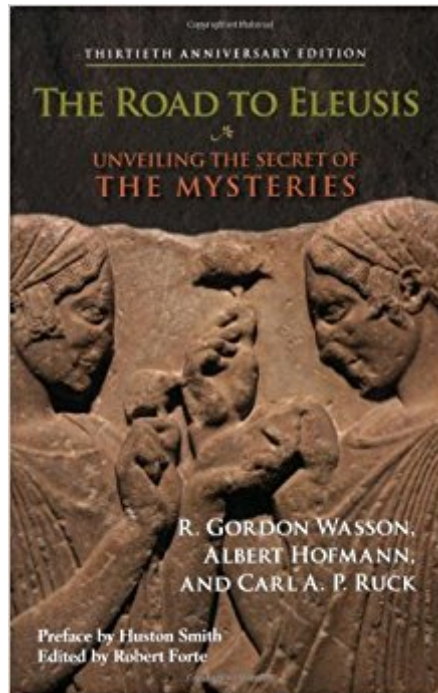




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# The Road To Eleusis: Unveiling The Secret Of The Mysteries



## Synopsis

The secretive Mysteries conducted at Eleusis in Greece for nearly two millennia have long puzzled scholars with strange accounts of initiates experiencing otherworldly journeys. In this groundbreaking work, three experts—a mycologist, a chemist, and a historian—argue persuasively that the sacred potion given to participants in the course of the ritual contained a psychoactive entheogen. The authors then expand the discussion to show that natural psychedelic agents have been used in spiritual rituals across history and cultures. Although controversial when first published in 1978, the book's hypothesis has become more widely accepted in recent years, as knowledge of ethnobotany has deepened. The authors have played critical roles in the modern rediscovery of entheogens, and *The Road to Eleusis* presents an authoritative exposition of their views. The book's themes of the universality of experiential religion, the suppression of that knowledge by exploitative forces, and the use of psychedelics to reconcile the human and natural worlds make it a fascinating and timely read. This 30th anniversary edition includes an appreciative preface by religious scholar Huston Smith and an updated exploration of the chemical evidence by Peter Webster.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“[Gordon Wasson has] made the specialty of mycology something of universal importance and one of the pillars of anthropology and the history of religions.” —Octavio Paz, Nobel Prize-winning poet and author “The Road to Eleusis grew out of a three-way collaboration of scholar-scientists sparked by R. Gordon Wasson’s insight into the true nature of an ancient

religious ritual, the Eleusinian Mysteries. In collaboration with the world-renowned chemist, Albert Hofmann, and Carl Ruck, a Classical scholar specializing in the ethnobotany of ancient Greece, they give solid foundation to what Wasson deduced as the essence of the Mysteries. The three authors present their findings and their evidence, drawing the specialties of their three fields together in fascinatingly persuasive form. "The content of those Mysteries is, together with the identity of India's sacred soma plant, one of the two best kept secrets in history, and this book is the most successful attempt I know to unlock it. Triangulating the resources of an eminent Classics scholar, the most creative mycologist of our time, and the discoverer of LSD, [The Road to Eleusis] is a historical tour de force while being more than that. For by direct implication it raises contemporary questions which our cultural establishment has thus far deemed too hot to face."

"Huston Smith, author of *The World's Religions* "The book's themes of the universality of experiential religion, the suppression of that knowledge by exploitative forces, and the use of psychedelics to reconcile the human and natural worlds make it a fascinating and timely read."

Gaia Media

R. Gordon Wasson (1898–1986) was a pioneer investigator of sacred indigenous mushroom rituals in Mexico in the 1950s. Albert Hofmann, the famed chemist who discovered the curious properties of LSD in 1943, recently celebrated his 100th birthday in Switzerland. Carl A. P. Ruck, an expert on ancient Greek ethnobotany, lives in Massachusetts.

This book was written before many others on the same subject. Wasson had less scholarship to work with and so he took a molehill of facts and used the technique of evocation to build a mountain of a book. In retrospect, he got it right most of the time. In situ, Wasson's evocative writing style is very poetic and dreamy. I enjoyed this book more than all of his others because he took me right to the Eleusinian mysteries and made me feel that I was right there sitting among my fellow initiates. Wasson is one of those writers that became better with each book he produced. His books are like fine-wine, they have aged extremely well, are still relevant and always enjoyable. This book belongs in the entheogenic Corpus. It is a quick and enjoyable read and you won't regret buying it.

Finally, humanity's oldest and most participated in ancient mystery has been solved. A fascinating account and realistic answer to the question of what occurred during the ancient mystery religion at Eleusis; how the sacred kykeon was prepared, how the initiates were prepared for the event, and its meaning and significance in ancient Greek society. Written by those best qualified to speak on the

subject: Gordon Wasson - mycologist, Albert Hofmann - chemist, and Carl A. P. Ruck - Classical scholar specializing in the ethnobotany of ancient Greece. The 30th Anniversary Edition (2008) includes an appendix on kykeon chemistry by Peter Webster.

More than information (which it has in spades) this book reminds me that people down through the ages have demanded Transcendence. It is our birth right to access our spiritual curiosity, and that can be interpreted as either an internal state through brain chemistry, or an external imposition from a Greater Power. I don't care either way HOW it comes, just as long as we are able to engender it. The hysterical prohibition by recent (paternalistic) political forces is to be torn down. This is not a recreational matter, even though the use of entheogens has been folded into our culture for that purpose - this is a genuine altered state that should be respected, but not prohibited.

I previously had a copy of this book but lost it great insight into an intriguing society

I have been wondering since the year 2000 when I first visited Eleusis about the mysteries of the place. Rituals were performed here regularly in ancient Greece, but the penalty for revealing the nature of said rites was death. This book contains the most likely solution to the mystery. S. Archer

Very surprising to realise that even the ancient Greeks used the help of psychedelic plants to get into deeper level of consciousness!

Covers the subject well. Some of the information was new to me but the subject has been well covered by other writers for centuries.

Could not be better - the famous mysteries are perfectly well described. IRMA DICKINSON

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