

PHALLUS IN FUNGUSLAND
A CRITIQUE OF THE SACRED MUSHROOM
AND THE CROSS

by
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ABSTRACT

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This is a critique of a book entitled The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, by John Marco Allegro. The author of this thesis begins by giving background concerning John Allegro and his previous published works.

Next, the author examines the historical statements of the book in light of relevant research in the field of ancient Near East studies. Here, contemporaries and friends of Allegro lend their insights as to the motivation for writing the book and criticism for his approach. Is the Sumerian language the "mother tongue" of all oral transmission? Are the epics of the Old and New Testaments cover stories for some ancient fertility cult found in Sumer? Allegro says yes, his critics and this author say no. A frontal criticism is then made by the author of Allegro's use of Sumerian and Koine Greek. This is an attempt to meet Allegro on his own ground and soundly discredit his philological approach.

Finally, a simple botanical comparison is made of the Amanita Muscaria in other societies that are known to use the drug. Furthermore, primary sources which Allegro uses are suspect and are shown to be such.

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...and certain intrinsic patterns of etymology which need to be
 critically examined. Basically stated, Allegro feels that Judaism and
 Christianity are facades for an ancient Semitic fertility cult. The
 writings of these major western religions are mere "cover stories" for
 the Semitic cult. Most reputable scholars have taken a contrary position
 and in doing so have ridiculed Allegro's thesis, leaving him with only
 his own intent.² A review by Reynolds stated, "...he has not himself

¹ John W. R. ... "In Christianity a Dress-Up for Semitic Deities"
The London Globe, Vol. 198 No. 5 (August 29, 1970), p. 166.

² ... "The Allegro Among the Mushrooms," World
Journal of Semitics, Vol. XVI No. 2 (Spring 1971), p. 225.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

An old Arabic joke says that every word has five meanings; its primary meaning, a second meaning diametrically opposed to that, a special meaning in theology, a special obscene meaning, and a special meaning relating to the camel.¹ However, to qualify one of these meanings as being superior to the other is a step one must take with fear and trembling. Unfortunately, John Allegro in his work, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, has sought to do just that, and end five thousand years of linguistic deficiency. He has left a deep impression or depression (whichever you like), in relating terms and religious concepts which have ironically eluded the majority of Near Eastern scholarship for the last two hundred years.

The thesis of his book which eventually develops into five major components, has certain intrinsic patterns of etymology which need to be critically examined. Basically stated, Allegro feels that Judaism and Christianity are facades for an ancient Sumerian fertility cult. The writings of these major western religions are mere "cover stories" for the Sumerian cult. Most reputable scholars have taken a contrary position and in doing so have decimated Allegro's thesis, leaving him with only his name intact.² A review in Newsweek states, "...he has set himself

¹John Strugnell, "Is Christianity a Cover-Up for Mushroom Eating Cult?" The Boston Globe. Vol.198 No.54 (August 23, 1970), p. 36B.

²Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mr. Allegro Among the Mushrooms," Union Seminary Quarterly Review. Vol.XXVI No.3 (Spring 1971), p. 225.

up against the entire scholarly establishment."³ In this kind of atmosphere intensive pronouncements and feelings are inevitable. Later we will discuss in detail comments by the community of Near Eastern scholarship. At this point, let it briefly be stated that John Allegro's book has had a varied acceptance, from one of modified credulity, to that of an outright insinuation of "phallic drive."⁴

My thesis seeks to communicate the intrinsic weaknesses of The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross which have appeared under the vigilant eye of contemporary scholarship. Moreover, correlation of these criticisms must be gathered from a variety of fields and organized to make them distinguishable. This is primarily due to the fact that Allegro addresses himself not only historically but also in the fields of linguistics and mythology. Furthermore, he makes sweeping statements which portray a pseudo-society structure of the ancient Near East. Blending then the ingredients of sociology, linguistics, and mythology, Allegro redefines terms, reinterprets religious functions, and makes certain statements of fact which are suspect by many of his contemporaries. Consequently, scholars of various disciplines have sought to understand why John Allegro has become so dogmatic and profound. Voicing their displeasure, Allegro's peers have been somewhat exacting in articulating arguments which have can not answer in his book or refute in his testimony of history.

³Editor's Review, "Allegro Troppo," Newsweek. Vol. LXXVI No.8 (August 31, 1970), pp. 66-67.

⁴Editor's Review, Times Literary Supplement. (May 28, 1970), p. 591.

This particular work seeks to provide a twofold function. First, we shall examine historically the erroneous comments made by Allegro in which he envisions every ancient culture to have totally and passionately become "hooked" on the sacred mushroom. Second, we shall measure his philological accuracy primarily in Koine Greek and secondarily, Sumerian. Allegro employs several language families such as Greek, Latin, and Hebrew but maintains his foundation in Sumerian. Unfortunately, Allegro has allowed himself to be hypnotised into thinking that once having traced a word back to its primitive roots, or having denoted a religious practice to its source, one has arrived at a complete understanding and evaluation of that particular word.

It is crucial to this paper that we examine John M. Allegro more personally in background, and achievement, to gain a vivid perspective of his work and life.

John M. Allegro was born in London, England, on February 17, 1923, to a master printer John Allegro and his wife, Mable Jessie Perry.⁵ Allegro was reared in Carshalton, Surrey, where he attended the Wallington County school. He served in the Royal Navy in World War II and following his discharge, he entered the University of Manchester to study theology with a desire to eventually become a Methodist minister.⁶ As Allegro began his university education, he was drawn toward a study of Semitic languages. At this point he decided to study Old Testament manuscripts.

⁵Records: Department of Population Census. City of London, Her Majesty's Printing Office. Month: February, Year: 1923 Vol. 381 p. 66.

⁶Current Biography, "John Marco Allegro," Charles Moritz-Editor New York: Yearbook 1970, The H.W. Wilson Co., 1970. pp. 7-9.

In 1951, he received his B.A. degree. In 1952, he received an M.A. degree, writing a thesis entitled, "A Linguistic Study of the Balaam Oracles."⁷

It is during this period that John Allegro became enthralled with Hebrew and other language derivatives from the ancient Near East. Such languages as Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian became his passion. He was eventually added to the faculty of the University of Manchester, and between the years 1962 and 1970 served the University as lecturer in Old Testament and intertestamental studies.⁸

It's apparent that during this segment of time from the late fifties until the present, Mr. Allegro has become rather prolific in his published works. In 1953, at the age of 30, he became the first British member of the international team which edited and translated the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁹ In his work, The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Doubleday 1958, which sold a quarter million copies) Allegro claimed that the Qumran "Teacher of Righteousness" had anticipated Jesus Christ.¹⁰

⁷Note: These oracles were the words Balaam, a soer, spoke to Balak, king of Moab. This king wished Balaam to curse the children of Israel who had recently defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, another Amorite of note. Balaam sought the council of God in the matter and was commanded not to curse the Israelites. As Balak sought a word from Balaam, he found only words of support for the Israelites. These oracles can be found in the Bible in the book of Numbers, chapters- 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9,15-24.

⁸Current Biography, op.cit.

⁹Editor's Review, "Allegro Troppo," Newsweek. Vol. LXXVI No.8 (August 31, 1970), pp.66-67.

¹⁰Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, review in Eternity. Vol.35 No.10. (November 1971), pp.54-55. This "Teacher of Righteousness" was the founder of the Essene Sect. Finding the identity of the "Teacher" is still a mystery. Several suggestions have, of course, been proposed, and the "Teacher"

This comment was calmly treated by Yigael Yadin in his work The Message of the Scrolls, where Yadin reflected: "This is a suggestion which seems to us to be somewhat thin."¹¹ Allegro's next work, The Treasure of the Copper Scroll (Doubleday 1960), was an interesting work in that the reader was provided with a column-by-column facsimile drawing of the Dead Sea document, and a running tentative translation.

His next series of books dealt directly with the Dead Sea Scrolls and his eccentric comments concerning them. These included: Search in the Desert (Doubleday 1964), Qumran Cave (Oxford University Press 1968), and Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan (Doubleday 1964, which is the fifth volume in the "American Schools of Oriental Research" series) and which elaborated even further concerning Allegro's obsession with Essenic material. The Essenes are Allegro's missing link to understanding (completely or otherwise) the questions raised by Judaism and Christianity.

has been identified with various historical characters of the second and first centuries B.C.: the High Priest Onias III, for example, murdered in 171 B.C.; the Priest Jose ben Joezer, said to have been executed in 162 B.C.; Eleazar the Pharisee, an opponent of John Hyrcanus; the Essene Onias the Just, a wonder-worker stoned to death in 65 B.C., etc.

Max Dimont in his book, Jews, God and History quotes A. Dupont-Sommer who has drawn some strong parallels between the "Teacher of Righteousness" and Jesus. This "Teacher of Righteousness" preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's brother, and chastity. Like Jesus he was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the Messiah Redeemer of the World. The "Teacher" pronounced judgment on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put him to death. However, Geza Vermes in his book, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English feels it dangerous to make too many generalizations concerning the "Teacher of Righteousness." He writes, "As a person the Teacher remains anonymous and appears only through the writings inspired by him, and through the role his followers attribute to him..."

¹¹Yigael Yadin, The Message of the Scrolls. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), p. 169.

Along with these works he wrote The Shapira Affair (Doubleday 1964) in which he tells the story of Moses Wilhelm Shapira, a nineteenth-century dealer in antiquities who tried to sell the British Museum a manuscript which he believed to be an ancient Deuteronomy text. Shapira later committed suicide when he became disgraced by charges of forgery. In short, then, John M. Allegro is a fine philologist and writer. But he has that uncanny ability to emphasize eccentric aspects of scholarly material and capitalize upon them.

Evidently, the bulk of the work John Allegro had done up to The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross had been based on the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, as this material was published, Allegro found himself polarized from his colleagues. While most scholars such as Geza Vermes, William Sanford Lasor, and Cecil Roth noted similarities of Judaism, Christianity, and the Essenes, their main weight of evidence was upon vast differences between the Jewish-Christian literature and that possessed by the Qumran Caves. The criteria for this division was based mainly upon similar custom, emphasis on words and works taken from the Old Testament and Essenic material, and couching these materials in their natural secular environment. On the other hand, Allegro stressed mutual similarities between the Essenic and early Christian literature.¹² In his article which appeared in August 1966 Harper's, Allegro commented, "We might begin with a fresh examination of the names and titles of Jesus and the Apostles. If these can be shown to be specifically Essene in meaning and origin then we have the kind of concrete link with the people of

¹²Current Biography. pp. 7-9.

the Scrolls that goes beyond mere community of religious outlook."¹³ Concerning the Essenes and Christianity he writes, "Scholars had long ago suggested that a Jewish sect called the Essenes might prove to be the missing link between normative Judaism and Christianity."¹⁴ Finally he comments, "We are, I am sure, on the verge of a tremendous breakthrough, and it will start with a recognition of the full extent of Christianity's debt to Essenism."¹⁵ Such statements as these were numerous and varied since he had been a member of the International Committee on the Scrolls. However, Dr. Edwin M. Yamauchi of the History Department of Miami University writes, "His statements were immediately repudiated by other members of the committee as being irresponsible."¹⁶

Let it be said in defense of Allegro, that he felt the Dead Sea Scrolls were the link to our total knowledge of the origins of Christianity and the clouded religio-political ferment of Roman occupied Palestine. Overall, the Scrolls provided many important clues which were vital to our understanding. But, the substance of the Old Testament and New Testament were not necessarily challenged by the answers provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls. This aspect of scholarship has become more vivid as many scholars of various fields have been able to examine many copies over a number of years since their discovery.

¹³John Allegro, "The Untold Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls" Harpers. Vol. 233 No. 1394 (August 1966), p.51.

¹⁴Ibid. p.50.

¹⁵Ibid. p.51.

¹⁶Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, Eternity. (November 1971), pp.54-55.

THE THESIS OF THE SACRED MUSHROOM AND THE CROSS

The thesis of The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross is basically one which ties Judaism and Christianity in a spirit of reciprocal transmission of the mushroom myth. Moreover, Allegro maintains that Judaism and Christianity were not indigenous religious movements, but were variations of a fertility cult found in ancient Sumer. This cult centered its whole assiduity around the mushroom (*Amanita muscaria*) and its followers imbibed the juice of the mushroom to acquire its drug induced religious presence.¹⁷ The cult acquired knowledge of god through the god's ejaculation of its sperm in the form of rain which gave potency to the earth.¹⁸ This "one deity of fertility" became the god of all the ancient civilizations which are known today. Any accounts from the Bible were merely disguised narratives of this fertility cult.¹⁹ With its secret terms locked in cryptograms of Biblical adoration, the mushroom became the center of Jewish, and later Christian worship. Unknown to the majority

¹⁷In Chapter IV of his book Allegro deals with the use of plants among ancient peoples. He also makes reference to several sources concerning the *Amanita muscaria*. However, the Encyclopaedia Britannica lists the *Amanita muscaria* among the poisonous group and gives the following symptoms when injected: "general excitation, temporary blindness, acceleration of pulse, dilation of pupils and hallucinations."

¹⁸John M. Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1970), p. 28.

¹⁹Ibid. p. XX.

of its believers, the Jews have been the center of persecution (says Allegro) throughout history because they held tenaciously to their secret belief in the mushroom, while outwardly expousing their traditional historic position. This fulfilled the ancient curse of fertility from the Sumerians themselves.²⁰ Where Karl Marx imagined religion as the opiate of the people, Allegro imagines opiates were the religion of the people.²¹

If, in the article in Harper's on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Allegro concludes his "breakthrough" in recent Essenic material to be his thesis of The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, we have indeed been duped into historical mushrooming. The combinations of sex and drugs in the Sacred Mushroom are such that the book provides a rather imbalanced approach as compared with primary resources that are available. Certainly we have examples of sex and drugs used in religious rites in history; they deal; however, more with open deification of sexuality and worship than with drugs, especially the *Amanita muscaria*.²²

John Allegro alleges that the "mystery" mushroom cult was transmitted to its believers through hidden etymologies from ancient Sumerian. These followers were persecuted unmercifully by civil authorities.

²⁰ Karl Metterstein in his book of translated "Sumerian Hymns" parallels Allegro's thinking by claiming that the Sumerians put a curse on anyone who hid the open worship of the "fruit of life." Allegro would consider this "fruit of life" the *Amanita muscaria*, while the Jewish worship would be an attempt to hide the open fertility emphasis.

²¹ John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p. 42.

²² Regis Hoperfine, Drugs, Religion, and Culture. (Sidney: Provney Press, 1966) p. 360.

As mentioned, the Jews have been persecuted because of their allegiance to the mushroom. In addition, the Christians were likewise maligned, and to protect their secret a hoax was perpetrated. The Christians sought to hide their secret from the Roman state and in doing so Allegro cites their peculiar dilemma: "What began as a hoax, became a trap even to those who believed themselves to be the spiritual heirs of the mystery religion and took to themselves the name of Christian."²³ In Allegro's opinion, Judaism and Christianity have been historical "stop-gap" measures to insure an existence of a fertility cult. Surprisingly, Allegro has given us a corollary which concerns Biblical morality and Christian ethics. "If the stories of Jesus are not more historically real than those of Adam and Eve, Jacob and Esau, and even Moses, what of the moral teaching of the Bible."²⁴ For some reason, yet unknown, the historiography of Israel and its profound influence upon Christianity, Islam, and western civilization are attempts to cover-up the secret most vital worship terminology of the Amanita muscaria. Comments concerning the uniqueness of Israel's concept of God as compared to the "fertility cult" of the Near East, will later be considered in more detail.

Throughout his book Allegro refines his basic premise by the use of terms and objects. For example, the cross is symbolic in background of the development from the cross-piece fastened to the central pole of the chariot. The driving of the chariot meant the active role in the copulatory act. Significantly, a sexual parallel is directly fostered.

²³John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p. XIV.

²⁴Ibid. p. 194.

This Allegro congers by citing mythological as well as Biblical characters. One of the New Testament themes of "take up the cross" was a euphemism for sexual copulation as the burden of the woman's crutch born by the erect penis. Also, Allegro provides a series of sketches which picture the cross in both pagan and Christian settings with a brief account of Biblical crucifixion.²⁵

Another motif which Allegro employs is the "hip" theme. This is done by mentioning several mythological characters such as Adonis-Na'imán and Dionysus who have stories concerning their "hips." He then states the account of Jesus being pierced in the side as relating to the "hip." Allegro writes, "In all of these references, the allusion is to the ball-and-socket picture presented by the hip-joint."²⁶ The hip is also given a deep sexual meaning emphasizing the fertility ideal.

Personal names also occupy Allegro's scheme. The apostle Peter, whom the Roman Catholic Church claims to be their first pope, is inserted by Allegro as a word play for the mushroom.²⁷ This however, sheds light on the Catholic-Protestant controversy over the Greek word (petros), meaning stone, which is in the masculine gender, and the word (petra), meaning bedrock, which is in the feminine gender. Jesus' promise of building his Church did not necessarily include Peter as the foundation. Furthermore, Allegro fails to recognize the self imposed limits of a language which refuses to mean more than it simply says exegetically.

²⁵ Allegro, Mushroom. pp. 105-106.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 107.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 47.

The more one reads Allegro's work, the more questions Allegro leaves unanswered. He claims that the basic terminology of the fertility cult of the sacred mushroom was Sumerian. How then does Sumerian, which flourished in the third millennium B.C., influence languages that developed at a much later period and thousands of miles apart? This primary question is never answered. He simply says, "Sumerian words...appear in Indo-European and Semitic languages."²⁸ Where was the bridge formed? What was the extent of linguistic transmission? These questions still remain unanswered in Allegro's book. Discussion of his philological methodology in arriving at his conclusions will later be considered.

In The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross the author works out his conclusions on a larger canvass of the entire ancient Near East, in a form comparable to his other works on the Dead Sea Scrolls. He assumes that the Bible as a document must be read on three levels: First, is the Hebrew-Greek level, in which the words have a narrative significance. Behind this is the Semitic level of language, consisting largely of puns. These puns show that Hebrew and Greek are not to be taken seriously. Finally, the third and basic level is where one learns that the puns are all allusions to the mystery fertility cult of the Amanita muscaria mushroom.²⁹

²⁸John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p. 16.

The Sumerian language is quite distinctive from other language groups of the ancient Near East. Sumerian is characterized by the use made of small letter units which may be attached to each other to produce a word unit. This is known as the agglutinative family group, which process of word development will be discussed in the later text.

²⁹Ibid. p. 43.

We may conclude then with the following five step breakdown of John Allegro's thesis. (1) The Indo-European and Semitic families of languages are derived from a common ancestor, Sumerian. (2) Sumerian words for religious concepts survived and remained practically unchanged in their proper names of gods and heroes. (3) These surviving terms all have reference to an ancient fertility cult centered around the "sacred mushroom," *Amanita muscaria*. (4) Adherents of a Jewish mystery cult threatened with extinction after the Jewish revolt of 66 A.D. wrote the books of the New Testament to preserve their knowledge of the ancient Sumerian mushroom names and yet keep them secret. (5) Thus, Jesus and other figures of the Old and New Testament are but masks for the mushroom, mere bearers of its names, and the name Yahweh is really nothing but another such mushroom cult name.³⁰

³⁰Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mr. Allegro Among the Mushrooms," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, p. 235.

³¹London News, Sir Geoffrey Elton, (Nov 26, 1970), p. 3.

SCHOLASTIC REPLIES TO THE SACRED MUSHROOM

Without surprise, the response to Allegro's book has been open and direct. The voices have not been those of "one crying in the wilderness," but of replies by noted scholars. Also, clergymen of the stature of William Barclay have responded to Allegro's query. Shortly after the book was published and had received mixed reviews a rather large group of famous scholars wrote in the London Times:

This is a work upon which scholars would not normally wish to comment. But the undersigned, specialists in a number of relevant disciplines and men of several faiths and none, feel it their duty to let it be known that the book is not based on any philological or other evidence which they can regard as scholarly.

In their view this work is an essay in fantasy rather than philology.

This letter was subsequently signed by a list of noted philologists.

G.R. Driver, Emeritus Professor of Semitic Philology, Oxford University. P.R. Ackroyd, Professor of Old Testament Studies, London University. G.W. Anderson, Professor of Old Testament, Edinburgh University. J.N.D. Anderson, Professor of Oriental Laws, London University. James Barr, Professor of Semitic Languages, Manchester University. C.F. Beckingham, Professor of Islamic Studies, London University. Henry Chadwick, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford University. John Emerton, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge University. O.R. Gurney, Professor of Assyriology, Oxford University. E.G. Parrinder, Reader in Comparative Study of Religions, London University. J.B. Segal, Professor of Semitic Languages, London University. D. Winton Thomas, Emeritus Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge University. Edward Ullendorff, Professor of Ethiopian Studies, London University. G. Vermes, Reader in Jewish Studies, Oxford University. ³¹D.J. Wiseman, Professor of Assyriology, London University.

³¹London Times. Sir Godfrey Driver, (May 26, 1970), p. 9.

Among others who were negatively impressed was Thorkild Jacobsen, one of the noted American experts on the Sumerian language who responded in the Union Seminary Quarterly Review.³² In his review of the book, from a purely linguistic angle, one would have to conclude that a major gap existed between his exquisite use of Sumerian derivatives and those employed by Allegro. This he does by quoting reliable sources and authorities. Later we will cite some examples. Furthermore, in the same issue of the review, Cyril Richardson, professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary points to some botanical inconsistencies which Allegro attributes to the *Amanita muscaria*. He cites the following:

If for instance, we find the modern French word ceps meaning the edible boletus (not a gilled mushroom like the *Amanita*, but a polypore like the *Boletus granulatus*), we are justified in saying that ceps means "mushroom" in general, and supposedly the *Amanita muscaria* in particular (p.47). This, in turn, suggests that since ceps likely comes from cepa, the Latin for "onion," the latter originally meant the *Amanita muscaria*. This further indicates that Cepha(s) in Aramaic had the same meaning. The fact that ceps never means mushroom in general, that cepa in Latin never means any kind of mushroom at all, that Cepa(s) in Targums and Talmud means "stone, rock,³³ or shore" and nothing else, does not deter Allegro.

Other reviews appeared which enjoyed the controversy of the book. The Spectator of London mentioned rather sarcastically that, "Once Mr. Allegro has seen one mushroom in the Bible, he does see them everywhere."³⁴

³²Jacobsen, Union Seminary Quarterly Review. (Spring 1971), pp. 235-246.

³³Cyril Richardson, "Mr. Allegro Among the Mushrooms," Union Seminary Quarterly Review. Vol. XXVI No.3 (Spring 1971); p. 248.

³⁴Editor's Review, Spectator. London. (May 23, 1970), p. 683

Some publications enjoyed the sociological implication from the influence of the drug culture of the late 1960's. Show carried a rather lighthearted review of the book, stating that, "Dr. Allegro is no long haired crank writing from a leafy pad in Laurel Canyon."³⁵ Unfortunately for Allegro, the reviews have fallen over the whole spectrum of periodicals and for the most part have been negative in tone.

Raphael Patai, writing in Saturday Review, blamed himself and Robert Graves for Allegro's thesis because of their book on Hebrew Myths. They had mentioned that the vision of the Garden of Eden in the Bible could possibly have come from a drug induced utopia.³⁶ Robert Graves in the New Statesmen directs the weakness of Allegro's book to his ignorance of established authorities of the Amanita muscaria. Graves writes, "The two greatest living authorities on the sanctity of the Amanita and other hallucinogenic mushrooms are a banker, R. Gordon Wasson, a former Vice President of the Morgen Garanty Trust, and Europe's most famous botanist Dr. Roger Heim, who directs the Musee de l'Homme in Paris."³⁷ Nowhere does Allegro mention these men or their work with the mushroom.

³⁵ Robert Kirsch, Show. (August 20, 1970), p. 54.

³⁶ Raphael Patai, Saturday Review. Vol. LIII No. 3 (September 19, 1970), p. 42.

³⁷ Robert Graves, "Jesus as Toadstool," New Statesmen. Vol. 79 No. 2044 (May 15, 1970), p. 694.

Other reviews of the Sacred Mushroom of a religious nature have come to haunt Allegro. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, professor of Aramaic and Hebrew at the University of Chicago, pictures Allegro's work much as the fairy-tale story of Alice in Through the Looking Glass.³⁸ Dr. Edwin Yamauchi in Eternity sees Allegro and the Sacred Mushroom in light of the German pan-Babylonian scholars who, at the beginning of this century, interpreted almost everyone in the Old and New Testaments in terms of Babylonian deities.³⁹ Finally, Edgar Krentz at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri uses Allegro's name with a similar word play as Allegro uses in his book. John Allegro then becomes, "God has been gracious to me quickly." Krentz finally concludes by saying, "Allegro has a sexual fixation. Too bad he has to demonstrate it at such lengths in public."⁴⁰

No less than two major books have been written in response to Allegro's approach. J.H. Jacques', The Mushroom and the Bride Derby: The Citadel Press, 1970, 126pp. Also, John C. King, A Christian View of the Mushroom Myth, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1970, 191pp. These books expand the problems of the Sacred Mushroom in much the same way as the reviews and articles. In concert then, the articles, reviews, and books, raise such critical questions as these: Where and how did ancient language transmission occur? Are languages really important?

³⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Marinating the Mushroom", America. Vol. 123 No.8 (September 26, 1970), p. 207.

³⁹ Yamauchi, Eternity. p. 55.

⁴⁰ Edgar Krentz, The Luthern Quarterly. Vol.81 No.16 (November 23, 1971), p. 403.

Was the Amanita muscaria really as available as Allegro states? Finally, were the Old Testament stories primitive ideas of early uncivilized man? To this, John Jacques in his book replies,

Nothing could be further from the truth. When the Old Testament came to be written, recognisable civilisations had been in existence for two thousand years or more. Civilisation as an ordered and organised way of urban life, with formal laws and political institutions began undoubtedly with Mr. Allegro's Sumerians who lived at the Southern end of the great river Euphrates.⁴¹

Let us examine the historical stage upon which Allegro conducts his "mushroom melodrama" and let there be the voice of history as his critic.

⁴¹John H. Jacques, The Mushroom and the Bride. (England: The Citadel Press., 1970), p. 19.

When Zachariah (1419) states "God that day shall be one, and His name 'God' be one" it does not mean that God will have only one name, but with the superscription "YHWH" will be the official name of God in the God of Days. This is the public name of the godhead, and even in such case he would not be God because God has not one but many names such as El, Elohim, Jehovah, Yah, Adonai, Eshkol, etc.

The fertility rites of the ancient Near East were the sophisticated religious worship. This worship was the process of deification of the fertility and planting process. The soil got figures associated with the female and wept as a sign of fertility. The individual gods making themselves into this mythical world, joined in the festival of fertility in the newly sowed field as women themselves from the work of planting.

⁴²John H. Jacques, "The Name of God", Journal of Near Eastern Studies, vol. 28, 2 (July 1970), p. 191.

A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO NEAR EASTERN THEISM

There is a thread of truth running throughout The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross which needs to be unraveled. This maxim states, more or less, that all ancient civilizations had some type of religious devotion to a fertility deity.⁴² Certainly this has been verified, but the deification of certain deities, and their emphasis of power contained the key to their understanding. Not all civilizations deified their gods in the same manner as witnessed contemporaneously in the differences of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Each claims similar roots, traditions and holy city, but each method of worship is remarkably different. This divergent concept is ably discussed in an article by Cyrus H. Gordon of Brandeis University in the Journal of Near Eastern Studies.

When Zechariah (14:9) states "on that day Yahweh will be one, and his name 'One'" he does not mean that God will have only one name, but with the numeral ~~YH~~ "1" will be the official name of God in the End of Days. This is the plain sense of the passage, and must in any case be correct because God has not one but many names such as El, Elohim, Yahweh, Yah, Adonai, Shaddai, etc.⁴³

⁴²The fertility deities of the ancient Near East were the established religious worship. This worship was the process of deification of the tilling and planting process. The male god figure copulated with the female god figure as a sign of fertility. The individual thus seeking blessing from this mystical union, joined in the festival of fertility in the newly planted field to secure blessings from the gods by imitation.

⁴³Cyrus H. Gordon, "His Name is 'One'", Journal of Near Eastern Studies. Vol. 29 No. 3 (July 1970), p. 198.

Inevitably, many names for the gods developed and so did their systems of organization. Behavior of the gods became different for every society while still appearing to be the same historically. Since Allegro's main comments center within the Judeo-Christian monotheistic example, we likewise will confine our comments to this area. The contrast then between Israel's concept of God and a strict fertility society becomes strikingly apparent when one is confronted with the Biblical account of Israel's occupation of Canaan, or the "promise land."

As Israel entered Canaan, a conflict between monotheism and polytheism occurred. Two differing systems of deity worship collided, and to simply brush away this confrontation by saying "Yahweh was Baal" as does Allegro, is a bit over-simplistic.⁴⁴

To understand properly the cultural backdrop upon which the events Allegro describes occur, a clearer definition is necessary. The knowledge which is available concerning the Near Eastern pantheon, other than from Biblical sources, has been provided through Ugaritic Hymns and the famous Ras Shamra text.⁴⁵ Herein are found particular Canaanite references to god and certain Biblical parallels. One clue that emerges from a comparative study is the relationship between El and Baal, principle gods of the Canaanite pantheon.⁴⁶

⁴⁴John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p. 192.

⁴⁵The Ras Shamra text was unearthed in 1929 by C.A. Schaeffer. Their importance is the several types of Akkadian script found, and the insights into the society and land of Canaan prior to the invasion of the Israelites.

⁴⁶The nominal head of the pantheon, but playing a rather inactive role, was the father-god El. The chief active deity was Baal(lord), a title of the ancient Semitic storm-god Hadad, who reigned as king of the gods on a lofty mountain in the north. Female deities included Asherah, Asrarte, and Anat(in the Ras Shamra text the consort of Baal).

In the Biblical tradition, however, the god of the Fathers is regularly identified with El, the head of the pantheon, never with Baal, whose name is absent from the book of Genesis.⁴⁷ But this still does not solve a basic problem. El is the head of the Canaanite pantheon as well as that of Israel. Does this mean there is a difference in their action? Fortunately not. Although El is mentioned in both cases there is not an attribute of El in the Canaanite pantheon which differs from that of El in the Israelite concept of the "prime mover." On the other hand, Israel's compatibility with Baal was not possible, due to the vegetative traits in Baal. His dying and uprising, especially his total sexual illusion, were an affront to the essential being, the absoluteness and majesty of the Israelite El who eventually became Yahweh of the Covenant.⁴⁸

⁴⁷James Muilenberg, "The History of the Religion of Israel," Interpreters Bible. Vol. I (Nashville: Abington-Cokebury Press, 1952), p. 268.

⁴⁸Two theories of Yahweh must be considered. James Meek in his book Hebrew Origins feels Yahweh was a local god worshipped in Arabia in pre-Hebraic times. He also feels that the Arabic root hwy, "to blow" combined to form the word Yahweh. Furthermore, he feels there is not a single derivation of the word Yahweh from a native Hebrew root. However, John Bright in his book A History of Israel feels that Yahweh is a causative form of the verb "to be." The enigmatic formula of Exodus 3:14 in its original third person form (yahweh asher yihweh), would mean "He causes to be what Comes into Existence." As El in the Canaanite pantheon was inactive as such, El continued to reveal himself, however, to the Israelites with his personal or covenant name Yahweh. This provided insights into his nature (Hos. 12:5) and anthropomorphic channels of communication. For example, Moses selected Elohim as the appropriate term for Genesis 1:2-3, God transcendent in creation; but Yahweh for Genesis 2:4-25, God imminent in Eden's revelations. Elohim gave commands, but Yahweh shut the door for Noah. In Psalm 19(vv1-6), the heavens declare the glory of Elohim; but (vv7-14) the law of Yahweh is perfect, and Yahweh is my strength and my redeemer.

Baal, then became for the Canaanite his "one god of fertility" as Allegro correctly states. Bernhard W. Anderson, in his book Understanding the Old Testament, continues to define the personage of Baal in the Canaanite pantheon by writing, "The title 'Baal' means 'lord' or 'owner', and designates the male diety who owns the land and controls its fertility. His female partner is known as 'Baalath', 'lady', whose personal name is better known as Ashtart."⁴⁹ Baal was a member of a god-family, similar to those on Mt. Olympus, and functioned in his family role or setting. Many of the Ugaritic texts find him in a family feud with other members of the pantheon. James B. Pritchard, in his work Ancient Near Eastern Text Relating to the Old Testament, cites such an incident.

One tells how Baal, rain and fertility god, and Anath, warrior-goddess, performed heroically their task of ruling as a whole parade of gods come and go. Yamm, the sea, Judge Nahar, the river, Kathar wa-Kasis, skillful and clever, and Mot, death, pass across the divine stage. El, who dwells at the "source of the two floods, in the midst of the head waters of the two oceans," receives maiden Anath into his presence while he sits with his feet on a stool and twiddles his thumbs. El instructs Kathar wa-Khasis, the craftsman god, to build a palace on his grounds. He announces that Yamm is his beloved son and shall be master of the palace. He authorizes Yamm to banish Baal from his throne.⁵⁰

Baal was the active god of fertility, sometimes known as Haddu (Hadad) the god of rain and storm. This Allegro cites, but of the differences in social character of Yahweh, not one footnote can be cited.

⁴⁹Bernhard W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1966), p. 102.

⁵⁰James B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Text Relating to the Old Testament. (Princeton: Princeton University Press., 1955), pp. 129-142.

Moreover, the cultural background of the ancient Near East with its ethnic peculiarities, is not directly defined in Allegro's book. The fertility cult was merely the recognition of the extreme dependence of man upon the whole process of tilling, planting, and harvesting crops, the techniques of which were well known and understood, but the success of which was dependent upon factors beyond human control. Rainfall, absence of disease and pests, and the process of growth through the maturation of the planted seed were all outer limits to the sphere of influence for the individual. The fertility cult was the deification of the process of the production and enabled the individual to extend himself beyond himself to influence the blessing of the gods. This was usually represented as a great mother goddess and god copulating as the "storm-god" brought the fertilizing rain.⁵¹

Subsequently, this keynoted another departure from the Canaanite pantheon and the God of Israel. As the Canaanites became more agriculturally inclined their regard for El was less expedient and their needs met more immediately in an adoration of Baal. Consequently, El was removed from pre-eminence in the Canaanite pantheon and Baal was secured as their foremost god. Conversely, the Israelites were a more nomadic people and were not tied so directly to the soil. Therefore, they formed a special relationship with El in their covenant, and eventually El became known by his personal name Yahweh. For Israel there was only one God of the Covenant, and his name was Yahweh.⁵²

⁵¹ George E. Mendenhall, The Tenth Generation-The Origins of the Biblical Tradition. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 223.

⁵² Dewey M. Beegle, Moses, The Servant of Yahweh. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 163-164.

To substitute Baal for Yahweh is somewhat incongruent with all the available primary information. Yahweh of the covenant was a god of differing motive than any counterpart in the ancient Near East. Moses, the architect of Israelite monotheism, fostered the unique relationship to Yahweh which would mark Israel in history. Yahweh's name did mean "lord" as Allegro correctly states; however, as Baal's name also meant "lord" the contrast of meanings is interesting. Baal's term for "lord" meant lord of the land while Yahweh term for the "lord" meant "lord of all." This illustrates the supremacy of Yahweh. Also, Baal was a god who required the continuous adoration and vocal speech of the people for his blessing of fertility, while Yahweh's name was revered and rarely spoken by the Hebrews. Herbert F. Stevenson in his book Titles of the Triune God writes concerning Yahweh,

The precise meaning of the name is obscure. In the Hebrew, it was originally composed of four consonants YHWH-known to theologians as 'the tetragrammaton' to which the vowels of Adonai were afterwards added (except when the name is joined to Adonai: then the vowels of Elohim are used.) The Jews came to regard the name as too sacred to pronounce, however, and in the public reading of the scriptures they substituted Adonai for it--Jehovah was indeed to them 'the incommunicable name.'⁵³

Another original characteristic of the Israelite God was that he stood alone, without any family connection, whether consort, son, or daughter.⁵⁴ Biblically, Yahweh is seen as the "father" chastening his children in the wilderness, loving them and providing for their needs.

⁵³Herbert F. Stevenson, Titles of the Triune God. (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1956), p. 20.

⁵⁴William F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press., 1957), p. 261.

The Hebrews thought of themselves as the 'people of Yahweh' (II Sam. 7:12), whose exclusiveness was to be marked, among other ways, by their care not to inter-marry outside the kin groups (Ruth 1:22). The 'covenant ideal' was to distinguish them among the other nations. This is why any attraction to the religion of Baal by the Yahwist was considered sinful. Furthermore, Israel's faith was based on a novel belief in a jealous god who would tolerate no rivals.

Baal, as seen previously, had a limited scope. He was the god of fertility, storm, and natural forces, while Yahweh's expression was more open and broad. John Bright, in his book A History of Israel mentions,

He (Yahweh) was identified with no natural force, nor was he localized at any point in heaven or on earth. Though controlling the elements (Judg. 5:4f, 21) and the heavenly bodies (Josh. 10:12f), and riding the wings of the storm (Ps. 29), he was neither a sun god, nor a moon-god, nor a storm god. And though conferring the blessings of fertility (Gen. 49:25f.; Deut. 33:13-16), he was in no sense a fertility god.⁵⁵

It is widely recognized that one of the distinctive developments of Israelite religion consists in the prominence it gave to sacred history (Heilsgeschichte).⁵⁶ This sacred history of Israel is significant.

⁵⁵John Bright, A History of Israel. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 141.

⁵⁶Heilsgeschichte is a German term meaning the "history of salvation." It sees the Bible as essentially such a history. It traces in history and doctrine the development of the divine purpose in the salvation of men. Considered as a somewhat different approach from the "proof-text" method, which uses the Bible as the raw material for the shaping of a systematic theology, Heilsgeschichte stresses a more organic approach.

At least in the states of Israelite religion represented by the Old Testament, it is Yahweh's making of Israel rather than his making of the world that is of primary religious significance.

If we wanted to follow the route of Yahweh into the other pantheons of the Near East we would be led to Egypt rather than to the shores of Sumer. William Foxwell Albright in his book From the Stone Age to Christianity argues against a point mentioned by a seminar on Egyptology at Harvard which suggested that in the fifth century B.C. a Jewish colony in Elephantine, Egypt, apparently believed that Yahweh had a partner, Anath.⁵⁸ Moses was trained "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22) and if there would be any direct religious influence it would have come from Africa rather than from Mesopotamia. However, a point needs to be made again. Allegro creates generalizations to encompass his thesis and make it plausible with his mushroom concept. We would agree with him at this point, that as the Israelites entered Canaan and began to assimilate the agricultural life of the Canaanites, they often borrowed varied Canaanite customs. Israel enriched her worship by borrowing. On the other hand, this posed the danger that pagan rites and pagan theory of sacrifice would creep in. Yet, Israel did not borrow indiscriminately, but rather tended to take over only what was compatible with Yahwism, and to supply that with a new rationale. A religious synthesis was created.

⁵⁷Jay A. Wilcoxon, "Some Anthropocentric Aspects of Israel's Sacred History," The Journal of Religion. Vol.28 No.4 (Oct. 1968) p. 198.

⁵⁸William F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1957), pp. 286-287.

Peter F. Ellis in his book, The Yahwist-The Bible's First Theologians, portrayed Israel's ability to demythologize its cultural history and background, while at the same time retheologizing those attributes which would emphasize Yahweh.⁵⁹

A particular type of anthropomorphic quality was given to Yahweh which excluded him from the fertility gods. It was precisely this anthropomorphism of Yahweh which was essential to the initial success of Israel's religion. Like man at his noblest, the God of Israel might be able to form and affect reactions, but there was in him none of the human frailties that made the Olympian deities of Greece such charming poetic figures and such unedifying examples.⁶⁰ The Jews influenced the pagans with their god Yahweh and were active in proselyting many of the gentile peoples. By the time of Herod's temple, a particular temple area was known as the "court of the gentiles" or proselytes. Though initially certain amounts of syncretism occurred, the uniqueness of Israel's god Yahweh and the covenant tradition with Yahweh left an indelible mark on the ancient world. "Yahweh is the first, last, and only creator. He is, moreover, the unique and effortless creator whose labors are defined in terms of the verb bara."⁶¹

⁵⁹Peter F. Ellis, "The Yahwist-The Bible's First Theologians." (Notre Dame: Fides Publishing Inc., 1968), p. 141-147.

⁶⁰Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity. p. 265.

⁶¹Norman C. Habel, "Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth," A Study of Traditional Criticism, Journal of Biblical Literature. Vol.91 No.3 (September 1972), p. 335. Note: The Hebrew verb bara is used in the concept of shape, fashion, or create out of nothing. It always implies divine activity in the use of objects, use of individual man, new conditions, and transformations. This is according to Brown-Driver-Briggs: Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.

At this juncture let us discuss what Allegro calls "the tale of Jesus." For Allegro, the Jews had their figure of cryptography of the mushroom in Moses. As the Christians saw themselves as the true spiritual heirs of ancient Israel, so likewise they needed a symbol for the mushroom cult. This symbol was a story figure, not a person (says Allegro) similar to Moses to enhance the New Testament as Moses had the Old. This, however, provides another stumbling-block for Allegro. Hypothetically speaking, one may be an ardent capitalist and may detest Karl Marx and his economic philosophy, but it becomes rather uncreditable to say that modern Soviet or Chinese Communism are but figures of the "tale of Marx" and that Marx never lived. Likewise, to see the impact that the Church has had, whether good or bad, gives mute testimony to a personage---Jesus.

Jesus was a person, and history bears this out. His execution on the order of Pontius Pilate is mentioned by the Roman historian Tacitus, writing in the second century A.D.⁶² Lucian, a satirist of the second century, spoke scornfully of Christ and Christians. Flavius Josephus became a pharisee at age 19 and in A.D. 66 was a commander of Jewish forces in Galilee until his capture in Rome. Josephus writing as a historian makes a quotation in his work Antiquities concerning Jesus.⁶³

⁶² *Annales*, XV. 44: "Auctor nominis eius Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuatorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat." Although Tacitus does not specify the form of execution "supplicium" could mean crucifixion. In *History* II. 72; IV. 11, Tacitus refers to crucifixion as "supplicium servile, (i.e. a despicable death)."

⁶³ Peter Grose, "Israeli Scholars Believe They Have New Evidence On Jesus' Existence," New York Times. Col.7 and 1 (February 13, 1972), pp. 1 and 24. This section of Josephus has been considered to be a

In the British Museum there is an interesting manuscript preserving the text of a letter written sometime later than A.D. 73. This letter was sent by a Syrian named Mara Bar-Serapion to his son Serapion. Mara Bar-Serapion was a prisoner at the time, but he wrote to encourage his son in the pursuit of wisdom, and pointed out that those who persecuted wise men were overtaken by misfortune. He instances the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras and Christ.

'What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise king. It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger; the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the teachings of Plato. Pythagoras did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise king die for good; He lived on in the teachings which He had given.'⁶⁴

These sources make one important comment on Allegro's "tale" theory. They emphasize that Jesus lived as an individual, who was killed under Pontius Pilate. He was not an allegorical figure of the Sacred Mushroom

"forgery" or "too Christian" in many scholarly circles. Besides this there is a Slavonic translation that is more suspect than the Greek text. However, in 1972 two professors at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Shlomo Pines and David Flusser, discovered a long overlooked version of a passage about Jesus attributed to Josephus. These men base their comments on a 10th century Arabic text entitled, "Kitab al-Unwan al-Mukallal bi-Fadail al-Hikma al-Mutawwaj bi-Anwa al-Falsafa al-Manduh bi-Haqaq al-Marifa." Which means, "Book of History Guided by All the Virtues of Wisdom, Crowned with Various Philosophies and Blessed by the Truth of Knowledge."

⁶⁴F.F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable? (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press. 1972), p. 114.

which was manifested in the minds of some crazed sect trying to preserve and ancient fertility cult. Ethnically speaking, the one group of people who would seek to eradicate the name of Jesus would be the Jews. However, the Talmud contains several references to Jesus. Linguistically, he is referred to as Ben Pandera or Ben Patere. The Talmud makes the following selected references to Christ.

On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.' But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover.⁶⁵

The Jews ascribe to Jesus miracles, but attribute them to acts of sorcery. Even within the same section as quoted above, the Talmud makes references to the disciples of Jesus.⁶⁶ Though negatively stated, the Jews still claim Jesus as a heretic and mention him as such. One Hebrew word used concerning those who followed Christ was "mnemonic." S. Funk sees in this word, "an allusion to the Christians acceptance of Jesus, 'the servant' as being the title claimed by those who worshiped him as Messiah."⁶⁷

⁶⁵Seder Nezikin, The Babylonian Talmud. Translated by Raabi Dr. I. Epstein. (London: Soncino Press, 1935), Sanhedrin 43a p. 281

⁶⁶Ibid. p.282

⁶⁷Ibid. p.417

Furthermore, parallels in the Talmud and the New Testament emerge in reference to the crucifixion of Jesus. Joseph Klausner the Jewish scholar writes when he, "speaks of hanging in the place of crucifixion, since this horrible Roman form of death was only known to Jewish scholars from Roman trials, and not from the Jewish legal system. Even Paul the Apostle (Gal.3:13) expounds the passage 'for a curse of God is that which is hanged'(Deut.21:23) as applicable to Jesus."⁶⁸

Nowhere does Allegro mention the possibility of documented concrete sources which displace any part of his theory. This becomes even more apparent as we delve into the use Allegro makes of Sumerian and Koine Greek linguistic derivations.

⁶⁸Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 28.

The key language base or derivative where all languages begin, says Allegro, is Sumerian. These people were the creators of civilization in their homelands and spread a distinctive culture in this whole area.

⁵⁹John Strassell, "Discoveries in the Jewish Desert of Jordan," Esprit De Quaran, Vol. 2 No. 26 (April 1970), pp. 153-175.

A LINGUISTIC CRITIQUE OF ALLEGRO'S THEORY

Allegro is primarily known as a linguist among his peer scholars. Consequently, his work has been centered around linguistic themes of one sort or another and has basically involved information retrieved from the Dead Sea Scrolls. This type of work, however, occurred prior to his writing of The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. Even these works, as mentioned earlier, were considered eccentric and off the beaten path by his contemporaries. John Strugnell of Harvard Divinity School in his review of Allegro's Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan in Revue De Qumran masterfully erodes the credibility Allegro has as a philologist.⁶⁹ Strugnell defies Allegro's conclusions on every page and explains in short the proper "procedure" in interpreting the "Discoveries in the Judean Desert." Unfortunately, Allegro did not seek to mend his linguistic ways and went a step further in his search for the sacred mushroom. John Allegro's approach within this volume is very important to the whole setting of his book. Without a proper scholarly synthesis to the languages he mentions, his theory, his discussion, and his conclusions become as unreal as a mushroom-induced hallucinogenic dream.

The key language base or derivative where all languages began, says Allegro, is Sumerian. These people were the creators of civilization in lower Mesopotamia and spawned a distinctive culture in this whole area.

⁶⁹John Strugnell, "Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan," Revue De Qumran. Vol.7 No.26 (April 1970), pp. 163-276.

Their monuments depict them as a clean shaven, stocky, broad headed people with a language distinctively their own.⁷⁰ The earliest texts which are available are in Sumerian and constitute the first organized written language. However, an important comment must be interjected concerning this language. First, Sumerian is a language which is in the agglutinative family of languages. This term, agglutination, comes from the Latin "ad" and "glutinare" which literally means "to fasten together with glue." Linguistically speaking, Sumerian preserves the root intact while expressing the morphemic changes by means of prefixed, infixes, and suffixed elements. On the other hand, languages such as Hebrew which Allegro employs is in the inflected language family which is distinct from Sumerian. Allegro makes no attempt to distinguish between these two language families or explain how a potential link was formed. Allegro presupposes a link which can not be traced. Samuel N. Kramer in his book The Sumerians-Their History, Culture, and Character writes: "Admittedly, the Sumerian origin of modern off shoots can no longer be traced with directness or certainty: the ways of cultural diffusion are manifold, intricate, and complex, and its magic touch is subtle and evanescent."⁷¹ Also, Henri Frankfort, in his book The Birth of Civilization in the Near East mentions, "Sumerian has no clear recognized affinity to other tongues."⁷²

⁷⁰John Bright, History of Israel. p. 24.

⁷¹Samuel Kramer, The Sumerians-Their History, Culture, and Character. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 5.

⁷²Henri Frankfort, The Birth of Civilization in the Near East. (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956), p. 51.

The Sumerian language is a unique language in relationship to others which are present today. Its basis of construction is noticeably different than Hebrew and Greek. Furthermore, some reviewers of Allegro's book doubt his ability to handle them correctly. Robert Graves, in the New Statesmen retorts, "John Allegro educated himself in the Semitic languages of which he soon became a leading authority."⁷³ The fallacy of Allegro's word usage is clearly seen in a short period of time as far as words and their changing meanings. Leonard Bloomfield, in his book Language, shows the basic change from the Sumerian to the Babylonian in relation to Latin and English.

... the ancient Sumerian word for 'god' was (an); when the Babylonians learned the use of writing they took over the Sumerian symbol as a logogram for the Babylonian word (ilu) 'god', and as a classifier which they placed before the names of gods. This kind of retention often occurs when a system of writing is adapted to a new language; thus we retain Latin abbreviations, such as & (Latin et) for (and); etc. (Latin et cetera and other things) for and so forth; i.e. (Latin idest) for that is; e.g. (exempli gratia 'for the sake of an example') for (for instance); lb. (Latin libra) for pound, and so on.⁷⁴

Contemporaneously, words change in our culture within decades, and to say a word of fifty years ago means the same today is humorously incorrect. To ascribe to the word "gay" as we know it, the same definition as a 1921 billboard definition of "light and free in spirit," totally pulls out of context the modern emphasis of the word.

⁷³Robert Graves, "Jesus as Toadstool," New Statesmen. p. 694.

⁷⁴Leonard Bloomfield, Language. (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Wilson, 1933), p. 288.

If one were reading a copy of a 1931 New York Times and came across the word "pot" it would be listed as either a cooking utensil or a fixture in the bathroom. Words take on different meanings at different times in the cultural life of any people, and to say dogmatically a word means "thus and so" in each and every case in the life culture of a people (namely the Sumerians) within a span of 2,000 years, ignores any sociological influence.

John Allegro is himself a linguistic detective. To understand his route of inspection, let us likewise follow his path with several examples. According to John Allegro, the Hebrew names of Cain and Abel come from the hypothetical Sumerian GAR-EN, "seed container" and BAL "borer, phallus"; Esau and Jacob from another Sumerian E-SHU-A, "raised canopy," i.e., the cap of the Amanita muscaria and IA-A-GUB, "pillar," or the mushroom stem. Mr. Allegro feels that II Samuel 23:1 should be translated, "the oracle of the erect phallus, the semen smeared of the God of Jacob, the Na'im of the stretched penis of Israel." The usual translation in comparison is: "The sayings of David the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high, the anointed of God of Jacob, and the sweet singer of Israel."⁷⁵

Remarkably, the only problem with this approach is that there are few Sumerian words Allegro uses that are familiar to other Sumerian scholars. His use of the Sumerian language is somewhat misleading.

⁷⁵The Oxford Annotated Bible, American Standard Version. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), Edited by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger.

If the major criticism of Allegro's linguistic approach can be viewed here, it is that he uses no lexicons to verify his word usages. We are expected to take at face value that "d" can be "t", "m" can be "g", "g" can be "b", and "b" can be "p". "M" can also be "n" and "n" can be "l" so can "r" and so can "s". "H", too, can be "g" which can also be "k".⁷⁶ Furthermore, fictitious words emerge, which according to Thorkild Jacobsen in his review, are not present in any Sumerian text.

On pp. 210f. we find: "cp. SIPA, SIB (reu) 'stretch-penis'...? SI garnu 'horn' + PA aru 'branch' slh=w-r-r), Kappu 'wing'..." The Sumerians word SI "horn" is never, in any text we know of, used for "penis." The word PA, Akkadian aru (or eru or haru, not aru) "frond," "palm leaf," is a substantive and can therefore not be used as a participle, past or present--whatever may be implied in "stretch"-- nor does it mean "to stretch." Its Akkadian equivalent, aru, does not derive as the parenthesis seems to imply w-'r-, which in Akkadian means "to brief," "to instruct." Lastly, the SIPAD "shepherd" + ends in A and so would not account for the complete form of the word. The etymology of SIPAD as SI+PA="stretch penis" is therefore better abandoned.⁷⁷

Allegro's references to the gods of the Sumerians and primitive mythologies are incorrect. Jacobsen continues:

In note 17 to chapter XV, on p. 283, the Akkadian epithet of the moon-god, nannaru, is said to go back to a Sumerian NA*AN*NA*RI "nuptial couch of heaven," and the note continues: "cp. the goddess of the new moon NANNA, NANNAR, and INNANA, Istar (womb)..." it does not, however, make a very good impression when our guide to ancient Sumerian religion shows ignorance of the fact that the Sumerian god of the moon, Nanna,

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John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross, p. 17.

77 Thorkild Jacobsen, "Mr. Allegro Among the Mushrooms," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, p. 237.

is a god, not a goddess and that he is different from INNANNA, Ishtar, goddess of the morning and evening star.⁷⁸

Frankly, so little is known about Sumerian, to make a "matter of fact" linguistic statement, one's comments must be backed up with several lexiconal sources. For example, several studies by Mamoru Yoshikawa of Hiroshima University with reference to the complexities of the Sumerian Verbal Suffix E-DE-E-DA (M) have brought to light an ever increasing caution when one is working in Sumerian.⁷⁹

However, the linguistic deficiencies do not stop with the Sumerian. Passages which are inclusive of Koine Greek are incorrect while words take on meanings which cannot be found in scholarly lexicons. If clouded meanings baffle the linguist in Sumerian, five hundred years of established scholarship in Koine Greek point to the extent linguistic deterioration has taken place in Allegro's book.

Greek is the most literary of all the ancient languages, having produced a veritable stream of literature, beginning with Homer about 900 B.C.⁸⁰ Its etymology is finite and exclusive and leaves no room for the ambiguities such as are present in English. If in English we say the word "diamond," it may convey several meanings. A baseball diamond, a diamond ring, etc. or any number of unrelated objects. Conversely, Koine Greek is not like this at all, but has specific words, which when used, visually depict certain meanings.

⁷⁸ Jacobsen, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p.241

⁷⁹ Mamoru Yoshikawa, "On the Grammatical Function of -E- of the Sumerian Verbal Suffix -E-DE'/-E-DA(M)." Journal of Near Eastern Studies. Vol. 27 No. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, July 1963), p. 251f.

⁸⁰ H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament. (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1957), p. 3.

Since John Allegro begins with basics, let us likewise again follow suit. Mr. Allegro uses 710 Koine Greek words which are primarily found in the Bible to give Biblical people and places their Sumerian trace names. A first-year Greek student learns that there are basically three Greek words for "love" used both Biblically and non-Biblically. There is the non-Biblical word "eros" from which we get our term "erotic" or "sexual love." There is the Biblical word "agape" or the "love of the value" of an object (namely God) which is loved. Finally, there is the second Biblical term used for love, "phileo," which is brotherly love and from which we derive the name Philadelphia.⁸¹ To understand now Allegro uses these terms we must proceed with his use of several Greek words which contradict lexiconal sources.

On page 212 number 11, Allegro makes this citation. "AG ramu 'love', as in AG-AG (ramu, and madadu 'measure') agapao 'love, attract, allure, intice." However, "agapao" a form of "agape" which we have already mentioned, is nowhere in a lexicon found to mean "attract," "allure," or "intice." In the Patristic Greek Lexicon edited by G.W.H. Lampe, the Greek word "agapao" literally means "to be fond of," and of its root "agape," the following meaning is enlisted: "God's love for man, man's love for God, and the fraternal charity of Christians."⁸² Giving a sexual meaning to all types of love is scholastic narrowmindedness.

⁸¹ Gerhard Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Vol. 1 & Vol. 9 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, editor and translator. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ., 1967), pp. 21-55 & pp. 112-146.

⁸² A Patristic Greek Lexicon. Edited by G.W.H. Lampe. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) p. 7.

These differing words for "love," with their contrasted meanings, point to a major flaw in Allegro's concept of ancient culture. It is hard to accept that every ancient individual, sound of body and mind, saw sexual connotations in every aspect of their lives. Fathers loved their sons, sons loved their fathers, family ties were as they are today, couched in their own social setting without a direct sexual emphasis. This idea would humorously fit into our sociological perspective, if a thousand years from today, another Allegro discovered a gasoline pump nozzle in the shape of a penis. This he would declare was placed into a car tank to simulate intercourse. Such names as Standard oil, Shell, and Exxon would be the temples at which a "fillup" would be considered a sexual attachment between a man and his car.

Allegro also cites page 300 number 107, and writes, "...ago 'lead, draw forth' which eventually means ..."lust." This is of much suspect because "ago" though meaning "lead" does not mean it in the sense of "drawing forth" but emphasizes the leading of animals. The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Joseph Thayer, renders the meaning, "to lead by laying hold of" or "to lead, guide, direct" or "to lead by accompanying."⁸³ The word in Greek which Allegro is searching for is "antleo" which means "to draw water in any way." Another word with a sexual connotation, the Greek word "Ezelko" which means, "to draw away or lure forth."⁸⁴ These words emphasize specific meanings.

⁸³ Joseph H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1966), p. 9.

⁸⁴ W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. (London: Oliphants, 1973), p. 337.

Again, the word "ago" is used in the wrong relationship, which actually sends forth another point that needs to be stated. Allegro, often in translating a word will first give the generic term for the word, then add his own specific meaning which ironically has a sexual understanding. Certainly, "ago" means "lead," but in what manner does it mean "lead?" There are at least thirteen other Greek words in the New Testament which mean "lead" but are used in different ways. For the word "ago" to also mean "draw forth" as Allegro says it does, would mean that the wrong Greek word has been used for the wrong definition if we are to accept the lexicons as reliable.⁸⁵

Moreover, words change for Allegro, and often appear to mean the opposite from the word given by a reliable source. For instance, on page 224 he infers that the term "left" means "left side of the womb." He also, in this flurry, mentions that Greek word "dezios" as picturing the trace words to the "left side." However, Lindell and Scotts' Greek and English Lexicon cites "dezios" as meaning "on the right hand or side."⁸⁶ There is no linguistic way "dezios" can mean "left side."

Allegro's fixation with the mushroom has him even giving animals, plant parts. On page 257 chapter XI number 7, after having quoted Arabic sources, Mr. Allegro enters the Greek word "koraz," Latin "corvus" with the Sumerian "GUR-UB" meaning "curved pod."

⁸⁵W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. p. 321-322.

⁸⁶Lindell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1339), p. 179.

Unfortunately, "koraz" has nothing whatever to do with a "curved pod." According to A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, "koraz" means "crow or raven" not a "curved pod."⁸⁷

One could go on with other such examples in any one of these language groups noting the vast differences in meaning when compared with a reliable lexicon. Consequently, Allegro goes as far as to change Greek words as they appear in the original manuscripts. On page 127 Allegro writes that "beloved son" in Matthew 3:17 are the Greek words "pais erotis paideros." But when one turns to Matthew 3:17, the word for "beloved" is "agapetos" and the word for "son" is "uios." Neither "pais" or "erōtis" are even mentioned.⁸⁸ These inconsistencies from several linguistic angles weaken still further Allegro's thesis of The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. Within the Greek section in the back of his book can be found at least twenty-three Greek words which dramatically differ from lexiconal sources.

However, proving Allegro's linguistic foundation to be erosive is but one aspect of this paper. A buttress to his linguistic comments are the botanical arguments made concerning the Amanita muscaria. John Allegro's statements here must also be placed under criticism for us to understand the proper relationships between the Amanita muscaria and its recorded use by man.

⁸⁷ W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 445.

⁸⁸ Alfred Marshall, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament from the Nestle Greek Text. (London: Bagster & Sons Limited, 1972), p. 9.

Chapter VI

SOME BOTANICAL INCONSISTENCIES IN THE SACRED MUSHROOM

The mushroom John Allegro is so concerned about is the poisonous species Amanita, namely Amanita muscaria. The "fly agaric" is its vernacular name, and comes from the domestic use in Europe by German housewives of spreading some of the mushroom on a saucer to attract flies and by eating it are eventually poisoned.⁸⁹ This mushroom also played a role in historical melodrama. The Emperor Claudius is said to have died from eating it, and it is told that Lucrezia Borgia and Nero both used it to poison cast off favorites. Lucrezia so loved its vivid orange-red hue that she had her portrait painted in a robe of that color.⁹⁰

Two cultural systems we know of are said to have used the Amanita muscaria. The Aztecs used this mushroom for visions and hallucinations and as a sacrament in religious ceremonies, while it is still used today by Mexican Indians for divination and religious worship.⁹¹ Another group using the Amanita muscaria are the natives of Kamchatka in northern Russia.⁹² Richard Evans Schultes in his article "Hallucinogens of Plant

⁸⁹Clyde M. Christensen, Common Edible Mushrooms. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1943), pp. 31-32.

⁹⁰Margaret McKenny, Mushrooms of Field and Wood. (New York: The John Day Co., 1929), p. 40.

⁹¹Richard R. Lingeman, Drugs from A to Z, A Dictionary. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1969), p. 178.

⁹²Peggy Young, "Mushrooms," Natural History. Vol. LXXIV No. 6 (June-July 1970), p. 70.

Origin" in Science elaborates on this phenomenon:

Many of these peoples have discovered that the intoxicating principles are excreted unaltered in the urine, almost as hallucinogenic as the original plant material. This discovery has given rise to the custom, sometimes ritually executed, of the inebriate's drinking his own or another's urine when he feels the intoxication waning, thus, repeatedly effecting a continuation of the narcosis.⁹³

Moreover, as the mushroom does give an effect of an hallucinogen, accumulative reactions are often harmful. Reports of vomiting, convulsion and death, plus the psychological affect of schizophrenia have been noted.⁹⁴

It seems illogical to think that many people on a mass scale, as Allegro suggests, would eat such a dangerous fungus. Granted, hallucinogenic visions would occur, but what of those who took too much of the mushroom? We can not suppose every ancient Near Eastern village had its own mushroom pharmacist who prescribed just the right amount of *Amanita muscaria* before every fertility rite. Even today with our modern methods of measure, medical dosage is still a problem. Furthermore, for there to be an extensive use of the mushroom as Allegro suggests, there would have to be an extensive supply. Robert Graves, in the New Statesmen clears the by pointing out that the host tree for the *Amanita muscaria* is the birch tree. This tree appears from the 45th parallel northward, but southward at only great altitudes. Surprisingly, the birch tree does "not grow

⁹³Richard Evans Schultes, "Hallucinogens of Plant Origin," Science. Vol.163 No.3864 (January 17, 1969), p. 246.

⁹⁴Howard Fabing M.D. "Toads, Mushrooms, and Schizophrenia," Harpers. Vol.214 No.12884 (May 1957), pp. 50-55.

in Palestine" while the only other host tree for the *Amanita muscaria* is the Pine.⁹⁵ But Allegro never mentions the Pine as a host tree and after calling upon Pliny who calls pine-resin the origin of all mushrooms, he adds that an Accadian hymn makes "seeds of a pine" the progeny of the sacred prostitutes.⁹⁶ One wonders, if the Jews who were as potent a group of people as history records, and the Christians who swept across the Roman Empire in the first century, were merely people swayed by the mystical power of the *Amanita muscaria*? If this mystery cult was as widespread as Allegro claims, certainly archeological evidence of any stores of mushrooms would have been found.

Furthermore, the primary source Allegro uses to establish a botanical argument is suspect. On page 37, the author contends that the name "peony" originally referred to the *Amanita muscaria*. He bases this claim on a description of the peony in Pliny's Natural History.⁹⁷ He is correct in his citation of the passage in which Pliny describes a medicinal plant some four inches tall with black and red seeds. Allegro then proceeds by writing,

Well, of course, this is not our crimson Paeony. It is some magic plant, 'the first to be discovered,' as our Roman botanist tells us. For various reasons which will become apparent, we can now differentiate this very special Paeony from the other plants to which the name was given, and identify it with the subject of our present study, the *Amanita muscaria*.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Robert Graves, "Jesus as Toadstool," New Statesmen. p. 694.

⁹⁶John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p. 74.

⁹⁷W.H.S. Jones, Pliny Natural History. (London: Harvard University Press 1951), Book 25 Note 29 p. 157.

⁹⁸John Allegro, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. p. 37.

by any number of noted mycologists point to the manifold colors from white and brilliant yellow to deep purple of the *Amanita muscaria*.

Finally, on page 74, Allegro displays the twelfth century Plaincourault fresco in France. This he entitles, "A Christian fresco showing the *Amanita muscaria* as the tree of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden." Again, this is clearly what it is not. It does not depict mushrooms, but it is a typical piece of Romanesque or early Gothic art, showing a "conventionalized tree" in Eden, as E. Panofsky testifies.¹⁰²

¹⁰²Quoted by Gordon Wasson, Soma, The Divine Mushroom of Immortality. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World 1968), pp. 179-180.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

What then can be said to capsulize and give poignant comment to John Allegro's book? Primarily, though trying to be scientific in his approach to Sumerian and the cultures of the ancient Near East, in practice, Allegro becomes oversimplistic and general. To draw such conclusions so emphatically with as little real concrete evidence is certainly dangerous. Even a clinical scientist with all his visual tools realizes his field is not cognitive but tentative or probabilistic.

No competent scientist would go into the laboratory and say, "If I perform operation A,B, and C, the result will be D." Rather he would say, "If I perform operations A,B, and C, ninety-five times out of one hundred, I expect D to result." Similarly, this is one of the glaring problems which strikes the reader as he encounters The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross. The probability of every Sumerian word Allegro mentions having a similar unchanging meaning over centuries is highly suspect. Furthermore, in those languages where stable meanings for words have been established, namely Koine Greek, this has been maintained only through the tireless efforts of scholars and reliable lexicons. There are a few Sumerian lexicons, but Allegro mentions none of them to either establish or dispute his own work.

Ultimately, what Allegro has done is to employ a form of what is commonly known among Near Eastern scholars as the "diffusion hypothesis." This theory relies heavily on the thesis that similarity of language,

custom and culture, indicates dependence upon uniformity.¹⁰³ However, there are a number of objections to this procedure.

1) The similarity may be superficial. A formal parallel is not sufficient evidence on which to base an assertion of dependence. 2) The use of verbal and cultic structures resembling those of others may be deliberate, in order to assimilate a prevalent and acceptable motif to an entirely different basis. The use which early Christianity made of the symbolism of the contemporary pagan world provides an obvious example. The symbols were appropriated, but given new meaning. 3) Some similarities would inevitably have occurred, such as laments for the dead, a system of an after life and parallels of man in his search for a superior being. 4) By using the prime argument of language, Allegro has chosen a notoriously difficult basis. The existence of a similar word does not necessitate belief in dependence, still less does it follow that a borrowed word is being used with its original or even a related meaning.

Certainly, we must note, that frequently those who wish to see a relationship between two different traditions create a resemblance, deliberately or unconsciously, by their descriptions of them. William Foxwell Albright continues with this inconsistency of detective etymology by stating:

When we speak of eating breakfast cereal we certainly do not mean to imply worship of the goddess Ceres.

¹⁰³Thomas Fawcett, Hebrew Myth and Christian Gospel. (Bristol: S.C.M. Press 1973), p. 18.

The word has simply been borrowed and applied to products previously believed to be under the special protection of the goddess of the name. Similarly, we celebrate Easter, which bears the name of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eoster, without intending to venerate her at all.¹⁰⁴

Subsequent to this, Allegro displays a surprising lack of knowledge concerning to concept of land ownership and land deification by peoples of the ancient Near East. In order for the land to be "my" land, I must live together with it. The man living in relationship with his land that transfers uninhabited wasteland into homeland, that transforms the land into the land of life, is significant. For Israel, they were reclaiming the land of their "fathers" Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Alternatively the land was not just there, at hand, to be granted "willy-nilly" by the deity. It was fought for and died for. Though historians question the historicity of the Biblical narrative of the sudden conquest of the land of Canaan, the religious-mystic and the reality of the tradition is beyond dispute. A holy land is a land that has been won.¹⁰⁵ Won, says Allegro, by the same deity with a different name. But unfortunately, Allegro again does not deal with any of the theories concerning Baal and Yahweh that have been expounded by the whole spectrum of scholars.

Certainly, Baal was one of the gods of the Canaanite pantheon prior to the Israelite invasion. However, Johannes Pedersen in his

¹⁰⁴William F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan. (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1968), p. 185.

¹⁰⁵Jonathan Z. Smith, "Earth and Gods," The Journal of Religion. Vol.29 No.2 (April 1969), p. 109.

series of Israel, Its Life and Culture mentions, "The designation ba'al was in its real sense no proper name for a definite God."¹⁰⁶ Pedersen goes on to elaborate that the soul or living essence of any living matter was called its ba'al. Consequently, there were numerous Baalim revealing themselves through nature.

This again, emphasizes Allegro's inability to convey several meanings to a word or words with which he deals. Inevitably, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross is a narrow approach linguistically to culture, while it contains broad statements of fact sociologically. To maintain Allegro's cryptic tone, I personally believe Allegro seeks to discredit Judaism the mother religion to Christianity. His anti-Semitic tone towards the Old Testament is rather unscholarly.

Finally, what is Allegro's opinion today as compared to when he wrote the book in 1970? In a letter dated November 16, 1974, John Allegro writes, "I have found no reason for departing from my conclusions."¹⁰⁷ He unfortunately still holds these views, and as Joseph Fitzmyer in America points out, "A once promising scholar has lost his senses."¹⁰⁸ Conversely, a humorous anecdote to this book comes by way of Thorkild Jacobsen, who in a letter dated December 5, 1974 replies, "Allegro knows no Sumerian--it is very difficult to take him seriously... I am inclined to think he wrote it with his tongue in his cheek."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Johannes Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture. (London: Oxford University Press 1963), p. 506.

¹⁰⁷Information in a letter to the author from John Allegro. The letter is dated November 16, 1974.

¹⁰⁸Joseph Fitzmyer, "Marinating the Mushroom," America. Vol.123 No.3 (September 26, 1970), p. 207.

¹⁰⁹Information in a letter to the author from Thorkild Jacobsen. The letter is dated December 5, 1974.

To conclude, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross was written when the sociological drug epidemics of the late 1960's were seeking a cognizant relationship with other cultures and past civilizations. Jack Finegan in his review of the book writes, "Is it too much to think that in the present book it is the reflexion of our own sexually oriented, drug bemused culture which is seen at the bottom of the well?"¹¹⁰ Whatever its import, The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross requires a realistic examination before one accepts its statements and its conclusions.

¹¹⁰ Jack Finegan, "A Study of the Nature and Origins of Christianity within the Fertility Cults of the Ancient Near East," Manuscript Copy. (November 25, 1974), p. 9.

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