



RESENHA CRÍTICA

## BOOK REVIEW: “*MÉTODOS EN ETNOMICOLOGÍA*”

### *RESENHA CRÍTICA DO LIVRO: “MÉTODOS EN ETNOMICOLOGÍA”*

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#### **Abstract:**

A critical review of the book “*Métodos en Etnomicología*” (Methods in Ethnomycology) is presented. The book is edited and authored by Mexican researchers and it discusses basic and new methodologies used in this field of study. In the opinion of the reviewer, the book, which is written in Spanish, is an important reference for ethnomycological researchers in Latin America.

**Keywords:** fungi, methodologies, Mexico, mycology, traditional knowledge.

#### **Resumo:**

Uma resenha crítica do livro “*Métodos en Etnomicología*” (Métodos em Etnomicologia) é apresentada. O livro é de autoria e editado por pesquisadores mexicanos e discute metodologias básicas e contemporâneas utilizadas na área. De acordo com a opinião da revisora, o livro, que está escrito em espanhol, representa uma referência importante para pesquisadores de etnomicologia da América Latina.

**Palavras-chave:** fungos; metodologias; México; micologia; conhecimento tradicional.

Here I present a critical review of the book “*Métodos en Etnomicología*” (Methods in Ethnomycology), edited by Felipe Ruan Soto, Amaranta Ramírez Terrazo, Adriana Montoya Esquivel and Roberto Garibay Orijel, published in 2020 in Mexico D.F., Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Its distribution began in 2021 and in 2022 I obtained a copy from one of the editors.

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The book editors are important names from contemporary Ethnomycology in Mexico, and members (founder members or ex presidents) of the academic working team "Grupo Interdisciplinario para el Desarrollo de la Etnomicología en México – GIDEM" (Interdisciplinary Group for Ethnomycology Development in Mexico), created in 1999. In 2016, the team GIDEM organized a symposium entitled "Reflexiones Metodológicas en la Etnomicología" (Methodological Reflections on Ethnomycology) (Mérida, Mexico), and the discussions generated during that event have culminated in this book.

The book is divided into seven chapters written by more than twenty authors. Mexico is considered the cradle of ethnomycological studies and its long tradition with the theme has generated a large number of highly skilled researches in the field and the publication of hundreds of studies.

Chapters one and two explore important aspects in the study of medicinal and edible mushrooms. Humankind have been using these mushrooms and other fungi since ancient days, but there is still lack of information about their cultural significance in different societies. The two first chapters discuss how to conduct ethnomycological studies with these mushrooms, since basic steps used in qualitative and quantitative ethnomycological research, but also highlighting the importance of accurate taxonomic determinations, ethnopharmacological studies, and interdisciplinary working groups.

Chapter three is extremely relevant, since it discusses how to involve members of the studied communities in ethnomycological researches, explaining the foundations of Participatory Action Research. In this aspect, possessors of biocultural knowledge are considered active collaborators, and the needs of the investigated communities drive the research process. Case studies are presented from Mexico and Colombia, including reports of events where mushroom foragers (called "hongueros" in Mexico) could openly discuss problems and concerns about their practices.

Following the idea that ethnomycological studies should be important for the development of communities, chapter four discusses the elaboration and execution of micotourism projects. Micotourism can lead to negative impacts if poorly designed and could represent a risk for the woods and their communities. Thus, the authors highlight the importance of commercial skills and community involvement to successfully initiate such projects, and how well organized ideas can improve local economy. Moreover, when well executed, micotourism educates both locals and tourists about several aspects of fungal ecology and could avoid incidents with toxic mushrooms.

Chapters five and six debate the use of technological tools in the studies of wild edible mushrooms (WEM), as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS). GIS generates maps that could predict potential habitats of WEM, environmental conditions that benefit their development, and to estimate the effects of mushroom harvesting. GPS is important to track human foraging routes, providing data to evaluate distribution pattern and availability of WEM. Both technologies, allied with ethnomycological studies, can help to generate strategies for management and conservation of these mushrooms.

Finally, chapter seven reinforces the need to correctly identify taxa for ethnobiological studies and describes detailed techniques used in molecular biology. The authors present several case studies where European species names have been wrongly applied to American mushrooms, including four species with relevant biocultural value. To investigate these issues, molecular tools were decisive to recognize species complex and

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to solve phylogenetic problems. Moreover, these tools can be used to facilitate food traceability and quality of products.

Concluding, the whole book is written in Spanish, therefore, it is an important reference to inspire and direct ethnomycological studies in all Latin America. Since Ethnomycology is a recent field of study, and considering that literature on methodologies used in this field is scarce, the book is a must-read reference for all of those interested in the subject.

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