



Gassire's Lute: A West African Epic

Alta Jablow

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A rousing tale of wars and heroes, Gassire's Lute recounts the fall of the city-state Wagadu and tells how Gassire, warrior son of the ruling family, renounced his noble birth to become his people's first bard. As an example of the relatively unknown oral literature of Africa, this poem is rich in historical and cultural interest. But it can be read and enjoyed simply as a beautiful and exciting story that shows clearly the universality of art and of human experience. The Waveland reprint includes an essay by the translator ("The Origin of Soninke Bardic Art"), which is meant to provide pertinent information for understanding and enjoying the poem.

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