

Unveiling Europe's Hidden History of Cannibalism

Description

The contemporary historical narrative of Western Europe is intricately defined by a dichotomy of civilization versus barbarism. Europe is often depicted as a bastion of enlightenment, standing in stark contrast to the perceived savagery of the broader world. Among the myriad customs that, for centuries, delineated Europeans from their global counterparts, the practice of [cannibalism](#) emerges as particularly noteworthy.

Frequently characterized as one of the most gruesome and abhorrent acts imaginable, my [recent research](#) elucidates that the consumption of human flesh was not only present in the prehistoric eras but persisted through subsequent centuries in various contexts across Western Europe.

The motivations underpinning this practice were multifaceted, encompassing nutritional exigencies, as well as ritualistic and medicinal endeavors documented throughout different epochs. During times of famine, conflict, or societal turmoil, references to cannibalism are notably recurrent in the medieval historical record.

An Enduring Taboo

For centuries, the human body was regarded as a material resource, utilized for a myriad of therapeutic remedies. Following the decline of Roman antiquity, legal frameworks emerged, such as those in the [Codex Theodosianus](#) and the [Visigothic Code](#), which explicitly prohibited the violation of graves or the exhumation of remains for medicinal purposes.

In the wake of these regulations, prohibitions proliferated throughout Europe, indicating that the practice itself endured despite efforts to stigmatize it.

Christian Penitentials and Cannibalism

The advent of Christianity introduced [Handbooks of Penance](#), which served to codify societal norms surrounding sin and penitence, thereby reflecting the ecclesiastical apprehension regarding societal moralities.

Prohibition of practices such as the ingestion of blood and other human-derived substances became commonplace, particularly targeting women's alleged endeavors to harness therapeutic benefits from male bodily fluids. This societal regulation hinted at an underlying recognition of the power attributed to such substances.

The murky waters of purported cannibalistic practices mingled with Christian doctrine, resulting in a profound complexity surrounding the issue that echoed through the ages.

[Abel de Lorenzo Rodríguez](#), Chercheur invité, LaMOP (UMR 8589), Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne & Postdoctoral Fellow, Faculdade de História, Instituto de Investigação de Humanidades, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela., [Universidade de Santiago de Compostela](#)



This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Vocabulary List:

1. **Dichotomy** /daɪ'kɒtəmi/ (noun): A division or contrast between two things that are represented as opposed or entirely different.
2. **Cannibalism** /'kæn.ɪ.bəl.ɪ.zəm/ (noun): The practice of consuming the flesh of one's own species.
3. **Exigencies** /,ɛk.sɪ'dʒen.si:z/ (noun): Urgencies or demands that require immediate attention.
4. **Prohibition** /,prəʊhɪ'bɪʃən/ (noun): The action of forbidding something especially by law.
5. **Ecclesiastical** /ɪ,kli:zi'æs.tɪ.kəl/ (adjective): Relating to the Christian church or its clergy.
6. **Therapeutic** /,θerə'pjʊ:tɪk/ (adjective): Relating to the healing of disease; having a good effect on health.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What is one of the main themes characterizing the historical narrative of Western Europe?
Option: A. Industrial Revolution versus Agricultural Revolution
Option: B. Civilization versus Barbarism
Option: C. Democracy versus Autocracy
Option: D. Colonialism versus Nationalism
2. According to the content, what practice emerges as particularly noteworthy in Western Europe?
Option: A. Agriculture
Option: B. Cannibalism
Option: C. Architecture
Option: D. Artistry
3. What were some of the motivations behind the practice of cannibalism as mentioned in the text?
Option: A. Emotional connections
Option: B. Nutritional exigencies
Option: C. Political aspirations
Option: D. Technological advancements
4. Which legal frameworks prohibited the violation of graves or the exhumation of remains for medicinal



purposes?

- Option: A. Napoleonic Code
- Option: B. Justinian Code
- Option: C. Codex Theodosianus
- Option: D. Magna Carta

5. What did the regulations following the decline of Roman antiquity explicitly prohibit?

- Option: A. Trade routes
- Option: B. Burials
- Option: C. Slavery
- Option: D. Cannibalism

6. The advent of Christianity introduced which significant documents according to the text?

- Option: A. Declaration of Independence
- Option: B. Articles of Confederation
- Option: C. Handbooks of Penance
- Option: D. Constitution

True-False

- 7. Cannibalism was only present in prehistoric eras and disappeared in later centuries.
- 8. The consumption of human flesh in Western Europe was mainly motivated by nutritional needs.
- 9. Legal frameworks such as the Codex Theodosianus prohibited the exhumation of human remains for medicinal use.
- 10. The Christian doctrine embraced and supported the practice of cannibalism throughout the medieval ages.
- 11. According to the text, human body parts were often used for therapeutic remedies in European societies.
- 12. Prohibition of the ingestion of human-derived substances primarily targeted men during the medieval period.

Gap-Fill

- 13. The practice of cannibalism endured in various contexts across Western Europe for centuries,



particularly during times of famine, conflict, or societal turmoil, documented throughout different _____.

14. Legal frameworks like the Codex Theodosianus and the Visigothic Code prohibited the violation of graves or the exhumation of remains for medicinal purposes, reflecting on the societal perspective regarding the human body as a material resource during the decline of _____ antiquity.

15. Christian penitentials served to codify societal norms surrounding sin and penitence, aiming to regulate and guide individuals in matters of sin and spiritual _____.

16. The murky waters of purported cannibalistic practices mingled with Christian doctrine, resulting in a profound complexity surrounding the issue that echoed through the _____.

17. The consumption of human flesh was not only present in the prehistoric eras but persisted through subsequent centuries in various _____ across Western Europe, as elucidated by recent research.

18. Emphasizing the legal prohibitions that emerged after the decline of Roman antiquity, regulations indicated that despite efforts to stigmatize the act, the practice itself of cannibalism _____ in Europe.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. B. Civilization versus Barbarism 2. B. Cannibalism 3. B. Nutritional exigencies 4. C. Codex Theodosianus 5. B. Burials 6. C. Handbooks of Penance

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. True 10. False 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. epochs 14. Roman 15. moralities 16. ages 17. contexts 18. endured

Vocabulary quizzes



Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. Which term refers to the ability of a treatment to provide a beneficial effect?

- Option: Efficacy
- Option: Misleading
- Option: Skepticism
- Option: Correlation

2. Which term is used to describe the study of diseases?

- Option: Profound
- Option: Cognitive
- Option: Pathology
- Option: Hypothesis

3. Which term refers to a division or contrast between two things that are represented as being opposed or entirely different?

- Option: Skepticism
- Option: Dichotomy
- Option: Desiccated
- Option: Resilience

4. Which term is related to the processes of thought and understanding?

- Option: Pharmacological
- Option: Cognitive
- Option: Ecclesiastical
- Option: Subterranean

5. Which term refers to urgent needs or demands?

- Option: Hypothesis
- Option: Ecclesiastical
- Option: Exigencies
- Option: Corpus

6. Which term refers to a collection of written texts especially the entire works of a particular author or a body of writing on a particular subject?

- Option: Prohibition
- Option: Correlation
- Option: Interventions
- Option: Corpus

7. Which term describes something that is short-lived or lasts for a very brief time?

- Option: Deterioration



- Option: Transmutes
- Option: Ephemeral
- Option: Illusive

8. Which term refers to a proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation?

- Option: Hypothesis
- Option: Profound
- Option: Cannibalism
- Option: Cherenkov

9. Which term refers to the act of one individual of a species consuming all or part of another individual of the same species?

- Option: Cannibalism
- Option: Remnants
- Option: Ecclesiastical
- Option: Cherenkov

10. Which term relates to the treatment or healing of a disease or disorder?

- Option: Desiccated
- Option: Therapeutic
- Option: Interventions
- Option: Exigencies

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

- 11. _____ effects of the medication were observed during the clinical trial.
- 12. _____ may lead to unnecessary medical interventions.
- 13. Her _____ and determination helped her overcome the challenges.
- 14. The speaker's words had a _____ impact on the audience.
- 15. Archaeologists uncovered ancient pottery _____ at the site.
- 16. The professor _____ the complex theory in a simple manner.
- 17. The garden was in full bloom displaying a _____ of colorful flowers.
- 18. The blue glow observed in the nuclear reactor is due to _____ radiation.



19. The mirage created an _____ appearance of water in the desert.
20. The advertisement was considered _____ as it did not accurately represent the product.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. Medical procedures or strategies carried out to improve health outcomes.
22. Doubt or questioning regarding the validity or truth of something.
23. Dried out dehydrated or lacking vitality.
24. Relating to the study or use of drugs in treating diseases.
25. Existing or occurring beneath the surface of the earth.
26. A statistical measure indicating the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate together.
27. The process of becoming progressively worse or less valuable.
28. Relating to the Christian Church or its clergy.
29. This statistical technique determines the degree of relationship between two variables.
30. The team explored the depths of the cave system.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Efficacy 2. Pathology 3. Dichotomy 4. Cognitive 5. Exigencies 6. Corpus 7. Ephemeral 8. Hypothesis 9. Cannibalism 10. Therapeutic

Gap-Fill: 11. Adverse 12. Overdiagnosis 13. Resilience 14. Profound 15. Remnants 16. Elucidated 17. Profusion 18. Cherenkov 19. Illusive 20. Misleading

Matching sentence: 1. Interventions 2. Skepticism 3. Desiccated 4. Pharmacological 5. Subterranean 6. Correlation 7. Deterioration 8. Ecclesiastical 9. Correlation 10. Subterranean

CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL6

Date Created
2025/02/23



Author

aimeeyoung99

ESL-NEWS.COM