Non-Anglo Entheography: Mini-Reviews of Non-English Publications, II

WHILE WE CAN BE GRATEFUL that there is again considerable publishing activity on the subject of shamanic inebriants in the United States—severally by academic presses, small presses [with numerous self-publishers], major trade-book houses—many books are being published in languages other than English, scarcely coming to the attention of aficionados in this country. There are welcome signs of the return of the “drug book” section to the bookstores of the land—rudely displaced by a riot of substance abuse [sic] self-help manuals in the 1980s—and their ranks would swell, were English editions of Spanish, Italian, German, French and Portuguese books on this subject published. This in turn would stimulate the writing of more such books in other countries, by giving their authors access to the larger and lucrative U.S. market, in which, moreover, direct-marketing allows more opportunities in niche-markets and/or non-mainstream subject areas. Accordingly, so to alert would-be translators, publishers and readers to noteworthy non-English publications, herewith mini-reviews of recent titles I think are especially valuable or interesting [some, alas, for their execrable quality]. Where possible, book prices and all salient ordering information are included, to facilitate direct and expeditious acquisition.

Spanish originals

Tobacco Frio, Coca Dulce [Cool Tobacco, Sweet Coca] Hipólito Candre [Translation and commentary by Juan Álvaro Echeverri], 1993; translation 1996. Themis Books [Council Oak Books; 1350 E. 15th St.; Tulsa, OK 74120; $19.95]. Sew-and-glue paperback; ISBN 0-9527302-1-9; 296 pp.; 13 pp. index; 10 pp. of notes to 3 pp. bibliography of 32 sources; 45 b/w photographs; 15 b/w drawings; one map. A bilingual English/Witoto [here hispanicized as Uttoto] version of bilingual Spanish/Witoto book Jiré Diona, Ríerre Jibirín, subtitled Teachings of an Indian Sage from the Colombian Amazon, we have here Witoto transliterations and parallel translations of 16 narratives by the shaman Kinera, preceded by a biographical sketch and interspersed with footnoted explanatory commentaries by Echeverri, then followed by 5 pp. of ethnobotanical and ethnozoological appendices, a brief bibliography and a useful index. Apart from being a priceless document of firsthand shamanic lore, in the tradition of Wasson’s bilingual María Sabina and Her Mazatec Mushroom Velada this is a treasure of ethnobiological data, nicely produced [on paper from “managed plantations”] and sturdily bound—a great value.

Farmacología y Toxicidad de la MDMA [Éxtasis] [Pharmacology and Toxicity of MDMA [Ecstasy]] Jordi Cami, 1995. Ediciones en Neurociencias [Numancia 207, Bajos; 08034 Barcelona, Catalunya, España]. Sew-and-glue paperback; ISBN 84-88648-08-1; 112 pp.; no index; a brief review with 166 references, followed by 47 pp. bibliography divided into 12 sections, with 432 references. A 38 pp. general review of the history, pharmacology, toxicology and clinical use of MDMA or Ecstasy, is followed by an extensive bibliography derived from a Medline literature-search covering 1981–1995. Although written in Spanish, the book will be of use to non-speakers
for its comprehensive bibliography which the author has conveniently subdivided into a dozen categories, including: neurochemistry, pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, epidemiology, adverse reactions, etc.

Teonanácatl: the Food of the Gods. Philip Conover, 1994. The Huaulta Press/Prensas Editoras de Huaulta [Galeana 25, San Ángel; 01000 México, D.F., México]. Sew-and-glue paperback; ISBN 968–6744–01–0; 132 pp.; no index; 11 pp. of notes with limited bibliographic references. This is a strange but interesting and well-written paean to the Mesoamerican psilocybin mushrooms, self-published in English in México City, by a British-Mexican poet educated in the United States and Europe. Characterized as "religious writing [which] wishes to communicate a [universal] religious experience," Conover tells the story, two decades hence, of his 1968 pilgrimage to Huaulta de Jiménez, Oaxaca, epicenter of shock-waves of the Entheogenic Reformation in the western world, unleashed there by María Sabina and Gordon Wasson in June 1955. In a well-crafted, novelistic style, Conover realistically evokes the exotic—some would say bizarre—ambience in a sequence of three day/chapters, interrupted by "The Dream," following a climactic second-night ecstatic encounter with teonanácatl [which does not mean "meat (or food) of the gods" as the author suggests—Conover is surely aware that even today nanacate means mushroom, not meat; Nahualatos rather construe the word as "wondrous mushroom," and it was Toribio de Benavente [as Friar Motolinia] who had alleged teonanacatl meant: "flesh of God," desirous to impress upon his superiors the heretical nature of the Indian communion... Nor, as the book concludes, do the Mazatecs use this Nahualt term. It is strange that a book titled teonanácatl cites none of the three previous books of that title, notably Wasson's monumental the wondrous mushroom, still in print in México as Teonanácatl: el Hongo Maravilloso—even though Wasson's much less relevant The Road to Eleusis appears [no sign of my 1978 Teonanácatl: Hallucinogenic Mushrooms of North America, which was translated into Spanish; nor Dolores Roldán's Teonanácatl of 1975]. I was also surprised Conover seemed unaware of the Spanish translation of the Mazatec name for Psilocybe carnescens—derrumbé or "landslide"—here twice mangled as arrumbe, and by his misspelling of "enteogenic" in a footnote explaining use of an alternate neologism allurism, which is unexplained, and perhaps is meant to suggest the mushroom's elin nature. But these are minor flaws in an interesting and heartfelt chronicle of a young man's quest for the fungal Grail of Huaulta.

La Contracultura en México [The Counterculture in México] José Agustín, 1996. Editorial Grijalbo [Calzada San Bartolo Naucalpan, 282; Argentina Poniente 11230; Miguel Hidalgo, México, México; Nuevos Pesos 69]. [Im] Perfect-binding paperback; ISBN 970–05–0722–6; 241 pp.; 8 pp. onomastic index; 5 pp. bibliography with 61 incomplete references; 87 b/w photographs; 3 b/w illustrations. This social history of the Mexican counterculture features one chapter on "hallucinogens"; another on the impact of U.S. jípis [the Merry Pranksters and Learyites] on their Mexican counterparts; yet another on jípitesas—rustic hangouts for psilocybian mushroom seekers in the Sierra Madre Oriental of Huaulta and environs. As such it makes counterpart to Conover's Teonanácatl and the previously-reviewed Huaulta en Tiempo de Hippies, by Sabina biographer Álvaro Estrada.

Los Hongos Alucinantes y Antología de Cuentos [The Hallucinatory Mushrooms and Anthology of Stories] Cutberto Hernández Torres, 1995. Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas [Fondo Estatal para la Cultura y las Artes; Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México]. [Im] Perfect-binding paperback; ISBN 968–6951–18–0; 178 pp.; no index; no bibliography; 8 b/w photographs. My expectations for this book were certainly low when I read announced on the verso that it "combined two visions: the journalistic and the testimonial" and that it was originally written as articles for the magazine Impacto, a sort of combination girlie-magazine and right-wing-political scandal sheet. We must allow for his profession, in having so titled a book, not even a third of which is related to the "hallucinatory" mushrooms of his native Oaxaca. With a great deal less aplomb and skill than Conover, Torres describes his own mushroomic quest in Huaulta. I will also spare the reader Torres' ignorant musings on "drugs," but challenge the author to justify his characterization of R. Gordon Wasson as a "lover of cheap thrills" [p. 72]; and shan't spare showcasing his misanthropic racism, as he laments "the perverse inclination of the human genus and particularly the degenerative condition of yanqui capitalism" [p 72]; denouncing "the infra-men and women who live and die the anguish of darkness in search of artificial light" [p. 74], as "detritus of the species" [p. 77]. But I'll not waste any more paper on this trashy, racist philippic—too many trees were already sacrificed to make 1000 copies of a book far better produced than it merits.

Actas II Congreso Internacional para el Estudio de los Estados Modificados de la Consciencia [Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Study of Modified States of Consciousness] Josep Maria Fericgló [Ed.], 1996. Institut de Prospectiva Antropològica [Avenida Gran Via 457, 4º, 1º; 08015 Barcelona, Catalunya, España; Ptas. 3050]. [Im] Perfect-binding paperback; no ISBN; 198 pp.; no index; bibliographies to 22 of the 52 contributions. Here we have a glue-bound, photocopied set of papers and abstracts from the Lleida [Lérida] Catalunya conferences [see MAPS V(3): 28–32, 1995, for Stacy Schaefer's report] in October 1994. Whereas most of the contributions are abstracts, some merely short paragraphs, there are nineteen articles included, some half-dozen of which exceed ten pages. The papers are broken down into subcategories: Anthropology and Archaeology, "Art, Philosophy and Religion," "Ethnopharmacology, Pharmacology and Chemistry," "Social Ethics and Law" and "Medicine, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy," accommodating the broad scope of the conference which, for me, suffered from lack of focus, and the uneven quality of the presentations, some of which were closer to religious proselytism than scientific reportage. But there are many valuable and informative papers in this collection, and Fericgló is to be commended for undertaking the considerable effort to assemble and self-publish this wide-ranging material on entheobotany and related fields.

Las Sustancias de los Sueños [The Stuff of Dreams] Simón Brailowsky, 1995. Fondo de Cultura Económica [Carretera Picacho–Ahusco, 227; 14200 México, D.F., México]. Sew-and-glue paperback; isbn 968–16–4585–5; 355 pp.; 34 pp. index; 3 pp. bibliography of 29 references; 41 b/w and 4 color illustrations; 11 tables. Subtitled Neopyschopharmacology, this is a well-illustrated laypersons’ primer on neuroscience and the basic pharmacology of mind-drugs. The mechanisms of the action of the various psychiatric drugs are explained, as well as stimulants, nootropics, "psychomimetics" [entheogens], anesthetics, narcotics, tobacco, alcohol, Cannabis and more. We could use a good, basic primer on this subject in English; mayhap somebody will venture to translate this one.

Spanish translations and periodicals

LSD: Cómo Descubrí el Ácido Y Que Pasó Después en el Mundo [LSD: My Problem Child] Albert Hofmann, 1995. Editorial Gedisa [Muntaner, 460, entlo. 1; 08006 Barcelona, Catalunya, España; Ptas. 1950]. [Im.–Perfect-bound paperback; isbn 84–7432–102–6; 227 pp.; no index; no bibliography. Originally published in a Spanish translation in 1980, now we have a third printing, like the first two lacking the book’s illustrations, but featuring at the end a translation of the legends for the chemical-structure formulae, which are also missing! And some people accuse self-publishers of incompetence! At least the Spanish market has proven more viable than the United States for this book, the second edition of which just lapsed out-of-print [interested parties apply to this reviewer], having taken 13 years to sell 5000 copies after the original 1980 edition was remaindered!


El Testo Drogado [Il Testo Drogato/The Drugged Text] Alberto Castoldi, 1997. Anaya & Mario Muchnik [Juan Ignacio Luca de Tena, 15; 28027 Madrid, España; Ptas. 2450]. Sew-and-glue paperback; isbn 84–7979–394–5; 283 pp.; 7 pp. index; 13 pp. endnotes to 4 pp. bibliography of 91 references; unpaginated insert of 21 b/w illustrations. A new Spanish translation of the 1994 Italian original, this is a fascinating study of the impact of diverse inebriants on world literature. After an eponymous introduction, the text is broken down by drug, with two chapters on opium [basically pre- and post-De Quincey], separated by hashish, morphine and ether; the latter followed by cocaine, mescaline and “LSD and the Beat Generation.” With no particular axe to grind, Castoldi treats the reader to a history of literature of and about drugs, and even for one so steeped in this literature as I, there were more than a few surprises.

Notas de un Botánico en el Amazonas y en los Andes [Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes] Richard Spruce [Alfred Russel Wallace, Ed.], 1996. Ediciones Abyafiala [Avenida 12 de Octubre, 14–30 y Wilson; Casilla 17–12–719, Quito, Ecuador]. [Im.–Perfect-bound paperback; isbn 9978–04–211–3; 803 pp.; no index; chapter endnotes sans bibliography; 7 pp. glossary of indigenous terms; 7 maps [4 fanfold]; 49 b/w illustrations. This is a welcome recent translation of the 1908 two-volume collection of field notes of the great Amazonian botanist, edited and condensed by his equally stellar colleague. While an index would have been a valuable addition to this seminal work on ayahuasca and other South American "narcotics," Abyafiala is to be commended for making this book available to the Spanish reader—it is No. 21 in their fabulous Tierra Incognita series of books.

Alexander T. Shulgin, the poem *La Leyenda del Agua* by Velasco and an excerpt from this reviewer’s *The Age of Entheogens*.

Pulque, Balché y Pajauarú [Pulque, Balché and Pajauarú] Oswaldo Gonçalves de Lima, 1990. Fondo de Cultura Económica [Carretera Picacho—Aguascalientes 227; 14200 México, D.F., México]. Sew-and-glue paperback; ISBN 968–16–3352–0; 483 pp; no index; 1135 references in individual chapter bibliographies; 4 pp. Nahuatl glossary; 45 b/w drawings. This is a welcome recent translation of this superb 1975 Brazilian—Portuguese worldwide survey of the ethnobiology of fermented beverages and foods, by the author of a classic work on pulque or octli [wine of maguex or Agave spp.], and the first to isolate DMT [nigerina or nigerine] as a natural product, from *jurema preta* [Mimosa tenuiflora/voskii], in 1946. This is the most comprehensive book on fermented drinks and viands, perhaps a little over-broad in scope, insofar as it includes non-fermented [but inebriating] libations like *soma* of the Indo-Aryans, not to mention *vinho da jurema*, despite its name [at least in its primigenial, indigenous form]. It would be most desirable to have an English translation of this pioneering and comprehensive work.

**Italian originals**

*L’Erba di Dario Erba* [Carlo Erba’s Herb] Giorgio Samorini, 1996[7]. Nautilus [Casella Postale 1311; 10100 Torino, Italy; Lire 16,000]. Sew-and-glue paperback; no ISBN; 171 pp; no index; 8 pp. bibliography of 111 sources; 16 pp. of appendices of period therapeutic formularies; 8 pp. unpaginated insert with 10 b/w illustrations. Giorgio Samorini, Italy’s premier expert on entheogenic ethnopharmacognosy, got into hot water with the estate of famed 19th century Italian physician Carlo Erba, by drawing attention to self- and clinical experimentation by Erba and fellow Milanese *psiconauti cannavinici*, with *Cannabis* formulations. We have sunk so low with the scientific perversions pursuant to prohibition, that what once was avant garde medical research is today motive for disgrace and shameful coverups! Employing his best diplomatic skills, Samorini weathered the media storm, which probably would make a good book in itself. Doubtless the English-reading public would also be interested in this intimate look at yesteryear’s *cannabis-therapeutics*, beautifully and sturdily produced by Nautilus, although the two blank and two advert pages in the back had better been dedicated to a much-needed index!

**German originals and non-English translation**

*Lob des Schauens* [Peaon to Vision] Albert Hofmann [Photos by Werner Huber]. 1996. Privately printed, no imprint; limited edition of 100 copies, none for sale. Smythe-sewn hardcover with d/j; no ISBN; 62 pp. [unpaginated]; no index; no bibliography; 26 color photographs plus one on d/j. It seems strange to be reviewing a book which has not really been published and is not for sale, and of which merely 100 copies exist, but I feel that any work by Albert Hofmann must needs be of interest to MAPS readers. In the tradition of some European countries, where it is the celebrant who gives gifts to birthday guests, Hofmann made this lovely little book for friends, in grateful celebration of his 90th year. Illustrated with photographs of butterflies (identified by common and scientific names) taken on his lovely property atop Mt. Rittimatte in Canton Basel, there is also a view of his “dreamhouse” seen across a flower-bejeweled alpine meadow. A 4 pp. preemium gives way to the 26 pp. eponymous essay, whose title neatly describes the contents, the latter part a sort of afterword to *Insight Outlook* [vide supra, Spanish translations: *Mundo Interior*], written for his 80th birthday. The following quotation gives some flavor of this spiritual/scientific pean to the inexhaustible wonder of life for Blake’s ever-youthful Man of Imagination, lavishing “gratitude for the privilege of being able to live in the country; what is more, in such a uniquely beautiful place as the Rittimatte, where the butterflies [Sommervögel, “summer birds”] still flutter…”

**Italian reprints and periodicals**

*LSD, Il Mio Bambino Difficile* [LSD: My Problem Child] Albert Hofmann, 1995. Libri Urra, Apogeo [Via Voghera, 11-a; 20144 Milano, Italy; Lire 21,000]. Sew-and-glue paperback; ISBN 88–7303–126–9; 214 pp; no index; no bibliography; 13 b/w illustrations in text; appendix with 9 chemical-structure formulae. This is a well-produced, new Italian translation of the 1979 German classic [English paperback of 1983 now out of print], to complete those 4 chapters devoted to Aldous Huxley, Ernest Jünger, Timothy Leary and Walter Vogt, previously published by translator Roberto Fedeli in 1992 [LSD in Mei Incontri con Leary, Jünger, Vogt, Huxley; Stampa Alternativa, Roma]. It is strange that there seems to be no U.S. market for this book [vide supra, Spanish translations: LSD], which was just published in Czech [LSD: Mě Nezvedené Dítě; Profess, Praha] and Hebrew [don’t ask me—but I did discern it was translated from my English, as I was listed as co-copyright holder!] translations, and has sold well in Japan. Hofmann remains completely bewildered by lack of interest in the United States, where he thought his memoirs would sell better than anywhere else.

Annales dei Musei Civici di Rovereto. Sezione: Archeologia, Storia, Scienze Naturali [Annals of the Rovereto Civic Museum. Sessions: Archaeology, History, Natural Sciences] Franco Finotti, 1985 onward. Musei Civici di Rovereto [Borgo S. Caterina, 43; 38068 Rovereto, Italia]. Sew-and-glue paperback; no ISSN; 420 pp.; no index; bibliographies to individual papers; well illustrated with some color plates. Italian botanist Francesco Festi, employed at the Rovereto Civic Museum, frequent collaborator of Giorgio Samorini and author of the excellent 1985 *Funghi Allicinogeni* [also published by the Museum], regularly edits a section of their yearbook, devoted to entheobotany. Issue 10 [1994(5)] featured a superb, near-book-length article on mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*) by Christian Rätsch; an article by Jochen Gartz on cultivation and chemistry of psilocybin mushrooms; and a study of Greek entheomycology by Samorini and SISSC [vide reviews of *ELEFTIS* and *Altrave* in previous column] colleague Gilberto Camilla. A 1993 supplementary volume was devoted to proceedings of a 1992 conference on mushroom poisoning held at the museum, with papers by Albert Hofmann, Caltan entheomycologist Josep Maria Ferrigla [vide supra, Spanish originals: Actas II Congreso...], Samorini, Gartz and many others. All volumes are bound well, beautifully produced, in classic Italian palaeographic style, on excellent paper.
Stechpfel: Halluzinogenes Nachtschattengewächs [Thornapple: Hallucinogenic Nightshade] Erwin Bauereiß, 1993. Wurzel-Verlag [Markgrafenstraße, 21; 91438 Bad Windsheim, Germany; dm10]. Staple-bound paperback; no ISBN; 44 pp; no index; 1 pp. bibliography of 20 sources; 37 b/w illustrations; one map. This is one of the earliest in the series of booklets, mostly on visionary nightshades, self-published by Bauereiß, author of Heimische Pflanzen der Götter [reviewed in previous column (Raymond Martin Verlag, 1995)] and proprietor of a company selling Solanaceae seeds. A brief botanical sketch on Datura spp. is followed by ethnomedicinal notes, pharmacology and psychoautonomic bioassay reports.

Bilsenkraut [Henbane] Erwin Bauereiß, 1994. Wurzel-Verlag [vide supra; dm10]. Staple-bound paperback; no ISBN; 44 pp; no index; no bibliography; 27 b/w illustrations; one map; one table. Another in Bauereiß's self-published series of booklets on visionary nightshades, here we have botanical notes on Hyoscyamus spp., reprints from an 'occult history' by Walter Schiering and phytochemical data by H. Wirth, with a concluding excerpt on Bilsenkraut from Christian Rätsch's The Dictionary of Sacred and Magical Plants [Prism Press, 1992].

Das Schamanische Universum [The Shamanic Universe] Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff [Christian Rätsch and Daniela Baumgartner, Eds.], 1996. Eugen Diederichs Verlag [München, Germany; dm48, sfr48, €375]. [Im] Perfect-bound paperback; ISBN 3-424-01334-x; 331 pp; no index; 19 pp. bibliography of 279 sources. Rätsch and Baumgartner have assembled extracts from 6 publications by the late German-Colombian ethnographer—3 on the Kogi Indians, introduced by Baumgartner; 3 on the Desana, presented by Rätsch; who also contributes a 25 pp. appendix on "The most important Colombian shamanic inebriants" and a 6 pp. essay on Reichel-Dolmatoff's contribution to contemporary consciousness research. An excellent bibliography includes 63 publications by the author, to which can be added two superb posthumous publications: Yurupari: Studies of an Amazonian Foundation Myth [Harvard University Press, 1996] and The Forest Within: The World-View of the Tukano Amazonian Indians [Themis Books, 1996]. Incredibly, this rich motherlode of information from a prolific shamanic ethnographer has been published sans index, and to add insult to injury, the publishers waste 6 precious pages advertising their books, many of which were cited in the bibliography.


German translations and periodicals


Jahrbuch für Transkulturelle Medizin und Psychotherapie [Yearbook of Cross-Cultural Medicine and Psychotherapy] Michael Winkelman and Walter Andritzky [Eds.], Vol. 6, 1995[6]. Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung [vide supra and Postfach 11 03 68; D-10833 Berlin, Germany; €44.95 (Mind Books)]. [Im] Perfect-bound paperback; ISBN 0939-5806; ISBN 3-927408-93-x; 416 pp; no index; bibliographies to individual papers; b/w illustrations; tables. Produced by the same publisher as Christian Rätsch's bilingual Yearbook for Ethnomedicine and the Study of Consciousness [reviewed in a previous column], this is a larger format, annual publication of the International Institute of Cross-Cultural Therapy Research (IIKT). This "theme issue" on sacred plants, consciousness, and healing: cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives, features 18 papers divided into three sections, "Theoretical Bases" [including papers by Stanislav Grof and Claudio Naranjo] "Clinical Perspectives on Hallucinogens" [Richard Jensen, Torsten Passie and others] and "Ethnographic Approaches and Applications" [Jochen Gartz, Edward F. Anderson, many others]. With a broad range of subjects focusing on the psychotherapeutic and ethnomedicinal aspects of shamanic inebriants, this is a valuable and information-rich volume.

French translation and reprints


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