

Abstract

This master's thesis deals with sacrifice by decapitation. Its goal is to describe systematically this phenomenon which was widely practiced in the Mesoamerican area. To accomplish this there were firstly introduced the main interpretation lines of human sacrifice. The importance of maize for the Mesoamerican culture was described in the next chapter.

The third part of this thesis introduces some Aztec festivities which are connected with ritual decapitation in Sahagún's *Historia general*. Then this thesis deals with the main aspects of the Mesoamerican ballgame and its connection with the story of the Hero twins from Popol Vuh is introduced here and analyzed.

The fourth chapter describes the methods of ritual decapitation. It deals with the question of the fixation method described by Sahagún as „espaldas con espaldas“ and the question of the ritual instrument which should have been used in this situation. Then it describes this method in the context of Maya sacrifices.

The final part deals with the posthumous dealing with the head and the body of the sacrifices. Big part is given to the problem of tzompantli and the treating of the body. Two main techniques are presented here – skinning and ritual cannibalism. Then it describes the Maya techniques of treating the head which include storing skulls in the burial chambers and caves.