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Hekate Liminal Rites: A Historical Study Of The Rituals, Spells And Magic Of The Torch-bearing Triple Goddess Of The Crossroads



Synopsis

At the crossroads of life, death and rebirth stands the Goddess Hekate. Honoured by men, women and gods alike, traces of her ancient provenance reach back through the millennia providing clues about her nature and origins along the way. Depictions of her as three formed facing in three ways, sometimes with the heads of animals such as the horse, dog and snake hint at her liminal nature, as well as the powers she holds over the triple realms of earth, sea and sky. The sorcery of Medea and Circe, the witchcraft of the women of Thessaly, the writings of philosophers such as Hesiod and Porphyry all provide glimpses into the world of those who honoured her. Her magical powers were considered so great that even King Solomon became associated with her, she was incorporated into Jewish magic, and merged with other goddesses including Artemis, Selene, Bendis and the Egyptian Isis. Whilst for some she was the Witch Goddess, for others she was the ruler of angels and daimons, who made predictions about Jesus and Christianity. Wherever you look, be it in the texts of Ancient Greece and Rome, Byzantium or the Renaissance, the Greek Magical Papyri or the Chaldean Oracles, you will find Hekate. The magical whirl of the strophalos and the barbarous words of the voces magicae carry her message; the defixiones, love spells and charms all provides us with examples of the magic done in her name. She was also associated with the magic of death, including necromancy and reanimation; as well as prophetic dreams, nightmares, healing herbs and poisons. The temples dedicated to her and the important role she played in the mysteries of Eleusis, Samothrace and Aigina all provide us with clues to her majesty. The popular shrines at the doorways of ordinary people, offerings left at the crossroads and guardian statues of her at the entrance ways to cities and temples all attest to her status in the hearts and minds of those who knew her mysteries. In this book the authors draw from a wide range of sources, bringing together historical research which provides insights into the magical and religious practices associated with this remarkable Goddess. In doing so they provide an indispensable guide for those wishing to explore the mysteries of Hekate today.

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent sourcebook of material on how the ancient Greeks and Romans actually perceived and worked with the Goddess Hekate, ritually and magically. While definitely not a contemporary neo-pagan "how to" book with lots of spells and personal speculation, it's rather a work filled with footnoted and sourced genuinely historical information covering a broad span of time. The authors quote many ancient sources, some not widely available, and seem keenly aware of keeping their own personal speculations to an absolute minimum. Previously published works on Hekate tend to fall into two camps. On the one hand you have allegedly "objective" classical scholars with no personal connection to Hekate who simply reiterate what the old sources say, while

putting their own particular and often clearly biased academic spin on things. Invariably Hekate is made out as a mostly dangerous and spooky "minor" Goddess, with older material showing Hekate in a positive light largely ignored or relegated to the anomaly pile. Scholarly works on Hekate have also tended to focus on a particular area or time period of Hekate worship - like Illes Johnston's Hekate Soteira or Rabinowitz's The Rotting Goddess or even Von Rudloff's Hekate in Ancient Greek Religion. The other camp is the often highly speculative modern Wiccan or neo-pagan side which sets out to show how overwhelmingly positive and inspiring Hekate is, yet ignoring much of the darker albeit later material that remains or else reframing it in a culturally acceptable or pop form in what appears to be an effort to sell books and seminars to Goths or Dark Pagans, or those with a minimal historical background.

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