end to cannibalism in North- and East Africa and only at the end, so to say, casually concludes: "Christianity together with other European

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11 A good example is A. A. Demarest. "Overview: Mesoamerican Human Sacrifice in Evolutionary Perspectives". S. 227-243 in: E. H. Boone (Hg.). *Ritual human sacrifice in Mesoamerica*. Washington, 1984.

12 Nigel Davies. op. cit. pp. 192-193 on Ewald Volhard. *Kannibalismus*. Stricker und Schröder: Stuttgart, 1951.

13 Ibid. p. 120.

14 See esp. his famous book on the headhunting of the Jivaro: Michael J. Harner. *The Jivaro*. University of California Press: Los Angeles, 1973; see Nigel Davies. op. cit. p. 313-316.

15 Michael Harner. op. cit. Marvin Harris. *Kannibalen und Könige: Aufstieg und Niedergang der Menschheitskulturen*. Frankfurt, 1978. pp. 153-159 (engl.: Marvin Harris. *Cannibals and Kings*. Random House: New York [NY], 1977) agrees with Harner. The thesis of Harner is denied by the following authors: B. R. Ortiz de Montellano. "Aztec Cannibalism: An Ecological Necessity?". *Science* 200 (1978): 611-617; M. Sahlins. "Reply to Marvin Harris". *New York Review of Books* 28 (1979): June: 52-53; Nigel B. Davies. op. cit. pp. 9+262-267; G. W. Conrad, A. A. Demarest. *Religion and Empire: The Dynamics of Aztec and Inca Expansionism*. Cambridge, 1984. pp. 165-170; Peggy Reeves Sanday. *Divine Hunger: Cannibalism as a Cultural System*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1986. pp. 15-20; W. Haberland. "Das Hochtal von Mexiko". pp. 19-86 in: *Glanz und Untergang des Alten Mexiko: Die Azteken und ihre Vorläufer*. Mainz, 1986, esp. pp. 80-82.

civilising influences has put an end to it (to cannibalism), that is in many parts of South America, New Zealand, on many islands of the South Pacific, the former center of cannibalism and in many parts of the African continent”.<sup>16</sup>

According to this, memories of cannibalism have been mostly lost. In the year 1977 Queen Elizabeth II. in New Guinea received a framework with two skulls (“Ariba”) from the Goariba Islands as a present, the “only location of which is known that missionaries were the victims of cannibals. 1901 the clergyman James Chalmers, his assistant preacher and eleven young Papuan converts were slain”.<sup>17</sup> The Queen accepted the present without protest<sup>18</sup> and presented it to the British Museum in London.<sup>19</sup> No one mentions the fact that this object offers evidence of murder.

The effort of the missionaries against cannibalism, human sacrifice and head hunting was in those days considered as effort in favor of “human rights”. Today it is considered as a violation of human rights by so-called organisations for human rights. In those days, the rights of the victims were respected, today the rights of the offender.

Some authors even want to turn the tables on that. So we can read in a book of one journalist and ethnologist full of hatred for Christian mission work: “In any case, the missionary agencies mark the beginning of the cultural decline of the primitive peoples ... This is true not only for missing links in their line of ancestors ... but also for the prohibition of head hunting and cannibalism, both of which seem natural and humane to us. But the prohibition of the inhuman can also have inhuman effects. The wellknown American anthropologist Margaret Mead in her book *Sex and Temperament in three Primitive Societies* gave a report on a Papua-tribe of New Guinea, the Mundugumor. She explained that the prohibition of head hunting and cannibalism completely destroyed the tribe in its life substance, 'like a watch, whose spring breaks'. But for cannibals and head hunters the unacceptability of such a prohibition derives not only from their own imagination—as if they were to prohibit us from slaughtering swine and oxen and eating them—but from their own experience of white people.”<sup>20</sup>

Therefore the prohibition against slaughtering cows would be the same as the prohibition against slaughtering men? What do these ethnologists really think about the victims? In addition, it was proven a long time ago that Mead's research is purely wishful thinking. She discovered what she wanted to discover in complete misapprehension of the facts and

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16 Ibid.

17 Nigel Davies. op. cit. p. 318.

18 In contrast to this, the missionaries were deeply shocked being confronted with such phenomena until our century. A classic example concerning this is Wilson S. Naylor. *Daybreak in the Dark Continent*. The Forward Mission Study Course. Laymen's Missionary Movement: New York (NY), 1908, pp. 90-91 (human sacrifices) and pp. 92-93 (cannibalism).

19 Nigel Davies. op. cit. p. 318.

20 Peter Baumann, Helmut Uhlig. *Kein Platz für 'wilde' Menschen: Das Schicksal der letzten Naturvölker*. Molden: Wien, 1974. p. 220.

the hard reality of the tribe she was researching.<sup>21</sup>

Accordingly, the authors agree with the decision of an Australian judge to exonerate head hunters when they explained to him that there is no difference between intertribal feuds/rivalries and the wars of the West.<sup>22</sup> How true! As the authors would probably disapprove of any offensive warfare, they should at the same time disapprove of intertribal rivalries and punish them! Will it then also be possible to justify murder in court with comparison with existing warfare? Would the authors have been willing to keep National Socialism alive, since its culture would have been destroyed by the prohibition from executing the Jews and the enemies of the Third Reich? A culture, which makes murder an element of its existence must, according to biblical teaching, be destroyed. "For all who live by the sword will die by the sword" (Mt 26,52).

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21 Esp. Derek Freeman. *Liebe ohne Aggression: Margaret Meads Legende von der Friedfertigkeit der Naturvölker*. Kindler: München, 1983 (engl. Original).

22 Ibid. pp. 220-221.