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## Chapter 1 : Human Sacrifice: An Overview | calendrierdelascience.com

*Human Sacrifices of Cosmic Order and Regeneration: Structure and Meaning in Moche Iconography, Peru, AD (British Archaeological Reports) First Edition Edition.*

But the original use of the term was peculiarly religious, referring to a cultic act in which objects were set apart or consecrated and offered to a god or some other supernatural power; thus, sacrifice should be understood within a religious, cultic context. This relationship may be conceived in a variety of forms. Although moral conduct, right belief, and participation in religious institutions are commonly constituent elements of the religious life, cult or worship is generally accepted as the most basic and universal element. In a sense, what is always offered in sacrifice is, in one form or another, life itself. Sacrifice is a celebration of life, a recognition of its divine and imperishable nature. In the sacrifice the consecrated life of an offering is liberated as a sacred potency that establishes a bond between the sacrificer and the sacred power. Through sacrifice, life is returned to its divine source, regenerating the power or life of that source; life is fed by life. Thus the word of the Roman sacrificer to his god: In a sense, sacrifice is the impetus and guarantee of the reciprocal flow of the divine life-force between its source and its manifestations. Often the act of sacrifice involves the destruction of the offering, but this destruction—whether by burning, slaughter, or whatever means—is not in itself the sacrifice. Sacrifice as such, however, is the total act of offering and not merely the method in which it is performed. Although the fundamental meaning of sacrificial rites is that of effecting a necessary and efficacious relationship with the sacred power and of establishing man and his world in the sacred order, the rites have assumed a multitude of forms and intentions. The basic forms of sacrifice, however, seem to be some type of either sacrificial gift or sacramental meal. Sacrifice as a gift may refer either to a gift that should be followed by a return gift because of the intimate relationship that gift giving establishes or to a gift that is offered in homage to a god without expectation of a return. Sacrifice as a sacramental communal meal may involve the idea of the god as a participant in the meal or as identical with the food consumed; it may also involve the idea of a ritual meal at which either some primordial event such as creation is repeated or the sanctification of the world is symbolically renewed. Theories of the origin of sacrifice Since the rise of the comparative or historical study of religions in the latter part of the 19th century, attempts have been made to discover the origins of sacrifice. These attempts, though helpful for a greater understanding of sacrifice, have not been conclusive. In Sir Edward Burnett Tylor , a British anthropologist, proposed his theory that sacrifice was originally a gift to the gods to secure their favour or to minimize their hostility. In the course of time the primary motive for offering sacrificial gifts developed into homage, in which the sacrificer no longer expressed any hope for a return, and from homage into abnegation and renunciation, in which the sacrificer more fully offered himself. William Robertson Smith , a Scottish Semitic scholar and encyclopaedist, marked a new departure with his theory that the original motive of sacrifice was an effort toward communion among the members of a group, on the one hand, and between them and their god, on the other. Communion was brought about through a sacrificial meal. In general, the totem animal is taboo for the members of its clan, but on certain sacred occasions the animal is eaten in a sacramental meal that ensures the unity of the clan and totem and thus the well-being of the clan. The later forms of sacrifice retained some sacramental character: From the communion sacrifice Smith derived the expiatory or propitiatory forms of sacrifice, which he termed piaculum, and the gift sacrifice. There were great difficulties with this theory: Sir James George Frazer , a British anthropologist and folklorist, author of *The Golden Bough*, saw sacrifice as originating from magical practices in which the ritual slaying of a god was performed as a means of rejuvenating the god. When he became old and weak, his mana weakened, and the tribe was in danger of decline. The king was thus slain and replaced with a vigorous successor. In this way the god was slain to save him from decay and to facilitate his rejuvenation. The old god appeared to carry away with him various weaknesses and fulfilled the role of an expiatory victim and scapegoat. This occurs through the mediation of

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the ritually slain victim, which acts as a buffer between the two realms, and through participation in a sacred meal. The rituals chosen by Hubert and Mauss for analysis, however, are not those of preliterate societies. Another study by Mauss helped to broaden the notion of sacrifice as gift. It was an old idea that man makes a gift to the god but expects a gift in return. In the Vedic religion, the oldest stratum of religion known to have existed in India, one of the Brahmanas commentaries on the Vedas, or sacred hymns, that were used in ritual sacrifices expressed the same principle: The gift thus creates a bond. Even more, however, it makes power flow both ways to connect the giver and the receiver; it invites a gift in return. Gerardus van der Leeuw, a Dutch historian of religion, developed this notion of gift in the context of sacrifice. In sacrifice a gift is given to the god, and thus man releases a flow between himself and the god. German anthropologists have emphasized the idea of culture history, in which the entire history of mankind is seen as a system of coherent and articulated phases and strata, with certain cultural phenomena appearing at specific levels of culture. Leo Frobenius, the originator of the theory that later became known as the *Kulturkreislehre*, distinguished the creative or expressive phase of a culture, in which a new insight assumes its specific form, and the phase of application, in which the original significance of the new insight degenerates. Working within this context, Adolf E. Jensen attempted to explain why men have resorted to the incomprehensible act of killing other men or animals and eating them for the glorification of a god or many gods. Blood sacrifice is linked not with the cultures of the hunter-gatherers but with those of the cultivators; its origin is in the ritual killing of the archaic cultivator cultures, which, in turn, is grounded in myth. For Jensen the early cultivators all knew the idea of a mythic primal past in which not men but Dema lived on the earth and prominent among them were the Dema-deities. The central element of the myth is the slaying of a Dema-deity, an event that inaugurated human history and gave shape to the human lot. The Dema became men, subject to birth and death, whose self-preservation depends upon the destruction of life. The deity became in some way associated with the realm of the dead, and, from the body of the slain deity, crop plants originated, so that the eating of the plants is an eating of the deity. Ritual killing, whether of animals or men, is a cultic reenactment of the mythological event. Strictly speaking, the action is not a sacrifice because there is no offering to a god; rather, it is a way to keep alive the memory of primeval events. Blood sacrifice as found in the later higher cultures is a persistence of the ritual killing in a degenerated form. Because the victim is identified with the deity, later expiatory sacrifices also become intelligible: Another interpretation of some historical interest is that of Sigmund Freud in his work *Totem und Tabu*; Eng. It is normal for a child to wish to have a sexual relationship with its mother and to will the death of its father; this is often achieved symbolically. In the primal horde, although the sons did slay their father, they never consummated a sexual union with their mother; in fact, they set up specific taboos against such sexual relations. According to Freud, the ritual slaughter of an animal was instituted to reenact the primeval act of parricide. The rite, however, reflected an ambivalent attitude. After the primal father had been slain, the sons felt some remorse for their act, and, thus, the sacrificial ritual expressed the desire not only for the death of the father but also for reconciliation and communion with him through the substitute victim. Freud claimed that his reconstruction of the rise of sacrifice was historical, but this hardly seems probable. He noted that the time and frequency of sacrifice and the type and quality of victim are affected by economic considerations; that the procedure of collective sacrifice involves not only the symbol of group unity but also a lightening of the economic burden or any one participant; that the use of surrogate victims and the reservation of the sacrificial food for consumption are possibly ways of meeting the problem of resources. Firth concluded that sacrifice is ultimately a personal act in which the self is symbolically given, but it is an act that is often conditioned by economic rationality and prudent calculation. Most social anthropologists and historians of religion in the mid-twentieth century, however, concentrated less on worldwide typologies or evolutionary sequences and more on investigations of specific historically related societies. Consequently, since World War II there have been few formulations of general theories about the origin of sacrifice, but there have been important studies of sacrifice within particular cultures. Evans-Pritchard acknowledged, however, that the Nuer have many kinds of sacrifice and that no single formula adequately

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explains all types. Furthermore, he did not maintain that his interpretations of his materials were of universal applicability. Many scholars would agree that, though it is easy to make a long list of many kinds of sacrifice, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a satisfactory system in which all forms of sacrifice may be assigned a suitable place. Analysis of the rite of sacrifice It is possible to analyze the rite of sacrifice in terms of six different elements: These categories are not of equal importance and often overlap. Sacrificer In general, it may be said that the one who makes sacrifices is man, either an individual or a collective group—a family, a clan, a tribe, a nation, a secret society. Frequently, special acts must be performed by the sacrificer before and sometimes also after the sacrifice. In the Vedic cult, the sacrificer and his wife were required to undergo an initiation diksha involving ritual bathing, seclusion, fasting, and prayer, the purpose of which was to remove them from the profane world and to purify them for contact with the sacred world. There are sacrifices in which there are no participants other than the individual or collective sacrificer. Usually, however, one does not venture to approach sacred things directly and alone; they are too lofty and serious a matter. An intermediary—certain persons or groups who fulfill particular requirements or qualifications—is necessary. In many cases, sacrificing by unauthorized persons is expressly forbidden and may be severely punished; e. The qualified person—whether the head of a household, the old man of a tribe, the king, or the priest—acts as the appointed representative on behalf of a community. The head of the household as sacrificer is a familiar figure in the Bible, particularly in the stories of the patriarchs. e. Generally, in cattle-keeping tribes with patriarchal organization, the paterfamilias long remained the person who carried out sacrifices, and it was only at a late date that a separate caste of priests developed among these peoples. In ancient China too, sacrifices were presided over not by a professional priesthood but by the head of the family or, in the case of state sacrifices, by the ruler. The old man or the elders of the tribe are in charge of sacrifices among several African peoples. Similarly, among peoples in Australia the leading role in all sacrificial acts is filled by the old men as bearers of tradition and authority. In cases in which there is a matriarchal organization, as in some parts of West Africa, the oldest woman of the family acts as priestess. The king has played an important role as the person active in sacrificing, particularly in those cultures in which he not only has temporal authority but also fulfills a religious function. The fact that the king is the primary sacrificer may stem from two roots. It may be that the most important gods of the state were originally family gods of the rulers, and, thus, the king is simply continuing the task of paterfamilias, only now on behalf of the whole community. The second root lies in the notion of sacred kingship, according to which the royal office is sacred and the king set apart from ordinary people is the intercessor with the supernatural world. These two concepts often go together. Thus, in ancient Egypt the pharaoh was divine because he descended from the sun god Re. The pharaoh stood for Horus, the son of Re. The concepts of the god as family ancestor and of sacred kingship were combined. Although worship in ancient Egypt was controlled by a powerful priesthood, officially all sacrifices were regarded as made by the pharaoh. Most frequently, the intermediary between the community and the god, between the profane and the sacred realms, is the priest. As a rule, not everyone can become a priest; there are requirements of different kinds to be satisfied. Usually, the priest must follow some training, which may be long and severe, There is always some form of consecration he has to undergo. For communities in which a priest functions, he is the obvious person to make sacrifices. The sacrificer is not always man, however; at times gods also make sacrifices. Examples of this are found chiefly in India and are set down particularly in the Brahmana texts; e. Material of the oblation Any form under which life manifests itself in the world or in which life can be symbolized may be a sacrificial oblation. In fact, there are few things that have not, at some time or in some place, served as an offering.

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## Chapter 2 : Human sacrifice | Revolv

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Mitigating Order with Chaos the modern idea 1. In general, a primordial being is killed or dismembered and from the pieces of his body the universe is made Lincoln , 2. Together they decide to create the universe. This may be the original PIE creation myth Lincoln , 7. In the Rig Veda, the book of hymns from Vedic India, there is a creation myth where Purusha meaning "Person" according to Mahony, is sacrificed and dismembered by the Gods. It can be found in Book 10, Hymn 90, verses Griffith, When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet? The Brahman Priest was in his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya Warrior made. His thighs became the Vaisya Commoners , from his feet the Sudra Servant was produced. Forth from his navel came mid-air; the sky was fashioned from his head; Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions directions? Thus they formed the worlds. In the Poetic Edda, a repository of Norse lore written in Iceland during the 12th or 13th centuries, a similar idea exists. The Romans also had some similar themes in their own lore. In one tale, the twins Romulus and Remus were laying out the walls of the city. In anger, Romulus killed his brother Morford, Plutarch mentions a story in wide circulation about Romulus in his Life of Romulus, chapter But others conjecture that the senators rose up against him and dismembered him in the temple of Hephaistos, distributing his body among themselves , and each one putting a piece in the folds of his robes in order the carry them away. Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions later that the pieces of his body were buried by the Senators, and Walter Burkert has argued that by being placed in the earth, Romulus became the earth, a form of cosmological creation Lincoln , These transformations from the microcosm Twin to the macrocosm creation of cosmos also occur during sacrifice. IE priests claimed to be doing the same thing, though perhaps on a smaller scale, where each sacrifice would be distributed to the cosmos. Without the matter derived from these offerings, the cosmos and the material world would become exhausted and depleted Lincoln , Herodotus, in his History 1. Their wont, however, is to ascend the summits of the loftiest mountains, and there to offer sacrifice to Jupiter, which is the name they give to the whole circuit of the firmament. They likewise offer to the sun and moon, to the earth, to fire, to water, and to the winds. These are the only gods whose worship has come down to them from ancient times. An Indic text, the Aitareya Brahmana 2. Lay his feet down to the north. Cause his eye to go to the sun. Send forth his breath to the wind; his life-force to the atmosphere, his ears to the cardinal points, his flesh to the earth. Thus the Priest places the victim in these worlds. But sacrifice is a two-way street. Not only do we offer to sustain the cosmos, but we can also use sacrifice to transfer the power of the universe into our own bodies. The King, Nuadu, cannot rule because he has lost his hand in battle. Dian Cecht strikes his son three times, but Miach repairs the damage each time. The story continues Blamires, After that, Miach was buried by Dian Cecht, and three hundred and sixty-five herbs grew through the grave, corresponding to the number of his joints and sinews. Then Airmed spread her cloak and uprooted those herbs according to their properties. Dian Cecht came to her and mixed the herbs, so that no one knows their proper healing qualities Ahriman came to the cattle. He struggled against the cattle. As the first ox died, because it possessed the nature and form of plants, fifty-seven species of grain and twelve species of healing plants came into being. Sacrifice is performed to feed the cosmos, as well as the reverse, to regenerate life. The sacrificed animal gives food to the family, promoting life in another form. And as the pruned vines give new and stronger growth so does harvested grain, buried in the ground as seeds, give new grain. And a good motivation for giving could be the formation of relationships where gifts can be received in return. Hospitality, and the obligations pertaining to it on both sides were extremely important. In the tale of the Trojan War, Zeus resolves to destroy the city because Paris violated the laws of hospitality when he stole Helen away from Sparta while staying as a guest under the hospitality of her husband, Menelaus Burkert, This

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would create an obligation of mutual hospitality and friendship that could continue in perpetuity. One famous example of this type of relationship continuing on through generations is that of Glaucus and Diomedes in the Trojan War. Since the time of Hesiod c. In other words, those who have more shall give more. The Greeks carried this to an extreme in their rite called a hecatomb. This rite was a magical act of multiplication. The Greeks would offer one ox in the expectation of receiving oxen from the Gods in return Burkert, 18! Patron

Client In this form of reciprocity, called clientship, the patron and client have mutual responsibilities towards each other that form the basis of the relationship. The patron, the richer and more powerful of the two, provides supplies, money or other needs and the client, in return, performs tasks or provides political support. In Rome, the patron might supply a steady income and in return, the client would run errands or vote as he is told. Since this relationship embraced social, military, political and economic obligations, it was in large part the basis of the power of the nobility. The patron would supply his clients with legal support, political protection, the possibility of sharing in the spoils of war, and even a place filled with the needed tools of farming. A patron who was stingy in fulfilling his side of the bargain might not last too long. However

Blamires, , At that time, Bres held the sovereignty as it had been granted to him. There was great murmuring against him among his maternal kinsmen the Tuatha De, for their knives were not greased by him. However frequently they might come, their breaths did not smell of ale; and they did not see their poets nor their bards nor their satirists nor their harpers nor their pipers nor their horn-blowers nor their jugglers nor their fools entertaining them in the household. With this blemish Bres could no longer be King. Another example, this one from Rome, shows clearly the importance of maintaining the reciprocal relationship. There was an ancient, public ritual called the Evocatio evocation that involved luring the Gods of an enemy city being besieged by the Romans into deserting that city and joining the Roman camp. But part of the ritual involved calling on the Gods to instill fear, terror and forgetfulness italics mine in the enemy people. Should the enemy forget to make their sacrifices to their Gods, the bonds of reciprocity would be broken. So the Gods, driven forth from the city, would still retain their honor because of the forgetfulness of the people Lincoln , The Expectation of Heaven Heaven in Vedic India was the reward of those who did rigorous penance, or heroes who risk their lives in battle which resonates with the Norse ideas of Valhalla , but most of all to those who give liberal sacrificial gifts Macdonell, Coming at early morn he gives his treasure ; the prudent one receives and entertains him. Thereby increasing still his life and offspring, he comes with brave sons to abundant riches. On the high ridge of heaven he stands exalted, yea, to the Gods he goes, the liberal giver. The streams, the waters flow for him with fatness: A Gift Is Part of Oneself The sacrificer is the person who actually performs the sacrifice, while the sacrificant is the person who will be receiving the benefit of the sacrifice Bourdillion, In Vedic culture a householder and his wife would pay the priests to perform a sacrifice, with the intention that the blessings would come to the household. Similarly, in the cities of the Mediterranean, the sacrificers would be professional priests, and the sacrificants would be the people or the State. In cases where a person would be performing their own sacrifice, they would be both sacrificer and sacrificant. Sacrificers can be priests, sacrificing on behalf of clients or the people, senior members of the family such as the Roman Paterfamilias sacrificing for the family, or indeed the supplicant herself. People usually make sacrifices at times of personal or group crisis, or periodically, at special seasonal times, or at the advice of seers or diviners. And what folks usually are doing in sacrifice is performing an act of propitiation, which is done to cause the deities to be favorably inclined, to induce or regain their good will, or to appease or conciliate them Beattie, In giving, a person gives a part of himself. The best gift a person might give to the Gods would actually be his own life, but a sacrificial offering of oneself is rare. In battle against the Gauls, Decius put on ritual garb and went to the priests Roberts: After the usual prayers had been recited he uttered the following awful curse: I will infect the standards, the armour, the weapons of the enemy with dire and manifold death, the place of my destruction shall also witness that of the Gauls and Samnites. And thus the battle was won. Substitution The ancients came up with a handy solution to this problem through the concept of substitution. In the ancient world, the usual and most ideal substitute for the sacrificant would be a domestic animal, such as an ox, goat,

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sheep, etc. Others items were also acceptable, such as precious objects, the first fruits of harvest, etc. The reason for the use of domestic animals was that they were identified with the home, the people who lived there and therefore with man himself, as opposed to nature or the wild Beattie, The closest substitutes for the sacrificant would be another person, a domestic animal, cultivated plants or their products like wine and precious objects. Human Sacrifice This brings up the question of human sacrifice. The closest substitute for a human being would be another human being. And the choice of the victim would be important. It would need to be someone separate from the community criminals, strangers, foreigners, slaves but not too separate, or the substitution might not be of enough equality Green , 30 to act as a stand-in for the sacrificants. In *Acy-Romance in the Ardennes of France*, a bizarre burial was found.

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## Chapter 3 : Aztecs: Regeneration and Ixiptla | AztecsMayasIncas

*Oxford: John and Erica Hedges Ltd. 6. Human sacrifices for cosmic order and regeneration: structure and meaning in Moche iconography, Peru, AD 6. Oxford: John and Erica Hedges Ltd. 7. Human sacrifices for cosmic order and regeneration: structure and meaning in Moche iconography, Peru, AD.*

Name[ edit ] The Mesoamerican ballgame is known by a wide variety of names. In English, it is often called pok-ta-pok or pok-a-tok. This term originates from a article by Danish archaeologist Frans Blom , who adapted it from the Yucatec Maya word pokolpok. In Classical Maya , it was known as pitz. In modern Spanish , it is called juego de pelota maya "Maya ballgame" , [8] juego de pelota mesoamericano "Mesoamerican ballgame" , [9] or simply pelota maya "Maya ball". Five of these balls have been dated to the earliest-known occupational phase for the site, approximately 1000 BCE. A rudimentary ballcourt, dated to a later occupation at San Lorenzo, 1000 BCE, has also been identified. Starting around 1000 BCE or earlier, ballplayer figurines were interred with burials at Tlatilco and similarly styled figurines from the same period have been found at the nearby Tlapacoya site. Although no ballcourts of similar age have been found in Tlatilco or Tlapacoya, it is possible that the ballgame was indeed played in these areas, but on courts with perishable boundaries or temporary court markers. The outfit is similar to that worn by Aztec players. As might be expected with a game played over such a long period of time by many cultures, details varied over time and place, so the Mesoamerican ballgame might be more accurately seen as a family of related games. In general, the hip-ball version is most popularly thought of as the Mesoamerican ballgame, [21] and researchers believe that this version was the primary or perhaps only version played within the masonry ballcourt. Each of the various types of games had its own size of ball, specialized gear and playing field, and rules. Games were played between two teams of players. The number of players per team could vary, between 2 to 4. Even without human sacrifice, the game could be brutal and there were often serious injuries inflicted by the solid, heavy ball. He also reported that players were even killed when the ball "hit them in the mouth or the stomach or the intestines". In modern-day ulama , the game resembles a net-less volleyball , [27] with each team confined to one half of the court. In the most widespread version of ulama, the ball is hit back and forth using only the hips until one team fails to return it or the ball leaves the court. In the Postclassic period, the Maya began placing vertical stone rings on each side of the court, the object being to pass the ball through one, an innovation that continued into the later Toltec and Aztec cultures. In the sixteenth-century Aztec ballgame that the Spaniards witnessed, points were lost by a player who let the ball bounce more than twice before returning it to the other team, who let the ball go outside the boundaries of the court, or who tried and failed to pass the ball through one of the stone rings placed on each wall along the center line. Loincloths are found on the earliest ballplayer figurines from Tlatilco, Tlapacoya, and the Olmec culture, are seen in the Weiditz drawing from below , and, with hip guards, are the sole outfit of modern day ulama players above a span of nearly 5000 years. In many cultures, further protection was provided by a thick girdle , most likely of wicker or wood covered in fabric or leather. Made of perishable materials, none of these girdles have survived, although many stone "yokes" have been uncovered. Misnamed by earlier archaeologists due to its resemblance to an animal yoke , the stone yoke is thought to be too heavy for actual play and was likely used only before or after the game in ritual contexts. Additionally, some players wore chest protectors called palmas which were inserted into the yoke and stood upright in front of the chest. Kneepads are seen on a variety of players from many areas and eras, and are worn by forearm-ulama players today. A type of garter is also often seen, worn just below knee or around the ankle it is not known what function this served. Many ballplayers of the Classic era are seen with a right kneepad no left and a wrapped right forearm, as shown in the Maya image above. Rubber balls[ edit ] In this detail from the late 15th century Codex Borgia , the Aztec god Xiuhtecuhtli brings a rubber ball offering to a temple. The balls each hold a quetzal feather, part of the offering. Mesoamerican rubber balls The sizes or weights of the balls actually used in the ballgame are not known with

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any certainty. While several dozen ancient balls have been recovered, they were originally laid down as offerings in a sacrificial bog or spring, and there is no evidence that any of these were used in the ballgame. In fact, some of these extant votive balls were created specifically as offerings. Someone discovered that by mixing latex with sap from the vine of a species of morning glory *Calonyction aculeatum* they could turn the slippery polymers in raw latex into a resilient rubber. Academic consensus is that these depictions are exaggerations or symbolic, as are, for example, the impossibly unwieldy headdresses worn in the same portrayals. The walls were often plastered and brightly painted. Although the alleys in early ballcourts were open-ended, later ballcourts had enclosed end-zones, giving the structure an -shape when viewed from above. Although the length-to-width ratio remained relatively constant at 4-to-1, [40] there was nonetheless tremendous variation in ballcourt size. The playing field of the Great Ballcourt at Chichen Itza, by far the largest, measures Although ballcourts are found within most sizable Mesoamerican ruins, they are not equally distributed across time or geography. Ballcourts were public spaces used for a variety of elite cultural events and ritual activities like musical performances and festivals, and, of course, the ballgame. Pictorial depictions often show musicians playing at ballgames, while votive deposits buried at the Main Ballcourt at Tenochtitlan contained miniature whistles, ocarinas, and drums. A pre-Columbian ceramic from western Mexico shows what appears to be a wrestling match taking place on a ballcourt. Fray Juan de Torquemada, a 16th-century Spanish missionary and historian, tells that the Aztec emperor Axayacatl played Xihuitlemoc, the leader of Xochimilco, wagering his annual income against several Xochimilco chinampas. Overall, there appears to be a negative correlation between the degree of political centralization and the number of ballcourts at a site. Several ceramic figurines show war captives holding game balls. A captive-within-the-ball motif is seen on the Hieroglyphic Stairs at Structure 33 in Yaxchilan and on Altar 8 at Tikal. The modern-day descendent of the ballgame, ulama, "until quite recently was connected with warfare and many reminders of that association remain". The Postclassic Maya religious and quasi-historical narrative, the Popol Vuh, also links human sacrifice with the ballgame see below. Captives were often shown in Maya art, and it is assumed that these captives were sacrificed after losing a rigged ritual ballgame. There has even been speculation that the heads and skulls were used as balls. Several themes recur in scholarly writing. The bouncing ball is thought to have represented the sun. This is the most obvious symbolic aspect of the game see also above, "Proxy for warfare". Formative period ballplayer figurines "most likely females" often wear maize icons. Playing ball engaged one in the maintenance of the cosmic order of the universe and the ritual regeneration of life. Nahua[ edit ] According to an important Nahua source, the Leyenda de los Soles, [64] the Toltec king Huemac played ball against the Tlalocs, with precious stones and quetzal feathers at stake. Huemac won the game. When instead of precious stones and feathers, the rain deities offered Huemac their young maize ears and maize leaves, Huemac refused. As a consequence of this vanity, the Toltecs suffered a four-year drought. The same ball game match, with its unfortunate aftermath, signified the beginning of the end of the Toltec reign. Maya[ edit ] Ballcourt marker, from the Maya site of Chinkultic, dated to The ball itself displays the finely incised portrait of a young deity. The Maya Twin myth of the Popol Vuh establishes the importance of the game referred to in Classic Maya as pitz as a symbol for warfare intimately connected to the themes of fertility and death. Despite the danger the brothers fall asleep and are captured and sacrificed by the lords of Xibalba and then buried in the ballcourt. Hun Hunahpu is decapitated and his head hung in a fruit tree, which bears the first calabash gourds. In one notable episode, Hunahpu is decapitated by bats. The twins eventually go on to play the ballgame with the Lords of Xibalba, defeating them. However, the twins are unsuccessful in reviving their father, so they leave him buried in the ball court of Xibalba. The ballcourt becomes a place of transition, a liminal stage between life and death. The ballcourt markers along the centerline of the Classic playing field depicted ritual and mythical scenes of the ballgame, often bordered by a quatrefoil that marked a portal into another world. In fact, the ballgame seems to have been nearly forsaken not only in Teotihuacan, but in areas such as Maticapan or Tikal that were under Teotihuacano influence. The murals of the Tepantitla compound at Teotihuacan show a number of small scenes that seem to portray various types of ball games, including: A

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two-player game in an open-ended masonry ballcourt. Teams using sticks on an open field whose end zones are marked by stone monuments. See side pictures above. It has been hypothesized that, for reasons as yet unknown, the stick-game eclipsed the hip-ball game at Teotihuacan and at Teotihuacan-influenced cities, and only after the fall of Teotihuacan did the hip-game reassert itself. Ballplayer painting from the Tepantitla, Teotihuacan murals. Detail of a Tepantitla mural showing a hip-ball game on an open-ended ballcourt, represented by the parallel horizontal lines. Note that the four players are all holding batons, perhaps indicating that they are playing a type of racquet- or stick-ball. Young Aztecs would be taught ballplaying in the calmecac school and those who were most proficient might become so famous that they could play professionally. Games would frequently be staged in the different city wards and markets often accompanied by large-scale betting. The Codex Mendoza gives a figure of 16, lumps of raw rubber being imported to Tenochtitlan from the southern provinces every six months, although not all of it was used for making balls. Batey game Batey, a ball game played on many Caribbean islands including Cuba , Puerto Rico , and the West Indies , has been proposed as a descendent of the Mesoamerican ballgame, perhaps through the Maya. Retrieved 20 December In the same volume, Gillett Griffin states that although these figurines have been "interpreted by some as females, in the context of ancient Mesoamerican society the question of the presence of female ballplayers, and their role in the game, is still debated. Retrieved 20 April Middle American Research Series Publications. Mundo Maya in Spanish. See also Uriarte, p.

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## Chapter 4 : Chapter 4: Ancient Religious World Views

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Lacambalam The cosmological view in Mesoamerica is strongly connected to the Mesoamerican gods and the spiritual world. The construction and division of the universe, therefore is a kind of visual and symbolic set up for their religious beliefs. Like the many different peoples of Mesoamerica, the detailed surface of the cosmological views tends to be many. They all come together though, in the belief of a fundamental cosmic order, in which the two elements of time and space are the most important. These two elements are seen as the center of the universe and make the center of the quadruplicity, known as the Mesoamerican world tree quite close to the quincunx. Space and Time[ edit ] The importance of time is seen in the cycles of life, death and regeneration, which are something worshiped in almost everything existing. Time itself, is symbolized in the cycle of the sun, both because the sun separates night and day, and also because the death and regeneration of the sun itself is the reason for a new era. As an expansion of quincunx, which then symbolizes space, we find two axes that combine the universe with the inclusion of both the natural and the spiritual, vertically and horizontally. It is called the axis mundi, which in the case of mesoamerican cosmology, vertically consists of three worlds and horizontally of four directions and a center. In the vertical axis we find the world that we know on the surface of earth, in the middle a world above us where the stars are seen and then a world below our surface. These three worlds are not to be confused with the Christian division of a heaven and a hell, although the Spaniards, in trying to convert the native Mesoamerican, made the two comparable by doing so. Recognizable by his goggle-like eyes and distinctive fangs. Tezcatlipoca Aztec - "Smoking Mirror"; guileful omnipresent deity of cosmic struggle, feuds, rulers, sorcerers, and warriors; the jaguar is his animal counterpart. God K Maya - Some similarities with Tezcatlipoca, but also connected with lightning and agriculture, and exhibits serpentine features. Deity of the sun, fire, war and the ruling lineage. Beyond this, the devoutly Catholic Spaniards found the standing Mesoamerican spiritual observances deeply offensive, and sought to either cover up or eradicate their practice. This resulted in the erasure of Mayan religious institutions, especially those centered on human sacrifice and propitiation of the multi-deistic pantheon. Martial values and human sacrifice were a ritualistic core of Mesoamerican spirituality prior to European incursion, but quickly dissolved in the early stages of Imperial rule. Pre-Hispanic warrior culture in Mesoamerica placed high value on capturing enemies on the battlefield; killing on the battlefield therefore was not encouraged and in fact considered brutish and sloppy. This emphasis on non-lethal combat is evidenced in the fact that Aztec warriors were promoted on the basis of however many captive warriors they could bring back from the battlefield, not on sheer destructive ability to kill. Prisoner capture between rival cultures provided both sides with sacrificial victims for deity propitiation, wars even being pre-arranged by both sides, the so-called Flower wars. This practice was ultimately made impossible once Spain had subjugated the Yucatan Peninsula. The deity Huitzilopochtli in particular had a devoted blood cult, as it was believed that without his continued sustenance the cosmos would be plunged into darkness. Less violent rituals were calculatedly suppressed as well, with the Spanish authorities deeming them anathema in light of their own spiritual preconceptions. When the Spaniards and their Tlaxcalteca allies besieged Tenochtitlan after having been forced out for preemptively massacring unarmed celebrants, the Aztecs struck back and sacrificed their Iberian captives to Huitzilopochtli, but ultimately the Aztecs could not defend the city after a devastating smallpox epidemic killed many warriors and leaders including the tlatoani himself. Even though the Aztecs continued to worship some of their own gods after the conquest, worshipping in secret and even disguising deities as nominal Catholic saints, the cult of the war god was totally suppressed. Indeed, Huitzilopochtli is still much less well understood than other major deities such as Tlaloc or Quetzalcoatl, and little was written about him in what sources survive from the decades following the conquest. From the start, authorities

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recognized the subversive potential of recording the details of "idolatry" and discouraged putting anything down in writing that might preserve pre-conquest religion. If tolerated at all, the recording these observations was a very subjective project, and only few of the manuals have even survived. Things considered to be "diabolical" varied depending on the reporting friar, one manuscript justifying a practice that another manuscript might condemn. But at the same time they also demonized other elements, which were considered to not comply with Christian beliefs. They did this to make it easier to convert the Mesoamericans to Christianity. Before the Spanish conquest each village had a patron deity whose idol was worshipped, presented with offerings and adorned with jewelry and fine robes. After the conquest, each village got in its place a Roman Catholic patron saint whose image was adorned and worshipped like before. The Aztecs abandoned their rites and merged their own religious beliefs with Catholicism, whereas the relatively autonomous Maya kept their religion as the core of their beliefs and incorporated varying degrees of Catholicism. Prestige and honor in the village were achieved by holding office within the religious organizations. It was not possible for the indigenous to enter the Orders or receive sacramental ordination as secular priests.

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## Chapter 5 : Mesoamerican ballgame - Wikipedia

*variety of sacrifice remains human sacrifice, and a new HUMAN SACRIFICE: Human sacrifices for cosmic order and regeneration: structure and meaning in Moche.*

The rules of the ballgame, which was played since at least BC, are not precisely known. Spanish records state that the game was played by two teams of two to four players. A hard ball made of rubber had to be kept in the air by hitting it with the hips, thighs or upper arms and bouncing it off the side walls. The sport had different versions in different places during the millennia, and a newer more modern version of the game, ulama, is still played in a few places by the indigenous population. Wikipedia In the Postclassical period, the Maya began placing vertical stone rings in the centre of each of the side walls. Any player who succeeded in passing the ball through the stone ring was immediately declared the winner. As the holes in the ring were not much bigger than the ball this must have been a very rare event. The ball game had important ritual aspects, and major formal ballgames were held as ritual events, often featuring human sacrifice. The association between human sacrifice and the ballgame did not appear until the Classical Era, and was particularly associated with the Maya cultures, where the most explicit depictions of human sacrifice can be seen on the ball court panels—for example at Chichen Itza—AD. The reliefs show the sacrifice of practiced ballplayers, perhaps the captain of the losing team. This suggests there is a link between this deity and the ritual game that took place in these sacred spaces. The ball court found at the school in Maxcanu was located at the foot of a mountain in a strategic location which was prime agricultural land, which could suggest the ball game was linked with an ancient ritual associated with the corn god and the beginning of the agricultural season. To the Mayans, the sun was one of the most important elements in their rituals, it signalled the change in seasons and the start of a pertinent time to prepare the land for corn cultivation. The ball is an analogy of the sun and the movements of the game are an analogy of the path of this celestial body. It was believed that playing ball engaged one in the maintenance of the cosmic order of the universe and the ritual regeneration of life. There is also evidence to suggest the ball games were tied in with astronomical events. Watchtower structures found several years ago at Chichen Itza were well positioned to observe the equinoxes and solstices. Archaeologist Jose Huchim commented that the five passages found at Chichen Itza had celestial alignments: Mexican archaeologist Jose Huchim Herrera says that there are many layers of ritual significance that the ball game had for the culture. Stone ring used in Maya ball games.

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## Chapter 6 : The Psychology of Sacrifice | Martha Blake NCPsyA

*HUMAN SACRIFICE: AN OVERVIEW* Human sacrifice, defined as the killing of humans or the use of the flesh, blood, or bones of the human body for ritual purposes, has been a widespread and complex phenomenon throughout history.

Human sacrifice has been practiced in various cultures throughout history. Victims were typically ritually killed in a manner that was supposed to please or appease gods, spirits or the deceased. Closely related practices found in some tribal societies are cannibalism and headhunting. In the New World, however, human sacrifice continued to be widespread to varying degrees until the European colonization of the Americas. In modern times, even the practice of animal sacrifice has disappeared from many religions, and human sacrifice has become extremely rare. Most religions condemn the practice, and modern secular laws treat it as murder. In a society which condemns human sacrifice, the term ritual murder is used. From its historical occurrences it seems mostly associated with neolithic or nomadic cultures, on the emergent edge of civilization. The Ashanti yam festival, early 19th century Human sacrifice has been practiced on a number of different occasions and in many different cultures. The various rationales behind human sacrifice are the same that motivate religious sacrifice in general. Human sacrifice is intended to bring good fortune and to pacify the gods, for example in the context of the dedication of a completed building like a temple or bridge. See Bridge of Arta. For the re-consecration of the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan in, the Aztecs reported that they killed about 80, prisoners over the course of four days. According to Ross Hassig, author of Aztec Warfare, "between 10, and 80, persons" were sacrificed in the ceremony. In Homeric legend, Iphigeneia was to be sacrificed by her father Agamemnon to appease Artemis so she would allow the Greeks to wage the Trojan War. In some notions of an afterlife, the deceased will benefit from victims killed at his funeral. Mongols, Scythians, early Egyptians and various Mesoamerican chiefs could take most of their household, including servants and concubines, with them to the next world. According to Strabo, Celts stabbed a victim with a sword and divined the future from his death spasms. It was found in many pre-modern tribal societies. Human sacrifice may be a ritual practiced in a stable society, and may even be conducive to enhance societal bonds see: Sociology of religion, both by creating a bond unifying the sacrificing community, and in combining human sacrifice and capital punishment, by removing individuals that have a negative effect on societal stability criminals, religious heretics, foreign slaves or prisoners of war. However, outside of civil religion, human sacrifice may also result in outbursts of "blood frenzy" and mass killings that destabilize society. The bursts of human sacrifice during European witch-hunts, [8] or during the French Revolutionary Reign of Terror, show similar sociological patterns see also Moral panic. Many cultures show traces of prehistoric human sacrifice in their mythologies and religious texts, but ceased the practice before the onset of historical records. Some see the story of Abraham and Isaac Genesis 22 as an example of an etiological myth explaining the abolition of human sacrifice. The Vedic Purushamedha literally "human sacrifice" is already a purely symbolic act in its earliest attestation. According to Pliny the Elder, human sacrifice in Ancient Rome was abolished by a senatorial decree in 97 BCE, although by this time the practice had already become so rare that the decree was mostly a symbolic act. Human sacrifice once abolished is typically replaced by either animal sacrifice, or by the "mock-sacrifice" of effigies, such as the Argei in ancient Rome. History by region Ancient Near East Ancient Egypt There may be evidence of retainer sacrifice in the early dynastic period at Abydos, when on the death of a King he would be accompanied with servants, and possibly high officials, who would continue to serve him in eternal life. The skeletons that were found had no obvious signs of trauma, leading to speculation that the giving up of life to serve the King may have been a voluntary act, possibly carried out in a drug induced state. At about BCE any possible evidence of such practices disappeared, though echoes are perhaps to be seen in the burial of statues of servants in Old Kingdom tombs. Courtiers, guards, musicians, handmaidens and grooms were presumed to have committed ritual suicide by taking poison. Palace attendants, as part of royal mortuary ritual, were not dosed with poison to meet death serenely. Instead, they were put to death by having a sharp instrument, such

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as a pike, driven into their heads. During a battle with the Israelites the King of Moab gives his firstborn son and heir as a whole burnt offering olah, as used of the Temple sacrifice 2 Kings 3: Whatever the explanation, evidently at the time of writing such an act of sacrificing the firstborn son and heir was considered as an emergency measure, to be performed in exceptional cases where Divine favor is desperately needed - and that in such cases it might be effective. The binding of Isaac appears in the Book of Genesis 22 ; the story appears in the Quran but Ismael is the one to be sacrificed. In both the Quranic and Biblical stories, God tests Abraham by asking him to present his son as a sacrifice on Moriah. Abraham agrees to this command without arguing. The story ends with an angel stopping Abraham at the last minute and providing a ram, caught in some nearby bushes, to be sacrificed instead. Jephthah vows to sacrifice to God whatsoever comes to greet him at the door when he returns home if he is victorious. The vow is stated in the Book of Judges , She begs for, and is granted, "two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends", after which "he [Jephthah] did to her as he had vowed. The bones of numerous infants have been found in Carthaginian archaeological sites in modern times but the subject of child sacrifice is controversial. Livy and Polybius do not. The Bible asserts that children were sacrificed at a place called the tophet "roasting place" to the god Moloch. Greco-Roman antiquity The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia, a mythological depiction of a sacrificial procession on a mosaic from Roman Spain References to human sacrifice can be found in Greek historical accounts as well as mythology. The human sacrifice in mythology, the deus ex machina salvation in some versions of Iphigeneia who was about to be sacrificed by her father Agamemnon and her replacement with a deer by the goddess Artemis , may be a vestigial memory of the abandonment and discrediting of the practice of human sacrifice among the Greeks in favour of animal sacrifice. In ancient Rome, human sacrifice was infrequent but documented. Roman authors often contrast their own behavior with that of people who would commit the heinous act of human sacrifice. These authors make it clear that such practices were from a much more uncivilized time in the past, far removed. Dionysius of Halicarnassus [23] says that the ritual of the Argei , in which straw figures were tossed into the Tiber river , may have been a substitute for an original offering of elderly men. Cicero claims that puppets thrown from the Pons Suplicius by the Vestal Virgins in a processional ceremony were substitutes for the past sacrifice of old men. When the Romans conquered the Celts in Gaul, they tortured the people by cutting off their hands and feet and leaving them to die. The Romans justified their actions by also accusing the Celts of practicing human sacrifice. Such practices included burying unchaste Vestal Virgins alive and drowning hermaphroditic children. These were seen as reactions to extraordinary circumstances as opposed to being part of Roman tradition. Vestal Virgins who were accused of being unchaste were put to death, and a special chamber was built to bury them alive. This aim was to please the gods and restore balance to Rome. However, the burial of unchaste Vestal Virgins was also practiced in times of peace. Their chasteness was thought to be a safeguard of the city, and even in punishment the state of their bodies was preserved in order to maintain the peace. It tells the myth of the Sabines suffocating her under the weight of their gifts, and sets the example of punishment for Vestal Virgins who broke their vow of chastity. Captured enemy leaders were only occasionally executed at the conclusion of a Roman triumph , and the Romans themselves did not consider these deaths a sacrificial offering. Gladiator combat was thought by the Romans to have originated as fights to the death among war captives at the funerals of Roman generals, and Christian polemicists such as Tertullian considered deaths in the arena to be little more than human sacrifice. Human sacrifice also became a marker and defining characteristic of magic and bad religion. Victims meant for Esus were hanged , Tollund Man being an example, those meant for Taranis immolated and those for Teutates drowned. Some, like the Lindow Man , may have gone to their deaths willingly. For example, Tacitus reports Germanic human sacrifice to what he interprets as Mercury , and to Isis specifically among the Suebians. Jordanes reports how the Goths sacrificed prisoners of war to Mars , suspending the severed arms of the victims from the branches of trees. By the 10th century, Germanic paganism had become restricted to Scandinavia. One account by Ahmad ibn Fadlan as part of his account of an embassy to the Volga Bulgars in claims that Norse warriors were sometimes buried with enslaved women with the belief that these women

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would become their wives in Valhalla. In his description of the funeral of a Scandinavian chieftain, a slave volunteers to die with a Norseman. This practice is evidenced archaeologically, with many male warrior burials such as the ship burial at Balladoole on the Isle of Man, or that at Oseberg in Norway[41] also containing female remains with signs of trauma. According to the Ynglinga saga, king Domalde was sacrificed there in the hope of bringing greater future harvests and the total domination of all future wars. Heidrek in the Hervarar saga agrees to the sacrifice of his son in exchange for the command over a fourth of the men of Reidgotaland. With these, he seizes the entire kingdom and prevents the sacrifice of his son, dedicating those fallen in his rebellion to Odin instead. This was especially prevalent during the Shang and Zhou Dynasties. During the Warring States period, Ximen Bao of Wei outlawed human sacrificial practices to the river god. The stated purpose was to provide companionship for the dead in the afterlife. In earlier times, the victims were either killed or buried alive, while later they were usually forced to commit suicide. Funeral human sacrifice was widely practiced in the ancient Chinese state of Qin. The fourteenth ruler Duke Mu had people buried with him in BCE, including three senior government officials. More than coffins containing the remains of victims were found in the tomb. In , the Zhengtong Emperor in his will forbade the practice for Ming emperors and princes. Human sacrifice was also practised by the Manchus. During the Qing Dynasty, sacrifice of slaves was banned by the Kangxi Emperor in Tibet Human sacrifice, including cannibalism, was practiced in Tibet prior to the arrival of Buddhism in the 7th century. The Lamas, as professing Buddhists, could not condone blood sacrifices, and they replaced the human victims with effigies made from dough. This replacement of human victims with effigies is attributed to Padmasambhava, a Tibetan saint of the mid-8th century, in Tibetan tradition. The 15th-century Blue Annals, a document of Tibetan Buddhism, reports upon how in 13th-century Tibet the so-called "18 robber-monks" slaughtered men and women in their ceremonies. A systematic survey of evidence for human sacrifice in 20th-century Tibet turns up three instances: Charles Alfred Bell reports the finding of the remains of an eight-year-old boy and a girl of the same age in a stupa on the Bhutan-Tibet border, apparently ritually killed. In India, human sacrifice is mainly known as "Narabali". Here "nara" means man and "bali" means sacrifice. Currently human sacrifice is very rare and almost non-existent in modern India. However, there have been at least three cases through where men have been murdered in the name of human sacrifice implying the practice may still be ongoing in greater numbers in the unpoliced slums. An Indus seal from Harappa depicts the upside-down nude female figure with legs outspread and a plant issuing from her womb. The reverse side of the seal depicts a man holding a sickle and a woman seated on the ground in a posture of prayer. Many scholars interpret this scene as a human sacrifice in honor of the Mother-Goddess, although many historians doubt it.

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## Chapter 7 : Human Sacrifice: Aztec Rites | calendrierdelascience.com

*These tensions put the Aztec state in an atmosphere of periodic crisis and regeneration and likely contributed to the escalation of ritual human sacrifices in the ceremonial center of the capital. It must be noted, however, that human sacrifice was practiced prior to the Aztec Empire and in many parts of Mesoamerica.*

As the "dismal drum" of the war god, Huitzilopochtli, mixed with the ominous sounds of shell and horn trumpets, the Aztecs decorated their captives with Aztec costumes and "with fans in their hands they forced them to dance before Huichilobos [Huitzilopochtli]" p. After this ceremonial preparation, we are told that the Aztecs lay the Spaniards "on their backs on some rather narrow stones which had been prepared as places for sacrifice, and with some knives they sawed open their chests and drew out their palpitating hearts and offered them to the idols that were there" p. Following this offering to the gods at the temple, the victims were rolled back down to the bottom of the steps where ritual experts "cut off their arms and feet and flayed the skin off the faces, and prepared it afterwards like glove leather with the beards on, and kept those for the festivals when they celebrated drunken orgies and the flesh they ate in chilimole" p. This shocking description of an apparent massacre represents what Burr C. Brundage in his book *The Fifth Sun* calls "the central fact of Aztec life" the nuclear cult of war, sacrifice and cannibalism. Among the outstanding elements in the text are the centrality of the sacred temple of Tenochtitlan, the ascent and descent of the temple stairs, ritual dressing, dancing and music, the heart sacrifice of enemy warriors, the dismemberment and flaying of the victim, cannibalism, and an atmosphere of political and military crisis. First, the Nahuatl word that is closest to "sacrifice" was *nextlaoalli* paying of the debt. In many parts of the Mesoamerican world, the ritual killing of plants, animals, and humans was carried out within a deep-seated belief that the deities had created the universe out of their own self-immolations or the giving of some part of their essences. Secondly, this gift of life put a debt on human beings whose responsibility it was to pay back the gods through ritual sacrifice and the production of blood that would result in the rejuvenation of the divine forces that sustain the world. Thirdly, this commitment to paying the debt had many ritual and theological dimensions that the Spaniards could not understand including the Mesoamerican belief that the reliability of many crucial transitions between months, years and larger cycles of time depended on the ritual giving of blood. These are just some of the key meanings of human sacrifice that is often overlooked by public and scholars alike. As a means of understanding these elements within a comprehensive setting, this essay will focus on the following: This approach will show Aztec ritual sacrifice as both text and context, ritual order and ritual destruction aimed at cosmic and social revitalization. The Aztec warrior and worshiper powerfully experienced the gods not only in the poetry, art, and architecture of the ceremonial centers of the empire but also in the elaborate preparations of ritual places, plants, animals and people for sacrifice through the deadly thrust of the sacrificial knife, the eruption of blood on the temple, and sometimes the transformation of human flesh into ritual food. **The Social World of Center and Periphery** The social world in which Aztec ritual sacrifice developed was a rapidly expanding empire, organized around the capital city of Tenochtitlan between and This state organization was created and maintained, in part, by military force and a religious cosmology pervaded by themes of competition, conflict, agricultural regeneration, warfare, and the ritual killing of gods and men. In the ninety-plus years of the rise of Aztec power, the elites of Tenochtitlan"who conceived of their world as *cemanahuac*, a "land surrounded by water" that was divided by the gods into four quadrants emanating from the capital"constructed the largest and most powerful political state in Mesoamerican history. This achievement of centralization was accomplished through the military conquest of scores of communities that lay in all directions from the capital. This center-oriented cosmological and social world was hampered by a pulsating political process marked by constant rebellions, secessions, and realignments by allies. One of the major political and religious instruments in stabilizing peripheral territories, and in the acquisition of massive tribute payments such as maize, beans, cloth, war service, and labor, was the periodic, sometimes large-scale

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sacrifice of enemy warriors at the major temples of Tenochtitlan. Some of these sacrifices constituted theatrical ritual displays of the ideology, wealth, and symbolism of the exemplary center for the purpose of establishing and expanding Aztec authority within and beyond the Valley of Mexico. This pattern of conquest, tributary control, and human sacrifice was already a traditional practice in Mesoamerica when the Aztec ancestors, the Chichimec sons of the dogs, migrated into the valley in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At that time, the Valley of Mexico was politically fragmented into a myriad of small, warring city-states each with a population of between ten and fifty thousand in constant competition and conflict for political, ritual, and economic control. While human sacrifice as an instrument of political intimidation and religious devotion was widely practiced and regulated by several calendars, the Aztec expanded its uses during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The most powerful city-state encountered by the Aztec during their rise to dominance was the Tepenac empire, which consolidated some areas of the central valley in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Around 1430, the Aztec of Tenochtitlan and the city-states of Texcoco and Tlacopan successfully rebelled against the Tepenac and formed a state organization called the Triple Alliance, which took over the Tepenac patterns of conquest, territorial control, and tribute payments. In some cases, large-scale military campaigns were carried out at great distances from the capital. These expansions into peripheral territories resulted in both new acquisitions of land and tribute but also terrible defeats of the Aztecs at the hands of the Tlaxcala-Puebla Valley kingdom in the east and the Tarascan state in the west. The Flowery Wars

One of the most important ritual and political institutions of the Aztec Empire was the Xochiyaoyotl Flowery Wars, which lasted from 1427 to 1487 and consisted of a series of scheduled battlefield confrontations between warriors of the Triple Alliance and warriors of the Tlaxcala-Puebla Valley kingdoms. In recent years a controversy has arisen over the causes and significance of the Flowery Wars. According to indigenous accounts that reflect the ideology of Aztec elites, the "wars" were staged primarily to provide sacrificial victims for ritual festivals and to keep the warriors in training. One argument is that the devastating famines of 1427-1430, during the reign of Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina Moctezuma I, were interpreted by the priestly elites as a sign of angry gods who needed a greater supply of warrior sacrifices. Whereas the actual social causes were almost certainly more complex, the argument put forth by Tlacaelel, the chief adviser of Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin Moctezuma II, represents the Aztec vision well. He compared a warrior going to the Flowery Wars with a merchant going to distant markets to purchase luxuries. The god and his army went to the battlefield to purchase blood and hearts, the luxuries of the temples. Recent research has expanded our understanding of the Flowery Wars by revealing that they began almost as demonstration wars or tournaments, with limited numbers of elite combatants, no intentional killing, and the release of prisoners. A convincing display of superiority could lead to capitulation, but if that failed, the war escalated over a period of years: Thus, these military confrontations resulted not just in the capture of warriors for temple sacrifice but eventually in large-scale battlefield killing that left the competing armies depleted and in disarray. In these cases, the Flowery Wars reflect true warfare conditions between states, not simply the acquisition of warriors for sacrifice in the capital. Further, it is certain that during periods of truce between these ritually warring kingdoms, rulers of enemy territories were invited to witness the theatrical sacrifice of warriors in the ceremonial center of Tenochtitlan. Hidden behind special canopies, these visiting lords witnessed the ritual devastation of allied and enemy warriors. According to Johanna Broda, the Aztec rulers organized the ceremonies so that their enemies could see "the greatness of Mexico" and in order to "bewilder them, fill them with fear, in order to show that the Aztecs were the masters of all the riches of the earth" Broda, 2001, p. 10. In this case, the rulers from the peripheries of the Aztec state were brought to the center to witness the ceremonial authority of the capital, Tenochtitlan, which assisted the Aztec in their purpose of achieving political superiority. Whereas the Aztecs were able by the middle of the reign of Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin to consolidate scores of city-states into their empire and to intimidate many others into uneasy alliances, their world was repeatedly shocked by rebellions and defeats at the peripheries of their empire. These tensions put the Aztec state in an atmosphere of periodic crisis and regeneration and likely contributed to the escalation of

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ritual human sacrifices in the ceremonial center of the capital. It must be noted, however, that human sacrifice was practiced prior to the Aztec Empire and in many parts of Mesoamerica. There is evidence of human sacrifice among the Olmecs who date back to bce and the Classic Maya inscriptions have a special glyph for the notion of sacrifice that sometimes referred to the ritual killing of a defeated, rival king. The ritual torture of prisoners at ceremonial temples as well as the ritual dismemberment and beheading of prisoners is shown on murals and painted vessels from numerous Maya archaeological sites. Recent excavations in Teotihuacan have proved that human sacrifice was practiced there on a large scale. So far, skeletons have been found in or around the temple of Quetzalcoatl, and archaeologists think there were at least individuals represented in remains associated just with this building. One hypothesis is that they constituted a foundation sacrifice that may have been part of a great ceremony dedicated to the deities of water, just before the completion of the temple. This oscillation reflects historical developments in which the collapse of specific city-states or kingdoms resulted in the initial fragmentation but later proliferation of new communities. At least three major cosmogonic episodes contain paradigms for the Aztec practices of warfare and human sacrifice. A review of these episodes reveals three important patterns: In some cases a third pattern appears—the victory of a weaker god or brother over the dominant sibling or deity. We are told that during the night the gods gathered around a divine fire at Teotihuacan abode of the gods to discuss who take it upon himself to "be the sun, to bring the dawn" vol. Following four days of penance and ritual, the god Nanahuatzin the pimply one, dressed in ceremonial garb, hurled himself into the fire, followed by a second deity, Tecuciztecatl lord of snails. Immediately, an eagle and a jaguar rose from the flames. Then the dawn appeared in all directions. Uncertain as to where the sun would rise, the gods fell upon their knees. Quetzalcoatl looked eastward and "when the sun came to rise, when he burst forth, he appeared to be red, he kept swaying from side to side" vol. The gods were faced with an unstable, threatening cosmic orb born out of the self-sacrifice of two of their number. Because of the motionless sun, the gods decide to sacrifice themselves, saying, "Let this be, that through us the sun may be revived. Let all of us die" vol. Thus began the fifth and present age—the Aztec age—created when one courageous warrior god sacrificed himself, followed by the sacrifice of almost all of the gods. It may be that this cosmogonic sacrifice served as the religious justification for the increase in sacrifices at later ceremonial cities such as Tenochtitlan.

**Cosmic Sacrifice of Huitzilopochtli** The cosmic pattern of mass sacrifice to energize the sun is repeated in a subsequent episode in which terrestrial warfare and human sacrifice are created by the gods to provide for their nourishment. In one version, the god Mixcoatl cloud serpent creates five women and four hundred Chichimec warriors to stir up discord and warfare. While the warriors pass their time hunting and drinking, the god sends the five human beings to slay them. In this account, war is created specifically to provide sacrificial victims for the gods but again we see a large number of sacrifices taking place. However, the specific paradigm for massive sacrifices of enemy warriors at Tenochtitlan appears in the teotihuacatl divine song of the birth of Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec war god. This narrative illustrates the pattern of the conquest and ritual killing of warriors from the periphery of the state at the major temple in the heart of the capital. The story begins when the mother of the gods, Coatlicue serpent skirt, becomes pregnant while sweeping out the temple at Coatepec serpent mountain. When her daughter Coyolxauhqui hears of the pregnancy, she incites her siblings to dress for war. Coyolxauhqui incited them, she inflamed the anger of her brothers, so that they should kill her mother" p. Next, Coyolxauhqui directs them to dress for war: Following a journey through many towns, the army, led by Coyolxauhqui, charges up Serpent Mountain to kill Coatlicue. As they reach the top, Huitzilopochtli is born fully dressed and attired for war. Attacking Coyolxauhqui, he cuts off her head and dismembers her. The text notes, "The body of Coyolxauhqui rolled down the slope; it fell apart in pieces; her hands, her legs, her torso fell in different places" p. Next, Huitzilopochtli attacks the other warriors: He chased them, he drove them away, he humbled them, he destroyed them, he annihilated them" p. Following the killing of the enemy warriors at the mountain, he takes off their costumes and "introduces them into his destiny" p. As the significant excavations of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan have revealed, this mythic episode was replicated in the architecture and ritual

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action of the temple, which was dedicated to Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc. It has been learned that the temple was called "Coatepec" by the Aztec. Ethnographic research has shown that the largest number of ceremonial sacrifices of enemy warriors from surrounding communities took place at this temple. And Huitzilopochtli paid back those who behaved that way. And his cult was taken from there, from Coatepec, the Mountain of the Serpent, as it was practiced in ancient times. In the three cases above, we see this pattern acted out when Nanahuatzin becomes the hero god of the Fifth Sun, when the five women take on the role of sacrificing the lazy male deities and when the miracle child Huitzilopochtli defeats his fully grown, experienced warrior sister. In these and many cases, the universe is renewed as a result of an "overthrow" of the younger sibling against the older and more powerful god. Practice and Paraphernalia of Human Sacrifice It must be understood that the "debt payments" by humans to the gods who created them and the universe—what we are calling human sacrifice—were carried out within a larger, more complex ceremonial system in which a tremendous amount of energy, wealth, and time was spent in a variety of ritual festivals dedicated to a crowded and active pantheon of divinities who needed to be nurtured. This dedication is reflected in the many metaphors and symbols related to agricultural renewal, war and sacrifice. Blood was called *chalchihuatl*, meaning "precious water." The greatest single ceremonial precinct, that surrounding the Templo Mayor, formed the axis of Tenochtitlan and measured meters on each of its four sides. It contained, according to some accounts, more than eighty ritual temples, skull racks, schools, and other ceremonial structures. At Teccizcalli, the Florentine Codex reports, "Moctezuma did penances; there was dying there; captives died there. And when she died, then they flayed her the fire priest put on the skin. They put squash blossoms with their flesh then the noblemen ate them, all the high judges: Most Aztec ritual began with a preparatory period of priestly fasting *nezahualiztli* that lasted four or a multiple of four days.

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## Chapter 8 : Mesoamerican religion - Wikipedia

*ART CH8. STUDY. PLAY. HUMANS RESPOND TO GOD: SACRIFICES. Various forms of religious blood sacrifices have been with the cosmic order and.*

AN OVERVIEW Human sacrifice, defined as the killing of humans or the use of the flesh, blood, or bones of the human body for ritual purposes, has been a widespread and complex phenomenon throughout history. Most contemporary scholars try to explain human sacrifice in terms of earlier theories of sacrifice in general. Though the explanations given for the purposes of sacrifice have been almost as varied as the phenomena themselves, they may be reduced to nine common themes drawn from four of the classic works on sacrifice. These themes may be illustrated with descriptions of human sacrificial practices in differing cultural contexts. Tylor " theorized that the origin of religion lay in the primitive tendency to "animate" the entire world with "soul-ghosts. Theoretical Perspectives According to W. Robertson Smith " , sacrifice originated in totemism. Sacrifice was a communal meal shared between the people and their god, who was simultaneously their totemic animal and their kinsman. Smith postulated two types of sacrifice. The first, the honorific, was a gift either on a friendly basis of exchange or as a part of homage to a powerful deity. The communion meal became a cannibal feast when a tribe, such as the wolf tribe, offered to the god the appropriate food" the members of the sheep tribe, for example. The animal, who as a kinsman was also a representative of the people themselves, was killed and then shared in a communion in which people achieved atonement by physically assimilating into their own bodies the totemic form of themselves. The sacrificed animal was reborn by being assimilated into the living bodies of the people who ate it, and since those people were identified with the totemic animal, they too were reborn through this ritual. Frazer " developed a theory of regeneration of fertility according to which the sacrificial offering possessed tremendous potency. Sacred kings and human vegetative gods were killed to pass on their power to a younger successor, to incorporate their potency into the living who consumed their bodies, and to prevent their decay in old age since decay would endanger the fertility of earthly existence. Frazer also suggested that animals and plants were eventually substituted for the original human sacrificial offering because of the fear inherent in killing humans. In their essay on Vedic and Hebrew sacrifice , Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss considered sacrifice to be a religious act which, through the consecration of an offering, modified or transformed the condition of the person who accomplished that act by joining the divine and mortal via the sacrifice. Nine basic purposes of human sacrifice have been commonly cited from these early theorists: Although some new approaches have been added taking into consideration factors such as the role that cosmology plays or the ordering capacities of human sacrifice, contemporary interpreters of human sacrifice still find these themes fruitful in a variety of cultural settings. Historical Corroboration The burials at Chan Chan fourteenth" fifteenth centuries in Peru are illustrative of the theme of soul-release and kinship with the dead. In this capital of the Chimu empire, many adolescent females were sacrificed and buried with their king. It is known that later, during Inca domination fifteenth" sixteenth centuries , the king was considered alive after death and was treated as a participant in the affairs of his surviving kin. A kinship was established between the dead and the living in the Shang period c. According to David N. Keightley , in the Shang political system the dead and the living formed a bureaucracy together. The dead received "salaries" in the form of human sacrifices for their jobs as intercessors between the king and the high god Di. Without this, earthly prosperity could not continue. The themes of expiation, redemption, and communion were central in the sacrificial tradition of the early Christian church. The early martyrs believed that their sufferings were evidence that the millennium was close at hand. Themes of redemption and abnegation can also be found in the self-sacrifices of the samurai in Japan. Since there were few wars for the samurai to fight, Confucian ideals were joined with the earlier warrior ethic to create a martial cult in which the warrior was to give complete loyalty to his lord by rendering service in office rather than in war. If seppuku ritual suicide was demanded, the samurai were to comply without question.

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Seppuku became a refined art in which the samurai, with tremendous self-control, slashed his own belly. Often an assistant then decapitated him in such a way that the head was left hanging by a bit of flesh. In one incident forty-seven samurai chose this ritual to avenge the disgraceful death of their lord. The kamikaze pilots of World War II also followed this ancient warrior tradition. In the Hawaiian Islands, sacrifice stands for transformation, communion, and the capacity to reorder what has been disordered. In Hawaiian theology, gods, humans, and nature are one human species. The sacrificial ritual begins with some perceived lack, which is understood as a kind of disorder. The offering is consecrated to the god, who eats a part of the sacrifice, thus assimilating into himself its mana effective potency. The sacrifice then passes back to the participants, who assimilate it. In this communal sharing, life is reordered and thus regenerated via the mutual assimilation of the sacrifice—an assimilation made possible by the shared kinship of gods and humans. A transformative reordering is made. The evidence for human sacrifice in Vedic India c. However, by drawing on both textual and archaeological sources, Asko Parpola has suggested that rituals that were precursors of the Agnicayana Vedic fire sacrifice included the killing of humans. Death and regeneration were central concepts in these two sacrifices as they were in the Agnicayana. Even in the early twenty-first century, the Agnicayana symbolically involves human sacrifice: Five heads originally were buried under the altar—those of a man, a horse, an ox, a sheep, and a goat. Today a live tortoise is buried because of its cosmic and regenerative symbolism. The themes of order and disorder also play a role in Aztec sacrifice as does the theme of sacrificial exchange. A central myth of the Aztec tells of the birth and destruction of four ages prior to the Fifth Sun, the age of the Aztec. Each previous age is named for the way in which the sun was totally destroyed. The Fifth Sun, called the "age of movement," was also doomed to destruction by earthquakes and famine. The sun of this age was born by the willing self-sacrifice of the gods, and so shall people sacrifice themselves for the gods in return. But just as all people are born, eat food, grow old, and die, so too will the Fifth Sun meet its demise, no matter how much it is fed. The Aztec universe was thus unstable—wobbling between periods of order and disorder. Only human sacrifice could stay the end, and that only temporarily. In this eschatological setting, massive sacrificial rites were performed that may have offered people a chance to take some control of their inevitable destruction, a chance to control the uncontrollable. Human sacrifice may seem remote to civilized sensibilities. Nevertheless, as a human act it must be at least partly intelligible to other humans. Most of them did so willingly. Yet some familiar themes may be recognized. The people of Jonestown, like the Christian martyrs, believed in a utopian world on "the other side. As Jim Jones said during that "white night": And I like to choose my own kind of death for a change. The section on sacrifice pp. The short article "Sacrifice" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th ed. Boston, , is W. A Study in Magic and Religion, 3d ed. Its Nature and Function Chicago, is a short study of the structure and function of Vedic and Hebrew sacrificial rituals and is a classic work that has had widespread influence. Origins of Chinese Religion by David N. Keightley offers a more concise discussion of the religious perspective that may have provided a basis for, among other things, human sacrifice in the Shang period in "The Religious Commitment: A comprehensive discussion of martyrdom and its sacrificial theology in the early Christian church can be found in the classic work by W. A more recent treatment can be found in A Noble Death: Droge and James D. Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii Chicago, is an extensive study of the structure and function of Hawaiian sacrificial rituals, with particular attention to the role of the king. Valeri includes a fine discussion of Hawaiian theology as well. This book also includes source material for the historical background of the possibility of human sacrifice in early India. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble as Florentine Codex: Santa Fe , N. Volumes 2, 3, and 7 are particularly good for ritualistic and mythic sources on human sacrifice. Read and Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

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## Chapter 9 : The Nature of Sacrifice | ADF

*Human Sacrifice 1 8. M odern Migration of self-sacrifice, and regeneration. 2. Snakes and Spears ensure the stability of the cosmic order. Orozco does.*

CWC Primer Chapter 4: By the time that fully developed civilizations emerged in each of these places ca. Since religious ideology was obviously fundamental to the formation of these cultures, we need to address the reasons for this as well as for the tendency of religious authority to become transformed into political, social, and legal power. Otherwise, much of what they have to relate will seem unintelligible or illogical. This chapter will present a reduced, distilled model for ancient polytheistic world views. Generalizations are necessary yet inevitably unsatisfactory. The texture of all religious world views is complex and multifaceted, making it difficult to do justice in broad strokes. Nonetheless, a template must be furnished for the chapters to follow. We are going to examine first the cosmology or world view of the polytheistic mindset. How did ancient societies generally perceive the universe to be organized? We will then examine the inherent logic to this world view. The fact that this world view was consistent and coherent demonstrates that its believers gave it considerable thought. Next we will examine the ways in which inhabitants of ancient societies communicated with their deities. To ancient worshippers the ability to communicate with deities meant that they could to some degree control these and through them the natural environment. Last we will consider ancient views of afterlife, since the manner in which ancient societies revered their dead says a great deal about what they cherished in life. It is difficult to appreciate how ancient peoples went about organizing their societies, their communities, or their lives without understanding their spiritual attitudes. At the outset the profound uniformity of ancient religious beliefs needs to be confronted. Ancient peoples tended to be highly superstitious. All around them natural phenomena released destructive energy that they could not understand. All they knew is that these forces were greater than human kind. An impulse to make sense of it all and to attribute transcendent meaning to natural phenomena ultimately led to a great diversity of belief systems and ritual practices. All early human cultures subscribed to the belief in divine beings that more or less exerted control over natural phenomena and human fortune. Lacking scientific understanding prehistoric peoples presumed that any force more powerful than humankind -- lightning, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, etc. The assignment of names and personalities to these various manifestations enabled prehistoric peoples to identify and to classify divinities and to devise means with which to communicate with them. To some degree the process resembled the tagging of a crime scene. The more divinities one could identify, the greater the likelihood that one could communicate with that divinity and appease it. In addition to identifying forces of nature, ancient polytheistic religions were also concerned with the process of the life cycle, that is, the seemingly perpetual cycle of Birth, Death, and Regeneration. Events such as the birth of infants, the marriage of newlyweds, and the interment of loved ones represented rites of passage for human kind. They were also symptomatic of the limits of human mortality and tended to evoke the most pious, profound emotions. The love that existed between life partners, the love of parents for their children and vice versa , the pain at losing a loved one, and the fear of death were all embodied by belief systems concerned with the life cycle. Bound up in this concept was the recognition that all organic life inherently had to consume life to exist. In essence, one is what one eats. When combined with broader notions of anthropomorphic divinities that existed and manifested themselves on the earth, the power to take life assumed profound significance. How did one know, when hunting down a deer in the forest, for example, that one was not in fact slaying the favorite deer of the huntress goddess Artemis? This is precisely what occurred in the legend of Agamemnon, the King of Bronze Age Mycenae, who was forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia in recompense. To avoid the risk of divine retribution, ancient peoples intrinsically recognized the sacred character of life by offering to share the fruits of the hunt with the gods through sacrifice. Despite its complementary tendencies toward the ecstatic and the macabre, sacrifice implicitly recognized the sacredness of all life and the fine line that existed between

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corporeal existence and nothingness. Polytheistic Cosmology Polytheism means the belief in the existence of many gods. This was true of all ancient cultures. There were anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic deities in most ancient cosmologies. By projecting human experience onto the transcendent realm, humans tended to perceive their gods organized as families, with a father deity usually the sky god exerting patriarchal control over his consorts, siblings and offspring. As king he could choose to accept their counsel or not. Such gods were naturally depicted in human form anthropomorphism , although attributes such as wings, multiple limbs, etc. Most cosmologies conformed to a familiar pattern of a sky god father ruling his often fractious family, whose members not only squabbled among themselves, but interacted for better or for worse with the lives of humans. As noted above, most ancient societies displayed a bewildering tendency to incorporate gods -- new gods, foreign gods -- into their cosmologies as a means to obtain the benefit of new and potentially untapped divine resources. This resulted in syncretism -- the merging of religious beliefs across cultures. Traveling abroad the Greeks associated Phoenician Melkart with Hercules the hero of civilization , Near Eastern Astarte with Aphrodite the goddess of love , and Anatolian Cybele with Rhea the mother of the gods. The Libyan Desert oracle consulted by the Macedonian King Alexander the Great at Siwah and known to the Greek world as the oracle of Zeus Ammon furnishes a famous example of syncretism. Even more illustrative is a passage from the second century AD Northern African author Apuleius, which lists a litany of ancient goddesses from the Near East, Greece and Rome, and equates them all with the Egyptian goddess Isis.