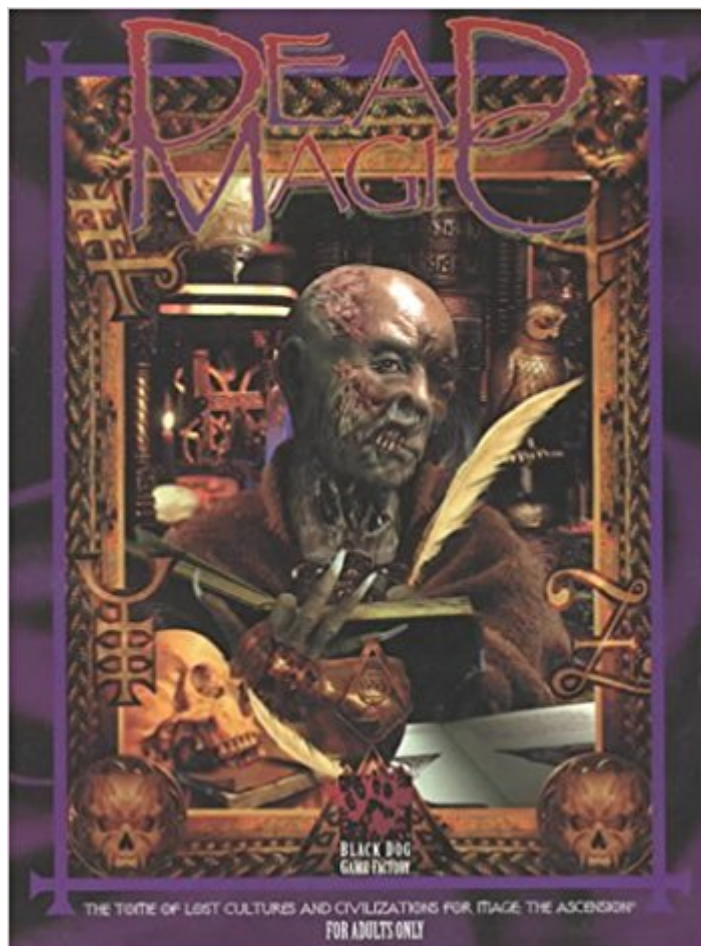


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# Dead Magic \*OP



## Synopsis

Civilizations rise and fall across seas of time. Along the way, each culture fosters its own mystic traditions. When mages of the present look for answers in the past, they lay bare the most terrifying - and potent - of humanity's superstitions. Such magics were forbidden even in the brutal cultures of ages gone; what terrible secrets do they hold for mages today? From the early days of civilization in Mesopotamia and Africa, to the philosophies of Greece and Rome and the mysteries of Central America, *Dead Magic* explores the mystic heritage of lost civilizations around the world. This is no travel guide for mages, though - these were cultures that practiced terrible, blood-drenched rites and consciousness-shattering rituals. Unearth these secrets and hope that you survive.

## Book Information

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: White Wolf Publishing; First edition (presumed; no earlier dates stated) edition (May 22, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1565044088

ISBN-13: 978-1565044081

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 0.3 x 10.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,077,288 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Gaming > World of Darkness > Mage](#) #346 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Gaming > World of Darkness > General](#) #86039 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy](#)

## Customer Reviews

Civilizations rise and fall across seas of time. Along the way, each culture fosters its own mystic traditions. When mages of the present look for answers in the past, they lay bare the most terrifying - and potent - of humanity's superstitions. Such magics were forbidden even in the brutal cultures of ages gone; what terrible secrets do they hold for mages today? From the early days of civilization in Mesopotamia and Africa, to the philosophies of Greece and Rome and the mysteries of Central America, *Dead Magic* explores the mystic heritage of lost civilizations around the world. This is no travel guide for mages, though - these were cultures that practiced terrible, blood-drenched rites and consciousness-shattering rituals. Unearth these secrets and hope that you survive.

It's got a lot of good information and ideas for running modern Mage the Ascension games based on hunts for ancient lores, but this is a bit dry and dense. Par for the course for most of the Old World of Darkness' "Black Dog" line. On the plus side, Dead Magic did not go overboard with the "adult themes" and let that completely dominate the text. It's not written in a relate able organic style of Dead Magic Two. Basically I'd say Dead Magic Two is better in every way, but you can still enjoy both since Dead Magic 1 and 2 both cover completely different ancient cultures.

I'm a big fan of white wolf fluff and this does not fall short. The description is pretty accurate so I won't go on too much, I found the section on how a mage would turn themselves into a lich to be very interesting and re-read it a bunch of times. :-)

This supplement for Mage is an excellent source book for diversifying your games. The main focus of this book is on "dead" magic: the forgotten magics of civilizations of yore. The book has lots of rites, wonders and so forth, but the bulk of the book is about how these civilizations practiced magic, and how the Traditions (namely your players) can adapt it. The first section covers the magic of sub-Saharan Africa, with a definite focus on western and southern Africa. Lots of details on the diversity of African culture (and a nice map too), along with how westerners (including most of the Traditions except maybe the Dreamspeakers) have marginalized African culture. Then we are given some sample African rites, many focusing on fertility, healing and spirit magics, and some pretty nifty wonders. There are also some interesting supernatural creatures and locations, in case you decide to run a game set in Africa. Following this is a section on ancient Mesopotamian magic. While I wish they would have toned down the infernalism a bit, this was a pretty nice section. A lot of it revolved around the meta-plot too, tying it in with Hermetics rediscovering Mesopotamian magic. A lot of the Mesopotamian magic focuses on complex divinations and spirit controlling magics. There is also a bit devoted to adapting Mesopotamian magic to the modern Traditions. Although groups like the Hermetics and Verbena usually use these in their ancient forms, modern Traditions have some unique takes on these rites. Very nice. There are also some Mesopotamian beings (including the Lamassu!). The next chapter was one of the best, in my opinion, focusing on the bloody magics of Mexico and South America. WW is pretty direct and to the point, stating that the Mayas, Aztecs, Incas and other Native Americans here used human sacrifices and that their magics were not for the weak. A bit of this chapter is taken up by an explanation of the Mayan calendar (which probably could have been briefer). Regardless, the sample rites (including things like turning into a jaguar,

making obsidian almost unbreakable and even causing volcanic eruptions) are all pretty neat and nicely based off Aztec and Mayan mythology (and the Mayan calendar). Further detail is given to some Wonders and mystical locations (including the Andes). Pretty cool. The next chapter focuses on classical Greece and Rome and their continuing influence on western magic. Everything from Plato to Greek mythology to Roman Hermeticism to "enlightened science" is explored. Its pretty cool if you want to incorporate Greco-Roman magic into your games. This section also has a lot of plot seeds, such as the start of the Ascension War, the "Golden Race" and the Oracle of Delphi, so player's might want to skip this. Some decent rites, Wonders and mystical locations are given, along with some classic monsters. Pretty neat. The closing chapter covered the magic of the Inuit and other people of the Arctic Circle. It was pretty decent, going into great details about shamanism and hunting magic in the far north. The rites, Wonders and spirits given are all very good, and can easily be adapted into almost any shamanic paradigm. Over all, this was an excellent book. I would recommend that if you intend to use any of the cultures in here, you look through both "Guide to the Traditions" and any number of books on history, archaeology, mythology and/or anthropology as well. I already found quite a bit of the African, Aztec/Mayan/Incan and Inuit sections helpful for running all Dreamspeaker chronicles, and intend to use the Mesopotamia stuff in a "Year of the Scarab" centered game. I'm certain other STs will find this book equally useful.

I initially picked up this book out of curiosity; I don't use the 'dead' civilizations much in my campaigns, but I usually enjoy seeing how White Wolf creates their alternate histories. This book was done reasonably well, covering five separate cultures - sub-Saharan Africa, Mesopotamia, Central/Southern America, Greece and Rome, and 'the Arctic'. The sections are all similar, with flavor text at the beginning, a brief overview of history in the middle, and magic from these cultures at the end. Some of the chapters are wonderfully executed, while others seem almost like they were rushed. In a few cases, I would have preferred that the authors and typesetters condensed some information, to make room for more flavor or culture notes (the explanation of the Mayan calendrical system is basic, but could have taken half the space). Overall, if you are planning on dealing at all with 'dead' civilizations as a mage, then this book (supplemented with real history books) will give you that something extra to make your stories more believable!

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