Dying For The Gods: Human Sacrifice In Iron Age & Roman Europe

by Miranda J Aldhouse-Green

Though human sacrifice cannot altogether be proven or disproven yet, the practice of making offerings to the gods is known to have taken place in Iron Age Britain, and played a significant role in their daily lives. The above can only be viewed through our modern (paradigm) eyes. "human sacrifice cannot altogether be proven": It is this, that is very important. The ancient Greeks practiced human sacrifice as well - a virgin daughter deemed the best candidate. Also, favorite slaves were slain when someone important, such as a king, died. Herodotus speaks of how people would find "fifty of the best of the king's remaining servants, strangle and gut them, stuff the bodies with chaff, and sew them up again" (p 163) to leave in the tomb. Evidence of cannibalism in South America is especially abundant. In India in the context of rituals associated with the god Shiva, in which the ground-up remains of a sacrificed pregnant Brahmin woman are...consumed by the presiding priest" (p 61). Nor was Rome itself completely free of such practices, although various Roman authors castigated them.