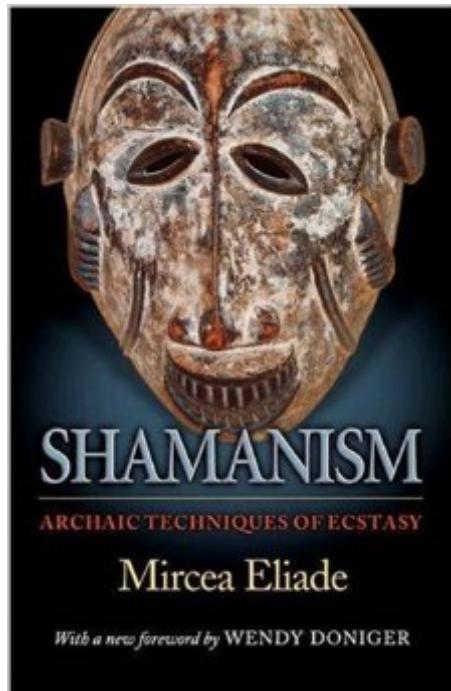


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Shamanism: Archaic Techniques Of Ecstasy (Bollingen Series (General))



Synopsis

First published in 1951, Shamanism soon became the standard work in the study of this mysterious and fascinating phenomenon. Writing as the founder of the modern study of the history of religion, Romanian Ă©migrĂ©-scholar Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) surveys the practice of Shamanism over two and a half millennia of human history, moving from the Shamanic traditions of Siberia and Central Asia--where Shamanism was first observed--to North and South America, Indonesia, Tibet, China, and beyond. In this authoritative survey, Eliade illuminates the magico-religious life of societies that give primacy of place to the figure of the Shaman--at once magician and medicine man, healer and miracle-doer, priest, mystic, and poet. Synthesizing the approaches of psychology, sociology, and ethnology, Shamanism will remain for years to come the reference book of choice for those intrigued by this practice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I agree whole-heartedly with the many earlier reviewers who have praised this extraordinary book. However, it has given rise to some controversies, and prospective purchasers might as well be aware of them. Given the richness of the volume, I consider them minor, but a chorus of praise invites disappointment. First of all, the original French edition was in 1951 (and was one of the author's post-war works apparently not written in his native Romanian). The revised and updated English translation (the fine work of Willard Trask) first appeared in the Bollingen series in 1964. Princeton University Press issued the Bollingen edition in paperback in 1972, and this appears to be

the version currently in print. Hence, it is, obviously, more than a little out of date bibliographically. Some people are troubled by this, but there is no way the book could have been expanded to deal with the explosion of research and publications which followed its appearance (although about two hundred titles, mainly post-1948, were added to the 1964 bibliography and notes). Just be aware that it may not mention something important.[Since this review was originally posted, the MYTHOS edition for which it was written has been replaced by a new Princeton printing (January 2004), with a preface by Wendy Doniger, describing the book's importance and limitations with clarity and considerable authority. (She is the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago.)]Also because of the book's age, Eliade still used terms and ideas which were common in European scholarship in the first half of the century, but have been largely abandoned since, and in some cases never made much of an impression on the English-speaking scholarly world.

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