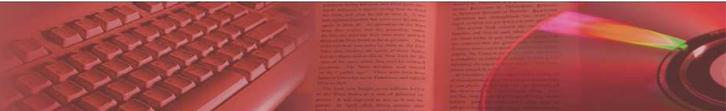


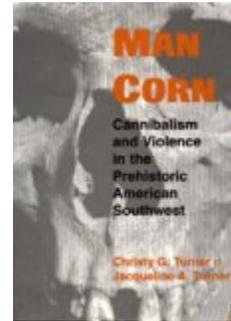
H-Net Reviews

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The American Southwest Revisited: Violence and Cannibalism, and the Anasazi and Toltecs of Mesoamerica

Introduction

The topic of cannibalism is an emotionally charged issue that may engage humanistic or anthropological terms (endocannibalism and exocannibalism, or example), suggestions of human sacrifice, or near starvation resulting in emergency or survival cannibalism. These and psychoanalytical phrases such as social pathology and “Hannibalistic” (Silence of the Lambs) behaviors, may bring vivid, perhaps Stephen King-like or Dracula-like imagery to the minds of laypersons and scientists alike. Add to this the potential for institutionalized violence or warfare, witchcraft or sorcery, and ritual executions, and then suggest that these activities and behaviors occurred in the American Southwest, a region usually depicted for peace, harmony, tranquility, and spirituality. Are these the potential plot parameters for a new “blockbuster” Tony Hillerman novel? No, to the contrary, these are some of the current scientific postulates by anthropologists and other learned scholars who are debating the hottest issue in the prehistoric American Southwest explanations of warfare, witchcraft, ritual executions, and cannibalism.

Even in the most dire, life-threatening circumstances, the consumption of the flesh of the affiliates of one’s own species or sociocultural group, whether the mem-

bers of the stranded Donner Party (Hardesty 1997) or sports team airplane crash survivors in the Andes (Read 1974) is regarded by a majority of outside observers as behaviorally inappropriate and, even as a criminal or anti-religious act. Neurological disease vectors aside (kuru, for example), the consumption of the body parts or flesh of an enemy or of an ancestor is in some cultures considered appropriate, if not mandatory, behavior. Within the past half dozen years esteemed newspapers, sleazy tabloids, and even that venerable magazine *The New Yorker* (Preston 1998) have carried accounts of gender violence, butchery, and the consumption of human body parts by other members of our genus and species. Even the journal *Science* (Kolata 1986) has been seduced by the so-called “myth” of cannibalism. Alfred Packer of Donner Party fame in 1846 and, more recently, Jeffrey Dahmer of Milwaukee and Alex Sukleten of Kazan, Russia, come to mind when cannibalistic behavior is mentioned (Askenazy 1994:10-17, Hogg 1958:188-191, Sartore 1994:91-100).

Recently the subject of a major story written by journalist David Montgomery and published in *The Washington Post* (1999), “The Body Farm” created by William Bass at the University of Kentucky documents the need to study environmental and cultural effects on human remains. The story demonstrates the importance of such analyses in the assessment of traumas, pathologies, accidents, interpersonal violence, and probable suicides.

In the mold of *Scientific American*, a new periodical called *Discovering Archaeology* (May-June 1999), included a "Special Report: Wars, Witches & Cannibals A Dark New View of the American Southwest." This issue includes presentations by Steve A. LeBlanc, Stephen Lekson, Christy G. Turner II, and William H. Walker (1999) on the theme of warfare, cannibalism, and the suppression of witchcraft; the narratives by Lekson, Turner, and Walker also appear on *Discovering Archaeology Online* at <http://www.discoveringarchaeology.com/0399/toc/>. Likewise, a television "documentary" entitled *The Most Ancient Taboo: Cannibalism* was featured on the History Channel's *In Search of History*, broadcast in August 1999. Evidence of cannibalism has been discerned recently in a Neanderthal population in western Europe, specifically the site of Moula-Guercy, Ardeche, France, about 100,000 years ago (Defleur et al. 1999, Cullotta 1999). Evidence of cannibalism in Fiji less than 2,000 years ago will be reported by David DeGusta in a forthcoming article in *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* (Holden 1999).

Therefore, from newspaper stories, television programs, and film documentaries, the public has become increasingly aware of the importance of skeletal analysis, forensic science, and paleopathology, and cannibalistic behaviors. Nonetheless, while there is mounting scientific evidence for violence and cannibalism, scholars also are turning to sociocultural explanations as to why the act occurs and who conducted these activities.

An Analysis of "Man Corn"

Christy Turner, Regents' Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Arizona State University, and his late wife, Jacqueline A. Turner (21 September 1934-13 February 1996), are the co-authors of *Man Corn*. The book's unusual title derives from the Nahuatl word *tlacatlaolli*, a "sacred meal of sacrificed human meat, cooked with corn" (following Fernandez 1992). The Nahuatl and Mesoamerican connections are more than coincidental. The idea for this volume was conceived in 1958, and Christy dedicates the volume to the memory of his wife. Christy Turner's initial assessments of cannibalism were published in Flynn, Turner, and Brew (1976), but a formal, systematic analysis began in 1980 with enhanced macro- and microscopic examinations, some experimentation, and a concerted effort to explain the causation. The Turners comment (p. 8) that "research on cannibalism has not been free of controversy or political and professional censoring," and they cite instances where their work has been disbelieved, dismissed, or admonished.

The narrative is divided into five chapters (pp. 1-484), supplemented by one six-page appendix (a discussion about and reproduction of four data-collecting forms), a four-page acknowledgment, 348 black-and-white figures (halftones and illustrations), 111 tables, and 499 references cited. There is also a detailed index to sites (n = 141) and an elaborate nine-page general index of conflated proper nouns and topics (one page has double columns and eight pages have triple columns). The diversity of references in English and Spanish cited in the Turners detailed analysis include unpublished diaries, newspaper accounts (such as the Los Angeles Times), Mexican codices (the Codex Borgia), masters' theses and doctoral dissertations, and even literary texts (Willa Cather). I shall summarize briefly the major thrust of each chapter and offer some comments before turning to an overall critique of the volume.

Chapter One: "Introduction: Studying Southwestern Cannibalism" (pp. 1-9) has one table illustrating chronologies in the "Southwest" and "Valley of Mexico" (e.g., Basin of Mexico). The Turners begin by differentiating endo- and exocannibalism, consider prior general surveys (particularly by Hogg 1966), Ahren's (1979) opposing views, and rebuttals (notably by Forsythe 1985). The authors state (p. 2) that "this book is the first to examine prehistoric Southwestern cannibalism on a regional scale rather than site by site. It has two goals. First, we define and illustrate the characteristics of damaged human bones that we believe reflect acts of cannibalism in the American Southwest. Second, we attempt to explain why cannibalism occurred there, offering a few working hypotheses about local, proximate causes. In order to be persuasive in arguing that cannibalism existed, we present all the evidence we have been able to amass, which makes up the largest part of this book chapter 3."

This regional approach, they assert (p. 2), produced five principal findings: 1) Cannibalism can be differentiated from all other forms of bone damage and mortuary practice. 2) Cannibalism was practiced for almost four centuries, beginning about C.E. 900, and was concentrated in the Four Corners area especially among people living in Chaco Canyon and in or near outlying Chacoan great houses. 3) Chacoan cannibalism appears to have originated in Mexico, where the practice was "common" [their term] and dates back at least 2,500 years. 4) Social control, social pathology, and some manner of ritual sacrifice (probably in that order) are provisionally the best combination of explanatory factors. And 5) reports of prehistoric Southwestern cannibalism have been published since 1902, but have been largely

ignored. There is no evidence of cannibalism among the Hohokam, perhaps because it has not been looked for there, even though the Hohokam were more influenced by Mesoamerican culture than any other prehistoric Southwestern peoples (p. 4). Cannibalism, the Turners suggest, has a restricted distribution, with almost all of the verified cases in or near the Anasazi culture area.

Chapter Two: “Interpreting Human Bone Damage: Taphonomic, Ethnographic, and Archaeological Evidence” (pp. 10-54, fourteen figures, eleven tables) provides an excellent review of methods of interpretation, beginning with the concept of taphonomy (Efremov 1940), concentrating on perimortem events. Taphonomy (p. 6) is the explanation of how the bone assemblage was deposited and damaged after death. Among the topics assessed are environmental processes; the mechanical and physical breakdown of bone; the effects of ground water, microbial activity, and acidic soils; and human activities (breaking, cutting, burning, etc.); color changes in burned bone; and pot polishing from culinary activities. A thorough assessment of ethnographic accounts of animal processing (among the Navajo, Zuni, Yavapai, Hopi, etc.), as well as archaeological data (from Olsen-Chubbuck, Snaketown, Arroyo Hondo, and other sites), provide comparative evidence for the definition of the “signature of cannibalism” as opposed to mortuary practices reported for the Anasazi area of the prehistoric Southwest.

A continuum of seven taphonomic categories are discerned (pp. 39-42): 1) normal, considerate burial with only minimal disturbance; 2) normal considerate burial with moderate environmental disturbance; 3) abnormal deposit with major environmental disturbance; 4) abnormal deposit without environmental disturbance; 5) normal considerate burial with perimortem human-inflicted damage; 6) abnormal burial or abandoned bodies with perimortem human-inflicted damage; and 7) nonburial floor or pit deposit with perimortem human-inflicted damage. McGregor’s (1965) temporal and regional summary of prehistoric Southwestern mortuary practices is also reviewed. Human bone damage caused by interpersonal violence is also assessed, including a review of data and interpretations from the Battle of the Little Bighorn (Snow and Fitzpatrick 1989). However, modern bioarchaeological analyses and forensic science have begun to aid in our understanding of mass deaths, such as the reanalysis of the Custer massacre by Scott, Willey, and O’Connor (1998), not cited by the Turners. The killing and mutilation of witches among Southwestern Pueblo peoples

(pp. 52-53) is mentioned and evaluated, but discounted. I shall revisit this issue later in this review. In sum, the Turners conclude that ethnographic analogy provides evidence for the roasting and boiling of humans in the same manner as individual game animals.

In Chapter Three: “Taphonomic Evidence for Cannibalism and Violence in the American Southwest: Seventy-six Cases” (pp. 55-415, 292 figures, 82 tables), the Turners document, illustrate, and discuss 76 sites where cannibalism or other violence both occurred. In 316 detailed pages, the authors consider 31 sites located in New Mexico, eighteen from Arizona, sixteen situated in Colorado, ten in Utah, and Casas Grandes (Paquime) from northern Mexico. Data is summarized in a 17-part format: Claim Date, Claimant, Claim Type, Other [Site] Designations, Site Location [USGS Quadrangle and elevation], Site Type, Cultural Affiliation, Chronology, Excavators and Date, Institutional Storage, Site Reports, Osteological Reports, Skeletal Evidence of Stress, Burial Context, Associated Artifacts, Figures (in the Turner’s book), and Taphonomy. The latter unit, Taphonomy, is further divided into 11 categories: MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals), Age and Sex, Preservation, Bone and Fragment Numbers, Breakage, Cut Marks, Burning, Anvil Abrasions, Polishing, Vertebrae Numbers, and [Evidence of] Scalping. Often there are extensive quotations from the original site reports and osteological analyses. The authors completed their data collecting in August 1995, but remark on human osteology from 11 other sites excavated and reported since then (p. 404). They also emphasize that the data they assess and tabulate errs on the side of conservatism (p. 413).

Of the 76 cases (Table 3.1, pp. 56-57), the Turners confirm 54 instances of cannibalism. Discount eight, and are unable on the basis of the evidence to sanction 14 others.

The Turners noted that there is “no way to make scientific generalizations except by pooling the available information” (p. 404). Nonetheless, there is always a potential problem of sample size. In Table 3.77 (p. 405), 38 sites with 286 MNI are listed; of the 258, 52.1 percent are adults, but identifiable adults by sex includes only 29 males and 28 females (a total of 19.8 percent). Therefore, in those sites exhibiting cannibalism there are nearly equal frequencies among adult males and females. In 38 sites with demonstrated violence (documented in Table 3.78, pp. 406-407), there are 445 MNI, of which only 37.7 percent are adults, or 94 males and 35 female adults. The Turners conclude that because there are more than twice as many adult males as adult females represented,

suggesting either that more women were spared or captured, or that males were more frequently involved in the fatal conflicts. Combining these data, violence or cannibalism account for 731 individuals, 43.4 percent of these were adults and 23.6 percent could not be aged or gendered. Subsequently the Turners relate their amassed information to gross chronological periods that I summarize below:

Pre-A.D. 900, six sites, 88 MNI, 13 cannibalism, 75 violence 900-1300, 62 sites, 454 MNI, 243 cannibalism, 211 violence 1300-1900 4 sites, 189 MNI, 30 cannibalism, 159 violence

Of the 159 cases listed as violence from 1300-1900, 127 were at one site, Casas Grandes (Paquime) located in northern Mexico.

There is a minor error in the Turner's tabulations: Table 3.80 refers to 62 sites for the period 900-1300, while comparable data in Table 3.81 uses a figure of 69 sites.

In a summary, Figure 3.292 (p. 411), the Turners illustrate the locations of those Southwestern sites where cannibalism is believed to have occurred and the "spheres of influence" for these sites. The Turners perceive the Chacoan connection as a common variable in these sites, and they make three points: 1) Southwestern sites with evidence of cannibalism are linked temporally to the so-called Chaco phenomenon; 2) Mesoamerican influence is seen in the rise and fall of Chaco, but the extent of this is uncertain; and 3) Mesoamerican cannibalism is linked to ritualized body processing. Five minimal summary conclusions are then stated (p. 413): 1) Perimortem taphonomic signatures of violence and cannibalism are distinct; 2) perimortem cannibalism is the same as that found in the processing of large and small game animals in both the prehistoric and contemporary periods; 3) Anasazi sites and the Chaco phenomenon are "strongly linked" to cannibalism for the period C.E. 900-1300; 4) Southwestern cannibalism seems to have begun with Chacoan development and areal expansion; and 5) 38 episodes of cannibalism involved 286 persons of all ages and sexes.

Unfortunately, the Turners do not further evaluate the assembled data (pp. 59-404). I have attempted to do this, and present the following general summary on the incidences of the 76 sites discussed:

Sites Types (n = 24 types); frequencies of occurrence in 76 sites: Pueblos (20), pithouses (10), house (5), kiva (5), Great House (5), village (4), caves or dry alcoves (3), res-

idences (3), cliff house (2) rooms (2), and isolated graves (2); 13 others are single occurrences. Culture: (n = 23 types); frequencies of occurrence in 76 sites: Anasazi and its variants (65), Basketmaker II (3), Salado Gila Phase (2), Sinagua (2), and Hopi (2); eight others are single occurrences. Within the eleven Anasazi-related cultures the frequencies include: Anasazi Mesa Verde (13), Anasazi Chaco (11), Anasazi (11), Anasazi Largo-Gallina (9), Anasazi Kayenta (8), Anasazi San Juan (4), Anasazi Cibola (3), and Anasazi-Mogollon (3). Loci of Human Remains (n = 24 location types); frequencies of occurrence (some sites have multiple loci, total n = 86): On floors (28), fill (13), pits (8), buried (4), rooms (3), charnal pits (3), firepits (3), trash (3), bone beds (2), and "many" (2); 14 others are single occurrences. MNI (Minimum Number of Individuals): frequencies based on 76 sites regardless of chronology, loci, etc.):

Total individuals reported in the literature (n = 2,458), total available for analysis (1,045). Based on the Turner's assessments: Adults (n = 449), subadults (160), children (81), and infants (10); specifically identified as males (179) and females (105), regardless age.

Mesoamericanists and well as Southwestern scholars will appreciate the information summarized in Chapter Four: "Comparative Evidence: Cannibalism and Human Body Processing in Mexico" (pp. 415-458, 34 figures, sixteen tables). Some of the osteological specimens were examined personally by the Turners, and the ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature was also evaluated, leading to the conclusion that cannibalism has been practiced in Central Mexico for a minimum of 2,500 years and possibly 6,000 years. The question of the magnitude of this practice is unresolved for the earlier periods. There is no clear evidence from the Preclassic Olmec or Postclassic Toltecs of Tula, although the Nahuatl-Aztec Late Postclassic Borgia, Hall, and Nuttall codices do illustrate acts of cannibalism. However, not cited by the Turners, Hassig (1992:15) reports that among the Olmec, burned bones suggested the cannibalism of war captives. Carmen Maria Pijoan's pioneering taphonomic studies of Aztec remains illuminates the Late Postclassic period and is cited by the Turners.

The Turners mention evidence from the Basin of Mexico, including the osteology from the Classic Teotihuacan period (C.E. 100-650, revised chronology) residential sites of Maquixco and Tlajinga 33, and the Feathered Serpent Pyramid in the Ciudadela. Sempowski and Spence (Millon 1994) conducted a comprehensive analysis of 373 burials recovered at Teotihuacan from the 19th century

through the 1970s. The Turners do not cite this data (revised from the authors' dissertations), nor is Rattray's (1992) inventory of 267 burials and grave goods mentioned. However, there is no documentation of cannibalism for Classic period Teotihuacan. According to Spence, who conducted the forensic analysis, "some bone might have ended up in dumps because of cannibalism. No traces of cutting, scalping, or marrow extraction were observed on any of the human bone" (1994:339). The cremation of Teotihuacanos by members of their own society apparently prevailed, although subfloor pit interments (with grave goods) in residences are also found. Storey's (1992:129-130) evaluation of 206 individuals identified in the Tlajinga 33 Classic period site show some signs of cut marks on a few human specimens (possibly one individual) but no evidence of burning or boiling. This suggests sacrifice rather than cannibalism as the Turners have defined it.

Citing a textbook entry (Adams 1991:224), the Turners (pp. 421-422) also state that the suburban Maquixco site produced "large quantities of split and splintered human bone fragments in general garbage and trash heaps, indicating that humans were being used for food." As a participant in the excavation of this site in the early 1960s, I take exception to this assessment. In the field and in the subsequent laboratory analyses, had the opportunity to study the human remains (but less so the non-human animal osteology) from all of the Maquixco excavations. The human remains had no observable evidence of cutting, dismemberment, burning, roasting, or cooking. This was confirmed in 1965-1966 by Frank Saul (then a human biologist at Penn State) and in 1969-1970 by the late Smithsonian Institution physical anthropologist and paleopathologist, Larry Angel, in 1965-1966. Some specimens of deer recovered from the middens did show evidence of burning (probably roasting). One midden specimen from Maquixco (TC-8:3), a fronto-nasal fragment of an adult with a probable artificial frontal-occipital cranial flattening, had cut marks and might have been a fragment of a trophy skull.

In addition, there is no evidence of cannibalism, although there were ample indications of violence and sacrifice, as evidenced by the more than 200 human sacrificial captives recovered from the Feathered Serpent Pyramid excavations by Ruben Cabrera, George Cowgill, Saburo Sugiyama, and Michael Spence (personal communications). The studies conducted by Spence (personal communication) which confirms the hypothesis of captive sacrifices and determines, on the basis of oxygen isotope analysis, that the chemical signature of these indi-

viduals' osteology indicated that they were foreigners to the Basin of Mexico. I have no new report on the evidence of the human osteology from Saburo Sugiyama's current (1999) Pyramid of the Moon excavations. However, an apparently high status burial with bound hands accompanied by raptorial birds (mostly eagles, one hawk, and one owl) and the caged skeletons of a jaguar, a mountain lion, and a wolf were recovered in situ. Evidence suggests that these were all buried alive as sacrificial offerings.

Chronologically the key to the Turner's argument about interpersonal violence and cannibalism in the American Southwest is the Early Postclassic Toltec period and particularly the site of Tula, Hidalgo, excavated by Mexican and American archaeologists over many years. The Turners report that Tula has "not yet produced clear-cut osteological evidence of sacrifice" (p. 425-426). Benfer (1974), who had also studied the osteology from Casas Grandes, reported no evidence of cannibalism or violence among six human burials that he studied at the site of Tula. The Turners do not cite his analysis of the Tula specimens nor other documentation from this same site provided by Healan (1989:111, 126, 128, 194-195), who reported a skull fragment from House VI, Room 2; caches of human limb bones; a burial within an altar; and a subfloor urn burial. Diehl (1983:98) conjectured that "the burnt human bones found in our excavations [at Tula] indicate that human flesh was considered edible. The bones probably came from sacrificial victims who were slaves. The frequency of cannibalism is not known." He also stated that fragmentary human skeletons and miscellaneous human bones mixed with other debris on and above room floors was "puzzling" at the Corral Locality excavations, but provided a hint of cannibalism (1983:94, 95). However, no one has provided incontrovertible documentation for sacrifice or cannibalism at Tula, capital of the Toltecs. The Turners were unable to examine these specimens. Hassig's (1992:112) assessment of Toltec warfare cites Diehl and Healan's studies.

The Turners themselves also personally evaluated skeletal materials from Formative period Coxcatlan Cave in the Tehuacan Valley (Burial 2, a five-year-old with potential evidence of "cranial roasting"), ca. 6000 BP. Human remains from Preclassic Tlatelcomila, Tetelpan (Mexico, DF); the Classic period site of Electra, Villa de Reyes (San Luis Potosi); 95 MNI from the Classic period Alta Vista (Zacatecas) site; and 170 skulls from Tlatelolco (Mexico, DF) Aztec tzompantli (skull rack) were examined and compared by the Turners. Evidence for sacrifice and potential cannibalism is evident for the Late Postclas-

sic Aztec period (C.E. 1200-1520). However, there was no evidence for warfare, sacrifice, or cannibalism seen in human specimens recovered from sites in the Mexican states of Sonora, Durango, Nayarit, or Coahuila (p. 426). Trophy heads were found at the site of Guasave, Sinaloa, and there was minimum direct evidence of cannibalism at Casas Grandes, but clear evidence of sacrifice and cannibalism at La Quemada, Zacatecas (C.E. 100-900) (p. 428). Based upon this "evidence," the Turners conclude that human sacrifice and cannibalism are much older in Mesoamerica than in the American Southwest (p. 457-458). However, for La Quemada (Nelson, Darling, and Kice 1992:305-308) not cited by the Turners – mortuary practices included the use of a charnal house, a skull-trophy rack, articulated (but decapitated) skeletons, articulated complete skeletons, and bone piles. Cannibalism was not suggested.

Hassig (1988:121) reminds us that warfare during the Late Postclassic Aztec period emphasized the taking of captives, usually nobles and warriors, for purposes of sacrifice, and he writes that "after they were killed, the bodies were laid by the skull rack, and each warrior identified the one he had captured. Then the body was taken to the captor's home, where it was eaten; the bones were hung in the house as a sign of prestige [citing Duran and Sahagun]. The heads of those who were sacrificed were skinned, the flesh was dried, and the skulls were placed on the skull rack" [following Motolinea's *Memoriales*]. There is no evidence that women, children, or infants were slain or their flesh consumed (see also Cook 1946). The Turners use the older Bandelier translation of Sahagun's Florentine Codex, rather than the definitive Dibble and Anderson translation (Sahagun 1953-1982). Four books from the newer rendition consider the Aztec human sacrifice of captives, with Book 2: Ceremonies, providing the most information (Books 1:19; 2: 3, 24, 47-48, 52-53, 170, 179; 4:35; 9:64, 67).

In Chapter Five: "Conclusion: Explaining Southwestern Cannibalism" (pp. 459-484, eight figures, one table), the authors offer several hypotheses in order to explicate the occurrences of Southwestern cannibalism. Among those assessed are starvation or "emergency" cannibalism, social pathology, and institutionalized violence with cannibalism. The Turners reject starvation as a general explanation after considering Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo Indian oral traditions. They turn to a combination of social control, human ritual sacrifice and social pathology as a proximate explanation, and mention Mesoamerican sources beginning with Classic period Teotihuacan (pp. 462-463). They also cite Maya specialist Richard

Adams's (1991:256-257, 285) textbook and conjectures by Bertha Dutton (1964) whose postulated Toltec migrations to the American Southwest C.E. 800-1000, although her discussion emphasizes "might have" migrated. Next, the authors turn to an evaluation of Mesoamerican influence on the Southwest (citing Dutton, the Listers, and Riley, among others), prior to a discussion of direct contact with Mesoamericans or the diffusion of cultural traits (emphasizing the postulates of the Listers, Ferdon, and Spicer). "Dental Evidence for Mexicans in the Southwest" (pp. 472-477) is offered as confirmation. Dental transfiguration (a term preferred to "dental mutilation") among some adults at Guasave, Sinaloa in West Mexico and at several sites in Arizona and New Mexico, including Pueblo Bonito, suggest to the Turners that "Mexicans were physically present in the Southwest" (p. 476). The argument is very "thin" and the frequencies of occurrences of human remains are carefully minimized in this narrative.

The social control hypothesis is seen as a potential explanation, but social pathology (killer-cannibals of the Jeffrey Dahmer type) is assessed as are psychiatric disorders, but these are rejected. The concept of institutionalized violence, such as a cannibal warrior cult, is touched upon, and the Turners conclude that (pp. 482-483): "The interregional contrast in Southwestern cannibalism seems to fit the idea of an actual Mexican Indian presence stimulating or even directing the Chaco phenomenon. We propose that these southerners were practitioners of the Xipe-Totec (or Maasaw) and the Tezcatlipoca-Quetzalcoatl (plumed serpent) cults. They entered the San Juan basin around A.D. 900 and found a suspicious but pliant population whom they terrorized into reproducing the theocratic lifestyle they had previously known in Mesoamerica". The Mexicans achieved their objectives through the use of warfare, violent example, and terrifying cult ceremonies that included human sacrifice and cannibalism. After the abandonment of Chaco, human sacrifices and cannibalism all but disappeared, suggesting some kind of prehistoric discontinuity."

Assessment of the Book

I shall begin with general statements about the current literature and interpretations and then move to particulars. Our comprehension of the prehistory of the Southwest has been enhanced in 1999 by the publication of no less than three seminal works, each of which is firmly grounded in meticulous archaeological data. Each study has led their authors to infer behavioral scenarios

that challenge paradigms and interpretations that have been held for many years. These include Stephen L. Lekson's *The Chaco Meridian: Centers of Political in the Ancient Southwest* (1999), Steven A. LeBlanc's *Prehistoric Warfare in the American Southwest* (1999), and Man Corn: *Cannibalism and Violence in the Prehistoric American Southwest* (1999) by the Turners.

Lekson's (1999) recent provocatively creative synthesis of the sociopolitical systems of the Greater Southwest for the period of Pueblo prehistory ca. C.E. 900 to 1450, suggests that Chaco was one of three sequential ceremonial cities or "capitals" of a low-level but vast politically and economically integrated network. The territory these capitals controlled incorporated most of the Pueblo world, and controlled the distribution of exotic materials (parrots, copper bells, marine shells, etc.) indicating that commercial contacts existed as far south as the tropical jungles of Central America. With the abandonment of Chaco (Chaco Canyon) in the twelfth century, the regional capital was shifted to the Aztec site (Aztec Ruins), and later to Paquime (Casas Grandes). His detailed assessment reveals that the Pueblo people had a sophisticated astronomical tradition, and that these three centers are located on precisely the same longitudinal meridian. He also relates this to phenomena such as the Great North Road and other ceremonial roads, Pueblo mythology, the rise of katsina ceremonialism, and political economics, particularly exchange and distribution. Warfare is perceived as a factor, but cannibalism is not.

LeBlanc (1999), focusing on the American Southwest, concludes that prehistoric conflict between peoples in that region, including massacres, raiding parties, ambush, pillage, scalping, and captive taking that is warfare is amply evidenced in the archaeological as well as the ethnographic record. In this regard he moves beyond Haas's (1990:171-189) assessment of the nature of warfare in the American Southwest. Influenced by Lawrence Keeley's *War Before Civilization* (1996), LeBlanc proposes the thesis that warfare was far from being a minor component of early Southwestern society, but was decidedly purposeful, and not simply based upon anger or revenge. LeBlanc proceeds to evaluate the evidence for warfare, the evolution of warfare technology, the endemic nature of early warfare, and the sociopolitical consequences of warfare during the later Pueblo periods. His stated purpose is to characterize warfare as practiced in this culture area, and he documents the inhabitants' concerns about safety and security, the creation of alliances, and that conflicts cut across cultural divisions and ecological zones. This well-reasoned and stimulating volume

lends support to the postulates and interpretations offered by the Turners. Violent death, the mistreatment of human corpses, cannibalism, and processed human bone are notable in the Chacoan Interaction Sphere (LeBlanc 1999:166, 168, 173, 176-186). Clearly, the model of Hobbesian aggressive behavior versus Rousseauian peaceful behavior has, in LeBlanc's view, swung back toward the former. Andrew Darling (1999), in reviewing *Prehistoric Warfare*, sees LeBlanc's argument as a paradigm shift responding to archaeological approaches of the 1970s and 1980s. Darling also characterizes this as an example of an anthropological "preoccupation" with warfare, noting that "neither Hobbes nor Rousseau offered any explanation for the occurrence of warfare in the American Southwest."

During the Turner's thirty years of data collecting and analysis, a few other physical anthropologists have undertaken meticulous studies of human remains from specific sites and suggested violence and cannibalism. Notably, Tim White's (1992) detailed assessment of the Mancos site in Colorado employs anatomical, taphonomic, and zooarchaeological analyses, and forensic science to deduce the human behaviors associated with the butchering, cooking, and eating of thirty people ca. C.E. 1100. However, he is unable to document unequivocally his inference of cannibalism, but he assesses a variety of alternatives ritual, starvation, warfare, and cultural diffusion, among others. He discusses intentionally defleshed and disarticulated crania, and longbones broken by percussion, the roasting of body segments, and that bone fragments "occupied ceramic vessels prior to disposal" (1992:364). In this pioneering, clearly presented analysis, White, lacking historical or modern specimens for comparison, compared the Mancos human remains with those of game animals used for food. For this approach some colleagues have criticized him.

Clearly, the Turners in *Man Corn* have enhanced their analytical techniques and expanded and reinforced their paradigms since the early assessment of the remains of eleven humans at the A.D. 950 Anasazi settlement of Burnt Mesa (Flinn, Turner, and Brew 1976). In that evaluation, starvation or necessity rather than ritual or religious configuration was suggested as the explanation for cannibalism. The Turners current synthesis suggests that small mammals (prairie dogs, for example), pronghorn antelope, and humans were treated in much the same way, therefore, circumstances rather than animal type or cultural tradition determined the cooking method that was employed (p. 31). But how does this statement correlate to the postulate that immigrating terrorist cultists

from the south reproduced “the theocratic lifestyle they had previously known in Mesoamerica, achieving their objectives through the use of warfare, violent example, and terrifying cult ceremonies that included human sacrifice and cannibalism” (p. 483)?

Let us examine some of the ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature on cannibalism and terrorism. Hogg (1958:vii-viii) stated that after consulting the British Museum Library (eight million volumes) and the library of the venerable Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, there was “no single work in the English language that covers the immense field of cannibalism and human sacrifice.” Accounts from missionary society libraries and archives provided the majority of the references to cannibalism (see also Tannahill 1975). Arens (1979:181), an anthropologist and a skeptic about cannibalistic events, stated that from his research “it was not possible to isolate a single reliable complete first-hand account [of cannibalism] by anthropologists.” Clinical psychologist Hans Askenasy (1994), who maintains a scrupulously noncommittal tone regarding the ultimate morality of cannibalism, but has taken uncritically secondary and tertiary reports of this activity. Brown and Tuzin (1983) undertook another psychological assessment. Among the members of the anthropological community, cultural materialists (Harris 1979, Price 1979) and their detractors (Harner 1977, Sanday 1986) have examined the phenomenon of Aztec cannibalism. The warfare hypothesis can be supported by the evidence the Turners have amassed and tends to “fit” the cross-cultural data assembled by Ember and Ember (1992), and the conclusions reached by Haas (1990) and Haas and Creamer (1993).

Cremation does ensure that the body (and spirit) of the deceased will not be consumed by real or perceived enemies. What role did this play in Central Mexico, especially in Classic period Teotihuacan (C.E. 100-650) where many cremations are known archaeologically, at Early Postclassic Tula of the Toltecs (C.E. 700-1300), and in the evolution of the Late Postclassic Aztecs (C.E. 1100-1520)? Evidence pro and con for the cremation of human corpses in the American Southwest is not discussed adequately by the Turners.

Let me now review the Turner’s major findings. The scientific community whether historians of Native Americans, archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, human biologists, or pathologists will appreciate the massive, systematic documentation that the Turners provide in Chapter 3. The amassed evidence is compelling and

documented by superb photographs. The regional approach produced five principal findings: 1) Cannibalism can be differentiated from all other forms of bone damage and mortuary practice. The evidence that they present in Man Corn is compelling and I believe that they have documented this activity. They contend that 2) cannibalism was practiced for almost four centuries (ca. C.E. 900-1300), and was concentrated in the Four Corners area especially among people living in Chaco Canyon and in or near outlying Chacoan great houses. The chronometric data (derived in the main from dendrochronology) and relative chronologies (from ceramic seriation) confirm the time frame. The geographical distribution is, likewise, substantiated. The lack of cannibalism among the Hohokam appears to be documented, but has the osteological evidence been as meticulously examined as the Turners might like? If the Hohokam, because of proximity, were influenced to a greater degree by Mesoamerican cultures than other prehistoric Southwestern peoples, your reviewer wonders why some evidence of cannibalism is not represented substantially in Hohokam territory. No one is suggesting that the Hohokam were the instigators of the violence and cannibalism but there appears to be a lack of any archaeological, ethnohistoric, ethnographic, and/or oral literature supporting cannibalism in the Hohokam area or by Hohokam peoples.

The Turners also state that 3) Chacoan cannibalism “appears to have originated in Mexico,” (p. 4) where the practice dates back at least 2,500 years. Here is argument they advance is, I believe, weak and unproven. Evidence for violence and cannibalism in the Classic period Teotihuacan polity (ca. C.E. 100-750) located northeast of Mexico, the extant evidence cannot support the hypothesis. At its apogee, C.E. 600, there were at least 125,000 and possibly 200,000 urban residents and another 25,000 to 30,000 inhabitants of nearby rural villages in the Teotihuacan Valley. Yet only about 800 human burials have been identified. What happened to the people of Teotihuacan and why this metropolis was abandoned are still major questions in Mesoamerican studies. The succeeding major political state was that of the Toltecs, centered at Tula, Hidalgo. The human osteological evidence from Toltec sites anywhere in the Meseta Central is too meager and inconclusive to suggest cannibalism. It is true that Teotihuacan has mural art featuring human hearts and that the Toltecs have decorative and monumental arts including lithic sculptures of human skulls and longbones, and warriors. However, the evidence that the Turners have mustered does not support the supposition that a cult of terrorist Mesoamericans –Toltec cult terrorists –

was responsible for the creation of the Chaco complex.

Likewise, the Turners contend that 4) social control, social pathology, and some manner of ritual sacrifice (probably in that order) are provisionally the best combination of explanatory factors. Darling (1998), originally in a 1995 Society for American Archaeology annual meeting paper now expanded into a fulsome article, challenges the validity of the argument that cannibalism best explains the evidence of defleshing, cutting, and bone breakage. His review of the ethnographic and ethnohistoric literature on Pueblo and Navajo witchcraft, and witch torture and execution that included dismemberment. Twenty-two accused witches were interrogated during “trials” which often included the hanging or clubbing of those accused; six individuals were executed by clubbing or stoning. Likewise, he summarizes the contexts of defleshing and disposal activities, artifacts, burning, osteological remains, age and gender, and the timing of these activities.

Darling’s “selected” 21 archaeological sites that exhibit mass inhumations with modified human remains may be compared with the 76 listed by Turner and Turner. Of these 21 sites, the Turners also included sixteen in their analyses, and in each case the Turners own examinations confirmed that cannibalism had taken place. My own review of Darling’s data reveals that most of these sites are culturally Anasazi (12), with Anasazi-Mogollon (2), Basketmaker III/Pueblo III (1), Hopi (1), and affiliation not stated (5). Ten of sixteen sites dated to C.E. 1100+ (two others were C.E. 400-900, two were 1000+, two were 1200+, and one was 1500+). The human remains were from pits (6), charnal houses (3), found on the floor (3), recovered in architectural fill (3), or found in a sub-floor context (1), and in a bonebed (1). Darling’s sixteen sites have an MNI of 194 (110 adults, fourteen subadults, 24 children; nineteen male and twenty female). In the sixteen cases, broken bones (13), burning (10), cutting (5), scalping (4), pot polishing (2), and chopping (1) were discerned. These chronological and contextual data are consistent with the Turner’s thesis of violence and cannibalism. Pits, it would appear, might be the preferred repository locus for the bodies of witches and these corpses might be ritually “killed” by clubbing or smashing the remains. Sticks and stones to break their bones.

Lastly, the authors rightly state that 5) reports of prehistoric Southwestern cannibalism have been published for almost a century, but have been largely ignored by the scientific community. The evidence the Turners provide would appear to be conclusive on this issue.

Cannibalism both the name and associated sociocultural behaviors reminded me more than a few times of stories about the Ilongot of Luzon in the Philippines (Rosaldo 1980) who consumed “Long Pig.” Pigs, of course, are omnivorous, as are human beings, hence, “Long Pig” was a roasted or steamed human carcass. A good friend of mine, who worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during the latter years of the Second World War, was parachuted into Japanese-held territory in the Philippines in order to organize resistance against Japanese troops. He recounted instances of trophy head hunting and the consumption of “Long Pig” of Japanese origin. In 1945 these instances of the consumption of human flesh was then a delicacy rather than a culinary necessity, but the implications of killing and consuming one’s “enemy” is an unavoidable byproduct. Weingartner (1992) has also commented on this “trophy phenomena.”

In summary, was Chaco such a center of violence and cannibalism that contemporary Native Americans of the region avoid it as a place of “bad medicine”? Probably. However, the fatal flaw of this book is the conclusion that peoples from Mesoamerica were responsible for this phenomenon at Chaco. The violence that resulted in mutilated human remains has other potential explanations, such as that postulated by Darling. But, can we account for these numbers of dismembered and smashed bodies as exclusively witch executions that appear in the oral traditions of the American Southwest? Could at least some if not fully one-third of the cases cited by the Turners be attributed to witch executions? Probably. But the Turners dismiss entirely the witch execution possibilities (pp.52-54), and Darling does not press sufficiently the issue in terms of parallel cases of witch executions. The witchcraft hypothesis emphasized by Darling (1998) requires a further evaluation, perhaps using the works of Parrinder (1963), Russell (1972), and Trevor-Roper (1969) on the European Middle Ages. The information collected by William Walker (1995, 1999) for the American Southwest is also supportive of the hypothesis of the ritual killing of witches. One question to ponder would a perceived witch’s family also be slain and would their household goods also be destroyed ritually? Arens (1979:93, 95, 154-157), Askenasy (1994:149-185), and Sartore (1994:31-42) also briefly consider witchcraft and its associated mythology.

Mock (1998), in discussing offerings and caches dating to the Terminal to Late Classic period termination event at Colha, Belize, comments on the “mutilation and defleshing” of thirty human skulls (twenty adults and ten children) and their collective burial in a pit. Among the

Maya, skulls were considered a primary source of regenerative power so that the mutilation of facial features was inferred to be a form of divine retribution for sociopolitical incompetence. These remains were also burned and smashed, so that this debasement signaled the termination of a ruling lineage or dynasty political termination as assassination but ensuring that the souls or spirits of the deceased could not be regenerated (Mock 1998:119).

Another avenue of investigation is through paleo epidemiology and disease vectors including viruses, bacteria, and spirochetes. Carlson (1999), for example, has suggested provocatively that encephalitis lethargica (commonly known as “sleeping sickness”), with symptoms of high fevers, seizures, hallucinations, and sometimes comas, is a viable explanation of the episodes of witchcraft in and near Salem, Massachusetts where documented accounts of convulsions and bizarre behaviors were reported. Encephalitis is more common among women and the young, rather than in males and the elderly. In the American Southwest, vectors such as hantaviruses and fleas may be a viable course for investigation.

In conclusion, from this reviewer’s perspective as an anthropological archaeologist weaned on ecological theory and cultural materialism, who has also had training in paleopathology, there tend to be several major positions at the present time in this ongoing debate: A) supporters of the warfare and cannibalism postulate; B) supporters of the witchcraft and ritual execution or interment proposition; C) detractors of B who support A; and D) detractors of A who support B. Likewise there are those who are E) detractors of both A and B; and F) those who are “neutral” because they have not yet been swayed by the evidence mustered by either A or B. You reviewer remains in the neutral camp.

The book’s title from the Nahuatl word *tlacatlaolli*, a “sacred meal of sacrificed human meat, cooked with corn,” is, to my thinking, an unfortunate choice. Although the term conveys Late Postclassic Aztec-Mexican-Nahuatl connections, the vast majority of the instances of cannibalism cited date to the Early Postclassic Toltec era where the evidence for cannibalism is controversial and is not documented in the archaeological literature. Likewise, the implication that human flesh was mixed with corn and consumed cannot be supported for the Classic period (C.E. 100-750) or the Early Postclassic Toltec era (ca. C.E. 700-1300). The Aztec evidence is more certain (see also Sahagun 1953-1982). There is no incontrovertible evidence about the languages spoken by the Teoti-

huacanos or Toltecs, – most Mesoamerican scholars believe that Nahuatl was spoken, others believe a polyglot mixture of Nahuatl, Otomi, Popoloca, Mixtec, Mazatec, and Yucatecan Maya (Diehl 1983:50) but that the Aztecs definitely spoke Nahuatl. There is no guarantee that the Toltecs were Nahuatl speakers although they probably were according to Richard Diehl and William Sanders (personal communications); therefore, using a Nahuatl word to convey a Toltec culinary practice might be erroneous.

Nonetheless, I am certain that we are just beginning a new round of debates on the violence and mutilation syndrome. It would be fascinating and informative to have the principals representing the spectrum of opinions debate one another at an annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology or a similar venue. The invitees should include Christy Turner, Steven LeBlanc, Andrew Darling, Stephen Lekson, William Walker, Lynne Christian, Linda Cordell, Jonathan Haas, and one or two Mesoamericanists Mike Spence and Rebecca Storey come to mind. I would volunteer as a moderator, or referee, as needed.

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