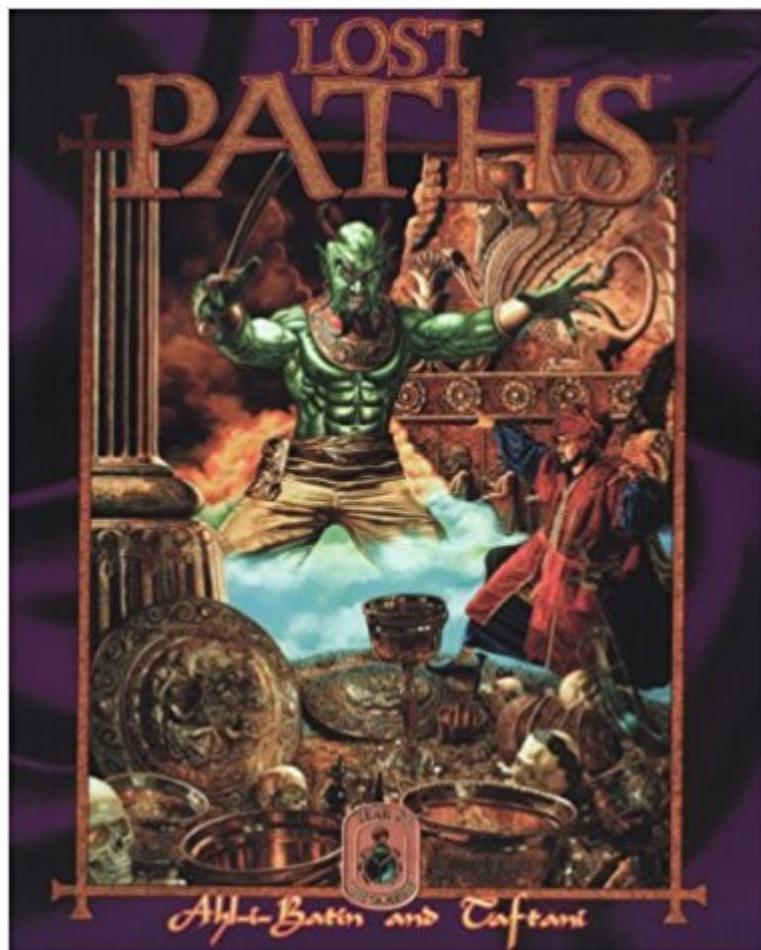


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Lost Paths 1 (Mage: The Ascension)



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Customer Reviews

I liked this source book for its insight into a couple of the lost traditions. It also allows GMs to expand their game world to include the Middle East. If you really like Mage the Ascension and get a chance to pick this book up, do so!!!

A nice book, covering a couple of obscure points in MtA: The arabian traditions. Very well researched (if almost difficult to read, too many arabian terms), all the paradigms was very deep developed, but, perhaps just a feeling, a little "rigid".

Since the early days of Mage, I've wanted to see more on the Ahl-i-Batin. This book gives all that plus more about Mages in the Middle East and even material on the Djinn, spirits unique to the Middle East. The first chapter covers the Ahl-i-Batin, the subtle Arabian magi who seek unity, and opens with perhaps one of the most interesting fictions in any Mage supplement in which a Batini magus deceives one of their ancient foes the Nephandi. It then gives a whole bunch of Arabic words used by the Batini. It then details their origins from the meeting of Akashic refugees of the Himalayan Wars and Ecstatic dervishes of Perisa to the modern times. Major things, such as the rise of Islam (which the Batini supported) to the Technocracy's war on the Batini to their growing influence in modern Iran's Shi'ite government complete with a timeline. It then examines the Batini's power and influence in the Web of Faith (which stretches across the Islamic world) and the five

schools of the Batini (kabbalists of the University of Light, alchemists and architects of the Silk Cartel, assassins of the Ikwhan at-Tawhid, sufis of the Darwushim and mentalists of the Paradise Garden). There are plenty of new Rotes, details on Batini magic, foci and philosophy and some interesting signature characters and templates. More importantly it also details the unique aspects of Batini magic (they begin with extra Arcane and can have Arcane ratings above 5, but cannot learn Entropy). The next chapter details the Taftani, extremely vulgar Persian magi who summon djinn, make flying carpets and shoot fireballs. First introduced in the Sorcerer Crusade's Player's Guide, this book fleshes them out by making their beliefs more interesting, drawing upon Zoroastrianism and Middle Eastern paganism. This chapter examines not only the beliefs of the Taftani but also a timeline of their history from ancient kingdoms in Petra and Mesopotamia to their suppression under Islam to their influence amongst Afghani warlords. Along with a map of Persia and Afghanistan, we are treated to areas where the Taftani are strong: Arabia, Turkey, North Africa and so forth. Ironically the same places as the Batini (like the Batini, some accompanied the Moors into Spain, followed Arab immigrants to Detroit or chose to settle in the deserts of Mexico and the southwestern US). Their two factions are examined, the Zaotar who embody vulgar magic in all its forms and the subtle Kahin, who use poetry and divination to work their magics. There's also details on their magic, beliefs, some signature characters and templates, new rotes, information on Djinn summoning and binding and a few sample spirit minions. There's also legends of the City of Brass and Irem of the Pillars. The book closes out with a short chapter on the Djinn, their history, their courts (from their Sultans and Caliphs to lowly commoners) and social structure (such as Shayateen, Efrit and so forth) and how to create and use Djinn in games. Basically, they are treated as extremely powerful spirits. There are also a couple sample Djinn presented. Overall, it's a pretty nice book to get, but there are a couple errors and mistakes that keep it from being ideal. For instance, a big point is made of how the Taftani avoid the use of Arabic words in favor of Persian, because of their rejection of Islam, but it then goes on to list the Taftani's major languages as including Gujarati, Armenian, Greek, Avestan, Pahlavi, Sanskrit and... Arabic! Likewise, Ar-Rutbah is mentioned as being a major Batini outpost in Iran, even though it is in Iraq (and in fact there's even a map showing it IN IRAQ!). A couple other examples are in there. But in general it's a nice book for information on the Batini, Taftani and Djinn, as well as providing some nice details for a Middle Eastern/Islamic setting for Mage games. It's even better if you use it alongside the information on the Web of Faith in Guide to the Traditions.

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