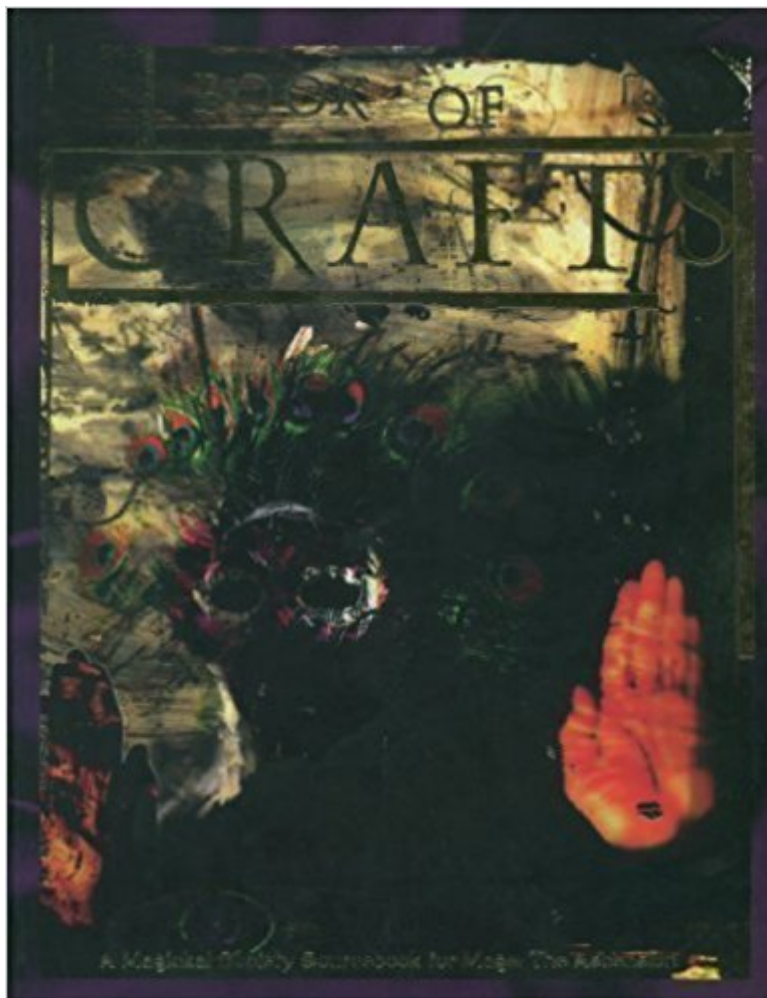


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Book Of Crafts *OP (Mage - The Ascension)



Synopsis

This book focuses on 8 magickal societies from the borders of the Ascension War with details for each. The societies are: *Bata'a: Spirit Music *Children of Knowledge: An Ancient Brew *Hem-Ka Sobk: Eaters of Sin *Kopa Loei: Magick from the Land *Sisters of Hippolyta: Wind-borne Seeds *Templars: Militia Christi *Wu-Keng: The Black Witch *Wu Lung: The Dragon Wizards

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Customer Reviews

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Good condition! Helpful info.

Another decent book written for second edition, but that could easily be adapted for revised, this book focuses on the Crafts: small (usually culturally connected) groups of Mages who choose to ignore all four sides in the Ascension War. However, unlike the Hollow Ones, many of these Crafts are pretty cool. The first section covers the Bata'a, a small craft practicing Voudon, Santeria, Candomble, Hoodoo and other related religions. Based mainly in Haiti and other parts of the Caribbean, they stood aloof from all outsiders. There is a nice glossary of Voudon and Bata'a related

terms, so you shouldn't get too lost. Great detail is given to Voudon cosmology, including various Loa. There is also a bit of detail concerning the Bata'a's cultic organization, Voudon foci and symbolism, and the Bata'a's ongoing war with the Followers of Set. Sample rites, Wonders and information on Zombis as Companions is included, and can easily be adapted for revised. The sample character, "Damballah's Daughter" is pretty cool, but not terribly original. The next group, the "Sons of Knowledge" didn't particularly interest me. They are a group of alchemists formerly members of the Solificati, the "outcast" Tradition. This section goes into Mage history and metaplot, as well as giving a brief overview of alchemy, some alchemical foci and symbolism, sample rites, Wonders and homunculi. Following this was a section on the Hem ka Sobk, an obscure Egyptian cult following the crocodile god Sobk. Unable to access certain Spheres, and united by a divine purpose, they stand alone in the world (although they do maintain some connections with the Ahl-i-Batin, Mummies and even Mokole). Of all groups, they are the most original, and most intended for ST use. Their section gives a lot of detail on Egyptian thoughts on magic and such. Another chapter covers the Kopa Loei, a Hawai'ian Craft made up of Ali'i (chieftens), Kahunas (priests and shamans) and enlightened adventurers, fishermen and explorers. Deeply connected to the land of Hawai'i, even maintaining relations with the Rokea (were-sharks) and Menhune (Hawai'ian fae), the Kopa Loei continue to carry a strong connection to the Gods themselves. There is a Hawai'ian glossary so you won't get lost in the front. Lots of details are given on Hawai'i's troubled history and continued exploitation by Haole, along with details on historical Hawai'ian society, common foci for all castes, descriptions of the Gods, sample rites (pretty cool ones too), some Wonders and notes on animal Companions. The sample character, a reformed thug, is pretty decent, but not too surprising. The Sisters of Hippolyta, modern s devoted to healing, were nothing too original. The section focused on their communal organization and matriarchal pagan magics. Some sample rites, Wonders and animal companions are given, but nothing too new or interesting. They are followed, ironically, by the Knights Templar. YES! Another secret society for the World of Darkness. Exploring Christian mysticism, secret societies and modern day knights, this was a very unique chapter. The sample rites are pretty martially oriented, as are the Wonders and animal companions. Neat chapter overall. The next two chapters focus on warring Chinese Crafts. The first, the Wu-keng, are all-male transvestite shamans and peasant wizards who fell to infernalism long ago. Now, unknowingly led by demons, these "Subtle Ladies" practice their dark (but subtle) magics against their rivals the Wu Lung, imperial wizards of China. These proud wizards, almost akin to Chinese hermetics, draw on elaborate rituals, alchemy, ancestor worship and so forth. Unfortunately, like a lot of other ancient Chinese customs, they have been displaced from modern

Maoist China. Both sections are particularly unique, although I like the irony presented by the Wu-Keng myself, as they don't even realize they now serve demons. Probably the best written infernalist in Mage. The one thing to remember if you use this book in Mage is that the revised setting has changed quite a bit. The Technocracy has eliminated most of the Crafts. The Children of Knowledge were forced to join the Order of Hermes as House Solificati. The Wu Lung threw their lot in with the Akashics to preserve China's culture. Many, though not all, of the Knights Templar joined their brothers in faith, the Celestial Chorus. The Hem Ka Sobk were corrupted by unknown forces. And the Bata'a and Kopa Loei joined with the shamans of the Dreamspeakers. Over all, however, this book does an excellent job of providing organization and philosophy for these groups. Plus, some groups (like the Knights Templar, Hem Ka Sobk and Sisters of Hippolyta) can prove useful for Mummy (or other Mid-Eastern centered) games. I recommend this book, but only if you intend to focus heavily on one of the groups or beliefs in this book.

Let me make this clear: I liked this book. I really did. But. Whilst the attention to detail and background on the magical groups within is, typically, lush, I can't help but wonder of how much use this book would be overall. A good half of the Crafts listed only operate within the specific national boundaries of their countries, and whilst getting the player magi out of the country once or twice isn't hard, they don't exactly have a lot of replay value. That aside, there is much to recommend this one. The Templars and the Eaters of Sins in particular make great adversaries or unexpected allies, and the wily GM could find much guidance in the formation of his own Crafts. If you're not desperate to buy anything else, give it a shot; it's worth a read.

This is perhaps the best book in the entire series of Mage books-- makes one wish that the entire spectrum of factions within the Mage setting were handled this way. The depth of paradigm and the combination of innovation and accuracy in looking at mystic groups it portrays, including Alchemists and Imperial Chinese Sorcerers, makes it very worthwhile.

This book is one of the best in the Mage line; it's got lots of great background data, and really unique new character types based on various world mythologies and practices! The authors really did their homework on this one!!!

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