Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Myth of Issah by Moussa Khalidou", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Eleanor A. Dasi and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/606. Entry version as of November 01, 2026.

Moussa Khalidou

Myth of Issah

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Monsters





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Myth of Issah
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Fulfulde
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	December 28, 2017
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Namtari, Ngoundere
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com
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Creators



Moussa Khalidou (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 55 (in 2017)

Social status: Member of Council of Elders

Profession: Business man

Language of narration: Fulfulde

Bio prepared by Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Background*: Namtari is a village located on the outskirts of Yola, Capital of Adamawa state in Nigeria. It has two constituencies: Namtari Gurel and Namtari Manga. Due to migration, some of its people now reside in Ngaoundere, capital of the Adamawa region of Cameroon. Located at Latitude 90 19’ 0” North and Longitude 120 17 0” East (Adebayo and Tukur, 1999), it has a population that is agro-based. In the outskirts of Yola, villagers belief in different gods associated to water, mountains, stones and forests. They offer sacrifices to these gods on particular days of the week, month, or year.

On the social scale, parents arrange marriages for their children. Equally, boys undergo initiation into manhood, without which, they cannot enter into their separate huts. Also, childbearing determines social status among the people. Their culture prohibits certain practices; taboos such as calling of the first son of a family by his name, unveiling of a veiled woman, and the eating of pork.

Occasion: staged

* Sources:

Adebayo, Abel Aderemi, "Climate I and II" in A. A. Adebayo and A. L. Tukur, eds., *Adamawa State in Maps*, Department of Geography, Federal University of Technology, Yola, Paraclete Publisher, Yola, 1999, 20–26.

Namtari Manga Map — Satellite Images of Namtari Manga, available at maplandia.com (accessed: January 7, 2019).

Summary

A long time ago in the Fulani kingdom of Namtari, there lived a monster which terrorized the whole community. Every attempt to get rid of it was in vain since all those who tried to penetrate its territory never returned. Terror became omnipresent in Namtari as every night, the monster visited the village to catch and devour all those who loitered around. The king promised to offer a substantial reward to anyone who would liberate the nation from this terrifying monster.

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The news of this terror spread to other neighboring villages and reached Issah, a brave, courageous, and discrete young man who could not bear to see people suffering.

On getting the news, Issah took a knife, a calabash of water, a bag, and seven stones to Namtari. Upon arrival in Namtari, he went straight to the cavern where the monster lived. While there, he hid behind a boulder, made a fire and threw the seven stones in the fire and heated them until they became all red as glowing charcoal. As darkness settled, Issah heard the monster approaching as its growl rose. Issah immediately ran out of his hiding to face the monster. Upon seeing Issah, the monster rushed, with its mouth wide open, to devour him. As it approached Issah, he started throwing the glowing stones in the monster's mouth one after the other. By the time he threw the last stone, the monster fell down and died. Its crumbling to the ground caused a tremendous vibration which was heard in the entire village. Immediately, Issah took out his knife and cut off the monster's head. He then put the head in the bag, carried it, and headed back to Namtari quietly.

The next morning, a hunter found the monster's dead body and took it to the king, claiming the reward the king had promised for the person who killed it. Nobody could believe him since he had nothing to prove that he was the killer. He could neither describe how he went about it, nor could he produce the monster's head. The old king decided to honor his promise by rewarding the killer of the monster who, out of bravery and courage liberated his kingdom from the fangs of the terrifying monster, with his throne. Many villagers tried to take advantage of the situation but had nothing to prove their heroism.

Finally, Issah presented himself and in a song, described how he went about to eliminate the monster. He then asked for the monster's stomach to be opened in order for him to show the proof of the seven stones he used to kill the monster. With his revelation and evidence, the villagers became very happy and celebrated Issah's heroism. He was then crowned the king of Namtari.

Analysis

Stories related to ancient Greece, Rome and Africa are replete with horrible monsters, ready, at all times, to devour people and other beings they consider inferior to themselves strength-wise. Because of the threat and intimidation posed by these monsters in the ancient

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societies, life and movement became difficult, especially to women. Within these confines, the greatest wish of people in the olden days was to slay such beasts. Figures that emerged, or could measure up to these monstrous forces were usually supernatural beings or human beings with supernatural wisdom, courage, and bravery. A case in point is Issah in the above myth, who since times immemorial, mustered courage to combat the monster that has virtually decimated the population.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Monsters

Further Reading

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Addenda

Method of data collection: Tape recording and note taking.

Researcher: Divine Che Neba.

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Assistant researcher: Aichatou Doudou.

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