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MYTH, RITUAL AND THE ORAL

Jack Goody is one of the pre-eminent social scientists in the world. Over the past half-century his pioneering writings at the intersections of anthropology, history and social and cultural studies have made him one of the most widely read, most widely cited and most widely translated scholars working today.

In *Myth, Ritual and the Oral*, he returns to the related themes of myth, orality and literacy, subjects that have long been a touchstone in anthropological thinking. Combining classic papers with recent unpublished work, this volume brings together some of the most important essays written on these themes in the past half-century, representative of a lifetime of critical engagement and research. In characteristically clear and accessible style, Jack Goody addresses fundamental conceptual schemes underpinning modern anthropology, providing potent critiques of current theoretical trends. Drawing upon his highly influential work on the LoDagaa myth of the Bagre, Goody challenges structuralist and functionalist interpretations of oral 'literature', stressing the issues of variation, imagination and creativity, and the problems of methodology and analysis. These insightful, and at times provocative, essays will stimulate fresh debate and prove invaluable to students and teachers of social anthropology.

JACK GOODY is Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of St John's College. Knighted by Her Majesty The Queen for services to anthropology, Professor Goody has researched and taught all over the world, is a fellow of the British Academy, and in 1980 was made a Foreign Honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2004 he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences and he was elected Commandeur des Arts et Lettres in 2006.

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The folktale and cultural history. Oralité et Littérature: échos, écarts, resurgences. *Cahiers de Littérature Orale* 56 (2005).

Animals, men and gods in northern Ghana. *Cambridge Anthropology* 16 (1992/3).

The Bagre in all its variety. Introduction to *A Myth Revisited: The Third Bagre* (with S. W. D. K. Gandah) (Carolina Academic Press, 2003).

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