

Curare

Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie • Journal of Medical Anthropology

hrsg. von/edited by: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin e.V. – AGEM

**Ethnobotanical Contributions
to Medical Anthropology**

**Beiträge aus der Ethnobotanik
zur Medizinethnologie**

- **Ayahuasca in Urban Circuit**
- **Peyote as Medicine**
- **Entheogens in Focus**
- **Ethnobotanical Title Pictures
in *Curare***

- **Die Ayahuasca-Liane**
- **Der Peyote-Kaktus**
- **Entheogene**



Zum Titelbild/Front picture *Curare* 37(2014)3:

Nothofagus antarctica (G. Forst.) Oerst. [antarktische Scheinbuche]. Detail of a Herbal Specimen of the Georg Forster Collection, by courtesy of "Herbarium, Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Freie Universität Berlin" © see complete document and more p.179f.

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Curare 36(2013)1+2: Medizinethnologische Diskurse um Körpermodifikationen im interdisziplinären Arbeitsfeld Ethnologie und Medizin (Body Modification and Medical Anthropology)

Curare 36(2013)3: Gesundheit und Öffentlichkeit: Medizinethnologische Perspektiven (Health and the Public)

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Curare 37(2014)4: AGEM und 50 Jahre „Interdisziplinäres Arbeitsfeld Ethnologie & Medizin“ (AGEM looking at 5 decennia of interdisciplinary discourses in anthropology and medicine)

Curare 38(2015)1+2: Selbstreflexion im Kontext medizinethnologischer Langzeitfeldforschung (Self-reflection in the Context of Long-term Field Research in Medical Anthropology)

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Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie Journal of Medical Anthropology



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IMPRESSUM *Curare* 37(2014)3**Verlag und Vertrieb / Publishing House:**

VWB – Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, Amand Aglaster
Postfach 11 03 68 • 10833 Berlin, Germany
Tel. +49-[0]30-251 04 15 • Fax: +49-[0]30-251 11 36
e-mail: info@vwb-verlag.com
<http://www.vwb-verlag.com>

Bezug / Supply:

Der Bezug der *Curare* ist im Mitgliedsbeitrag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin (AGEM) enthalten. Einzelne Hefte können beim VWB-Verlag bezogen werden • *Curare* is included in a regular membership of AGEM. Single copies can be ordered at VWB-Verlag.

Abonnementspreis / Subscription Rate:

Die jeweils gültigen Abonnementspreise finden Sie im Internet unter • Valid subscription rates you can find at the internet under: www.vwb-verlag.com/reihen/Periodika/curare.html

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ISSN 0344-8622

ISBN 978-3-86135-779-7

Die Artikel dieser Zeitschrift wurden einem Gutachterverfahren unterzogen • This journal is peer reviewed.



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edited by / herausgegeben von:
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Redaktionsschluss: 30.11.2014

Lektorat und Endredaktion: EKKEHARD SCHRÖDER und LISA MÄRCZ (Praktikum)

Die Artikel der *Curare* werden einem Reviewprozess unterzogen / The journal *Curare* is a peer-reviewed journal

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The famous wooden carved anthropomorphic Mandragora figures of “The grete herball” from Peter Treveris, London 1526, which were used frequently as logo in AGEM-publications.

Contributions from Ethnobotany, Ethnozoology and Ethnopharmacology to Medical Anthropology and Human Ecology. Editorial

AGEM (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin) is a German association of medical anthropology, which seeks to enhance in this journal the studies in the relationships between humans and plants and between humans and animals. Here we draw on the field of **human ecology**¹ as we seek to gain a deeper understanding between the human and non-human world. While it should be understood that the topics discussed in this special issue are not exhaustive, nor representing the full scope of different aspects, we hope to provide a glimpse into the manifold relationship between plants and human societies here with selected articles on “mind-moving” plants: Authors BEATRIZ CAIUBY LABATE & TIAGO COUTINHO are discussing the use of Ayahuasca in urban environment (p. 181–194), KEVIN FEENEY (p. 195–211) analyzes Peyote use and CHRISTIAN SCHMID entheogens (p. 212–225). All show different legal statuses and cultural acceptances of these types of plants. The authors also argue that hallucinogenic plants should be understood as “cultural actors,” even if, or maybe especially when, they provoke controversies among different groups and national legacies.

A few notes are in order. First, and not surprisingly, the healing potentials of plants are of particular interest in this issue. These three main articles demonstrate that while healing is of great importance, there are often entanglements with local administrations, public health strategies, and governmental directives. These can be viewed as expressions and performances of power relations between groups. In context we learn that certain entheogenic plants are made illicit, given their association with addiction. Independently of such power differentials, biologists and natural scientists are studying the physiological and chemical aspects of entheogens to describe the effects on the human body and to develop international classifications or taxa of these “matters.”² Similar to the ways, in which anthropologists have analyzed hallucinogenic plants both as cultural and sociological agents and as culture-producing actors, one could argue that these plants should be regarded in the framework of a “symmetric anthropology” in the sense of Bruno Latour.³

Second, looking at classic discussions of “universals” in human behavior, we need to remind ourselves

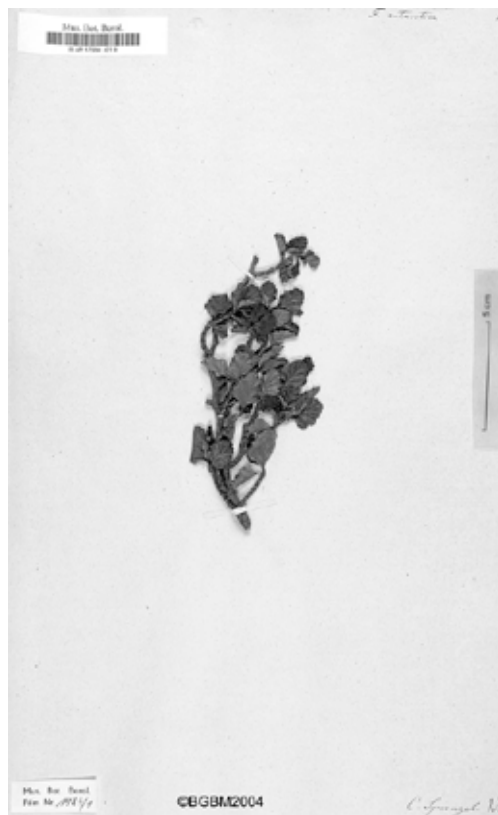
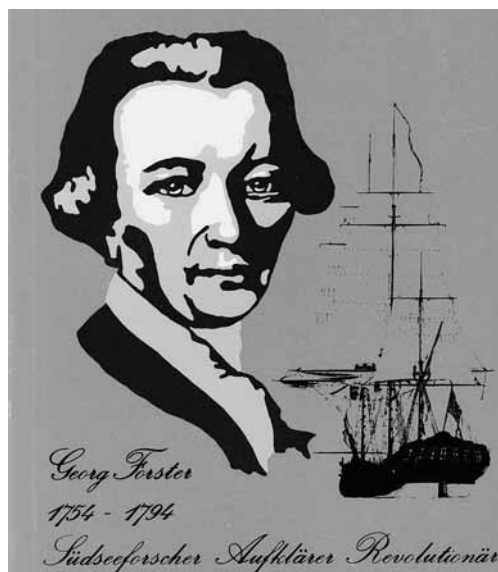


Fig. 1: Antarctic beech; Ñira (span.); Antarktische Scheinbuche⁴ // Fig. 2: Georg Forster exhibition 1976⁵



about the “gathering” process to collect the plants. All human societies engage in cognitive processes to differentiate between matters both in basic and ordinary actions. To illustrate this process, we chose a fairly small (and not very exotic) dried young bush of the specimen *Nothofagus antarctica* (G. Forst.) from the Tierra del Fuego (collection of the Botanical Garden of Berlin) to represent the plant as matter that is “gathered” (fig. 1)⁴. Its gatherer, the scientist, anthropologist, politician and travel book author Georg Forster (fig. 2)⁵, together with his father Johann Reinhold F., represents entire generations of explorers and travelers of the 18th and 19th century. It was during that time period that researchers and explorers were interested in building up multiple collections seeking to amass an encyclopedic body of knowledge on “mankind,” but also that time period of the beginning of the forced colonialization of large regions of the globe.

Smaller contributions to our Journal *Curare*, which do not explicitly analyze mind-moving plants, still allude to them. In this issue SABINE LENKE’S analysis of the Jesuits historical collections of medical plants (p. 226–231) mentions tobacco and yerba mate among the ancient Guaraní and draws upon the “Tabaksakazie,” *Piptadenia peregrina* (Benth.)⁶, which she listed in her article (p. 230). In another recent issue, the interview with a contemporary Muslim Healer from England⁷ exemplifies the curing and ritual importance of *Saussurea lappa* (Decne.)⁸.

Finally, let me point out that the fly agaric⁹ printed at the end of this Editorial has previously been analyzed in *Curare* and represents one of the cultural aspects of mind-moving plants in past and present. It seems to be a fitting addition to the scope of the main articles of this issue.

EKKEHARD SCHRÖDER,
Berlin, December 6, 2014¹⁰

Anmerkungen

1. Defined in the founding statute of 1970 access: www.agem-ethnomedizin.de.
2. Taxonomy, see: ROGER D. SPENCER & ROBERT G. CROSS. 2007. The International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN), the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP), and the cultigen. *Taxon* 56, 3 (August): 938–940.
3. LATOUR, BRUNO 2008. *Wir sind nie modern gewesen. Versuch einer symmetrischen Anthropologie*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main. [Franz. Orig. 1991, dt. Erstausg. 1995].
4. *Fagus antarctica* G. Forst. <http://herbarium.bgbm.org/object/BW17694010>. For detailed information on the specimens of J.R. and J.G.A. Forster collected during the 2nd voyage of Captain J. Cook in the Willdenow herbarium, see P. Hiepko in *Willdenowia* 5, 2: 279–294.1969. © ROBERT D. (ed.) 2000+ [continuously updated]: Digital specimen images at the Herbarium Berolinense.—Published at <http://ww2.bgbm.org/herbarium/> (Barcode: B -W 17694 -01 0 / ImagedId: 200650)

- [accessed 14 Jan 2015], reprint with the courtesy of Botanical Garden and Museum Berlin.
5. Detail of the title picture: Museum für Völkerkunde Frankfurt am Main und des Überseemuseums Bremen 1976. *Georg Forster. 1754–1794. Südseeforscher – Aufklärer – Revolutionär. Roter Faden zur Ausstellung*, Bd. 3. Frankfurt (Text by H. KELM & B. HEINTZE). // During the 1960th and 70th Forster was highly appreciated in GDR because of his revolutionary activities, while in GFR he was scarcely noticed. Nowadays he is seen as important author of the age of enlightenment, see e. g.: REICHHARDT R. & ROCHE G. (Eds) 1994. *Weltbürger – Europäer – Deutscher – Franke: Georg Forster zum 200. Geburtstag*. Mainz: Univ. Library. A Forster-exhibition took place 1998 in Berlin (Botanic Garden).
 6. Synonymous for: “*Anadenanthera peregrina* L. (Speg.)” also known as Yopo [...] or Calcium Tree, a perennial tree [...] native to the Caribbean and South America, known also as source of dietary calcium. Bean preparations are entheogens used in healing ceremonies, rituals and as snuff. Beans and fallen leaves are toxic for cattle. (See also Wiki)
 7. SAX, WILLIAM 2013. The Reality of 21st Century Islamic Healing—An Interview with a Muslim Healer. *Curare* 36, 3: 168–171, here p. 169: “[...] Qust-al-Bahri [...] from India. You have to crush it to make it fine, you can crush it, you can sniff it, you can use it with olive oil, you do some recitation and can use it for people affected by evil eye or black magic or whatever.”
 8. Recently the root of costus (dt. Kostwurz) is discussed to have anticancer compounds, see KUMAR A. *et al.* 2014. ULPC/MS/MS method for quantification and cytotoxic activity of sesquiterpene lactones isolated from *Saussurea lappa*. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 155: 1393–1397.
 9. Facsimile München 1977, Bilder-Conversations-Lexikon, Brockhaus, Vol. 2, 1838 (Mannheim).
 10. On this date I visited an exposition of the Hemp Museum (Hanf Museum) in Berlin, celebrating its 20th birthday, a well reputed place for documentation of this controversial discussed matter, the history of hemp as important and powerful plant for so many technical uses, and also as cultural inventory and medicinal plant [www.hanfmuseum.de].

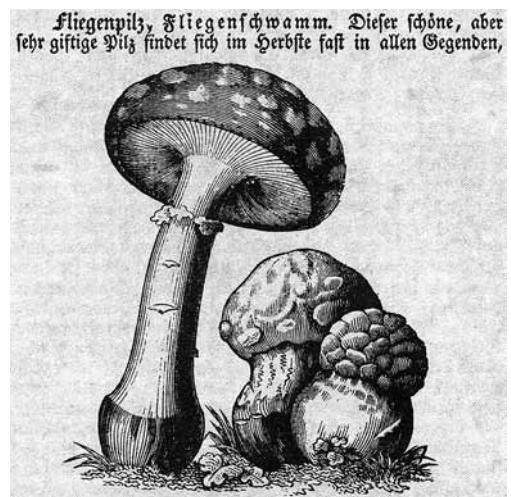


Fig.3: Fly agaric from Brockhaus 1838⁹

ISSN 0344-8622 26(2003)3

CULTURE

Zeitschrift für Ethnomedizin und transkulturelle Psychiatrie
Journal of Medical Anthropology and Transcultural Psychiatry

hrsg. vor/edited by: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin e.V. - AGEM

Neue Trends in der Ethnobotanik und Ethnopharmakologie /
New Trends in Ethnobotany and Ethnopharmacology

Berichte
Buchbesprechungen
Dokumentation
Zeitschrift
Etiologia




VWB

ISSN 0344-8622 24(2001)1+2

CULTURE

Zeitschrift für Ethnomedizin und transkulturelle Psychiatrie
Journal for Ethnomedicine and Transcultural Psychiatry

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Ethnomedizin e.V. (Hg.) / Society for Ethnomedicine Inc. (Ed.)



Ethnomedizin 2001: Rückblicke, Einblicke, Ausblicke
Ethnomedicine 2001: Looking back and forward

VWB

ISSN 0344-8622 34(2011)1+2

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Zeitschrift für Medizinethnologie • Journal of Medical Anthropology

hrsg. vor/edited by: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ethnomedizin e.V. - AGEM

New Trends in Ethnobotany and Ethnopharmacology

Selected Contributions of the 4th Colloquium of ESE /
29th Conference of AGEM,
8-10 November 2007, Leipzig

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- Ethnoveterinary Medicine
- Ethnomycology
- Ethnozoology
- Convention of Biological Diversity



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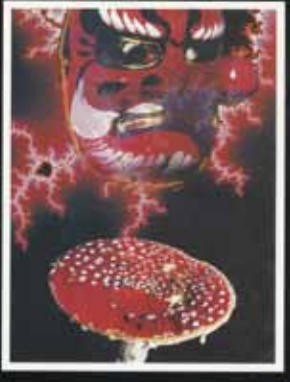
ISSN 0344-8622 18 (1995) 1

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Zeitschrift für Ethnomedizin • Journal for Ethnomedicine

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