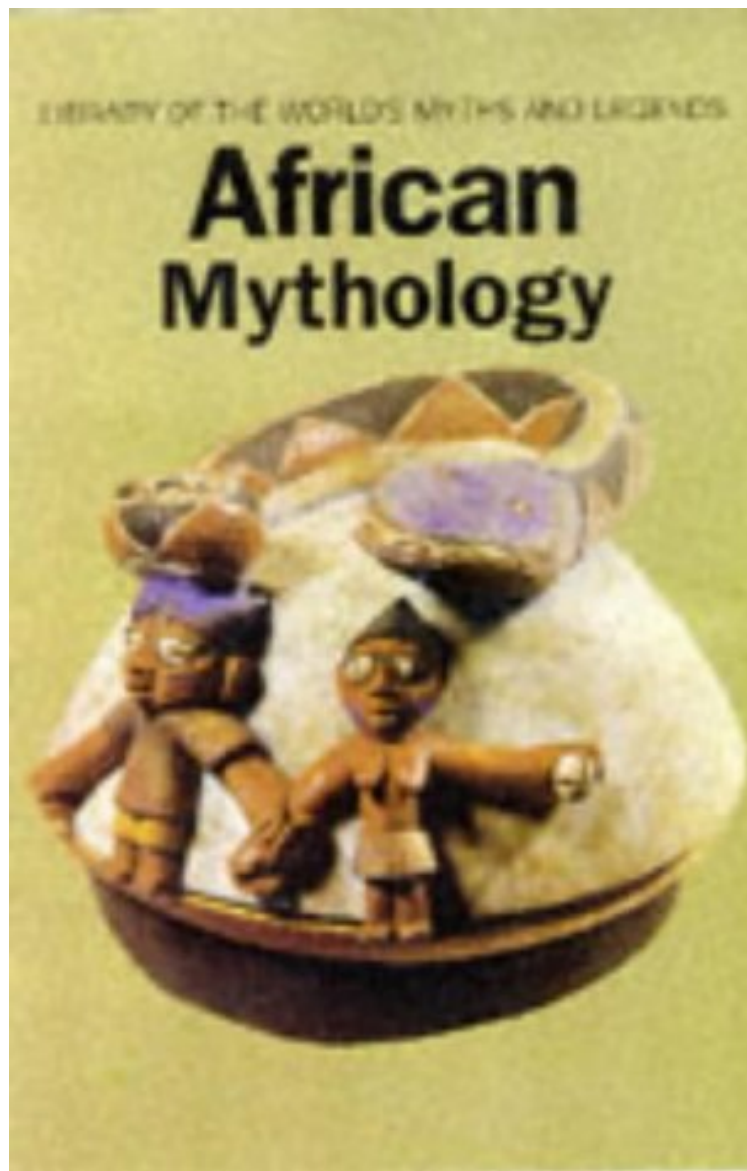


[Mobile ebook] African Mythology Library of the World (Library of the World's Myths Legends) (English and Spanish Edition)

African Mythology Library of the World (Library of the World's Myths Legends) (English and Spanish Edition)

Geoffrey Parrinder

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#2941933 in Books 1996-04-15 Original language: English, Spanish PDF # 1 #File Name: 1851529284144 pages | File size: 34.Mb

Geoffrey Parrinder : African Mythology Library of the World (Library of the World's Myths Legends) (English and Spanish Edition) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised African Mythology Library of the World (Library of the World's Myths Legends) (English and Spanish

Edition):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. and looks used and like it been passed around a few times
By Alice
This book shouldn't be more than 25 dollars. Its thin, and looks used and like it been passed around a few times. A bit disappointed. Wanted it to be a table book sort of thing.
11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.
Putting the Light on the "Dark Continent"
By Zekeriyah
Part of the "Library of the World's Myths and Legends" series, this book was done by an author familiar with both African culture and world mythology so it does a wonderful job exposing the oft-overlooked myths and legends of sub-Saharan Africa. I make a point of saying that because everything north of the Sahara (including Egypt) is excluded from this book. Instead, the focus is on the related themes running through indigenous traditions. Lavishly illustrated with masks, ceremonial objects, the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, wooden figures, amulets, Bushmen rock paintings and so forth, this is a wonderful little book to look at. The introduction does a good job of showing how diverse Africa is, both in terms of geography and in terms of ethnicity. The first couple chapters are devoted to the Supreme Being (as indigenous African culture was monotheistic), including a widespread belief that some action of man caused this Supreme Being to withdraw from the world. The myths and legends of different groups are given, revealing both similarities and differences. From there it goes to examine myths of the creative ancestor figures and beliefs on the cycle of life, death and rebirth. Both are central to African beliefs, and are somewhat connected as people are believed to continue their involvement with the community after death as ancestor figures eventually to be reborn. These are very sophisticated ideas common throughout the continent and again, numerous myths and legends are given. One particular myth that shows up here are the various myths about the origin of death. The next couple chapters examine more social aspects of mythology in African life, taking a look at oracles, divinations, magic, witchcraft, monsters and secret societies. These are things which take an active role in community life (whether it was to help the community as oracles and secret societies did or to harm it as witches and other monsters did), and the book is full of depictions of ceremonial objects such as masks, divination tablets, diving rods, vessels for making offerings, bullroarers and so forth. Both magical practices and specific myths related to them are observed, giving the reader a clear idea of how the practices related to a mythical past and connected the practitioners to the creative ancestors. This is followed up by legends involving historical events including Osei Tutu and the golden stool, tales of old Ife and Benin, Kikuyu myths of Mt. Kenya, the mystery of Great Zimbabwe and even stories about the first encounters with Europeans, amongst other things. The book closes out with numerous well known African animal tales, including numerous tales of Anansi the spider trickster of the Ashanti. He then mentions how aside from African influences travelling to the Americas and even Europe, other mythologies have influenced Africa; Islamic tales such as the 1,001 Nights in Muslim communities (especially in the north and the east), Indian tales like the Pancha-tantra and Jataka along the coast, Portuguese stories in Angola and Mozambique and even Grimm's Fairy Tales in some schools. He finishes by stating the importance of recording African myths to provide insight into the indigenous religious views of the African people, and ultimately I think that this book is a decent introduction to just that. Its certainly worth picking up, if only for a general review of African mythology and it's major themes. The nice thing about this is that it doesn't focus too much on one particular group or another. You can find tales from the Pygmies, Mbundu, Hausa, Swazi, Zulu, Chaga, Malagasy, Venda, Dogon, Songhai, Shona, Dahomey, Igbo and many others besides in this book. Sierra Leone is given as much attention as, say, the Congo or Kenya. So ultimately this is a wonderful little book if all you want are comparative myths and legends of sub-Saharan Africa.
6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Every paragraph is interesting
By Dr. Lee D. Carlson
The African continent of course is huge, and therefore it is not surprising that the number of ideas, works of art, and customs is overwhelming and would take any one person many decades to sort through. This book gives a brief sampling of these, with particular attention paid to the lands south of the Sahara desert. The author concentrates his attention on this part of Africa, for he reasons that it is this part that was shielded from European and Middle Eastern influence, due to the difficulty of crossing the Sahara. The reader learns of the Bushman, who were at the Cape of Good Hope when the first Europeans arrived, the Pygmies, and the Hamites, the latter being the group most strongly influenced by Islamic and Arabic traditions. It is primarily the Negro population of this geographical region though that the author concentrates on in the book. As the author points out, one troubling feature of African mythology is that they did not usually write anything down, but instead passed on their stories orally. The author blames this lack of written word on the geographical isolation that discouraged its spread. But he also points out that the absence of writing was also a characteristic of ancient American civilizations and the ancient Britons and Teutons. The author therefore relies on the research and recordings of modern African scholars who painstakingly wrote down the stories told them by the various peoples. A culture of course needs more than just verbalization to express its ideas and moods. To capture and sustain an idea in time without writing, one can use art, particularly in paintings and sculpture. The author argues that African art is deliberately expressive and was employed to symbolize the life in every aspect. Interestingly, the author holds that African proverbs and myths expressed joy in life and human activity. Calling it a 'world-affirming' philosophy, in which life on earth is thought of as good, despite human suffering. The Africans were surely correct about this. Absolutely for sure. The reader will also learn that nearly all African peoples

believe in a supreme being, who created all things. Some of the names of this being include Mulungu in East Africa, Leza in central Africa, and Nyambe in the west. And the author points out, interestingly, that very few temples were built to the "supreme" god, while places of worship were built for the lesser deities and ancestors. "God is too great to be contained in a house" say the Africans. Also interesting is that the Africans did not have a god of Sun, for such a god was not needed: there is plenty of sun in Africa. In some African myths, god created the earth in four days, a fifth day being reserved for worship. God also created a mountain with the power of speech, so as to allow the people to hear the divine voice and laws. Dreaming was considered a gift from God, and it functioned as a sequence of messages from God. But witchcraft was believed in also, with women again being the chief practioners. Man was not the first to create fire, say some Pygmy legends. Rather, it was chimpanzees who first possessed it, and a Pygmy stumbled across their fire accidently and wearing a long bark-cloth, caught it on fire and ran for home. Thus the origin of fire for man. The god of some African myths used to live on Earth, but left due to some human fault. Others speak of a Golden Age, in which god left willingly. God leaves paradise, and not the humans, for some of the African legends. Also, death was not considered natural in some African myths. It got its start from a dog or a chameleon. The author gives several other fascinating accounts of the African conception of death, including a story very similar to Pandora's Box. Curiosity in many cultures is considered the origin of all evil and suffering, unfortunately.

Describes the ancient myths and legends of the tribes of Africa, and their association with spirits and religious deities. The book deals in detail with the meaning of these primitive beliefs, and with the narrative tradition in which they have been handed down.