

Did "Mexika Human Sacrifice" Exist?

By Kurly Tlapoyawa

"After careful and systematic study of the sources, I find no sign of evidence of institutionalized mass human sacrifice among the Aztecs. The phenomenon to be studied, therefore, may not be these supposed sacrifices but the deeply rooted belief that they occurred."

- Dr. Peter Hassler

Books written about the Mexikah usually waste no time in describing the genocidal acts of mass human sacrifice allegedly carried out by our ancestors. In fact, the story has been repeated so often, and with such near-religious zeal, that it has become accepted as common knowledge. Rarely, if ever, are the sources of these claims ever questioned. But as we will soon discover, the idea that our ancestors practiced human sacrifice is not only absurd, it is a calculated lie which was carried out and promoted by the Spanish propaganda machine.

By de-humanizing our ancestors in the eyes of the world, the Spaniards managed to justify the systematic butchery and rape of our people. We must remember that the Spaniards had just carried out the inquisition, and the techniques of demonizing their enemies had been perfected in a holy war against the Muslims and Jews. Back in Europe the Spaniards had successfully created an image of the Jew as a demon-possessed servant of evil, who plotted to sacrifice Christian children as offerings to his god. An overwhelming majority of people actually believed this, and the Jews suffered greatly as a result. So when the Spaniards brought their holy war to Ixachilan, it was only a matter of de-humanizing our people in the same manner.

But where does the myth of Aztekah human sacrifice come from? In 1522, Hernan Cortez wrote a letter to the king of Spain describing an alleged sacrifice of Spanish soldiers shortly after a Mexikah victory. Cortez claimed that he and his men observed these sacrifices from Tlakopan, while they took place on the main temple in Mexiko-Tenochtitlan. A feat which was physically impossible, as the Spaniards were separated from Tenochtitlan by over three miles of water. Bernal Diaz del Castillo also gave an account of this incident in his book "The true history of the conquest of New Spain," published in 1631. An entire industry based on the premise that human sacrifice took place has thrived to this day, solely based on the words of just TWO men. Of course, both had a vested interest in demonizing our ancestors, a fact most modern scholars choose to overlook.

The ONLY other account EVER given of human sacrifice comes from the Maya of the Yukatan. During the inquisition of the Maya, which lasted from 1561 to 1565, the Spaniards managed to torture confessions of human sacrifice out of a few Mayan captives. Of course, all this manages to prove is just how savage the Spaniards truly were - and how far they would go to justify their actions.

Why then have the lies of Cortez and his men gone unchallenged for more than 500 years? It seems that so-called historians and ethnologists have been quick to accept the words of fellow white men on face value, and have conducted their research accordingly. Archeologists fail to question the true meanings of their findings, and instead chalk up all Mexikan human remains as evidence of sacrifice. This is known as circular reasoning:

1. *The Spaniards, along with christianized Natives claimed that human sacrifice existed.*
 2. *Such claims are eagerly accepted without ever questioning the motives of the Spaniards.*
 3. *Archeologists assume that human sacrifice took place, and whenever they discover human remains, they credit their findings to sacrifice.*
 4. *The works of such archeologists are published, reinforcing the myth of human sacrifice. Such writings are then blindly accepted as fact, based on historical "evidence," such as.....*
1. *The Spaniards, along with christianized Natives claimed that human sacrifice existed...etc., etc.*

But what about all of the so-called physical evidence which “proves” that human sacrifice took place? To fully understand the various ceremonial artifacts and works of art which supposedly offer proof of human sacrifice, we must first understand the philosophical significance behind each item.

For example, in our traditional societies the maguey plant holds an extremely high level of importance: its fiber is woven into clothing, its leaves have medicinal value, and its sap is fermented into an alcoholic drink known as Pulke or Okti. No part of the maguey plant is wasted. However, when the plant reaches a certain age, its stock becomes too heavy to support its own weight and can tip over, killing the plant. This stock, which is metaphorically known as the “heart” of the maguey, is ceremonially removed from the plant and eaten. Since our ancestors described this process using metaphorical symbols and artwork, it has been misinterpreted as the re-telling of ritual human sacrifice.

Among the remains which “prove” human sacrifice took place are the human skulls which were mounted on the infamous “skull racks” in the main plazas. As shocking as they may be, these skulls served a perfectly reasonable purpose in Anawak societies. Our ancestors had very strict laws, and anyone caught stealing, abusing alcohol, or committing adultery would be put to death. The skulls of these people were then cleaned and placed on public display, a grisly reminder of the consequences for breaking the law.

Not surprisingly, the number of skulls on display was greatly exaggerated by Spanish soldiers, who claimed that over 27,000 skulls rested on one rack alone! This number is often repeated by so-called scholars as fact, yet examinations of the skull racks reveal that they could have held around 2,760 skulls at most. If what the Spaniards said was true, it would have required skull racks over six hundred feet tall to accommodate such a large amount of skulls - a ridiculous claim to say the least. In fact, archeological digs have unearthed exactly 170 human skulls which had been placed on skull racks, a far cry from the estimated thousands supposedly “witnessed” by the Spaniards.

Other skulls which are counted as “proof” of human sacrifice are those which have been decorated with flint stones jutting out from the nasal cavity and mouth. In traditional Anawak culture, the flint represents a cutting ray of knowledge. It is most likely that these skulls belonged to the teachers, elders and leaders of our people. The flint stones were probably inserted shortly before burial, representing the cutting rays of knowledge which emanated from these great people. While this may sound strange to some, we must understand that the beauty of metaphor was not wasted on our

people. Our ancestors had an exact understanding of our reality, and chose to express this understanding through art, poetry, song and dance. Scientists however, have chosen to examine such practices as if they were literal, and have ignored the use of metaphor altogether.

One of the supposed "Gods" which our ancestors offered human sacrifice to was the philosophical energy known as Xipe Totek. As evidence of this, archeologists offer various sculptures of human figures which have two layers of skin, the outer layer often depicted as loosely hanging off the body. According to archeologists, this proves that the Mexikah offered human sacrifice to Xipe Totek by cutting off all of the victims skin, which was then "worn" by a priest who danced around in it. While this makes for a good story, such a claim hardly stands up to scrutiny.

Xipe Totek is an energy which represents re-birth and new life. This is reflected in the natural world by the changing of the seasons, human growth, birth, and animals shedding their skin. Knowing this, the true meaning of the sculptures becomes obvious: they represent Xipe Totek in action. To our people, Xipe Totek represents the constant changes which human beings undergo throughout our lifetime. The sculptures show this by depicting people "shedding" their flesh and transforming into something new.

Obviously, anthropologists and archeologists are not aware of the rich philosophical meanings behind each artifact they "discover," nor do they have any intention of finding such things out for themselves. As a result, we have an entire school of thought based on half-truths, outright lies and ignorant assumptions. This is what passes for scholarly work when it comes to our people. But the dangers of carrying out such careless research is obvious.

Imagine a future archeologist who is excavating the ruins of a now extinct Catholic church. As the dig proceeds, this person finds multiple images of men being nailed to crosses, a decorated altar and "sacred" texts which speak of bizarre rituals in which followers of this faith consume the flesh and blood of another. Upon further examination, large chalices are found, along with a gravesite located behind the main building. This archeologist, not knowing the true purpose behind each artifact is likely to conclude that the church he has discovered was once a place of worship used by practitioners of human sacrifice and cannibalism. The archeologist would report that the worshippers crucified their victims on crosses, then placed the dead body on the altar where it was quickly divided up and eaten by the worshippers - blood dripping from the chalices as they drank it down. Whatever was left of this poor soul was then taken out back and buried.

The scientific community would be thrilled over such a macabre discovery, and the writings of this archeologist would then become a primary source for others in the same field. Based on uninformed assumptions, this archeologist has slandered an entire religion. Through time, the lie would be repeated so often and with such authority, that eventually it would be accepted as "common knowledge." Does this sound far-fetched? One would hope so. Unfortunately, the snow job being carried out against our people shows us that it is very real.

Even with all metaphorical and philosophical beliefs put aside, the argument for human sacrifice does not hold up. According to the Spaniards, our ancestors sacrificed people by laying them across altars and cutting open their chests with obsidian blades, enabling the "priests" to tear out their hearts. All of this was supposedly done in order to please the "Gods" and help our people to prosper. Yet even with

modern surgical technology, such an operation requires a scalpel and a rib spreader. Admittedly, obsidian blades serve as perfect scalpels, but rib spreaders were in short supply in the 1400's. Such a task would have required two strong men pulling on either side of a man's rib cage to create an opening wide enough to get at the heart. Not impossible, but hardly practical. Not to mention extremely sloppy for what was supposedly a very "sacred" ritual.

Things really get ludicrous when believers in Mexikah human sacrifice start suggesting the amount of people who fell prey to this practice. For the dedication of the main temple alone it has been stated that 60,000 people were sacrificed over a four day period. This means that roughly one person was sacrificed every six seconds, non-stop for 96 hours straight! Not very likely. Of course, the logical response to such an accusation is: where are the bodies? Unfortunately for sacrifice pushers, they simply do not exist.

Obviously, it would be naive to claim that every depiction of death seen in Anawak artwork is actually a metaphorical expression. Some of these images must represent actual deaths taking place. But why do "historians" rush to the conclusion that these deaths were by human sacrifice? We know that our ancestors had a strict legal system, with various crimes being punishable by death. It seems likely that depictions of people being put to death are actually records of such laws being carried out. The depiction of murder being committed is also likely. But these explanations are far too logical, and hardly conform to the savage images of our people created by the white man.

When examining pre-Kuauhtemok artwork, we must not allow our perception of the past to be clouded by pre-conceived Eurocentric notions. This is OUR history, and it is our duty to record it properly. Besides, if modern Europeans continue to insist that Sacrifice took place, we should remind them that never once was an eye witness or reliable account of sacrifice ever recorded. But there exists a wealth of documentation concerning white people sacrificing people and even committing cannibalism to this very day!