

Of Cannibals, Inquisitors, Mainstream Militants & Escape Artists:

A Passport for Extra-Canonical Voyages

by Guido Mina di Sospiro (January 2018)



The Library of Thorvald Boeck, Harriet Backer, 1902

Rereading recently St. Augustine's *Confessions*, written over sixteen hundred years ago, I was struck by one aspect that had previously eluded me: the authors he makes reference to are, for the most part, still known to us today. Whether consciously or not, he was already contributing to building the western canon. The Aristotelian-Euclidean-Cartesian-Newtonian-Darwinian/Spencerian canon by which the western world operates to this day has been in the making for millennia. Along the way, there were death blows to the possibility of at least one other canon, for example the Platonic Academy, which was first destroyed by the Roman dictator Sulla in 86 BCE, and then, having been revived centuries later, was closed once and for all by Justinian I in 529 AD. The Church had/has its Canon Law and was, for centuries, a strict enforcer of it, with anything beyond it being perceived as heresy and being vigorously stamped out.

While the western world in the 21st century is free from alacritous canon-enforcing enterprises such as the Holy Inquisition, it nevertheless operates by a canon which remains very much the mentioned Aristotelian-Euclidean-Cartesian-Newtonian-Darwinian/Spencerian one, inculcated into us all from kindergarten to the grave, echoed not only by schools of all levels, but by governments, the media, official institutions and nonofficial entities and, last but not least, by the entertainment industry.

Judging from the history of mankind, the simple reality is that people both need and like dogmas. Concepts that to an uninvolved and level-headed mind seem grotesque, evil and everything in between, at a certain time and in a certain

place looked just right. Customs that appear barbaric today were the norm once, and vice versa. The Holy Inquisition is the obvious target, as is the Nazis' Final Solution. But what of Stalin's Great Purge? The Khmer Rouge Killing Fields? Ethnic cleansing in the Balkans?

And then there are many less obvious examples.

In his book *Los Invencibles de América*, Spanish author Jesús Á. Rojo Pinilla maintains that, far from committing genocide against the Aztecs in what is today Mexico, Cortés and his conquistadors *saved* them from a self-inflicted holocaust. Animal husbandry being unknown to the Aztecs, they and their neighbors were essentially eating each other to the brink of extinction. Not only did they commit tens of thousands of human sacrifices every year for religious motivations, and thereafter ate the thighs of the sacrificial victims, but their cannibalism was widespread because of the scarcity of food. The contemporary western canon, still a staunch supporter and propagator of the *Leyenda Negra* (the British/American propaganda that demonizes Spain and all things Spanish), in the face of historical *and* archeological evidence teaches us the opposite: that pre-Columbian Mexico was the Garden of Earthly Delights and that the conquistadors proceeded to exterminate everyone. DNA testing on contemporary Mexican population reveals that 30% of them are of pure Aztec or Maya descent; 60%, *mestizo*