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The taking and displaying of human body parts as trophies by amerindians

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Abstrak

The Amerindian practice of taking and displaying various human body parts as trophies has long held the imaginations of both the public and scholars alike. Sensationalized accounts of such practices recorded by various New World explorers frequently shocked OldWorld sensibilities and often served to reinforce Eurocentric notions of superiority over the indigenous ?Other.? Rather than following this colonialist tradition of denigrating indigenous customs and belief systems, this book seeks to respectfully and dispassionately shed light on why such behaviors occurred in the Americas. It is remarkable that until the present volume there was only one other scholarly work that specifically addressed the topic of human trophy taking on a continent-wide basis.1 Our collective analysis of the archaeological, ethnohistorical, osteological, and ethnographic evidence in this book clearly indicates that not only is human trophy taking of great antiquity in the western hemisphere (dating back to the Archaic Period), but it also appears to have been widespread in every major culture area of the Americas (except for Patagonia, which has not provided any evidence of human trophy taking).