

Apotropaic Human Trophies via Crucifixion, Hanging, and Impaling

Using the wheel, hanging, impaling, placarding, and crucifying (WHIPC) in war showed power, punished rebels, and prevented the *cacoëthes* of future revolts. One way leaders accomplished the display of power and instigation of fear was through creating trophies out of the bodies of their war enemies and executing living prisoners of war on stakes. Romans created an artistic style of representing these human scarecrows. Exposure punishments not only punished but invoked fear in both enemies and potential insurgences. I will demonstrate that preceded by the Ancient Near East, the Greeks and Romans used corpses as make-shift trophies as apotropaic magic and as donative offerings. Human trophies via hanging, impaling, and crucifixion of the human bodies in wars served as apotropaic magic and their replicas as short and long-term monuments of victory and territorial subjugation. The paper further looks at both the etymology and representations of staked humans through hanging armor trophies such as the Greek and Roman *tropaeum* and associated terminology, as well as sympathetic magic. The Greek and Roman trophy of armor on a cross will be scrutinized specifically. The idea of sympathetic magic, specifically apotropaic qualities, in the use of human trophies will be considered. The evolving theories of Greek and Roman trophies proposed by Woelcke, Trundel, Prichett, Konstan and Peter Meineck, A. B. Cook and most recently, Kinnee will be put forth and disputed. I suggest the symbol may have been an offering to the changing spirit, the forces who altered the course of the war. Furthermore, the armor trophies were used by the Greeks and Romans as apotropaic magic and donative victory offerings in battle, as well as symbols to inspire fear, or to invoke fear-exciting spirits against their enemies.

The Greeks and Romans attributed religious significance and magical attributes to armor. Armor still held the power of the deceased owner. By possessing it and essentially crucifying the armor or image, as the Greeks and Romans did in battle and at home, the power remaining was locked in place. Military trophies, all or part of the human body, or even a replica of the body, show the power of the military leader or an empire. The paper demonstrates the ancient belief that these items held apotropaic power, therefore the human body was put through hanging, impaling, or crucifixion to form a military trophy, thus fulfilling all three of the functions of the exposure executions; power, punishment, and religion. The mutilation and exposure of the body as a trophy not only punished the enemy warriors and their families, it also invoked fear and demoralized the foe. Furthermore, the victors erected the dismembered body parts and replicas believing they had intrinsic power as donative offerings to gods and spirits. They also had magical power to act as apotropaic icons, both temporary and permanent.