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Dead Magic: Secrets And Survivors (Mage The Ascension)



Synopsis

Australia. Etruria. Scandinavia. In these places and more, magical styles were carefully preserved by cunning individuals who eschewed the Traditions and Crafts, but who evaded the Technocracy. Long thought lost, these cloistered practitioners have come forth once again - and their ways grow. The rebelling Traditions can draw from their strength if they can learn from it... but perhaps things hidden through the ages are best kept hidden. In the vein of Dead Magic, more magical styles from historical obscurity to modern places. Unlike the dead cultures of the past, many of these cultures survive to the modern world. Whether they'll thrive in the World of Darkness depends upon the secrets they hold - and upon what you do with them! But be careful. These enlightened magicians could aid the world... or plunge it into ruin.

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Customer Reviews

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Good add on. Good condition.

Alright, the first Dead Magic was great, so I had high expectations for this one. I wasn't disappointed. This time though, the focus on living cultures was just as strong as "dead" cultures. As such, we begin with a look at the shamanistic magics of Polynesia told IC by an ancient Kapuna to a Dreamspeaker refugee. The belief system of Huna was found throughout the entire region in some form or another, and this book gives an island to island survey of it, covering New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji, Hawaii, the Marquesas, Easter Island and elsewhere. Aside from mention of head hunting and cannibalism (which were parts of RL Polynesian religions), we also get a look at tattoo magic, fireballs, tikis, sea-faring magic and such. There's also plenty of plot hooks, and even information on the "lost" Kopa Loei craft, now a part of the Dreamspeaker Tradition. It goes on to get to the Dreamtime of the Australian Aborigines, giving a great overview of tying the Dreamtime into the World of Darkness. A whole new set of rules for the Dreamtime, initiation rites and Dreamtime Ancestors is given, along with a vast array of Aboriginal rites, wonders and plot hooks. Again, lots of Dreamspeaker stuff, but also a focus on Aboriginal society itself rather than "Tradition" or "Technocracy". Afterwards, we are treated to a relatively short chapter on Indian Shakti. After a strange fiction story about an Ecstasy Cultist's brush with a Kali cult, we get a nice overview of Tantra and the worship of Shiva and Kali. A few Hindu flavored rites are given, rounding out this short chapter. Then we are treated to a section on European Shamanism. Lots of fiction stories here, each tying to a specific culture. I was expecting to see stuff about the Saami (Lapps) and such, but was completely shocked when I saw that it covered the shaman of the Irish, Scots, Picts, Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Russians, Poles, Finns and Germans. Lots of cool rites, wonders and plot hooks, interestingly enough designed to fit in with Mage: the Dark Ages (for the Spirit-Talkers, proto-Dreamspeakers). Again, this is good for Dreamspeakers, but also the Aided, Verbena and so forth. Following this is a chapter on Norse magic. It really ties up Norse myths in the World of Darkness. Even explaining Hunters as Odin's warriors, and Ravana as Loki. Lots of cool rites, and not just Runic stuff either. There's spae-wives, seither (Norse shamanism), smithing, berserkers and so forth. Again, Dark Ages Valdaermen (and Spirit-Talkers for the Seither section) systems are given. Great for Verbena, Dreamspeakers, Ecstatics, Euthies or even Choristors and Hermetics. Finally, it closes out with some meta-plot story about an ancient Italian liche and some overviews of Etruscan magic, divinations and necromancy. There's not a lot to go on concerning ancient Italy (before the Romans anyway), so there's a list of gods, words and a reading list. The Euthanatoi and

Hermetics still preserve some aspects of Etruscan magic in the WoD, so this was a really nice chapter. Overall, I strongly recommend this book. Since the Dreamspeakers are my favorite Tradition, I appreciated the fact that most of the chapters (Polynesian, Australian Aboriginal, European Shamanism and Norse) tie in to that Tradition, but any Tradition could benefit from this book. The Euthanatos draw upon Hindu beliefs, Norse rune-casting and Etruscan necromancy; the Verbena would love to learn about the ancient beliefs of the Norse, Anglo-Saxons and Irish. I haven't incorporated any of this stuff in my games yet, though I'm planning on making heavy use of the Polynesian chapter soon. Regardless, my only disappointment was the lack of Filipino magic (presumably native shamanism), but then again, perhaps we shall see a Dead Magic 3!

I enjoyed the collection of stories and varying viewpoints this book offers to my chronicle. I've already begun intergrating some of the Crafts and events into my game. This book offers a wide selection of culture-specific rites which i find very useful. I find that some of my players have a difficult time making their rites unique to their characters. More specifcily I find the sections on India and Europe most useful for my game. The downsides to this book are the lack of MET conversions and that the chapters are so short. I would love to have more information on the different crafts. But as with all game supplements: if you don't know it, make it up. ;)

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