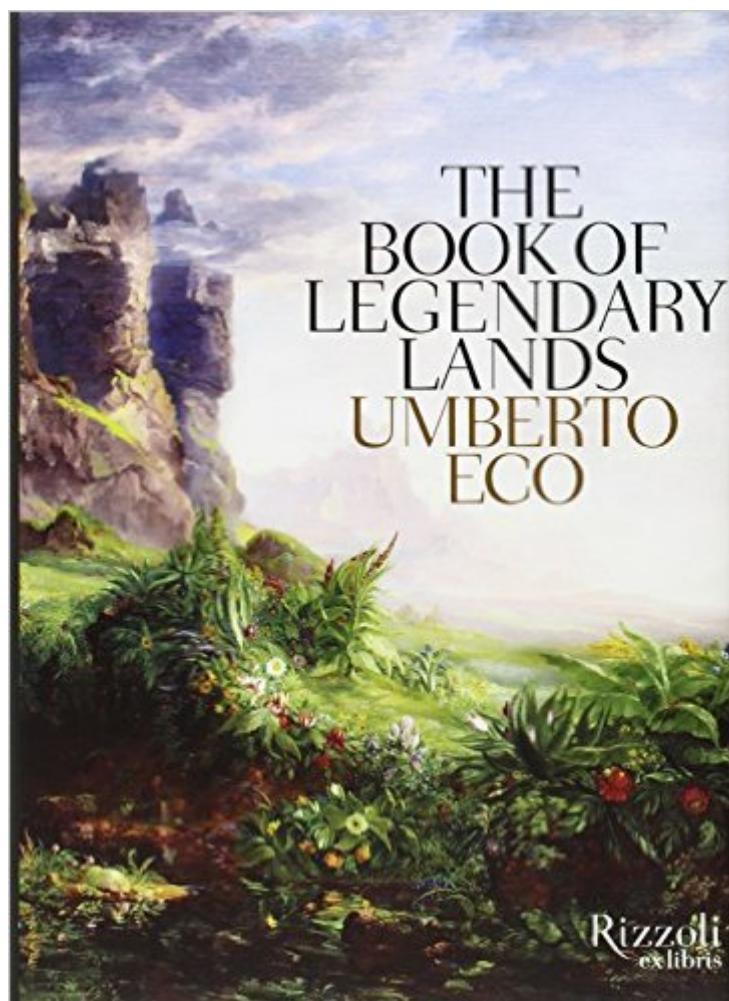


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The Book Of Legendary Lands



Synopsis

A fascinating illustrated tour of the fabled places in literature and folklore that have awed, troubled, and eluded us through the ages. From the epic poets of antiquity to contemporary writers of science fiction, from the authors of the Holy Scriptures to modern raconteurs of fairy tales, writers and storytellers through the ages have invented imaginary and mythical lands, projecting onto them all of our human dreams, ideals, and fears. In the tradition of his acclaimed History of Beauty, On Ugliness, and The Infinity of Lists, renowned writer and cultural critic Umberto Eco leads us on a beautifully illustrated journey through these lands of myth and invention, showing us their inhabitants, the passions that rule them, their heroes and antagonists, and, above all, the importance they hold for us. He explores this human urge to create such places, the utopias and dystopias where our imagination can confront things that are too incredible or challenging for our limited real world. Illuminated with more than 300 color images, The Book of Legendary Lands is both erudite and thoroughly enjoyable, bringing together disparate elements of our shared literary legacy in a way only Umberto Eco can. Homer's poems and other ancient and medieval texts are presented side by side with Gulliver's Travels and Alice in Wonderland; Tolkien shares space with Marco Polo's Books of the Marvels of the World; films complement poems, and comics inform novels. Together, these stories have influenced the sensibilities and worldview of all of us.

Book Information

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: Rizzoli Ex Libris; First Edition, 1st Printing edition (November 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0847841219

ISBN-13: 978-0847841219

Product Dimensions: 7.1 x 1.3 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (18 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #121,591 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in Books > Arts & Photography > Painting > Landscape #49 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes > Landscapes & Seascapes #160 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Books & Reading > General

Customer Reviews

Umberto Eco managed to write a book which is fully equal to similar already existing works such as "The Atlas of Legendary Lands" or "Lost Lands, Forgotten Realms". Very convincing the selection of images: There are several we did not know, yet. From an aesthetic point of view a really beautiful book! And very convincing, too, the textual elaboration. On the basis of Atlantis for example we see clearly that Umberto Eco did not just copy what others repeated already a thousand times. Rather did Umberto Eco find even in this controversial issue his own convincing path. In detail on this example: For Eco, the history of the various Atlantis localizations is not - as so often - a menacing climax with National Socialism as culmination (wagging forefinger!). It is rather a journey through history with National Socialism as one stop of several. Olof Rudbeck, too, is no crackpot "baroque Nazi" for Eco but a serious baroque scholar, who just erred. Someone like Umberto Eco knows how to place these things properly, of course. In the video for the book the connection of Hyperborea (astonishingly not: Atlantis) to the Holocaust is drawn too closely: as if someone who reads and thinks about the ancient Hyperborea (resp. Atlantis) would become a National Socialist ... well, it is only the video, therefore let's forget it. Let us leave the vexed and vain NS topic and come to Atlantis itself: Already in his "Foucault's Pendulum" Eco was pleasantly reserved concerning Atlantis - this applies here, too. The Atlantis map of the baroque scholar Athanasius Kircher is called correctly a map of the "site" of Atlantis, not as a map which allegedly displays the exact shape of Atlantis.

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