

IN SPORE ATIONAL ART:

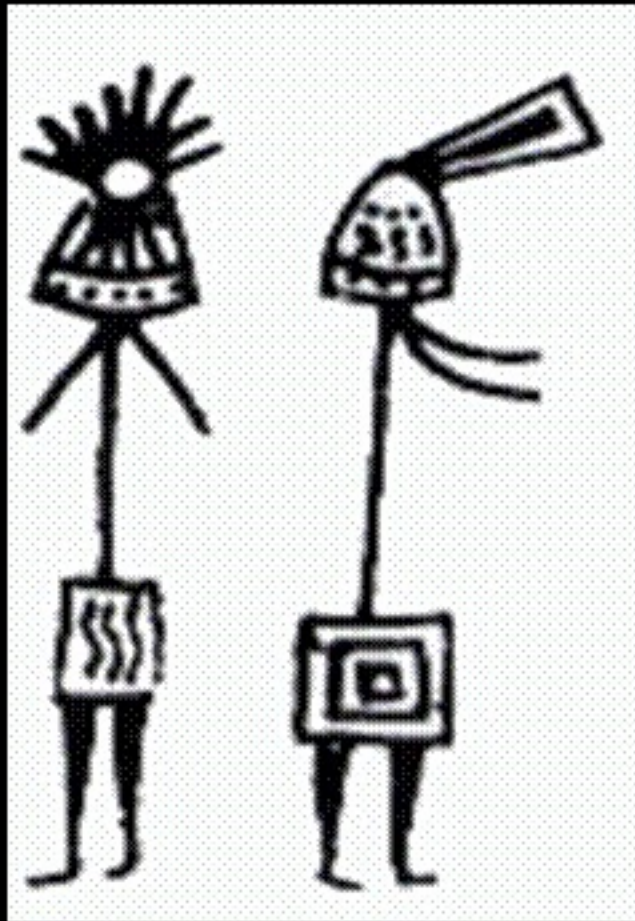
(with thanks to Yva Neal)

Mushroom Art as an expression of
mystical experience

Petroglyphs of Psilocybin Practitioners

India

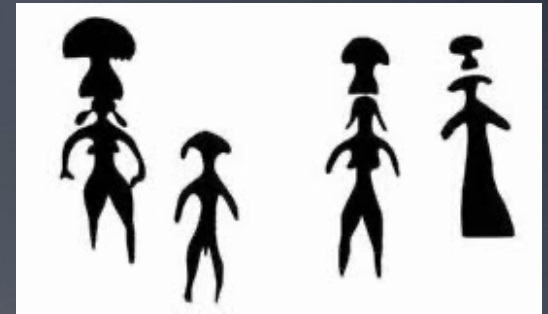
40,000 years old



Pegtymel River Petroglyphs

Far East Siberia

10,000 years old



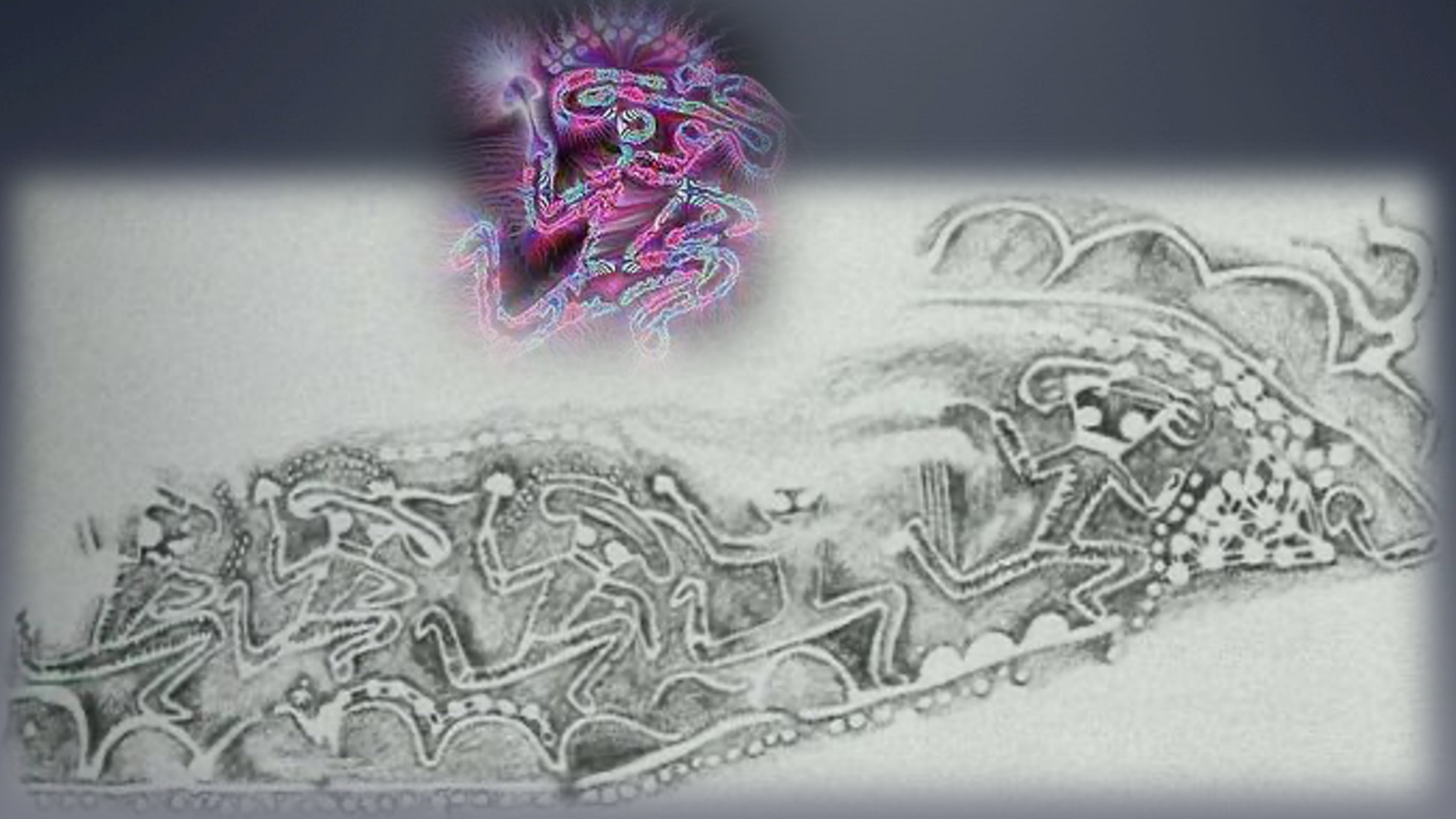
Tassili Mushroom Man

Algeria

7,000 to 9000 years old



Mushroom Men of Tassili



Cave paintings in Chad, Libya, & Egypt



The Selva Pascuala Mural

Spain

6000 years ago



Sumerian Tablets

Southern Mesopotamia

2150 BCE



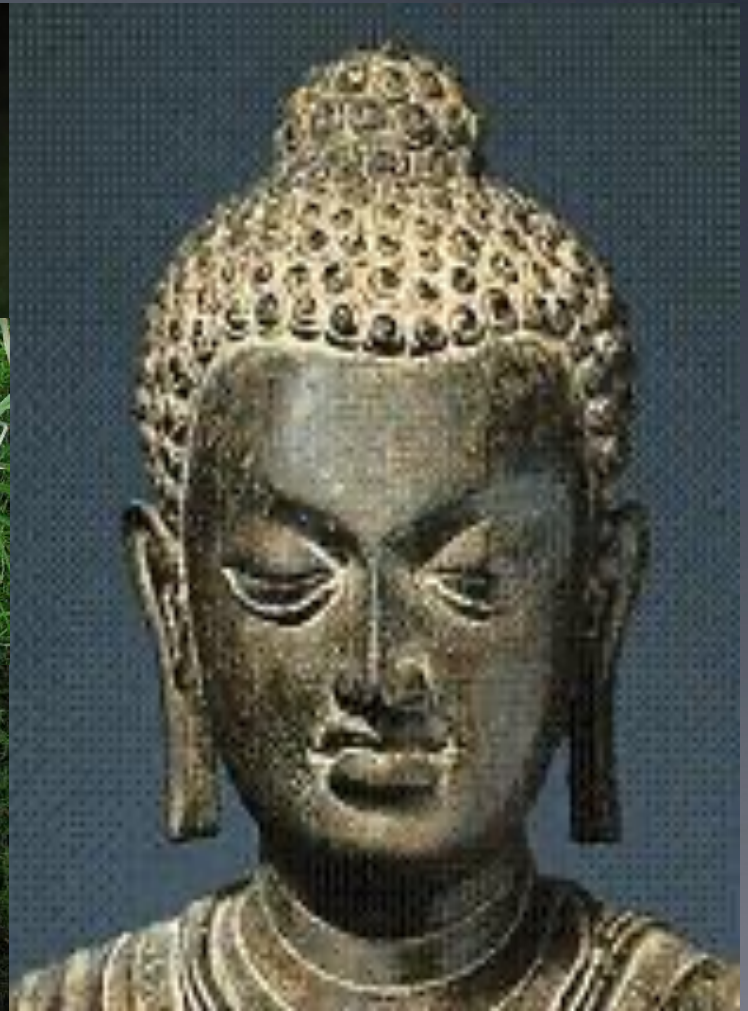
Egyptian Ankh : Food of the gods

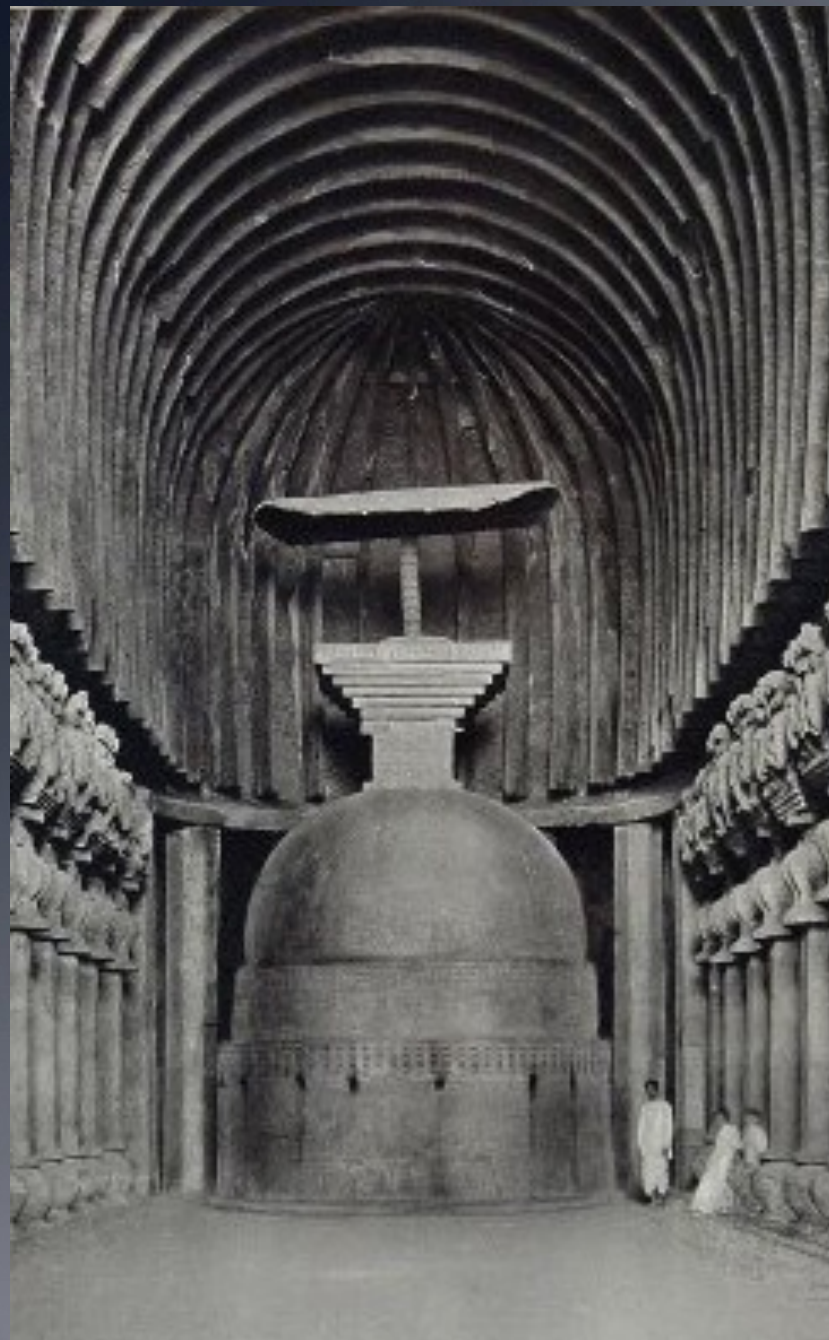


Egyptian Mushroom Crown



Buddha Art





Hindu Goddess



Hindu Mushroom Stone Relief



Exaltation of the Flower

Greece

540 BCE

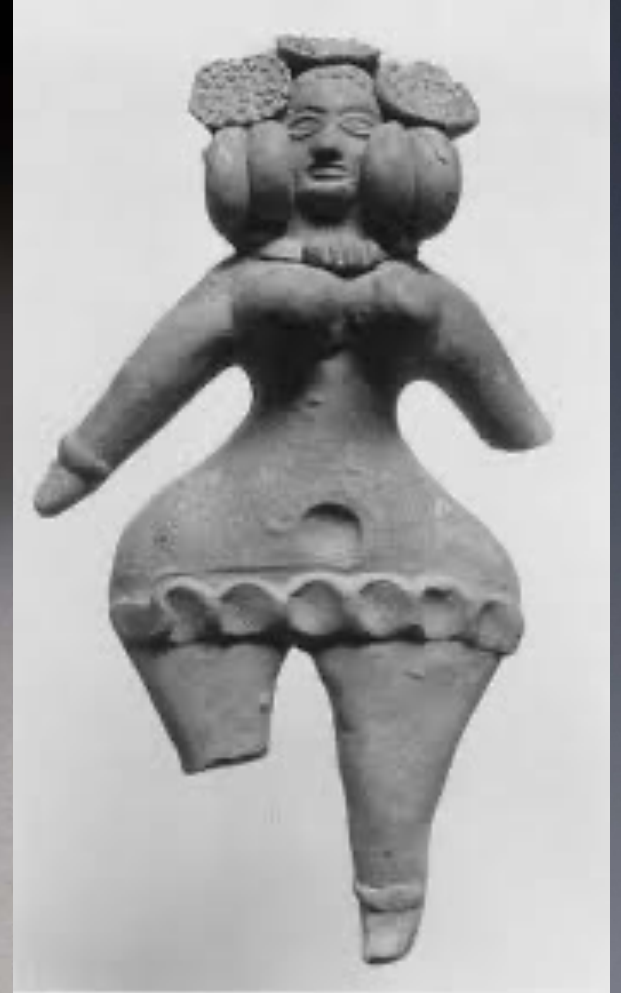
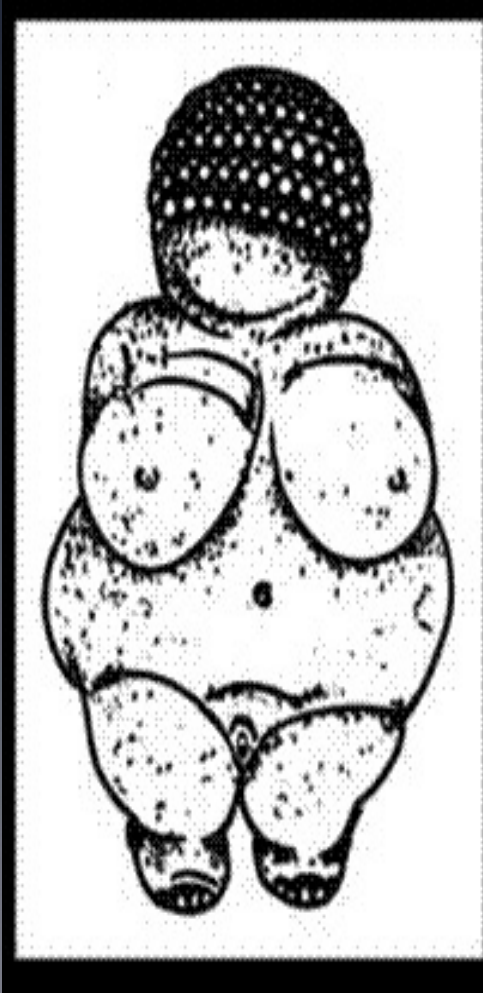


Indus Valley Earth Goddesses

3rd Century BCE



Mushroom Fertility Goddesses

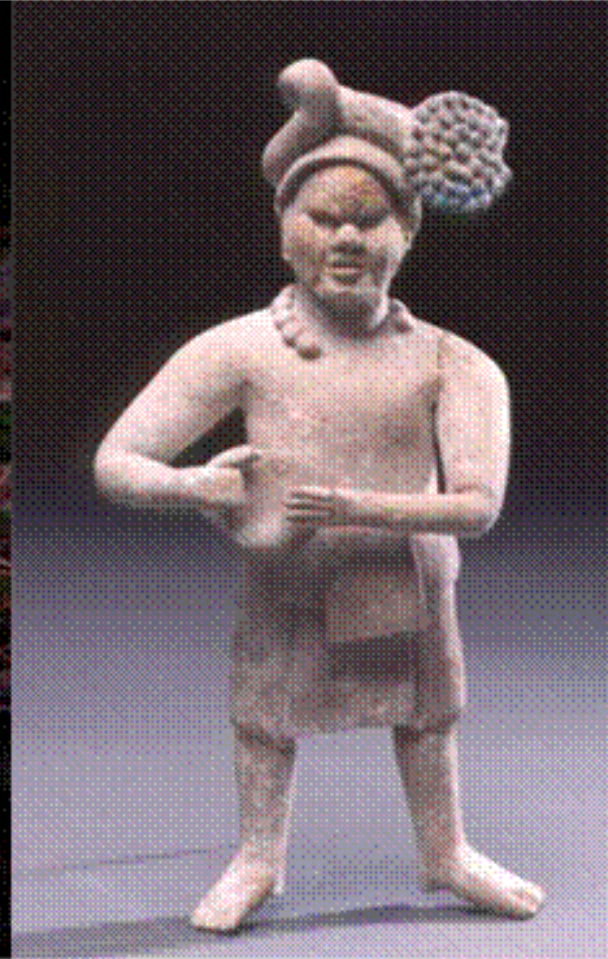


Maya Figurines

300-900 BCE



K2853



Mesoamerican Were-Jaguar Mask



Mesoamerican Rock Art

1000-500 B.C.



Precolumbian artifacts







Peruvian Mushroom Artifacts

100 – 300 AD



Maya Artifact 600-700 AD



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Aztec Artifacts



K2048



Mosaic in the Basilica of Aquileia

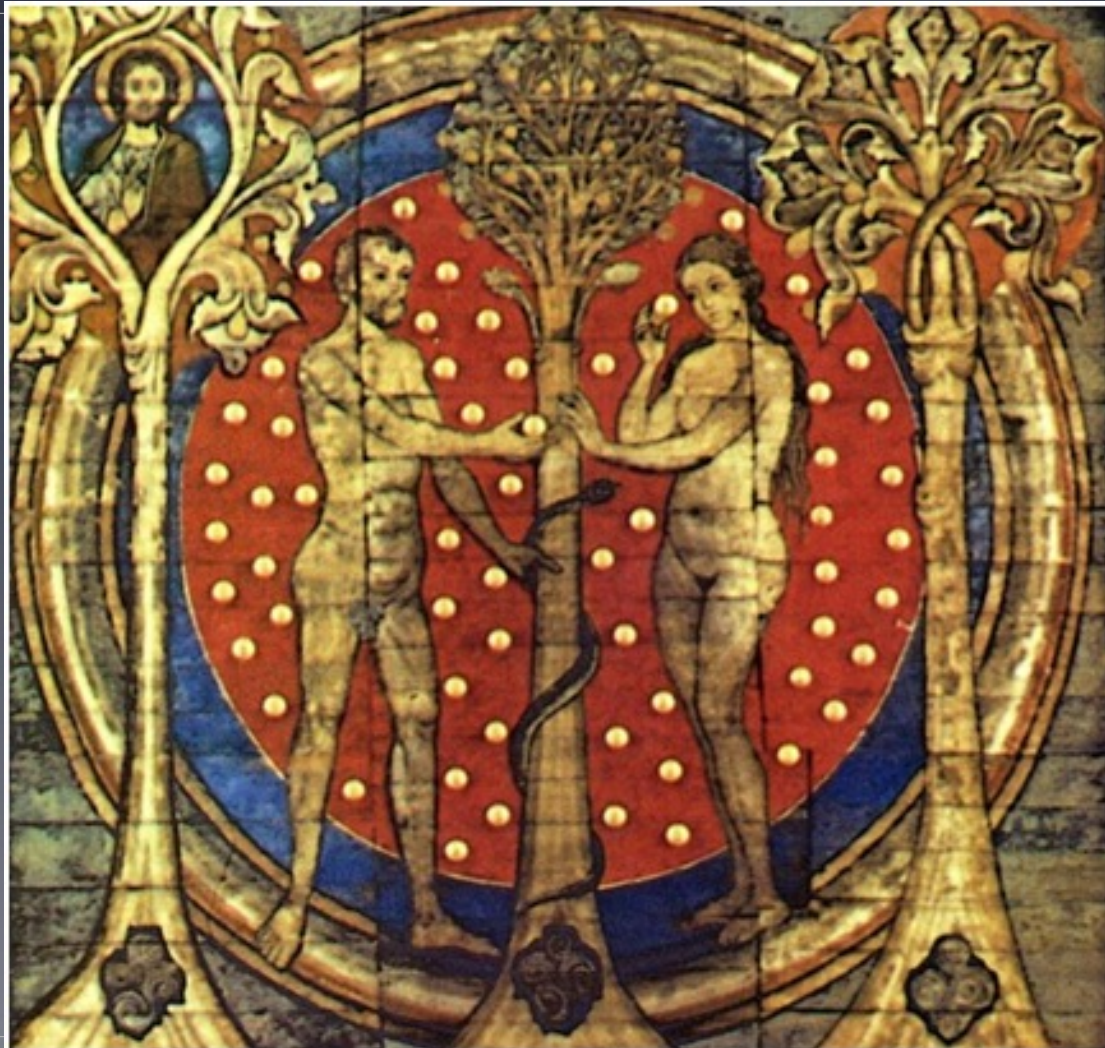
Northern Italy

330 AD



Mural from St. Michael's Church

Germany 1192 AD



Mural from the apse in Sant Sadurni Spain 12 century



Adam & Eve with the Tree of Knowledge

Canturbury Psalter 1147 AD



Canterbury Psalter: Creation Story



CREATION OF DRY LAND & PLANTS



Canterbury Psalter:

The Psychedelic Bible



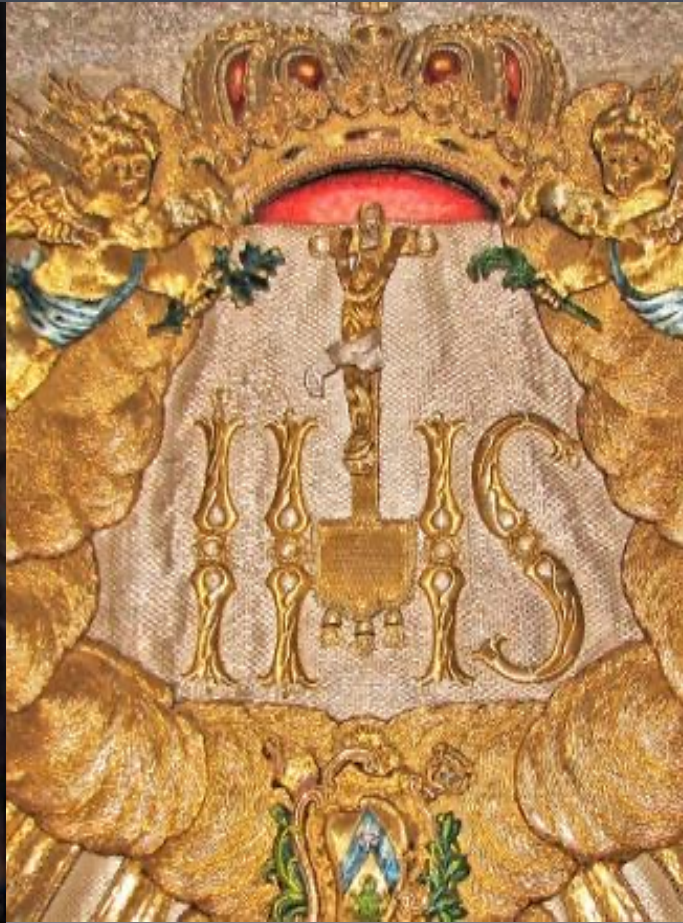
Christ and the 12 Apostles

Barcelona

12 century



Hidden Mushroom Imagery: 17th Century



Entheogen use in Spiritual Contexts

ARCHAIC REVIVAL?

The *Psilocybe* mushrooms have often been discussed as factors of hominid Evolution, in that the consumption of these mushrooms as a daily diet triggered the break away of consciousness of man from nature (McKenna)



Could the interest in the use of psychedelics in a religious context (e.g. Ayahuasca Tourism) be an attempt to address the modern individuals' hunger for a felt sense of participation in a wider spiritual reality?

Drugs and Religion

- Pre-industrial societies view hallucinatory plants as gifts of the gods, if not the gods themselves
 - Schultes and Hoffman hypothesize that the whole idea of a deity could have arisen as a result of the effects of hallucinatory plants
 - Wasson, the first white man in recorded history to ingest psilocybin mushrooms felt that the mushroom experience “must have reinforced mightily the idea of the miraculous”
 - Aztecs called magic mushrooms “Teonanactl” (divine flesh)
 - Maya cultures in Guatemala apparently had a sophisticated religion utilizing mushrooms
 - *Amanita muscaria*, another psychoactive mushroom has been used as an inebriant and as a means to induce visionary states in shamans

Faith Based on Primary Religious Experience?

The Rig Veda, one of the world's oldest texts (4000 BC) devotes 120 out of 1000 holy hymns to *Soma*, which is speculated to be prepared from a Psychedelic plant.

Use of Soma can occasion:

- state of divine ecstasy
- light phenomena
- paranormal effects

Entheogenic experience (a term that describes plants & their by-products in a religious context...literally the “god within”)

Influenced formulation of Eleusian mysteries

Eleusis

- 2000 years ago ancient Greek religious ritual in honor of the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone
- Described as the most awesome and the most luminous of all the divine things that exist among men. Five day celebration with ingestion of *kykeon* on sixth day.
- Speculation that *kykeon* contained a hallucinogenic compound which resulted in an ecstatic-visionary state
- The longevity of Eleusinian Mysteries suggests that an ecstatic-visionary state answered a spiritual need
- Christian churches, which view the world in dualistic terms, ended this religious ritual around 392 A.D.

Knob Handled Dish 330/320 BC

The procession of Greek gods shows Persephone going to (or coming back from) the underworld. The dish is important because it is the only single artifact that links both mushrooms and the Eleusian mysteries.



From the Art Institute of Chicago
Greek: Apulia, Italy
Attributed to Baltimore Painter

BWITI: An Ecstatic Religion

- Practiced by the Fang tribe, a native culture of west-central Africa, preserved native element during European colonialism
- Use hallucinogenic plant Tabernanthe Iboga as their sacrament
- “Bwiti” cult refers to both a superior divinity who is revealed to the initiate and a sculpture post that is the fundamental temple system
- Use a religious calendar similar to Catholic one. Iboga serves as the communion offered during these holidays
- Initiation rite, has applicant ingesting a large dose of iboga. This initiation leads us to consider Bwiti as a complete psychedelic religion
- This moment of initiation is considered the moment of greatest illumination and must be taken into consideration for the rest of the initiates life.

The Bwiti People of Gabon and the Mystical Iboga Root



Native American Church and Peyote

- Pre-Columbian Indians used many mind-altering plants for religious purposes, referred to them as “spirit helpers”
- European conquerors dismissed the religious state that resulted as drunkenness, a result of witchcraft and banned them (Spanish Inquisition)
- Native American deification of peyote is estimated to be about 10,000 years old. Huichol Indians of northwestern Mexico still use peyote sacramentally.
- Peyote is revered as the heart, soul, and memory of their Creator, Deer-Person, dies and is reborn in the Peyote plant to give his people wisdom
- Huichol healers and singers achieve union with their Creator, as incarnated in Peyote, who then speaks through them...

The Huichol and Their Pilgrimage for Peyote



“The white man goes into his church and talks about God.

The Indian goes into his tepee and talks to God”

-Quanah Parker

Peyote Ceremony

- Peyote is regarded as a gift from God
- Counters craving for alcohol, and is the heart of recovery for many thousands of Native Americans (whose deaths from alcoholism are over six times the national average)
- Acknowledged as a treatment for alcoholism by Indian Health Service and is protected by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1994
- 2005 study found “no evidence of psychological or cognitive deficits among Native Americans using peyote regularly in a religious setting”
(Halpern, et. al, 2005)

Ayahuasca Churches in Brazil

- Plant tea originally used by Amazonian indigenous groups for medicinal and magico-religious purposes
- Three main Ayahuasca Churches in Brazil, UDV largest
- Syncretic Christian churches with Ayahuasca tea as the embodiment of a divine being, a true living sacrament. It contains DMT, a schedule I psychedelic
- 1996 study of UDV church (Grob, et al):
members had exceptionally healthy psychological profiles
Ayahuasca drinkers have higher density of serotonin transporter receptors in blood platelets (improves efficiency of serotonin function, mood regulation?)

UDV

- UDV CEREMONY

- Hoasca (sacramental tea) is distributed by the mestre conducting session
 - Reading of UDV Statutes
 - Invocations made to the Divine asking permission to penetrate the enchantments
 - Music is played and invocations are made to regulate the force and the light of the session. Long periods of silence interspersed with conversational sharing
 - Conducted twice a month, which allows time for integration of experience
- US. Branch Founded in 1994 by Jeffrey Bronfman, an ecological activist and member of Seagram family, after he became a mestre in UDV. After battle over import of Hoasca, U.S. Supreme Court ruling allowed use of Ayahuasca in UDV religious ceremonies (2006).

Amazonian Tribes and Ayahuasca



Peyote & Ayahuasca ceremonies conducted specifically to treat substance use disorders

Reports show low rates of SUDS, sustained abstinence, and no evidence of adverse psychological or cognitive effects in long term members.

Link between sacramental serotonergic hallucinogen use in religious settings and anti-addictive effects?

MAGIC MUSHROOMS: Flesh of the GODS

The history of the ritual use of magic mushrooms spans millennia

- From the contemporary Mazatec Indians of Southern Mexico
- To the Mayan and Aztec cultures of Mexico and Central America 600 years ago
- To the cultures which came centuries before them

Pattern of mushroom usage among indigenous communities in Mexico consistent with

- Use patterns for ayahuasca in So. America
- Use patterns for peyote in No. America
- Use patterns for iboga in equatorial Africa



Mushrooms Used Ceremonially

- Obtaining spiritual visions of afterlife
- Communing w/spirits of the natural world
 - For healing (course corrections)
 - For knowledge
- Ritual context of indigenous people offer psychospiritual safeguards:
 - Structured use
 - Restrictions on use
- R. Gordon Wasson was first Westerner to take part in Valeda, published in Life Magazine in 1957. Triggered experimentation.





**“For the first time the word ecstasy took on real meaning.
For the first time it did not mean someone else's state of mind”**

(Gordon Wasson: Life Magazine May 13, 1957)