Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: The Rock-Soldiers by Eveline Keko Ngang", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Eleanor A. Dasi, Susan Deacy and Karolina Anna Kulpa. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/912. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Eveline Keko Ngang

The Rock-Soldiers

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions





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

General information	
Title of the work	The Rock-Soldiers
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Mankuu
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	January 15, 2019
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Mankon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com
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Creators



Eveline Keko Ngang (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 45 years (in 2019)

Social status: Commoner

Profession: Farming

Language of narration: Mankuu

Bio prepared by Divine CheNeba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating	Cultural Background: Mankon is found in Bamenda city, the capital of the North West Region of Cameroon. Like any other fondom in this region, the Mankon people revere their ancestors and have special objects that serve as symbols of authority and continuity. Their traditional worship system is based on rituals and sacrifices offered to these ancestors both at the community and individual levels. Their sacred shrines are found in rivers, forests, trees and stones. However, many of them have embraced Christianity. They speak the Ngemba language and engage in farming as their main occupation. Their rich cultural diversity is displayed in the museum situated at the Mankon palace. Occasion: Staged
Summary	A long time ago, when intertribal wars were still very common among migrating communities, a certain warring village attacked the Mankon warriors. Awasom Tambu, a Mankon Chief Priest, who was at the same time a prophet, chanted some incantations and transformed his warriors into a heap of rocks. The assailants arrived the battle ground only to discover that the Mankon warriors were no longer more there. They were confused about what must have become of the soldiers. They were ready to fight and defeat them. Their herbalist, who was also a seer, revealed that the rocks were the Mankon soldiers who had transformed. The assailants unanimously decided to start a fire on the rocks. The chief Priest, who was among the soldiers came out of the rocks, transformed into a swallow, flew up and burst open the sky. A torrential rain, accompanied with hailstones, poured and quenched the blazing fire, sending away the assailants. The Mankon chief Priest returned and wanted to restore his rock-soldiers to humans but unfortunately, he forgot the antidote incantations he was supposed to chant in order to reverse his actions. He tried and tried to no avail, so resigned and went home disappointed and dejected. To date, the rock-soldiers are still on the spot and are believed to be the spiritual guards of the land from foreign attacks. It is one of the major shrines in Mankon, where yearly and occasional sacrifices are being performed.

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Analysis	Shape-shifting is a well known theme in world mythologies. The process, as most myths record, includes: transforming gods into humans and vice versa or transforming people into objects of nature and vice versa. The reasons behind shape-shifting are numerous among which are: protection, liberation, punishment and paving the way for the impenetrable, to mention just a few. “Rock-soldiers” introduce us to humankind’s transformation into rocks as a defence mechanism. Though the chief priest fails to bring the rocks to life, the presence of the rocks, which is today a permanent ritual ground for the Mankon people, is eternal. Besides transforming human beings into stones, the chief priest himself turns into a bird in order to access the sky seeking a solution to the fire on his soldiers. This blend between fact and fancy in myths only helps articulate the complex nature of the world. The motif of transformation of a man into a bird is classified by Thompson (Aarne and Thompson, 1961) as D150 motif and is present in folk tales such as *The Vanished Husband*, *King Lindorm* and *Little Brother and Little Sister*.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Religious beliefs Transformation War
Further Reading	Aarne, Antti and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale. A Classification and Bibliography: Antti Aarne's Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961.

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Arnott, Bruce, *African Folklore: The mystery of Birds Part 2*, blog.londolozi.com, September 16, 2017 (accessed: June 3, 2019).

Addenda

Method of data collection: Tape recording and note taking

Researcher: Divine Che Neba

Assistant researcher: Azise Fru Vanessa

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