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EGYPT

TOMBS. TEMPLES. TROUBLE.



BY THOMAS M. KANE

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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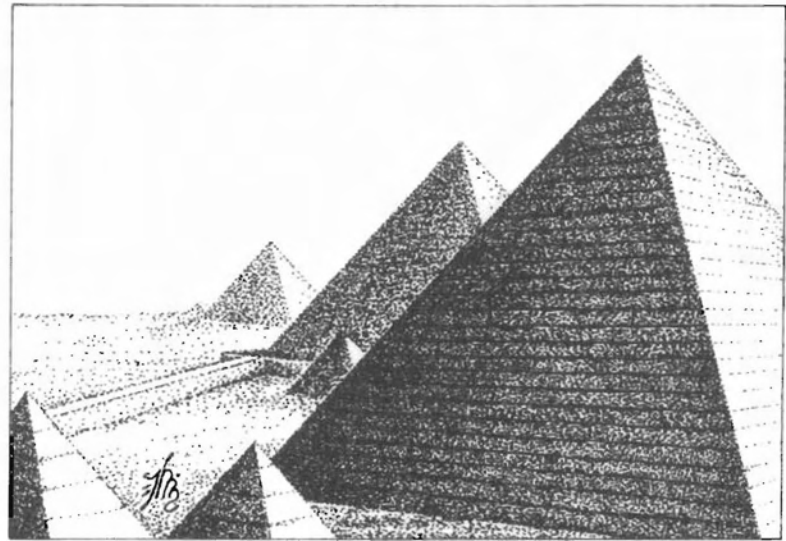
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ABOUT GURPS

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Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised**. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the **Basic Set** – e.g., p. B23 means p. 23 of the **Basic Set**. M refers to **GURPS Magic, Second Edition**; BE refers to the **GURPS Bestiary, Second Edition**; CI refers to the **GURPS Compendium I**.

INTRODUCTION

"At the end of the corridor is a small room. In the corner, half-buried in the litter, you see a chest . . ."

A long-forgotten tomb, filled with treasure . . . but guarded by fiendish traps and, even worse, the restless dead. It seems trite to the experienced roleplayer, but that's because it's *the* basic adventure setting from which the whole hobby grew. And it's straight out of Egypt.

A culture that worships hundreds of divinities, and divides them, not into "good" and "evil," but into supporters of wholesome order and dangerous chaos. The experienced roleplayer shakes his head . . . "Haven't we outgrown that stuff?" But that's the way it really was, in Egypt.

Our hobby owes a great deal to Egyptian history and mythology . . . yet most of it is second-hand. Gaming sourcebooks for Egypt have been few and far between, and have concentrated mainly on mummies, myths and tombs full of gold. That's important, and fun, but it's not all there is to Egypt.

In **GURPS Egypt**, Thomas Kane gives us much more. This book is not just a guide to "Egyptian influence" in a roleplaying campaign . . . it can also support a whole campaign set in the kingdoms of the Nile. The day-to-day life of Egypt was very like ours in some ways, exotically different in others. And that combination of familiarity and difference is fertile ground for roleplaying! Pharaoh's domains were wide; he was served by warriors, bureaucrats, scribes, priests, and powerful wizards, all of whom were needed to preserve *ma'at* (order) and insure that the gods were properly served and the barbarians kept at bay.

Best of all, a historical campaign need not give up any of the magic and romance of Egypt. To the Egyptians, the gods were real and very present. And with 3,000 years of Egyptian history behind him, a subject of Pharaoh could be as awed by ancient pyramids, and as excited and fearful about what they might contain, as any modern archaeologist or tomb-robber.

Peruse this book, then. It is a worthy gate between this world and one long past. May you be enlightened, and may your heart weigh less than a feather on the day when you first pass through that gate.

– Steve Jackson



About the Author

Tom Kane enjoys roleplaying games of all kinds, and has written a substantial number of adventures and gaming supplements. He is currently in Kingston-Upon-Hull, England, finishing work on a Ph.D. in Strategic Studies. While working on **GURPS Egypt**, Tom made an important discovery – he and Hermes Trismegistus, the mythical founder of the Egyptian alchemical tradition, were both born on October 9.





ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LIFE

The key to the feeling of life in ancient Egypt is that the Egyptians were comfortable people. Food was plentiful, life was peaceful, families tended to be close and the gods seemed present in daily life. Egyptians believed that their way of life had been perfect for several hundred years, and most had no interest in change or disruption.

THE TWO LANDS

TECH LEVEL

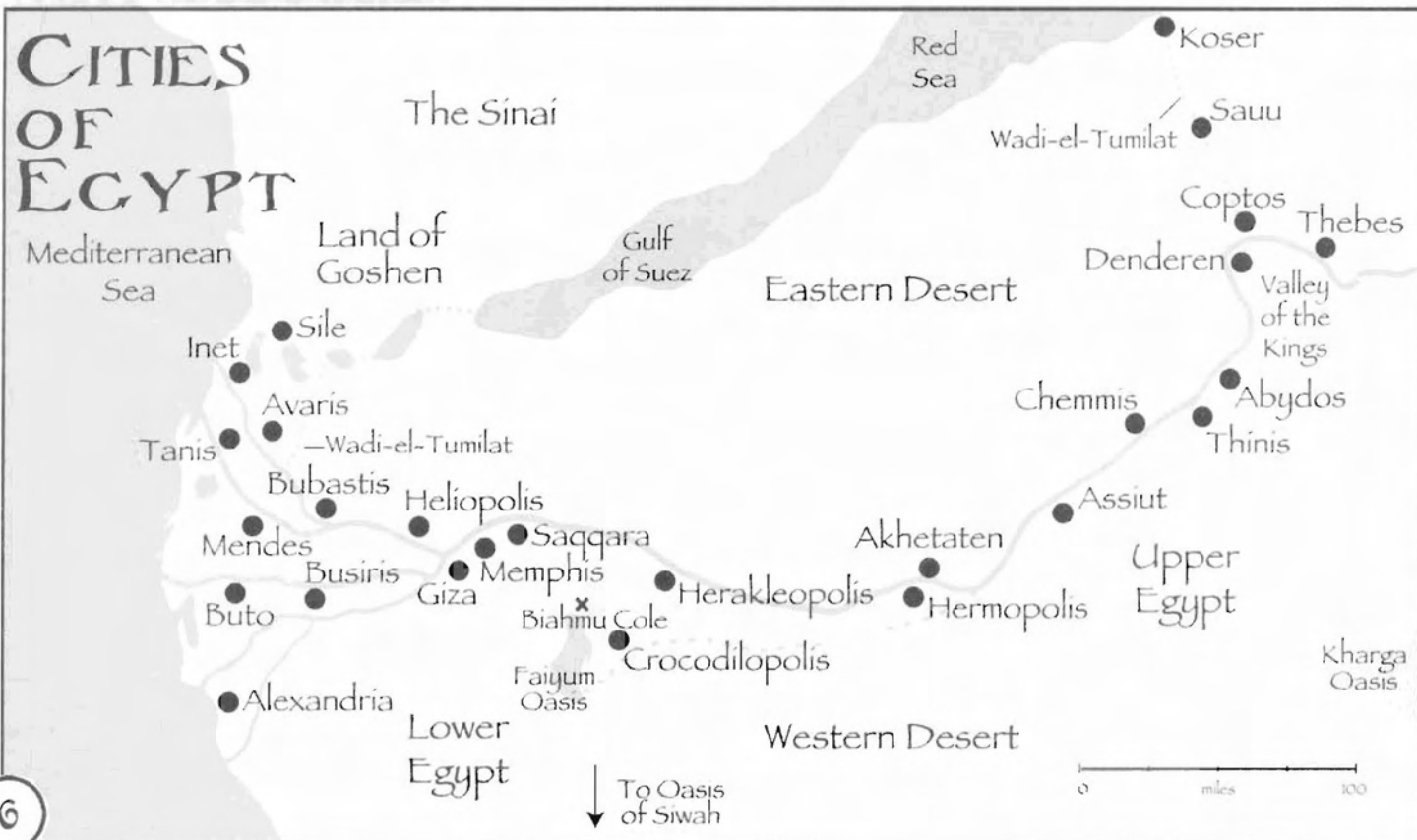
Egypt had one of the most advanced societies of the ancient world. It reached Tech Level 1 around 4000 B.C., over 1,000 years before the first pharaoh. Bronze remained the most common metal for all of the pharaonic period, but iron was used in jewelry and small tools (such as knife blades) as early as 2,000 B.C., bringing Egypt marginally into TL2 in that respect. The pyramids stand as proof of Egypt's capabilities, and in certain campaigns they could be the product of contact between the Egyptians and some race of far greater technological development.

Egypt had a reputation for pharmaceutical and mathematical innovation, but while the medical reputation was justified (see *Medicine*, p. 7) the majority of Egyptian mathematical knowledge was simple and utilitarian: rules of thumb for resurveying fields after the annual floods, simple calculations of area and volume for use in taxation and monumental construction, and the like. It would be the Classical Greeks who would turn these beginnings into theoretical geometry.

All that was Egypt lay within a few miles of the Nile River, called simply Yor, "the River," by Egyptians. The Nile provided Egypt with its major social and political boundaries as well, dividing the country into southern Upper Egypt (Ta-Resu) where the river cut through limestone highlands, and marshy northern Lower Egypt (Ta-Meht) where the river drained through a delta of countless channels to the Mediterranean Sea. Lower Egypt was a melting pot, the center of trade with nations around the "Great Green" and the target for raids by seaborne pirates. Upper Egypt was the center of high Egyptian culture and the primary route for the country's expansion over the centuries. On either side of the Nile were the dunes and stony hills of the North African desert. The local name for Egypt was Tawy, the Two Lands, referring to Khemet (The Black Land: the fertile Nile valley) and Deshret (The Red Land: the forbidding deserts).

Animal life flourished along the Nile – during the Roman period Lower Egypt was a favored hunting ground of Romans seeking fierce beasts for use in gladiatorial combat. The more dangerous Egyptian species were lions, crocodiles, hippopotami, asps, vipers, cobras, scorpions, panthers, leopards, bears, wild boars and elephants. Other common animals included apes, bats, weasels, otters, wild dogs, foxes, jackals, hyenas, wild cats, porcupines, hares, rodents of all sorts, camels, deer, gazelles, oryx, wild goats, wild sheep, wild cattle, vultures, ostriches, geese, tortoises and many varieties of birds.

The following overview describes major cities and other landmarks of special interest to adventurers, keyed to the Cities of Egypt map below. Many Egyptian cities are best-known today by the names the Greeks gave them; in such cases, the original Egyptian name is given in parentheses.





Philae (Aa-t Rek)

This city extended onto the islands of the Nile, and was noteworthy for both economic and religious reasons. Quarries and mines lay north of the city, and produced quartz, precious stones and gold. Philae also contained important shrines to Horus, Isis and the lion-goddess Tefnut. The temples bred sacred falcons and lions in honor of Horus and Tefnut. Not only Egyptians, but many from the lands to the south worshipped here. Despite the frequent clashes between Egypt and the southern tribes, the priests enforced a perpetual truce on temple property.

On the nearby island of Bigah stood a temple reputed to hold the left leg of a god. Most accounts asserted that it was the leg of Osiris, but earlier legends implied that the leg belonged to Set (see *Herakleopolis*, p. 10). In any event, Bigah was a sacred place where no human could set foot. A single priest had the monthly duty of sailing to the island's shores and leaving an offering of milk.

First Cataract

Here, the Nile rushed through a maze of stony islands called the "Belly of Stones," making boat travel perilous. Although the empire of the pharaohs often extended south of the First Cataract, these rapids served as a natural symbolic boundary between Egypt and the wilderness.

Elephantine

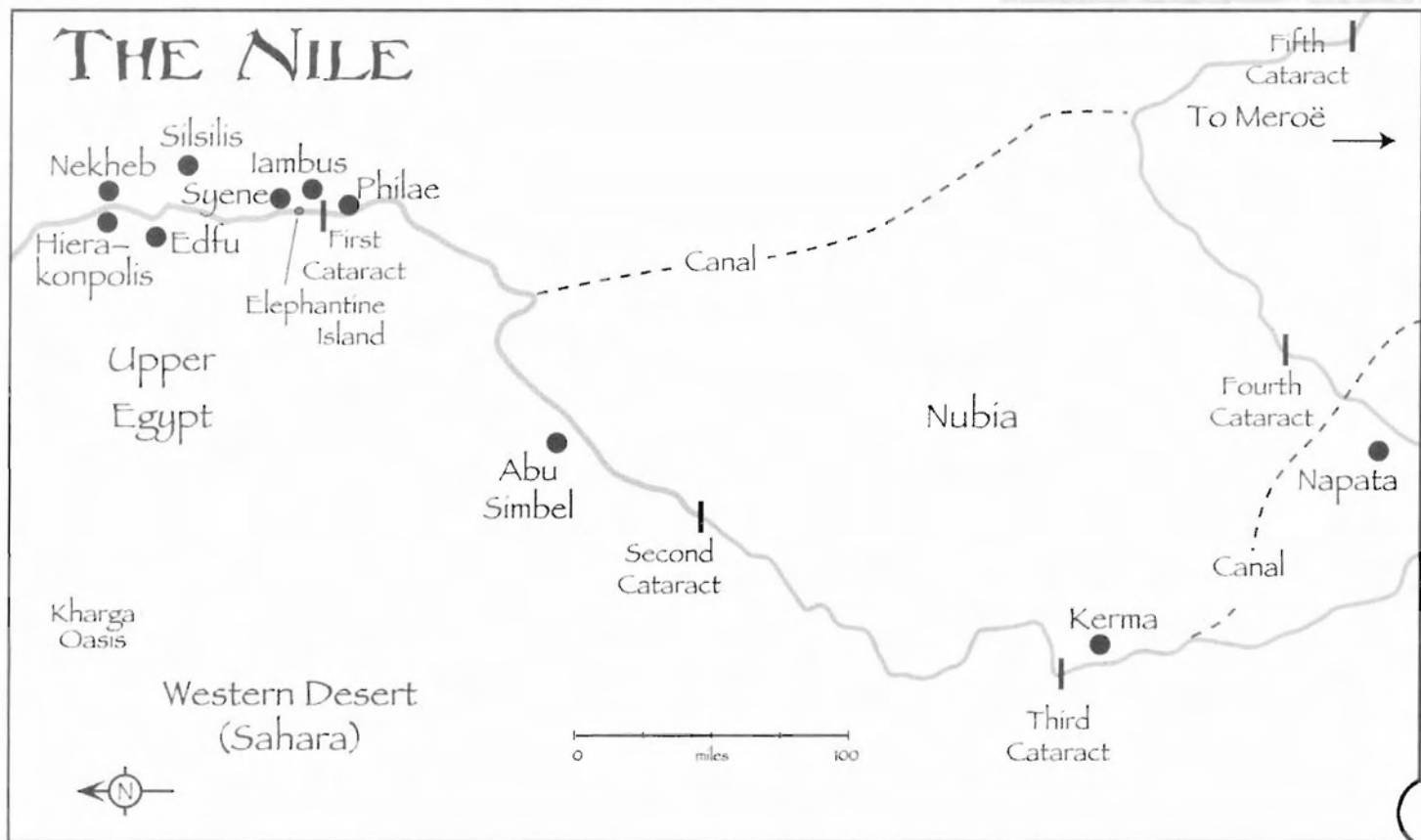
Elephantine was an island fortress on Egypt's southern border, and its governors tended to be tough, aggressive men, typically bearing the title "Overseer of All Deserts Who Sets the Terror of Horus in the Foreign Lands." Raiding parties from Elephantine regularly ventured southward to exact tribute from the people of Nubia.

MEDICINE

The average medical tech level of Egypt was the same as that of other Mediterranean empires (TL2-3), but Egypt was particularly advanced in some fields. As early as 3,000 B.C. Egypt had professional doctors, and in the reign of Pharaoh Djoser (*circa* 2650 B.C.) there were even specialists – dentists who both extracted teeth and drilled abscesses.

Internationally, Egyptian doctors were renowned for their pharmaceutical knowledge. Physicians attempted to cure most ailments with a combination of herbal remedies and magical incantations (see *Paut*, p. 92), and some attributed the medicine of Classical Greece to Egyptian wisdom that was already hundreds or thousands of years old. Not all of these remedies worked, of course, but others were effective; an Egyptian pregnancy test dated to 1400 B.C. required the woman to urinate on small bags of wheat and barley – if the grain in the bags sprouted before control bags that were only watered, the woman was pregnant. Surprisingly, when this test was checked in the 1930s it was shown to actually work! A hormone in the urine accelerated the grain's growth. Unfortunately, the belief that the order in which the grains sprouted predicted the sex of the child (wheat first for a boy, barley for a girl) was found not to work.

Continued on next page . . .





MEDICINE (CONTINUED)

Egyptian doctors also had functioning birth control methods, a treatment for kidney stones, toothpaste, and painkillers, and while they didn't know why it worked, physicians applied antibiotics (in the form of moldy bread) to wounds in poultices.

In the surgical field, Egyptian doctors were curiously behind. Although Egyptian physicians had a wide array of medical tools available to them, including copper knives and suturing needles when most of the country was still using stone knives, they made less use of these instruments than other ancient surgeons. Because of religious taboos, they hesitated to interfere with an intact (although injured or diseased) body during life, refusing to perform amputations or other disfiguring surgeries, even when the techniques were well known in neighboring countries.

But they did use their expertise to correct the shortcomings of *dead* bodies. A body had to have the semblance of health in the grave for the person's *sah* (see *Death and Afterlife*, p. 100) to be whole in the afterlife, and surgery was used to complete a corpse before its burial. In some cases the repairs were made *after* the burial, a body damaged by tomb-robbers being sewn back together or even provided with well-crafted artificial limbs, something unheard of among living Egyptians.



Elephantine was also a major trade center. Egypt imported large quantities of ivory through Elephantine, the source of the city's Greek name. Nubia also supplied hides, spices, ostrich feathers, cattle and goats. In exchange, the Egyptians offered grain, as well as unguents, honey, cloth, pottery and other finished goods. The governor exacted a 10% tax on all trade passing through the city, although merchants in the service of established temples were immune.

Due to this city's position high upstream on the Nile, priests built a nilometer here (see *Osiris' Resurrection Festival*, p. 25). The instrument here informed the priests when the Nile had begun to rise in the spring, allowing them to prepare to perform their fertility rituals.

Iambus (Nubt)

A major temple to Set stood here.

Syene (Swenet)

Today, Syene is known as Aswan, the site of the Aswan High Dam.

Silsilis (Uab)

This town contained noteworthy sandstone quarries, along with a temple to the crocodile-god Sebek.

Edfu (Behdet)

This town contained important temples to Ra and Horus.

Hierakonpolis (Nekhen)

Prior to Egypt's unification, Hierakonpolis was the capital of the southern kingdom ruled by Narmer's predecessors. All of the pharaohs of unified Egypt (with the exception of Seth-Peribsen, who claimed to be the incarnation of the northern deity, Set – see p. 35) claimed to be incarnations of Hierakonpolis' patron deity, Horus the Falcon.

Nekheb

Located across from Nekhen on the east bank of the Nile, the fortress of Nekheb served as one of Egypt's primary bulwarks against invasion from the south, and the position of commander here was one of the most coveted titles in the Egyptian military.

After unification, Nekheb's patroness, the vulture-goddess Nekhbet, appeared with the cobra of Buto (see p. 12) on the brows of Egypt's pharaohs to symbolize the unification of south and north.

Thebes (Waset)

Although Memphis was the traditional capital of Egypt, Thebes was the center of government administration. Thebes straddled the Nile, with life in the western half of the city revolving around a complex of cemeteries and life on the east bank centered on the state and temple bureaucracies. In the eastern suburbs, Karnak and Luxor, the pharaohs of the XVIIIth and later dynasties raised massive temples as headquarters for the priests of the national gods (see *GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. 36). The temple at Karnak honored Amun, while that at Luxor honored a composite version of that god, Amun-Ra.

Due to the importance of Thebes, many of Egypt's revolutionary conspiracies and religious wars began here.

West of the west-bank cemeteries and mortuary temples (the "Houses of Millions of Years") stood Meretseger ("She who loves silence"), a chalky, tree-





less mountain with sheer cliffs over 1,000 feet high. On the mountain's slopes lay a wilderness of gorges, mesas and boulder fields, devoid of vegetation and water (except during flash floods). These badlands sheltered the secret tombs of XVIIIth-XXIst-Dynasty pharaohs who didn't think that even the most devious traps and curses could protect their graves from robbers. The tombs formed a city of the dead which snaked through two canyons, called the Valley of Kings and the Valley of Queens.



Coptos

This city was a base camp for merchants traveling the Koser Route to the Red Sea. Coptos also supported a colony of workmen who labored in limestone quarries deep in the desert. The religion of the fertility god Min was popular here, and a major temple to Min stood in the town.

Sauu

This tent city, known as the White Haven, was a rest stop for caravans from the Red Sea on their way to Koser.

Koser

Most of Egypt's trade with Arabia and points east passed through the Red Sea port of Koser. Once goods reached this city's docks, merchants had to convey them along the dangerous Koser Route through the desert to Coptos. Due to Koser's isolation from the rest of Egypt, this was a dangerous city, featuring a mishmash of different peoples and cultures.

Denderen (Iunet)

Hathor's principal temple stood here.

Abydos (Abedju)

The ground beneath Abydos was honeycombed with tombs dating to the earliest days of Egyptian civilization. Osiris supposedly lay mummified in these warrens, and so many worshippers brought offerings of vases and precious unguents that mountains of pottery rose around the entrance to the tombs. According to popular belief, a race of dog-headed men resembling the god Anubis dwelt in the catacombs, protecting Osiris' body (see *Anubis Beast*, p. 104).

Many of Egypt's greatest pharaohs, priests and notables were buried in Abydos to be near Osiris in death. Egyptians believed that Osiris would select his purest followers to work the rudder on his funeral-barque, and even those who did not receive this honor hoped to follow Osiris on his journeys through the underworld. Eventually, even the middle class began to crowd their graves into this city. Those who didn't actually want to be buried here often constructed symbolic tombs in Abydos, in addition to their actual graves elsewhere.

People wished to be buried in Abydos for practical reasons as well. The vigilance of the local priests, the legend of the Anubis-offspring, and the profusion of curses and traps gave the tombs of Abydos great protection against grave robbers.

REVELRY

The typical Egyptian loved revelry, and needed no special occasion to host a party. All social gatherings featured lavish amounts of food and drink, and a good host provided *hors-d'oeuvres* of spicy cabbage to make guests thirsty and increase wine consumption. The rich enlivened their banquets with displays by dancers and acrobats. Such performers could be slaves or free professionals, male or female – nude female dancers were especially popular. In addition to watching such shows, guests at a party took to the dance floor themselves, although they danced individually, not in couples.

Musicians of both sexes played at parties and on street corners, in temples and during festivals. A man who could afford many servants usually had a full-time harpist for private entertainment as well. Popular instruments included harps, lyres, lutes, horns, drums (of various sizes), tambourines, clappers and bells. Woodwind instruments were common, with men playing long flutes and women preferring smaller instruments with two pipes. Egyptologists speculate that the overall effect of Egyptian music resembled that of a modern South American dance band.

The Egyptians also had a musical instrument called a sistrum, consisting of a metal image resembling the head of a cow. Wires ran between the cow's horns, and metal discs were strung along the wires. The sistrum could produce either a soothing susurrant, or a harsh clanging noise. This instrument represented the benevolent cow-goddess Hathor, and its sounds were said to drive away evil spirits and assist women in labor.

Egyptians did not attend theaters for pure entertainment, although temples staged religious dramas. Professional storytellers were popular, performing both in markets and at private gatherings. Magicians also performed at Egyptian gatherings.





GAMES

The Egyptians loved games, both indoors and out. Noblemen raced each other in chariots, and took pride in their vehicles, much as modern people take pride in their sports cars. Archery was popular, with participants firing at copper targets while mounted on racing chariots. The upper class did not wrestle, but enjoyed watching soldiers or slaves engage in this sport. Noblemen did, however, love to hunt, and commemorated spectacular kills by erecting monuments.

Both the upper class and the common folk enjoyed watching bullfights which pitted, not man against bull, but one bull against another. Temples often staged bullfights and awarded lavish prizes to the owners and trainers of the victorious bull.

Ball-games were common among both sexes, especially among women. The most popular game was a combination of catch and juggling in which participants kept multiple balls in the air at all times. A person who dropped a ball had to carry another player on his back. When the rider dropped a ball, he had to dismount.

Egyptians fenced using a single stick to attack, and another strapped to the left arm as a shield. Occasionally, soldiers would organize mass battles between large teams of stick-fighters. Such war games could involve mock fortresses and battering rams. Sailors also fought naval battles with their long boat-poles.

Indoors, Egyptians played board games, in addition to gambling with dice or lots. The most common was *senet*, which resembled backgammon. In *mehen*, players raced to advance counters along a winding path which resembled the body of a coiled snake deity that protected Ra's boat from the serpent Apep. Another game, called *hounds and jackals*, resembled cribbage.

Indeed, unscrupulous people often sought to have relatives sneak their corpses into the Abydos catacombs without permission. Therefore, the priests of Anubis passed laws against "grave squatting." The priests cremated any unauthorized corpses they discovered, thereby denying the deceased persons places in the afterworld.

The temple employees at Abydos, from priests and scribes to common laborers, received immunity from taxes and forced labor, even in time of war. The temple also received an exemption from the laws that made trade a royal monopoly, allowing Abydos' priesthood to carry on independent seaborne trade with the outside world.

The streams around Abydos were rich with gold dust, but the law strictly forbade anyone but the priests to pan for the gold since this metal was supposed to have washed from the body of Osiris.

Thinís (Tjeny)

This sprawling city contained numerous government offices.

Chemmis

Chemmis featured an important temple to Min.

Assiut

This city featured a major temple to Anubis.

Akhetaten

In 1344 B.C. the monotheist pharaoh Akhenaten built a new capital city, Akhetaten ("The Horizon of the Aten"), in a particularly infertile section of desert. Farming was impossible here, and travelers came and went primarily by boat since few wished to venture into the sun-baked hills which fenced the city on the north, east and south.

Akhetaten supported itself through income from the "House of Gold," a legendary alabaster quarry a few miles to the east. Few freemen volunteered to work in this blasted region, so most of the quarry workers were convicts, prisoners of war or slaves. These miserable people lived in caves, cut into the hillsides. The hills to the east also contained burial complexes for noblemen and the royal family.

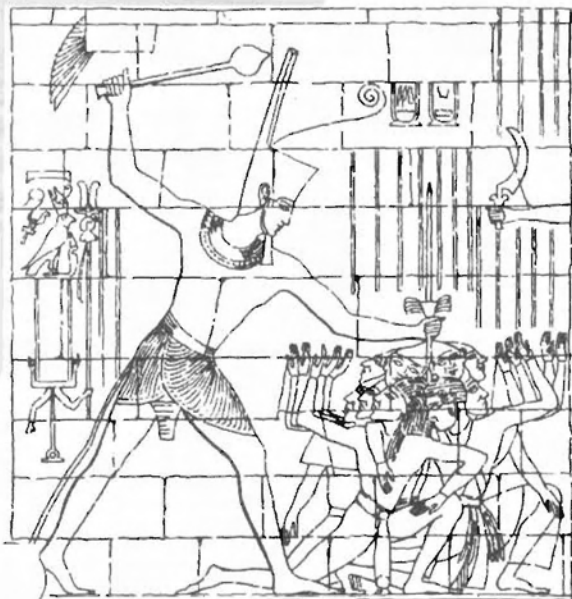
After a little more than a decade (within two years of Akhenaten's death) the city was abandoned – even the bodies in the eastern tombs were removed to be reburied in more traditional cemeteries in other parts of Egypt. The site was considered accursed.

Hermopolis (Khmun)

Hermopolis featured the chief temple to the god Thoth, whom the Greeks associated with their god Hermes. Thoth was a god of learning, and this city possessed famous libraries and collections of lore.

Herakleopolis (Hensu)

Throughout Egyptian history, the folk of Herakleopolis were enterprising merchants and innovators. Before the age of the pharaohs, merchants in this region became wealthy by trading in marble and semi-precious stones. In later years, Herakleopolis became a center of shipbuilding and oceanic trade. The Herakleoptians played an aggressive role in politics and regularly rose to prominence during periods when the empire lay in disarray.





* In mythology, Herakleopolis was the scene of several battles between Horus and Set. Once, when Horus managed to cut off Set's right leg, he presented the severed limb to the priests here as proof of his feat. The priests of Horus claimed to have the leg, preserved and hidden inside their temple. (See also *Philae*, p. 7.)

Biahmu Colossi

Here stood a pair of quartzite statues representing human figures, each over 40 feet tall. There are no known temples, tombs or ancient towns in the region, and archaeologists do not know why the colossi were built.

Crocodilopolis (Shedet)

Crocodilopolis was the home of a local cult which worshipped a "family" of sacred crocodiles. Unsurprisingly, Sebek the crocodile god was a mysterious and bloodthirsty deity who demanded regular offerings of flesh. The priests of this temple exerted great influence over all religious activities in the Faiyum region.

Lake Faiyum (She-Resy)

Egyptian priests maintained that Lake Faiyum was the remains of the primeval ocean (Nun) and the place of origin for all life. Therefore, the lake symbolized fertility, rebirth and creation. The shores of Lake Faiyum also offered some of the finest hunting grounds in Egypt, and the upper class frequently staged expeditions there.

Memphis (Men-Nefer)

Pharaoh's primary palace, the legendary White-Walled Citadel, stood in Memphis. From the reign of the first pharaoh to the present day, the capital of Egypt has stood almost continuously near this spot – the official boundary between Upper and Lower Egypt. This site has supernatural significance, since the union of opposites played an important role in Egyptian mysticism; the name Men-Nefer meant "established and good."

In mythology, the gods often congregated in Memphis. Horus and Set met here for their final confrontation and truce. The body of Osiris was supposedly buried beneath the city (but see also *Abydos*, p. 9). Ptah's worshippers in Memphis founded a school of thought in Egyptian mystic cosmology called the Memphite Theology (see *Gods of Egypt*, p. 21). Memphis offers a natural place for adventurers to find lost secrets of Egyptian mysticism, or for supernatural villains to complete their apocalyptic plots.

Saqqara

Saqqara was one of Egypt's largest and most independent cities of the dead. The Step Pyramid of Djoser (see p. 36), the earliest known structure of its kind, rose here.

Giza

This was the site of the famous Great Pyramid of Khufu (see p. 38) and the Sphinx, along with a number of other pyramids and countless smaller tombs.

Heliopolis (Iunu)

If Memphis was Egypt's political capital, Heliopolis was its religious center. The principle temple of Ra lay in this city, and many of Egypt's religious doctrines originated here (including possibly the monotheism of Akhenaten – see p. 51). In mythology, Heliopolis was the site where the gods assembled after the death of Osiris, under the leadership of Geb.

Heliopolis was also home to a great many obscure religions. Temples to



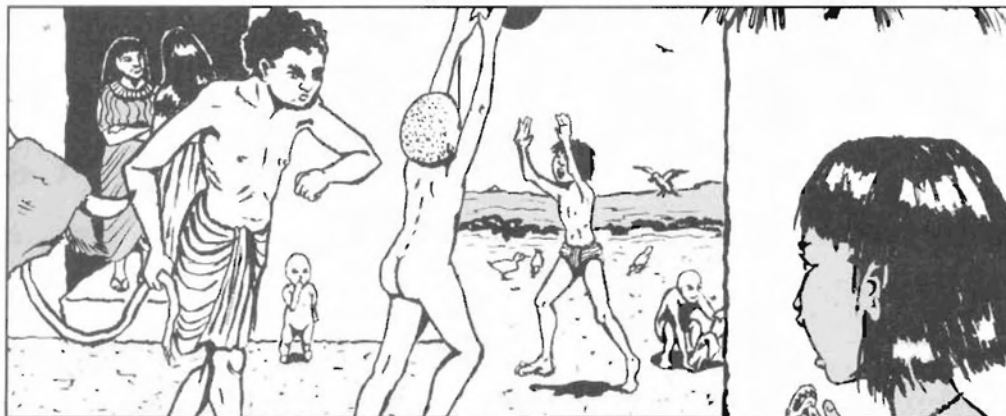
MARRIAGE

Egyptians had a far more romantic view of marriage than most ancient societies. In artwork, husbands and wives nearly always appeared side by side, holding hands or relaxing in each other's embrace. Married people expected their affection to grow and deepen as they aged. Furthermore, although pharaohs tended to choose their wives for reasons of ritual and politics, they could choose secondary wives out of love, while ordinary people were often free to marry for love. Divorce laws were liberal, women were free to initiate divorce proceedings, and men were required to pay their former spouses alimony.

Egyptian men practiced polygamy, but one woman, the Chief Wife, always held the dominant position in the household. It was the firstborn of the Chief Wife, and not necessarily that of the husband, who inherited family property. The First Wife was the legal owner of all family furniture and possessions, and after a divorce, she could claim a particularly generous alimony. Jealousy and intrigue prevailed among the women of polygamous husbands, and Ramesses III nearly died at the hands of his conniving wives (see *Queen Tiy's Conspiracy*, p. 56).

Egyptians saw nothing wrong with marriages between brothers and sisters. Such unions were, however, uncommon outside of the royal family, largely because they precluded any chance to gain extra inheritance or form an alliance between two families. To complicate matters, husbands and wives often called each other "brother" and "sister" as terms of endearment, whether or not they were blood siblings.





CHILDREN

Egyptians lavished attention on their children, possibly because of the high miscarriage and infant mortality rates. As one text put it, "a father can have no greater joy than to receive the obedience of an obedient son." Mothers carried their infants everywhere, in cloth slings or in leather or basket backpacks. Older children typically went naked, except for a string of beads and possibly a protective amulet. Other ancient people found it noteworthy that Egyptian children wore nothing to protect their heads from the sun, and Greek authors claimed that this produced adults with particularly tough skulls. The Egyptian nobility shaved the heads of boys except for a single braided lock on one side. The rite of passage to adulthood involved cutting the lock off and burning it, and performing a circumcision.

Frescoes depicted Egyptian children playing hopscotch and leapfrog, along with the juggling game (see *Revelry*, p. 9). Such paintings also make it clear that Egyptian children were free to run, shout, leap and engage in energetic, freeform play.

Little girls collected dolls, some of which had moving joints and elaborate wardrobes. Other toys included wooden models of cooks kneading dough, smiths forging or similar scenes; the child could manipulate a slide-mechanism in the model to make the figures move as if they were alive. Egyptian children also had toy crocodiles with moving jaws.

Older children of both sexes spent a great deal of time studying. Even the offspring of commoners often received a little education in literature. Temples served as schools, although wealthy parents could keep their children home and hire tutors. Teachers disciplined their students strictly, and a common aphorism ran that "a boy's ears are in his backside."

Heliopolis was also home to a great many obscure religions. Temples to sacred trees, bulls and lions abounded in the city. If a GM wishes to create a secret cult of any nature, Heliopolis offers a natural base for it.

An undercurrent of rivalry existed between the citizens of Heliopolis and Memphis. The priests of these cities preached opposing doctrines (see *Gods of*

Egypt, p. 21) – while ancient Egypt didn't suffer the religious wars of medieval Europe, adventurers could still find themselves caught up in this dispute. Alternatively, it was possible that the doctrines of Heliopolis and Memphis were paradoxically related through some deeper mystery. This possibility has potential for an Illuminati campaign.

Although Egypt's national fertility rites took place in Memphis, Heliopolis was the site of the nilometer which determined when these ceremonies should take place (see *Osiris' Resurrection Festival*, p. 25).

Buto (Per-Wadjet)

Before the unification of Egypt, Buto was the capital of a northern kingdom with the cobra-headed patron goddess Wadjet. She, along with the vulture-goddess Nekhbet (see *Nekhbet*, p. 8), was incorporated into the crowns of pharaohs to represent half of unified Egypt.

Bubastis (Per-Bastet)

This city was sacred to Bast and her major temple stood here.

Mendes (Aatchaba)

Mendes featured a major temple to Khnum.

Inet

The wines of Inet were known throughout Egypt.

Busiris

This city was named for Osiris and contained one of his major temples.

Goshen

Egyptians called the land of Goshen "the gate of the barbarians," as invaders frequently swept into Egypt through this barren country. Many Hebrews lived in this area in the mid-second millennium B.C., and were employed (possibly against their wills) building the city of Piramesse for Ramesses II.

Wadi-el-Tumilat

Around 600 B.C., Pharaoh Nekau built a canal running from the Nile at this point to the Red Sea. The Persian and Ptolemaic pharaohs would repair and improve the canal in their turns, as would the Romans after them. Nekau's canal may have been built on the site of a canal begun as much as 1,000 years earlier.

Avaris (Piramesse)

Avaris hosted one of the major Hebrew settlements of the Middle Kingdom, and was the capital of the XVth-Dynasty pharaohs during the Second





Intermediate Period. During the New Kingdom, Ramesses the Great rebuilt the city and renamed it Piramesse.

This city contained a huge temple to Set, honoring him in his role as god of war. Avaris was also famous for its wine.

Sile

The fortified city of Sile served as a land gateway to Arabia and Asia. The army used it as a base of operations for campaigns, and peaceful travelers made it their jumping-off point. Upon returning from the east, travelers had to stop at border checkpoints here.

Tanis (Dja'Net)

Although it was marshy and chronically impoverished, the Egyptian government kept this city of canals active as a strategic base in the Nile delta. With a broad lagoon on one side and miles of featureless, marshy flats on the other, Tanis was naturally fortified against invaders. The lagoon offered a sheltered place where Egyptian warships could dock.

Egyptian officials and army officers regarded an assignment to Tanis as punishment duty. Perhaps due to the prominence of the military here Set worship flourished in Tanis.

Alexandria (A-Argsandres)

Alexander the Great founded this city in 331 B.C. Alexandria was famous for its Museum (and attached Library; see p. 60) and the Lighthouse built on the island of Pharos in its harbor (see p. 62).

EVERYDAY AFFAIRS

Family Life

Egyptians had close families, and placed enormous value on a happy family life. A typical household consisted of a man, one or more wives, and their children (see *Children*, p. 12). Aunts, grandmothers and other members of the extended family might also live in the house, but this wasn't common, even less so for male relatives who were expected to have their own homes. Dead ancestors were considered a part of a family's life, and Egyptians visited tombs in much the same spirit that they visited living relatives.

Being childless was embarrassing for men and adoption, secondary wives and having children by slaves were all socially acceptable options. Prayers and spells for fertility were common, as were spells to determine or increase a woman's fertility, and to guard against miscarriage or death during childbirth.

Egyptians practiced matrilineal succession, meaning that property passed from mother to daughter. However, sons tended to take up their fathers' professions. Therefore, a woman claimed social status by virtue of being married to a certain husband, but a man depended on his wife to inherit money, property and other material goods.

Food

Egyptians ate heartily and were particularly fond of meat. There were two primary meals in the day: a sumptuous dinner held at noon and a smaller repast at sundown. Members of the upper class flaunted the richness of their tables as sta-

ART

Egyptians viewed art as a utilitarian endeavor. The lasting artistic merit of Egyptian sculptures, frescoes and ornaments is unquestioned, but the craftsmen who made these products made no effort either to claim credit for their work or to distinguish their creations with any individual vision. Egyptian art followed rigid stylistic conventions, so that an artist would no more think of depicting a person in a new pose or an object from a new point of view than a contemporary author would think of inventing a new system of spelling.

Painters, in particular, took a rigid approach to their craft. Most paintings were intended to convey information, be it the story of a god or the accomplishments of a pharaoh. Therefore, artists operated under conventions designed to make their message clear. In a statue of a god protecting a pharaoh, both god and man would have similar facial features to demonstrate the ruler's family resemblance to his divine parent. Pharaohs were also depicted in idealized forms; despite Pharaoh Siptah's withered foot he was always sculpted standing straight and perfect, while we only know that Queen Nofretiti was bucktoothed from her mummy, not her painted images (see *Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten*, p. 51). People and animals appeared in a side view, making them easy to identify. To depict a group of people or things, such as soldiers in a column or cattle in a herd, artists drew each individual, stacking figures on top of each other so that all were visible and a viewer could easily count the exact number depicted. The Egyptians seem to have understood perspective, but they didn't use it often.



THE WORD "PHARAOH"

"Pharaoh" is an anglicized version of the word *per-o*, "Great House," a reference to the palace in which Egyptian rulers lived. From 1500 B.C. to 900 B.C. people used this term as a personal name for Egypt's ruler, referring to him not as "the pharaoh," but simply as "Pharaoh," usually followed by the formula "Life! Prosperity! Health!" From 900 B.C., the term was more of an honorific preceding the ruler's ordinary name (e.g., Pharaoh Nekau). Prior to 1500 B.C., the term *per-aya*, "king," was used, and it remained in use even when "Pharaoh" was in vogue.

When two different pharaohs with the same regnal name (e.g., Ramesses I through XI) had to be differentiated, the pharaoh's full name was given: "[On that day] came the vizier . . . and read to them a letter saying that Nebmaatre Ramesses Amenherkhepshef-meryamun [Ramesses VI] . . . had arisen as the great ruler of the whole land."

More often than not, no distinction was made between pharaohs with the same name – it was assumed that the pharaoh in question was the one currently reigning if not otherwise specified. This has made dating documents and inscriptions on statues difficult when dealing with the 4 Osorkons, 11 Ramesseses, 15 Ptolemys and so on.

Although it's technically wrong to refer to an Egyptian ruler from before the New Kingdom as pharaoh, *GURPS Egypt* uses that title to avoid confusion.

tus symbols, and even the poor had plenty to eat except during rare famines. Among both rich and poor, every meal consisted of many different dishes, the variety corresponding to social rank.

In formal settings, Egyptian table manners were quite complicated. People sat in a circle around the food, their status shown by whether they sat in a chair, on a stool or on woven mats on the ground, and on how close to the head of the household they were seated. Diners would help themselves to food, one at a time, in response to signals from the head of the household. Egyptians used spoons to eat soup, and occasionally employed knives for carving meat, but ate most other food with their hands. However, like the Arabs who came after them, the ancient Egyptians considered it unacceptable to use their left hands to serve themselves – that was reserved for less sanitary activities.

Before each meal, Egyptians thanked the gods for favoring Egypt over the other countries of the world. Furthermore, after a formal dinner the diners passed a wooden figure of Osiris (see p. 114) from hand to hand, as a reminder that life was transitory, and that the living had to prepare for the inevitable end. Some interpreted the Osiris ritual in a solemn fashion, but in more light-hearted households the custom was taken in the spirit of "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die," and the appearance of the idol signaled the beginning of revelry.

The most common meats in Egypt were beef and goose. Professional bird-trappers captured ducks, pigeons, quail and cranes, and game hunters killed oryx, gazelle and ibex. Egyptian cooks prepared these meats with an enormous variety of sauces and dressings, distinguishing them from the many other ancient peoples such as the Homeric Greeks, who were content simply to roast their meat.

Figs, dates and grapes were ubiquitous in ancient Egypt, but coconuts were a luxury and citrus fruits were unknown.

Early Egyptians ate hard flatbread, made palatable by dipping it in wine. By the 1500s B.C., softer leavened bread spread throughout the nation. Wealthier people ate bread made from emmer wheat, while the lower classes ate barley. Milk, butter and cheese were rare delicacies, but eggs from geese, quail, ducks and other birds were common. Chickens weren't introduced into Egypt until the

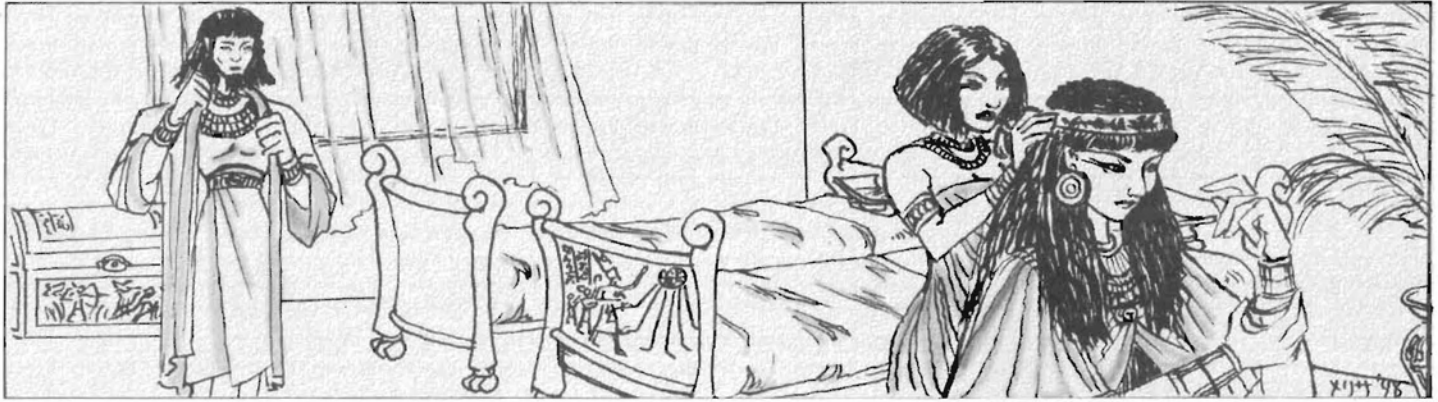
Hyksos invasion. Leeks, beans, chick peas, radishes, spinach, turnips, carrots, cabbage and lettuce were all popular. Slaves and the poor ate large amounts of onions and garlic.

The most common beverage in Egypt was a weak beer made by soaking barley bread in water and allowing the resulting stew to ferment. The upper class also had a taste for sweet grape wine. During the Old Kingdom most wines were red, but by the Middle Kingdom white wines became popular. Other common wines were made from dates, palm sap and pomegranates. Those who could afford to imported exotic vintages from Syria and Palestine, with the most precious wine of all coming from Greece.

Fashion

Egyptian dress was minimalist and functional. Under the African sun too much clothing could become hot and tiresome while desert nights could be chilling, especially in winter. Pharaohs of the early dynasties were typically depicted naked to the waist, indicating that they were ready to work on behalf of the nation. Other noblemen wore





white linen robes. Laborers usually wore no more than a kilt or loincloth, but their supervisors deliberately wore more clothing while working in order to emphasize their position, stripping down to similar attire at home. There were few taboos against nudity, especially for men.

Women wore slightly more elaborate clothing. Female attire included loose shirts, girdles, petticoats and skirts. The sleeves of the shirt could be billowy or skin-tight, and the skirts could be pleated or fringed. Such clothing came in many hues and styles, with brightly-colored cloth being more expensive.

Most Egyptians wore sandals of leather or woven papyrus. As Egypt came into contact with Greece, boots and hard shoes also became common. Pharaohs had pictures of captive enemies painted on the soles of their shoes, so that they could perpetually trample on their foes.

Hairstyles

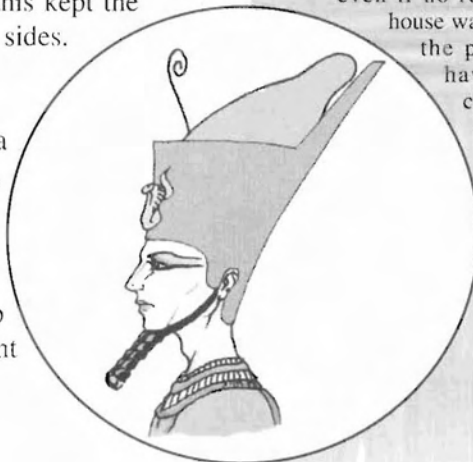
Egyptians took great pride in their grooming, contrasting their combed hair with the unkempt heads of foreigners. Men cut their hair short but wore curled and pomaded wigs on social occasions. Men also wore false beards as a sort of courtesy apparel, similar to the necktie in modern society. Ordinary citizens wore small goatees, perhaps two inches long, while pharaohs wore square-ended beards four or more inches long. Beards on statues of gods curled upward at the end, but no mere mortal ventured to wear his beard in that style.

Women wore long, coiffured hair, supplemented with wigs, pins, fillets, bands of beads, tasselled ribbons and tiaras. Most women kept their hair in masses of braids which hung below their shoulder blades in the back and fell down their heads on either side to the level of the bosom. Hairstyles were chosen to indicate social and marital status more than fashion and laws forbade slave-women to wear their hair in the same fashion as their mistresses, with the usual slave fashion being a simple loop or a few braids.

Carved wooden head rests were used instead of pillows; this kept the user's head cool since air could circulate around the head on all sides.

Ornament

Perfumes were common, and although women engaged in a far more complex toilette than men, both sexes wore makeup. Lips, palms and feet were painted with henna, eyes were lined with dark kohl and gold dust adorned the rich. Indeed, many believed that kohl helped ward off eye diseases. At festivals, Egyptians of both sexes placed cones of perfumed wax on top of their wigs – as time passed the wax melted, causing the scent to trickle down their faces and necks.



CULT OF THE PHARAOH

The pharaoh was not merely a living god, he represented aspects of many gods. The priests of Ra held that he was an incarnation of the sun-god. Since the goddess Neith had appointed Horus to watch over the world of mortals, the pharaoh became an incarnation of that god as well. When pharaohs died, they rose in the underworld as incarnations of Osiris. The pharaoh received offerings at the temples of these gods and others, and these temples enjoyed Pharaoh's special favor.

As the incarnation of multiple gods, the pharaoh was responsible for daily rituals that ensured that the life of Egypt would continue. Each morning he ritually washed his arms and legs, just as Ra washed his limbs in the ocean of heaven, restoring the vital force that flowed through Egypt. Only priests could serve as his body servants, and when they arrived each morning to dress him they wore masks of Horus and Thoth. Finally, the pharaoh prayed at his palace temple, in a rite which ensured that the divinities would watch over temples throughout the land.

During important religious festivals, the pharaoh often took the place of the high priest of a temple to perform the holy rituals. If Pharaoh wasn't there, he could appoint a proxy, such as his vizier, and even if no representative of his house was present at the ritual the pharaoh might still have a stele carved claiming that he had officiated at the rite.



COMBINED GODS

The laws of the material world did not limit the Egyptian gods, who had no difficulty manifesting themselves in many locations at the same time or in merging their powers and personalities into composite godforms. Priests were adept at using this concept to put the best theological face on political events. When, for instance, a pharaoh proclaimed Amun his patron deity, the priests of Ra simply stated that Ra had united himself with Amun, thereby remaining the god of the king. On a more mystical level, as the gods personified the forces within the human psyche, combined gods represented the synthesis of emotions which motivate people.

Ra was the god who appeared in combined form most often; Amun-Ra, Atum-Ra and Bast-Ra appeared frequently. Osiris and Ptah appeared in joint form under the name Serapis. Hapi, the god of the Nile, merged with Osiris in the season of inundations to fertilize the crops. Hathor often appeared in combined form, for example uniting with the war-goddess Sekhmet to produce an egocentric, single-minded killing machine (see *Ra Destroys Mankind*, p. 112).

The worshippers of Set tended to be people on the borders of Egypt, and Set often combined with war-gods of other Middle Eastern traditions, such as Set-Ba'al.



Jewelry

Egyptians of both sexes and all classes covered themselves with jewelry. Rings, brooches, anklets, bracelets, necklaces, pectorals and circlets were all common. The wealthy wore pectoral plates of gold and silver, which often went with a *menat*, or counterweight, that hung between the shoulder-blades. The *menat* typically served as an amulet (see p. 97). Bracelets could fit the upper arm, as well as the lower. A necklace of beads often hung down over the shoulders like a short cape. Jewelry often displayed ankhs, scarab beetles, eyes or hawk's heads. Such symbols were reputed to insure good health even when the jewelry was not designed to have magical power.

Gold, or *nub*, was the most common material for Egyptian jewelry. Originally found nearby in the Nile and in sites in the Eastern Desert, as local supplies became scarcer expeditions were sent to the gold-rich lands south of the First Cataract, earning that land the name Nubia.

Silver and copper, along with amethyst, beryl, calcite, carnelian, jasper, malachite, olivine, onyx, peridot, rock-crystal, sard, sardonyx and turquoise were also used. Lapis lazuli, imported from the region of modern Afghanistan, was especially valuable. Diamonds, opals, rubies and sapphires were unknown, as was the art of cutting facets into gems – all gemstones were polished spheroids. Enamel, glass paste and a fine porcelain known as faience served as substitutes for precious stones.

Headgear

Pharaohs wore a great variety of crowns, each with its own ritual or political meaning. The White Crown, a tall conical hat of white linen (resembling a papyrus plant) represented Upper Egypt, and images of Osiris often depicted him wearing this headgear. The round, flat-topped Red Crown, with its curving strip of metal rising from the front (evoking the image of a lotus flower), represented Lower Egypt.

Some rulers wore headgear that combined the features of the Red and White Crowns, although these were unwieldy, especially when pharaohs added other decorations such as ram's horns (representing Ra), golden cobras (after Wadjet, the goddess of Lower Egypt), vultures (for Nekhbet, the goddess of Upper Egypt) and falcon feathers (for Horus). These composite crowns eventually gave way to the Blue or War Crown, a cap of dyed leather, studded with gold sequins and encircled by a rim shaped like a cobra.

On informal occasions, an Egyptian ruler covered his head with a striped cloth called the *nemes* headdress, which went around the forehead and behind the ears, to tie at the back of the neck. Folds of cloth fell forward over the shoulders onto the chest. Lesser noblemen wore a simpler version of the *nemes* which lacked the stripes.

Housing

Early Egyptian noblemen built their tombs in imitation of their houses, later noblemen's houses imitated their ancestors' tombs, and common-born homeowners built their houses in imitation of the nobility, so the same style of architecture prevailed throughout every district of an Egyptian city. Nearly all buildings were made of sun-dried mud bricks. When builders needed especially strong bricks they reinforced the mud with linen fibers or straw – stone was used for thresholds and the bases of pillars.

Although the Egyptians knew how to kiln-bake red bricks, they had little need for them; houses were built on high ground or behind protective dikes to





stay dry during the Nile's annual flood, and even if a house was damaged by a freak rainstorm or particularly high flood it was easy to replace. Today, several thousand years later, structures made from Egyptian mud bricks remain as hard as stone if they haven't been exposed to water, and mud-bricks are still used in house-building.

Houses stood off the ground, mounted on brick platform-foundations. Instead of windows, an Egyptian building had slits with grills set high in the walls. Few houses had more than a single entry or an upper story, but many featured an interior ladder leading to the flat roof, allowing the rooftop to be used for additional living space and for sleeping on hot nights. Still, houses could be large, and a nobleman's villa might easily have 25 to 30 rooms.

Most houses had a cluster of outbuildings. Kitchens were in separate structures to protect the rest of the building from heat and odor. There were conical grain silos, stables, toolsheds and workshops. The head steward and other valued retainers had homes modeled on their master's villa, and there was a small village of huts for other servants.

Every home had gardens, on the ground and sometimes on the roof. Most people maintained pleasure-gardens, featuring flowers, lily pools and artfully tended trees planted in earthenware pots. Popular trees included willows, sycamores, pomegranates, figs and palms. Every garden included a beehive for honey and pollination.

Interiors

The interiors of Egyptian houses were designed for maximum protection from the heat. Broad corridors allowed air to circulate, and even the small outbuildings belonging to servants might contain open courtyards, for the same purpose. Houses also mounted wooden sails (*mulkuks*) on the roofs to direct winds into ventilation ducts.

Ceilings and floors were covered with gypsum plaster. The wealthy had the ceilings and walls decorated with frescoes or murals of country scenes, typically involving birds in flight, or had them covered with wooden panelling. Wood was expensive (often imported), and when Egyptians moved, they took their panelling with them.

The interior layout of a house was centered on a hall at least 30 feet square, where occupants dined, amused themselves and did business such as weaving cloth. This hall invariably had a higher ceiling than the rest of the house, supported by four wooden pillars. The main room had an alcove for washing, with a basin and pitchers, and was adjoined by a small shrine to the household gods such as Hathor, Bes and Taweret (see *A Selection From Thousands*, p. 112) and specific patrons such as Imhotep for artisans (see *Sanakhte, Djoser and Imhotep*, p. 36).

The homeowner had his bedrooms, robing rooms and lavatory in the house's rear. An Egyptian bathroom would look quite familiar to someone from the 20th century, with a modern-looking lavatory seat and, in some cases, running water. Some had shower stalls – a flagstone floor and a perch from which a servant could pour water over the bather's body. The Egyptians had no soap, but used fine clay to clean themselves. A stone massage table completed the bathroom furniture.

The modest homes of farmers, servants and the poor were similar in many respects to those of the wealthy, although on a much smaller scale. They consisted of four brick walls and a flat roof covered by palm-branches and mud plaster. The central room was used for eating and handicrafts during the day and sleeping at night, while the out-

SACRED ANIMALS

Temples often kept holy animals in tribute to their gods, and occasionally embalmed them after death. Temples also preserved more common animals to ensure a representation of all species in the underworld. Even some ordinary people mummified their pets so that they might be with them in the afterlife.

The following animals had special significance in Egypt.

Apes: Apes were sacred to Thoth, and mummified apes and green monkeys were commonly found in Thebes and Hermopolis.

Bats: The bat was a symbol of fertility.

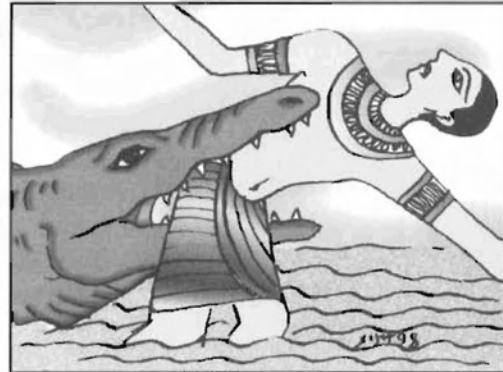
Cats: Cats were sacred to Bast and were the most commonly mummified animals, their tombs being found throughout Egypt.

Cattle: Cows were sacred to the goddess Hathor, while bulls (symbols of power) were sacred to a number of gods. No Egyptian dared kill a cow, but bulls frequently provided the meat for religious festivals. When the sacred bulls at Apis, Mnevis and Buchis died (of natural causes), they were mummified and buried, events important enough to be recorded in the lists of Pharaoh's annual accomplishments. When the Persians conquered Egypt in 525 and 343 B.C. they slew the sacred bulls to demonstrate their power.

Chickens: After the introduction of the chicken to Egypt by the Hyksos, the white rooster became sacred to Anubis.

Crocodiles: Crocodile cults abounded in rural Egypt, although people in the Nile heartland feared and detested crocodiles. Crocodiles were associated with the fierce gods Sebek and Set. Crocodiles were found mummified in Thebes and, of course, Crocodilopolis.

Continued on next page . . .





SACRED ANIMALS (CONTINUED)

Dogs: Dogs, wolves, jackals and foxes were sacred to Anubis and were found embalmed in Thebes. Mummified dogs were also found in tombs, either outside or in corridors as tomb-guardians, or inside as companions in the afterlife.

Frogs: Frogs were a symbol of Ptah and were mummified at Thebes. According to some, the frog represented Heket, the goddess who watched over women in labor and protected the home. Egyptians did not regard living frogs as particularly holy.

Gazelles: The priests of Thebes mummified gazelles.

Hares: The hare was a divine creature, which symbolized resurrection.

Hawks: The hawk was sacred to Ra, Horus and Heru-Ur, and hawks were mummified in Thebes. Eagles, vultures, geese, owls and sparrows were preserved by minor Theban cults.

Hippopotami: The powerful hippopotamus was sacred to Set and symbolized warfare. Hippopotamus mummies were found in Thebes.

Ibises: Ibises, the sacred birds of Thoth and symbols of purity, were mummified in Thebes, Memphis, Hermopolis, Abydos and other cities.

Insects: The bee was a symbol of Lower Egypt and the beetle was a symbol of Ptah and Khepera – both were found embalmed in Thebes, along with flies (which weren't sacred to any known Egyptian god).

Lizards: Mummified lizards were found in Thebes.

Pelicans: These birds were ritually significant in the Early Dynastic Period but lost that role afterward.

Pigs: The sow was sacred to Isis.

Rodents: Mice were sacred to Buto, a goddess of guardianship, and mouse and rat tombs occurred in Thebes.

Scorpions: Some villages worshipped a scorpion-goddess named Selk.

Sheep: Sheep and goats were sacred in many parts of Egypt, although no particular god laid claim to them. Many deities appeared in the form of a ram. Sheep and goats were found mummified in Thebes, and the sacred goat of Mendes was treated much like the Apis bull.

Turtles: The turtle symbolized evil deities, along with the more remote and hostile aspects of Ra.

Vipers: The viper was sacred to Amun and was mummified at Thebes.

buildings of large houses were simply other rooms of a poor man's home. The poor primarily grew vegetables in their gardens.

Fortifications

Especially along the frontiers in the south and to the east and west of the Delta, Egypt had a developed system of fortifications. Fortress walls were as much as 15 feet high and 50 feet thick. Most walls had parapets with loopholes so that archers could fire down at attackers. Square towers rose at regular intervals around a fortified place. Forts also featured walls extending at right angles from the main walls like spokes projecting from the hub of a wheel, forcing besiegers to either spend time reducing the projecting walls, or advance past them, allowing archers on top to shoot arrows at them from behind.

A permanent fortification was often surrounded by four separate rings of defense: a steep embankment faced with stone, a trench with a low wall in the middle, a system of walls and towers with positions for archers to fire on troops crossing the first barriers and a cleared zone around the fortification itself.

Pets

Egyptians commonly kept dogs, cats, baboons and monkeys as pets. Dogs were sacred to the god Anubis, and there were four popular breeds of this animal: a miniature "toy" dog, a compact mastiff, a moderate-sized guard dog and a breed resembling a modern greyhound. Cats were sacred to the goddess Bast, and their mysterious nature made them the subject of superstition; killing a cat was a serious crime although killing a dog is never mentioned in legal documents. Both dogs and cats were often mummified after they died (see *Sacred Animals*, p. 17), and special tombs were built for them. Egyptians commonly placed jewelry on their animals. Cats, in particular, were often the recipients (willing or unwilling) of jeweled collars and golden hoop earrings.

Other animals played roles in Egyptian domestic life. Vermin are always a problem for an agrarian culture, and Egyptians employed a number of strategies beyond the usual cats to deal with rats and mice. Some kept a type of mongoose called an ichneumon to hunt snakes and rats, while others left a small dish of milk on the ground each morning for the "house snake," which ate other vermin. Farmers trained monkeys to climb trees and drop fruit to people below. Lions, crocodiles and cobras were sacred, and although they were obviously not common in households, wealthy people might keep them. Elephants, jackals and cheetahs could also appear.

Trade and Money

Egypt did not have a capitalist economy. Pharaoh nominally owned everything in the nation – farm-owners were technically government officials managing Pharaoh's land and herds under the direction of the court or temple bureaucracy. Those who transported goods from one part of Egypt to another were teamsters and boatmen employed by the bureaucracies. Artisans, innkeepers and sellers of small goods operated shops in cities, but the government regulated their business activities. The only commercial activity that was relatively free of outside regulation was small-scale business conducted from the home, such as the trading of surplus vegetables and textiles for commodities in which a particular household wasn't self-sufficient.

With no large-scale trading activity, Egypt needed no formal system of money. Farm-owners traded produce and artisans offered services on an individual basis, employing barter and payment in kind, with grain being the most com-





mon "currency." When it was impractical to trade in food, people used precious metals for money, but they traded it entirely on the basis of weight and purity, not in the form of coins. The Egyptian system of weights was based on the *deben* – about 3.2 ounces. Unworked rings of precious metal weighing one-twelfth of a *deben* were often carried to market, as well as bags of metal filings. The actual value of gold fluctuated greatly with the purity of the metal and every marketplace had a licensed master of the scales who weighed commodities to ensure fair trades. For game purposes, a *deben* of gold is worth \$20.00.

In early Egyptian history, silver was perhaps twice as precious as gold because the latter could be found in a pure form in stream-beds while silver usually had to be refined from ores or alloys – only Egypt's isolation from the other nations of the Mediterranean forestalled a rush of speculators hoping to profit from this "backward" exchange rate. Sometime before the Middle Kingdom most of the supplies of free-standing gold ran out and with silver ore more common than gold ore, the values reversed themselves. After the reversal, silver traded for gold at a rate ranging from 2.5:1 immediately after the reversal to 12:1 by the Persian period, with fluctuations depending on local conditions and the amount of trade Egypt had with other nations. Even after gold became rare, foreigners still described Egypt as a land where "gold is as plentiful as dust."

Copper traded for silver at a rate of from 60:1 to 100:1. Iron and ostrich feathers and eggs were reputedly worth their weight in gold, while a dancing pygmy transported up the Nile from central Africa was considered a greater treasure than "the spoils of the mining country and of Punt" combined.

The *hequat*, a measure of grain, equalled slightly more than a gallon. Most linear measurements were in royal cubits of about 21 inches, each of which was divided into seven palms. The short cubit, used for measuring cloth, was only six palms long. Longer distances were measured using the *khet* of 100 royal cubits (about 60 yards) and the *iteru* ("river-measure") of 20,000 royal cubits (6.6 miles).

International Trade

Despite the primitive state of internal commerce, under certain pharaohs Egypt traded extensively with the outside world. International trade was a state monopoly, and pharaohs commissioned officials to travel abroad in search of commerce under the title "Treasurers of the God."

Certain imports were essential to the survival of the realm. Nearly all of Egypt's hardwood came from Syria and Phoenicia, and Egypt imported all of its copper and tin (necessary for bronze-production) – copper came from Cyprus and tin from an as-yet unidentified source. Other goods weren't vital in the normal sense but played important roles in the Egyptian lifestyle – and afterlifestyle. Among other luxury goods, Egypt imported pottery, porcelain, metals of all types, ivory, ebony, gemstones, horses, exotic animals, trees, seeds, fruits, bitumen, incense, gums, perfumes, spices, slaves and various oils.

Some of these items were traded directly between adjacent nations, but others came from as far afield as India and China through a network of trade and tribute that connected the entire ancient world. From the mid-third millennium B.C. most of this trade came through ports on the Canaanite coast, giving these harbors great importance to Egypt's economy.

Egypt financed its foreign trade with exported grain, linen and papyrus, and gold and silver mined in Nubia and the Eastern Desert.

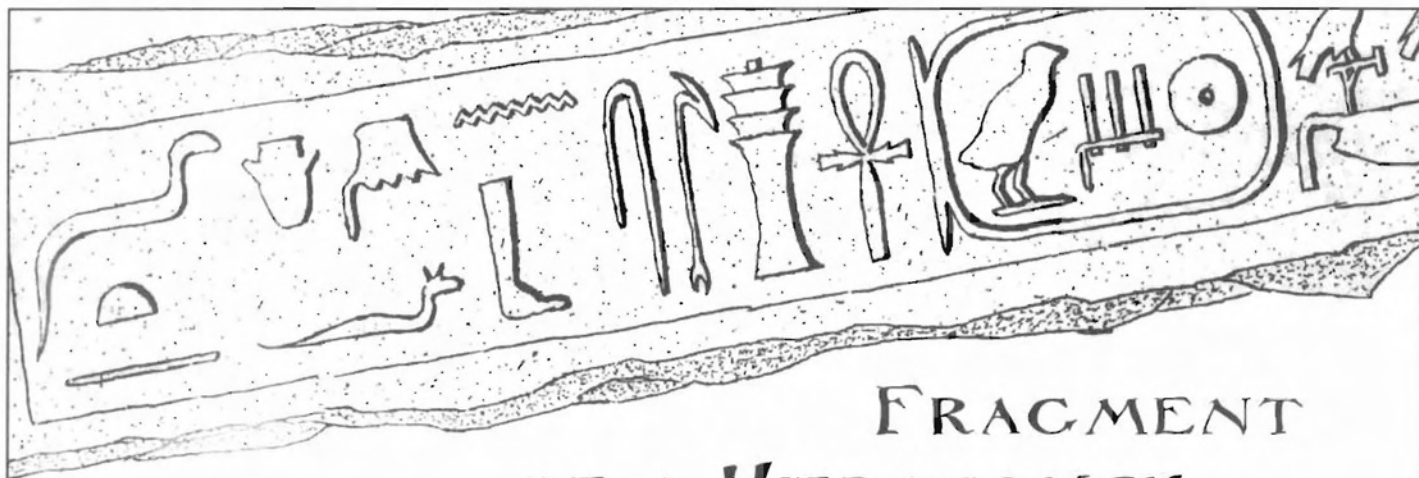
When the Persians, Macedonians and Romans established themselves in Egypt, they brought their own systems of money, merchant classes and customs of trade.

CONTRACTS

Egyptians sealed all business agreements with written contracts. Without a formal monetary system, every large-scale sale involved a complicated transaction of goods in which both sides had to understand the details and agree. Contract law was as complicated in Egypt as it is today, and wise negotiators took care to write every possible contingency into their contracts, to keep clever people from discovering and exploiting loopholes. Thus, contracts included such details as physical descriptions of the parties involved, names of the signers' relatives, and dates for each exchange of goods.

Many contracts involved debt, since, although money was not common, the concept of obtaining credit was. Unlike many ancient societies, Egypt did not permit lenders to collect on their debts by selling the debtors into slavery, nor could they seize any tools which the debtor required in order to carry on his profession. However, many debt contracts required borrowers to offer their ancestors' bodies as collateral.





FRAGMENT OF A HIEROGLYPH FROM SAHURE'S TOMB.

"Sahure (he to whom Re draws near).
Life, stability, dominion. May his heart be wide."

HELLENISTIC RELIGION

When the Greeks encountered the Egyptians, the two found their religions quite compatible. Both cultures accepted that there could be innumerable gods who appeared in a variety of forms. The following list shows gods which the Greeks and Egyptians sought to establish as identical. Some of the matches are rather dubious, such as the male Egyptian moon-god Khensu being linked to the female Greek Selene.

<i>Egyptian Deity</i>	<i>Greek Deity</i>
Amun	Zeus
Anhur	Ares
Anubis	Charon
Bast	Aurora
Geb	Chronos
Hathor	Aphrodite
Horus	Apollo
Isis	Demeter
Khensu	Selene
Min	Pan
Neith	Athena
Nut	Rhea
Osiris	Hades
Ptah	Hephaestus
Thoth	Hermes

Hieroglyphs

Researchers have always had great difficulty deciphering Egyptian inscriptions, and even almost two centuries after the "hieroglyphic code" was broken through the use of the Rosetta Stone (see p. 66) many writings remain unreadable. None of this would have surprised the Egyptians. Egyptian scribes did not expect the uneducated to read their inscriptions, and were particularly uninterested in making their writing accessible to foreigners; international correspondence was carried out using the lingua franca of the ancient world, Akkadian written in cuneiform script.

Like many other writing systems, originally Egyptian hieroglyphic writing was a language of pictures. As the culture and language became more sophisticated, the system evolved into something closer to an alphabetical one where most hieroglyphic symbols were pictures of objects or parts of the body but some were phonetic symbols, representing syllables. Other glyphs portrayed abstract concepts which sometimes corresponded to words in Egyptian speech and sometimes did not. A scribe with an artistic touch could complete his writing by adding small pictures which resembled hieroglyphs but were, in fact, illustrations.

To further complicate matters, writers arranged their text for artistic effect, rather than laying out sentences in a uniform pattern. Although words usually ran from left to right, they could also appear in alternating order or in vertical formations if it better fit the shape of the item being inscribed or the format of the illustration it accompanied. In Nubia, speeches on tomb walls were read from right to left if the illustration of the speaker faced the left, and from left to right if he faced the opposite direction!

Due to the complexity of drawing and reading hieroglyphs, scribes invented two forms of shorthand. The first, called hieratic, appeared mainly in official documents, while the second, demotic, appeared in personal papers and other mun-





dane records. In some cases, different words were used to describe the same concept in each of the scripts. In addition, writers often indulged in their own private abbreviations, removing vowel characters and other “unnecessary” letters.

Calendar

The Egyptian civil calendar consisted of 12 months, each lasting 30 days. The names of the months (theoretically beginning in late summer) were Thoth, Paopi, Athor, Choiakh, Tobi, Mechir, Phamenothh, Pharmuthi, Pachons, Paoni, Epep and Mesore. Since this calendar had only 360 days, five extra days were added to make it match the solar year of 365.24 days more closely. According to legend, these extra days were the birthdays of the deities Osiris, Horus, Set, Isis and Nephthys (see *Nut*, p. 114).

Unfortunately, the Egyptians had no leap year to account for the extra quarter-day per year, and the official calendar slowly fell out of synchronization with the astronomical one (the “Sothic” calendar, based on the risings of the star Sothis or Sirius), only coinciding every 1,460 years, an event that happened only twice in pharaonic Egyptian history: in 2773 B.C. and 1317 B.C. After 730 years, the civil calendar was exactly the reverse of the actual one, with winter weather occurring in what was officially a summer month; “Winter is come in Summer, the months are reversed, the hours in confusion” stated a record from the 13th century B.C.

The year was divided into three seasons, Akhet (“inundation”) from Thoth to Choiakh, Peret (“sowing”) from Tobi to Pharmuthi, and Shemu (“harvest”) from Pachons to Mesore, although actual farming activities didn’t follow this schedule exactly. Farmers sometimes managed to sow and harvest a second crop between the primary harvest and the next inundation.

RELIGION

Religion was ingrained into every aspect of Egyptian culture, from the rise and fall of the Nile to Pharaoh’s government. Temple festivals were frequent events, with colorful pageantry providing entertainment and renewing religious enthusiasm. Egyptians took the existence of the gods for granted. Gods lived lives much like their mortal worshippers, and some myths went so far as to describe the ridiculous things which certain deities had done after getting drunk at parties. For those who wanted material proof of the gods’ existence there were temples in which lesser gods routinely appeared before worshippers in the form of sacred beasts.

Despite the popular nature of Egypt’s religion, few cultures had a deeper tradition of convoluted metaphysics (the sidebar *Combined Gods*, p. 16, and Chapter 4, *The Supernatural*, p. 89, outline some of the consequences of this philosophical sophistication). Various occult sects, including the Rosicrucians and medieval alchemists claim to trace their esoteric beliefs to Egyptian origins.

Gods of Egypt

Over 2,000 Egyptian deities have been identified, including gods worshipped only in a restricted locale, gods who were still

PASSPORTS

Whenever an Egyptian wished to journey from one town to another, he had to visit government offices and present a passport, both before leaving one town and upon arrival in the next. Egyptian passports were wooden tablets, inscribed with details on the bearer’s physical appearance, profession and life history, and sold by the scribes who made them.

The passport system began as a way to enforce Egypt’s laws limiting artisans to a single profession. By requiring travelers to carry identification, the government could prevent people from moving to new cities and starting new careers. However, the passports also provided a mechanism for monitoring the lives of people in more detail. Upon presenting a passport, an Egyptian swore an oath promising to answer all of the official’s questions truthfully. Passport officials could then interview the citizen about any subject they desired.

It was customary for passport officers to demand that individuals give an account of their recent lives, including any crimes committed. Obviously, if the government had any reason to suspect a traveler of wrongdoing, such interrogations could become detailed. Under Egyptian law, few crimes carried a sentence more severe than a beating, but the penalty for lying under oath was death. Therefore, many criminals actually gave passport authorities full accounts of their crimes.





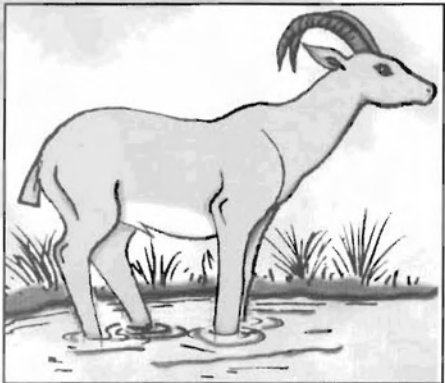
TEMPLES AND TRADE

In addition to exercising great influence over the pharaoh, Egypt's temples often acted as a state within a state. Temples owned their own land, and they reported their profits only to the religious hierarchy, not to the government. Therefore, the temples were the only economic power that did not answer to the court bureaucracy. Although the pharaoh supposedly headed both church and state, the high priests of great temples had, in practice, the power to act independently from his interests.

A few temples (such as the shrines in Abydos) even had the right to carry on foreign trade. The matter of trading privileges was one of the few sources of intrigue and deadly strife in Egypt's otherwise calm system of government.

Egyptians found guilty of engaging in commerce without royal permission faced brutal punishment, and during periods of dynastic change it was often unclear who was allowed to trade and who was not. Therefore, the opportunities for blackmail proliferated. Unscrupulous administrators could also create a pretext for punishing old enemies by imposing new trade laws retroactively. The army commanders who oversaw border posts often took the enforcement of trade laws into their own hands. At the same time, foreign trade was so lucrative that temples faced a strong temptation to continue their mercantile activities as long as possible. Smuggling and quasi-smuggling must have been common.

A temple which considered its trading status uncertain could hire adventurers to take the risk of carrying goods across borders. Naturally, if government troops arrested such merchants, the temple would deny all knowledge of them.



remembered long after they ceased to be actively worshipped, gods adopted from neighboring states, and secret cults that sprang up around the nation worshipping mystery entities.

Each deity could be split into forms which were, in many ways, separate entities. Thus, the priests at Heliopolis worshipped a subtly different Ra from the priests at Thebes without contradiction; this was simply part of the mystery of divine things, akin to the differences between the Catholic Virgin Mary revered in the guise of Our Lady of Fatima in one location and Our Lady of Guadeloupe in another. Even when a specific version of the god gained nationwide predominance, such as Amun of Thebes during the New Kingdom, local and national forms of the god could be worshipped side by side.

The priests of different cities promoted different beliefs about the divine hierarchy. One school of thought, based in Hermopolis, claimed that Thoth, the all-knowing, used his infinite knowledge to assemble the world, and therefore deserved the title of chief god. The Memphite Theology admitted that Thoth created the universe, but claimed that Ptah's power over the heart (judgment) and tongue (commanding will) enabled him to assign each thing its place in the cosmos, making him its ruler. In Heliopolis it was stated that the universe began when the sun (Ra's eye) emerged from a lotus blossom in the cosmic ocean, and that Ra was therefore the universe's ruler.

The success or failure of a city's religious ideas had a great effect on the political power of that city's rulers (and vice versa). During the earliest dynasties, Egypt's capital was Memphis and that city's patron deity, Ptah, was considered the creator god. In the Vth Dynasty the capital moved to Heliopolis and Ra was deemed the creator. National worship of Ra was replaced by reverence of Amun from his city of Thebes in the XVIIIth Dynasty. And all the while Pharaoh ruled as the living incarnation of Horus, the patron deity of the pre-unification capital of Upper Egypt, Hierakonpolis. (For a number of rival creation myths, see *In The Beginning Was Disagreement* and *The Myth of Khepera*, p. 111. For a description of the major Egyptian deities, see *A Selection from Thousands*, p. 112.)

Temples and Worship

The temples of Egypt had individual practices, rather like the different orders of Catholic monks. Some Egyptian priests were scholars and teachers, others treated the sick and injured, while yet others were aloof and mysterious, devoted to their gods' secret rituals. However, temples of different gods often exchanged clergy from the lower ranks, so many priests had experience in the rituals of more than one deity. Overall, the priesthood constituted an independent nation within Egypt, governed from Memphis and responsible only to the gods.

Egyptian priests took great care to maintain their dignity. Anything which might have embarrassed an ordinary person was a profound humiliation for a priest. Priests also took care to maintain their symbolic purity, bathing twice each day and twice each night, and shaving their entire bodies every three days. Priestesses did not generally shave their heads. Complicating the bathing ritual, the most devout priests refused to touch any water until a sacred ibex had dipped its beak in it, due to the belief that these birds wouldn't drink impure water.

Aside from the high priests who governed the temples there were three ranks of priesthood. The most important of these were the Fathers of the Gods. The Servants of the Gods were assistants to the Fathers. Ordinary priests had the title Pure Ones. Women could serve in any of





these positions (even in the temples of male deities) and a position above high priest, God's Wife, was created in the New Kingdom to provide a female counterpart to Pharaoh's role in important rituals. An additional priestly position, that of the Lectors who served as temple scribes and read from magical scrolls during funerals, was almost closed to women because of their low literacy rate.

Temples were massive buildings, containing hundreds of tiny shrines for individual worship, all oriented around a central hall, with its ceiling high overhead. A great pylon stood before the temple entrance, surrounded by precious wooden flagpoles, the number of flagpoles having ritual significance. The interior of most temples was overbearing, with massive pillars (required to hold up the heavy stone roof) making the central chamber too narrow for comfort, and ornate frescoes and carvings plastered on every square inch of wall. Priests and priestesses continually circulated in the temple, playing sacred music and performing countless minor sacrificial rituals. In addition, most temple complexes had sub-buildings containing libraries, museums, classrooms and offices.

Each temple was devoted to a single deity and contained a life-sized wooden statue of that god. Every day, the priests entered the secret chamber where the figurine stood, gave the god a bath, dressed it in fine clothes, and touched the statue's lips with a metal instrument to symbolically open them so that the god could eat. After the ritual, the priests withdrew, sealing up the god's room with clay and sweeping the ground with palm branches to erase their footprints.

Worship took the form of sacrifices of food, money, fine pottery and other valuables to the gods, with individuals making devotions either at annual events or when some divine favor was needed. The wealthy donated statues, obelisks or even entire buildings! Ordinary people could write their names on specially reserved parts of the temple walls, along with notes of devotion. Although human sacrifice wasn't central to Egyptian worship, there were occasions when high-ranking prisoners of war were sacrificed to Amun as lessons to rebellious vassals.

One of the benefits of worship was the right of sleeping in the temples of certain gods in hope of receiving advice or instructions from the god in dreams (see *Dream Interpretation*, p. 92).

Miracles

Many temples specialized in miraculous healings, and priests were often trained in the medical arts. People who experienced cures left clay facsimiles of whatever body parts had been restored, facsimiles that were displayed in special shrines advertising the successes of the healers.

On momentous occasions priests performed miracles of a symbolic nature. Although these tricks were performed by means of stage magic (such as moving a statue's arms mechanically), even the priests who performed the miracles wouldn't have deemed this charlatanism. They considered the mechanics of the miracle secondary to its symbolic importance.

Many mystery cults not only accepted the fact that priests staged their miracles, but made this a tenet of their teachings. Upon reaching the advanced stages of initiation, a novice learned that the supernatural events which had once left him awestruck were actually no more than tricks. After receiving this knowledge, the novice could no longer rely on material evidence to sustain his faith. To continue in the cult, he had to surrender to purely spiritual insights. The final secret, it was said, was that there were no secrets.

NUBIA

Nubia (from *nub*, "gold" in Egyptian) was the region of the upper Nile between the First and Sixth Cataracts. In many ways, Nubia was a second Egypt – almost all of its cultivated land lay along the banks of the Nile and it therefore evolved similar ways of life.

Egyptians and Nubians saw themselves as separate peoples and the border saw frequent skirmishes. During different periods of history, each had its period of dominating the other (see *The XXVth Dynasty*, p. 59). The Nubians, however, defended their freedom with a zeal that the peace-loving Egyptians did not. During the centuries when Egyptian pharaohs ruled the south, the Nubians revolted on a nearly annual basis and the country earned the alternate name Ta Sety, "the land of the bow," because of the skill of its defenders with that weapon – mercenary archers were almost as common an export to Egypt as Nubian cotton.

Despite this hostility, Nubia adopted many elements of Egyptian culture, building short, steep pyramids of the Middle and New Kingdom style over the tombs of kings and nobles and adding Egyptian gods, including Amun and Set, to their own pantheon headed by the lion-headed god Apedemak and featuring the fertility god Peteris (represented by a crocodile with a lion's hind legs, human arms and a hawk-head, with a lotus growing out of its back) and other local deities including Sebiemaker and Sesotris.

In the earliest part of its history, Nubia seems to have been a matriarchy and even in later years it had a large number of powerful queens. Nubian women apparently considered large hips and buttocks a sign of status . . . but interestingly, when Nubia adopted goddesses from Egypt they were still depicted in the usual slim Egyptian fashion. (See *GURPS Places of Mystery*, pp. 77-78, for more on Nubia.)

Although the land at Nubia's southern extreme, beyond the confluence of the White and Blue Niles, is now arid, in ancient times it was a lush savannah. Lions, elephants and other large wildlife abounded, and a variety of nomadic tribes lived upon the grassland. To Egyptians and northern Nubians this was a gateway to lands of myth.



SYRIA

Sitting between great empires, the Syrians spent much of their history fighting to survive. Syrian cities were heavily fortified, and during periods of independence the lord of a city usually ruled with little outside interference. In the deserts of southern Syria, these kingdoms formed a loose confederacy.

Syria adopted much of its culture from the Mesopotamian empires that frequently ruled it. Syrian scribes rewrote many of the classic Babylonian religious texts to suit their own tastes.

Economically, Syria was moderately well-off. It had a good water supply by Middle-Eastern standards and Syria could breed horses to trade for metal and timber.

The most widespread Syrian deity was Adonai, the god of beauty who died in his youth. Each city also had its own god, known as the *ba'al* ("lord") of that city, typically shown as ferocious sun-gods. Many Syrians also worshipped sacred stones, streams and forests.

The temples of Astarte, the passionate goddess of love and war, practiced a ritual in which priestesses picked men from the streets, inviting them to the temple where they made love to a priestess who represented the goddess incarnate. Afterward, the men made donations to the temple funds. The Syrians considered this temple prostitution quite holy.

Temple Intrigue

Conflict is the stuff of adventures, and Egypt's religion provides plenty of disputes in which adventurers may find themselves included. Temples (both those of the gods and the mortuary temples of the pharaohs) received the majority of their funding through endowments of land or businesses set aside to provide them income in perpetuity. Competition for grants grew fierce and underhanded as the country's resources grew strained – at the height of their power the temples of Amun owned 66% of all temple land, 90% of all ships and 80% of all factories in Egypt!

The priesthood also had to defend its traditions against hostile religious systems. When Pharaoh Akhenaten attempted to ban the old religion in favor of the god Aten, the priests resisted. Although no full-scale religious wars or medieval-style inquisitions developed, the aftermath of this heresy may have led to the assassination of the boy-king Tutankhamun (see *Tutankhaten/Tutankhamun*, p. 52).

Festivals

Ordinary Egyptians had little contact with the temples except on holy days, during religious processions and when they had specific boons to ask – everyday worship was conducted through small shrines in homes.

Egypt's chief form of public worship consisted of religious festivals. On any day, there was a festival in some city of Egypt. Given the spectacular nature of these occasions, the wealthy rarely missed an opportunity to attend the ceremonies of distant towns. Religious pilgrimage was a form of tourism, and generated business for innkeepers, food-sellers and souvenir-traders.

Many festivals featured symbolic pageants in which priests used large pup-





pets or actors in costumes to portray important mythological episodes. Most ended with the slaughter of sacrificial animals for public dinners. As evening approached, even the poorest shared in a lavish feast, complete with beer, sports and dancers.

Some festivals had national significance and could last for weeks, while others were purely local in character. The following were typical major or national celebrations.

Heliopolis and the Heb-Sed Festival

Many of the rituals in Heliopolis revolved around worship of time and the night sky. The priesthood of Nut there held four nighttime festivals each month, celebrating the phases of the moon. Heliopians also celebrated the sixth evening of each month, to mark the beginning of the second week. Every 30 years, the pharaoh traveled to Heliopolis and celebrated the anniversary of his coronation in a jubilee known as the heb-sed festival. Pharaohs typically chose this date to erect obelisks, colossal statues and other monuments to themselves. The heb-sed festival was supposed to rejuvenate the pharaoh, and some went through the ritual more frequently than tradition required.

Osiris' Resurrection Festival

Osiris rose from the dead on the 30th day of Choiakh, and every city in Egypt celebrated this holiday. The priests of Abydos held an especially lavish ceremony. Other priests carried a symbolic pillar upriver from Busiris, and raised it in Memphis to honor Osiris and the reigning pharaoh. This djed pillar was a squat column with a rounded top and concave sides, circled by three rings, one on top of the other. It represented stability, the resurrection of Osiris and the hope for a long reign for the pharaoh.

The Flooding of the Nile and the Breaking of the Dams

In Memphis, the priests of Ptah performed fertility rites on the day the Nile's annual floods officially began to ensure that farms throughout Egypt would prosper during the floods. Because the date on the civil calendar couldn't be used to predict the flood with any accuracy, priests had to use other methods to time festivals that were linked to the natural year instead of the calendar year. One way was to watch for the first appearance of Sothis after its disappearance behind the sun during the early summer months. A more direct method was to track the changing depth of the Nile itself. Although the Nile began its slow rise as early as late spring, it reached a high point in late summer (at approximately the time of the reappearance of Sothis). The priests gauged the height of the Nile at the nilometer (a set of measured marks carved into the stone in the river's bank) upstream at the First Cataract, which gave them a few days of warning before the Nile at a companion nilometer downstream at Heliopolis showed its own peak rise.

The fertility ceremony began with the priests leading a herd of sacred bulls around the Memphis city walls. Then, the priests sent another sacred bull running out through the east gate of their temple, to go forth and symbolically fertilize the land. Finally, priests throughout Egypt broke the earthen levees along the Nile, allowing silt-bearing water to rush into irrigation ditches, flowing out to actually fertilize the nation.

The breaking of the dams was always a moment of great import. This event symbolized the marriage of earth to water and the marriage of Isis to Osiris. More practically, the priests maintained that, if the gods were angry, this was the



CRETE

By 2500 B.C. the island of Crete had splendid cities, notably at Phaestus, Mallia and Knossos, and the Minoan Empire was forming. Unlike mainland civilizations where the army was supreme, Crete's military power was based on a navy that was able to protect a merchant fleet that controlled trade within the islands of the Aegean Sea and along the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean.

Egypt traded extensively with Crete, exchanging marble, clay, ostrich eggs and precious stones for wool, olive oil, timber, silver, and metal goods. Cretans were famed for their metalwork and may have introduced the art of smelting iron ore to the Egyptians, who previously depended on meteorites for this resource. (The Hittites might also have been the source of Egyptian iron-working technology.)

Women dominated Crete's society, and while each major city had a king or male chieftain, he received his title by marrying a high priestess. The Cretans worshipped a powerful goddess, performing her ceremonies either underground or on mountaintops. The priestesses maintained special temples filled with snakes. They claimed to be immune to venom and to know advanced magical techniques including the arts of healing and prophecy learned from their reptilian companions. Other temples raised sacred fig trees; to eat the consecrated figs was to become one with the goddess. These religious practices may have influenced the story of Adam and Eve.

Crete's society relied heavily on secular magicians. The sorcerers of Crete produced magical seals that threatened terrible consequences for anyone who removed or broke them without performing the appropriate rituals. Cretans also wore them as medallions to "seal" their bodies against disease, demonic possession and other intrusions.

Around 1500 B.C. a volcano erupted on the island of Thera, some 70 miles off the Cretan coast, blanketing Crete with ash and inundating its cities with tsunamis. The Minoan trading center on Thera was destroyed and Crete itself was weakened by the disaster, to be invaded by Mycenaeans from mainland Greece. Some believe that Egyptian records of this incident formed the basis for the Atlantis myth (see *GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. 9).





PHOENICIA

The string of port cities in what is now Lebanon was anciently called Phoenicia. The largest of these were Byblos, Sidon, Tyre and Berot (Beirut). Many of these cities were on islands or defensible peninsulas, and the mountains of the interior provided an additional obstacle, enabling Phoenicia to maintain its independence for centuries, although by the 9th century B.C. it was forced to pay tribute to Assyria.

The Phoenicians called themselves the Kena'ani, "merchant" in their tongue, and they traded throughout the Mediterranean, taking up where Cretans had left off. Phoenicia exported cedar, pine, wine, metals, glass, salt, fish and pottery. Tyre was famous for a purple dye made from shell-fish and the dye eventually gave its name to the entire region, "phoenix" being Greek for purple. Phoenicia founded numerous colonies to further its trade, the most famous and successful being Carthage, across the Tyrrhenian Sea from Rome, and Phoenician traders searching for new markets to exploit sailed out of the Mediterranean to England in the north and West Africa in the south – the fleet that circumnavigated Africa for Pharaoh Nekau (see p. 61) was Phoenician.

As a cosmopolitan nation, Phoenician culture was a mix of myths, traditions and artistic motifs from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria and Greece. They worshipped many of the same gods as the Syrians but with some differences, such as Asherah (the Syrian Astarte) being the consort of a sky-god named El. The greatest Phoenician accomplishment was the transformation (around 1000 B.C.) of the cuneiform writing system of Mesopotamia into an alphabetical system which has survived to this day.

time when they would poison the fields instead of watering them. Therefore, the Egyptians were prone to take any unusual event which happened at this moment as an omen, for good or for ill.

Good, Evil and Ma'at

GMs can pit the heroes against opponents whose tactics included poison, necromancy, gruesome rituals and other practices which modern people consider evil. However, priests of "good" Egyptian gods would not generally try to wipe out the worship of "evil" gods simply on grounds of principle. For the worshippers of different Egyptian gods to fight, they needed a stronger motivation than the traditional enmity of their deities.

To modern minds, the god Set and the serpent Apep represent sources of supernatural evil, but early Egyptians did not recognize the concepts of "good" and "evil" in the modern sense. The guiding principle of Egyptian life was ma'at, the principle of "right living." To follow ma'at was to fulfill one's role in life honestly and well. For a peasant, ma'at meant working diligently on behalf of one's ruler and family. For rulers, ma'at meant doing one's best to ensure prosperity and happiness for the people. Egyptians believed that ma'at was the natural order of the universe, necessary for the happiness of the individual and the good of the collective. The most important part of the code was the acceptance of the way things were – Egyptians liked knowing that they had a place in the cosmic scheme where they belonged.

Egyptian philosophers were fond of the idea that the wholeness of the universe depended on the union of opposing forces, and they considered the dark nature of Set (representing *isfret*: chaos and disruption) a necessary complement to the benevolent nature of Osiris. There were public temples to Set, and perfectly respectable people worshipped there.

It was only when worship of Set became associated with disruption of the normal Egyptian way of life, an offense against ma'at, that Set and his followers became enemies of the people. The Hyksos invaders who ruled Egypt in the 17th century B.C. and the raiding desert tribes who bothered Egypt throughout its history showed a great enthusiasm for Set, making the god a threat to Egypt. Within a generation of the expulsion of the Hyksos around 1555 B.C., priests began to destroy sacred texts associated with evil gods, and to scratch the images of Set off of temple walls.

Cities of the Dead

From prehistory through the first dynasties, Egyptians buried their dead in cities of the dead that stood just outside the cities of the living. The earliest burials occurred in simple pits, but eventually they were covered with *mastabas*, brick or stone houses placed over the shaft leading to the burial chamber below the desert. Over time the mastabas grew larger, covering complexes of rooms filled with burial goods as well as the entombed body. In the IIIrd Dynasty an innovation occurred; a series of successively smaller mastabas were built over the tomb, creating a stepped pyramid. When the steps were smoothed over with dressed limestone the familiar Egyptian pyramid was born. During this era the cities of the dead were also moved away from the cities of the living, occupying the west bank of the Nile so that the souls of the dead would be closer to the land of the setting sun (see *Tuat*, p. 100).





* Eventually, the threat of tomb-robbers drove Egypt's leaders to abandon obvious structures and construct secret tombs instead. However, even then they built false tombs in the old cemeteries to serve as places for their mourners and descendants to leave offerings.

An entire division of the priesthood, the mortuary cult, existed to watch over the dead. It functioned much like the priesthoods serving individual gods, and performed many of the same rituals. One of their most important functions was performing the Opening Of The Mouth ritual (see *Coming Forth By Day*, p. 93) upon either dead bodies or statues of the dead, allowing the deceased to regain their full faculties and senses in the afterlife. Poor people received a single Opening Of The Mouth during their funerals – the rich had it repeated as often as once per day, for as long as the priests still visited their tombs.

GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE

Egypt was both a theocracy and a monarchical empire, with the pharaoh serving as king, god and high priest. The conservative nature of Egyptian society also appeared in its rulership. Pharaohs treated even minor matters of policy as weighty decisions, a fact which insured continuity, but also meant that some rulers put off solving some great problems for generations. Even the most politically active of pharaohs seldom altered the basic structure of government; the system seemed to work splendidly, and except for brief periods of disorder, the pharaonic government lasted for almost 3,000 years.

One thing for 20th-century gamers to remember is that few Egyptians were cynical about their rulers. The pharaoh was a national celebrity whose royal pageantry served to fill the people with awe. His people loved him, and would have been offended by anything which seemed to slight him. Nor was this merely a case of people praising the monarch while blaming their ills on the rest of the administration. Apparently life in Egypt was pleasant enough to keep the Egyptians satisfied with their system of government.

The Pharaoh

From the New Kingdom on, Egyptians did not speak of “a” pharaoh or “the” pharaoh, nor did they usually refer to living rulers by their ordinary names. The current pharaoh was simply Pharaoh, the divine king (see *The Word “Pharaoh,”* p. 14). Although Egypt's first rulers did not claim to be gods, the advantage of declaring the ruler to be a living deity was soon seen by the priests and the rulers themselves, and after the first century or so of united Egypt's existence, the custom was entrenched. The word of Pharaoh was law in the absolute sense – indeed, the Egyptian term for “justice” translates literally as “what Pharaoh loves,” while wrongdoing is “what Pharaoh hates.”

Due to a national obsession with tradition and record-keeping, Egypt gradually accumulated a comprehensive unwritten constitution. By examining the judgments of early rulers, scribes wrote a series of books on law, the Eight Books of Thoth. These books, however, served more as guidelines than absolute law. Defendants couldn't depend on the “letter of the law” to protect them from judgment.

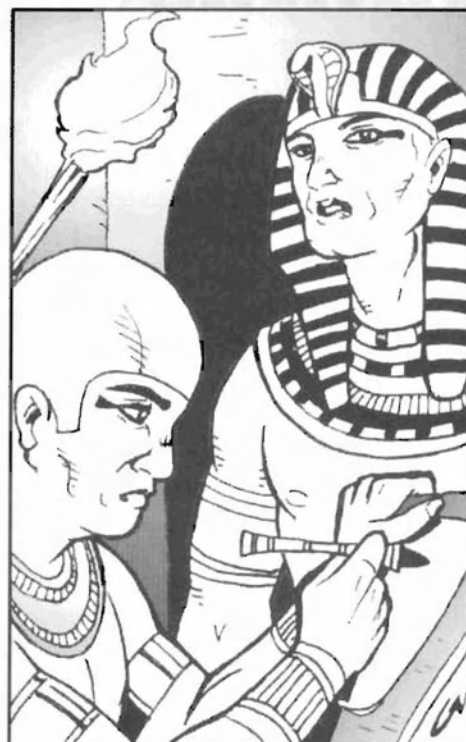
Despite his technically absolute power, ritual and books of religious law prescribed most of the pharaoh's life, serving, among other things, to prevent him from indulging in unbridled tyranny. In addi-

CANAAN

Canaan was a rough country, in which patches of fertile land were sprinkled among boulder-strewn hills. The Canaanites had a tribal society based around village life, but there were a number of walled cities to defend against attacks from Egypt and Mesopotamia.

As a result of the harsh conditions in Canaan, the inhabitants sometimes migrated to the fertile Nile and Tigris/Euphrates valleys during times of famine or invasion. One such migration may have occurred during the Hyksos domination of Egypt (see *The XVth, XVIth & XVIIth Dynasties*, p. 45) and may have been the origin of the Joseph and Exodus myths (see *Egypt in the Bible*, p. 57).

When the Israelites returned to Canaan after their sojourn in Egypt, they found the Canaanites who had remained behind too powerful to displace from the land. The Israelites established a foothold in Canaan, occupying the mountainous areas that the Canaanites disdained, while the iron-armed Philistines (the remnants of the Sea Peoples who had attempted to invade Egypt; see p. 56) attacked Canaan from land and sea. By 1000 B.C., the Philistines had firmly established themselves in southwestern Canaan, and kings Saul and David had united the Israelite tribes to conquer the rest of the country.



DESERT NOMADS

The Bedouin, Berbers and Tuaregs roamed the Middle East from West Africa to the Persian Gulf, dwelling in distinctive goatskin tents. These nomads divided themselves into numerous tribes and family clans, each of which had its own customs and a distinct status within nomad society.

Of all the clans, the fierce cattle-herding Tuareg held the highest status, partly because of their fearsome reputation for never letting insults go unavenged. The Tuareg, like the Egyptians, passed property from mother to daughter, and even after their conversion to Islam, Tuareg women remained powerful within their tribes. Tuareg women wore no veils, but Tuareg men wrapped their faces with blue scarves, revealing their features only to those with whom they shared some powerful bond.

Every group of desert nomads was ruled by a *sheikh* or "elder." The *sheikh* had the honor of receiving tribal guests in his tent. Beyond that, the authority of this leader depended largely upon personal charisma and his ability to maintain the support of his people.

In addition to the *sheikh*, most nomads appointed an elder with a reputation for wisdom to serve as the *hakim*, or judge. When two tribes had a dispute, their *hakims* mediated between them to prevent war. However, the nomads also had a strong tradition of avenging minor insults by stealing the cattle and camels of their enemies. The *hakims* seldom interfered in these raids.

Nomad tribes frequently attacked Egyptian villages and raided caravans. Other bands sold their protection to Egyptian travelers. During pharaonic times the nomads seldom united into a force strong enough to threaten the nation as a whole. When the prophet Mohammed appeared, his religion spread rapidly among the nomads, and the Bedouin quickly became Islam's most ferocious warriors.



tion to daily religious rituals (see the sidebar on p. 15), every festival and every meeting of the court followed a choreographed script in which each move had a meaning, and every action Pharaoh took, even incidentally, had some import. If the pharaoh's shadow fell upon someone, it was a terrible omen for that person, and if the pharaoh should happen to touch someone with his staff, the victim would expect to die shortly thereafter.

Most pharaohs married their eldest sisters or even their mothers, both to avoid diluting the divine bloodline and because Egyptians inherited property through the woman's side of the family – the pharaoh needed such a marriage to have a legal claim on the throne. For the same reason, pharaohs married any other woman who might lay claim to rulership, consolidating all claims in a single person. Pharaohs also maintained large harems of foreign princesses acquired in political marriages, along with women chosen simply for their beauty.





The Bureaucracy

Pharaoh had a permanent civil service of several thousand ministers and exalted servants to maintain his kingdom, accounting in part for the millennia-long continuity in Egypt's government. Many positions in the hierarchy were purely honorary. Members of the court liked to have strings of titles after their names, and pharaohs continually sought new rewards to give valued servitors.

The vizier, or prime minister, did the routine work of running Egypt, leaving the pharaoh free to concentrate on major decisions. A vizier supervised all other officials, kept records on such vital statistics as rainfall and the national accounts, and planned major agricultural and engineering projects. In addition, he held court each morning, hearing petitions from people of any rank who choose to come before his seat.

After the vizier, the most important officials in Egypt were the magistrates, who judged cases of national importance and served as an inner council for the vizier and Pharaoh. There were 30 magistrates – ten chosen from each of the major cities: Thebes, Heliopolis and Memphis. Egyptians abhorred corruption, and paid their magistrates lavishly in an attempt to eliminate the temptation to take bribes.

The pharaoh appointed regional officials (nomarchs) to govern Egyptian provinces (nomes). Normally there were 36 nomes, although some pharaohs increased this number, either to govern an increasing population or to provide more offices for prominent officials. Each province and city also had its own panels of judges, the number of which varied. Often the son of a nomarch "inherited" the position, but only if the inheritance was confirmed by Pharaoh.

Advancement within the military, temple and bureaucratic hierarchies could be quite fluid. At the end of the XXth Dynasty, Herihor worked his way up to the military rank of general before being named Pharaoh's vizier in Upper Egypt. From that position he managed to gain status in the third hierarchy as high priest of Amun despite his prior lack of priestly experience. It was a short step from there to declare himself sole ruler of Upper Egypt, beginning the Third Intermediate Period.

Crime and Punishment

To Egyptians, the law was sacred, and magistrates had a divine duty to act swiftly to enforce it. In theory, anyone who had suffered a wrong could request justice from the pharaoh. In practice, people took their complaints to the local magistrates, who instituted proceedings against the accused. The passport system (see *Passports*, on p. 21) helped to flush out criminals who evaded detection by other means.

Each nomarch maintained a police force, often composed of Nubians or other foreigners who would have fewer loyalties to the local populace. Police

MESOPOTAMIA

The land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Mesopotamia in Greek) was the seat of human civilization – some towns along the Euphrates may be over 12,000 years old! The river flood plains were fertile, with wheat and dates growing abundantly, and apples, pears and other fruit common. Mesopotamian kings extended a system of canals across their country, irrigating yet more land and making transportation simple.

Although initially the kings of the fortress cities on the flood plains were autonomous, they struggled to establish their supremacy over each other, forming a series of empires named after the ruling city (Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Ashur (Assyria), etc.), each the home of a different patron god.

In early Mesopotamia, the foremost deity seems to have been Inanna, the bountiful goddess of love. A king could not rule unless a priestess of Inanna accepted him as a husband. Inanna's husband Tammuz was an arrogant god who presumed to issue orders in her name. As a result, she banished him to the underworld, where he became a god of death.

As Inanna was the provider of all good things, her temples distributed food, farmland and other wealth. In order to keep accurate records, the temple administrators invented a system of writing which involved pressing sharpened styluses into clay tablets. This script, known as cuneiform, is the earliest known writing system. The temples of Inanna also practiced sacred prostitution (see *Syria*, p. 24).

Mesopotamian innovations spread across the ancient world, through trade and conquest. For thousands of years after the fall of the Akkadian Empire the language of international diplomacy was Akkadian (written in cuneiform), some of the laws found in the biblical books *Leviticus* and *Exodus* were derived from the law code of Hammurabi of Babylon, written circa 1700 B.C., and later Babylonian religious philosophy and mythology shaped Judaism during the 6th-century B.C. Babylonian Exile.



PUNT

Egyptians were continually fascinated by this land of riches and magic, blessed by Hathor according to the priests, ruled by a dragon-king according to folk tales. Egyptian drawings depict Punt's inhabitants as a short, pot-bellied people.

Numerous pharaohs provided funds so that intrepid explorers could travel to Punt and trade for riches. Although Punt was famous for gold, spices, drugs, ebony, ivory and exotic furs, its most valuable product was incense. Egyptians always arrived bearing lavish gifts and strange goods, which must have improved relations between the two nations.

Punt may have been located on the horn of Africa in modern Somalia or across the sea on the Arabian peninsula. There were many names for this country, including "Ladders of Incense," "Gods' Country," "Cinnamon Land" and "Land of Hathor."

served primarily to arrest dangerous suspects or force people to pay taxes and comply with other unpopular laws – police work was largely a matter of brute force.

A chief magistrate opened each trial, ceremoniously entering the courtroom and donning a pendant depicting Thmei, the goddess of truth. An assistant brought in the Eight Books of Thoth and placed them in a convenient location. Scribes representing the plaintiff submitted a written accusation containing their entire argument, including requests for sentencing and retribution. The defendant had the opportunity to read these documents and submit written rebuttals of any sort or to write a request for lesser punishment. The court didn't allow either side to present an oral argument, on the theory that persuasive orators might influence it. The panel of judges deliberated, and when they'd reached a decision, the chief magistrate touched the image of Thmei to the party the court had chosen to favor.

Egypt maintained prisons only to hold defendants until magistrates could impose sentences. Beating with sticks was the nearly universal punishment for crime. Men received this penalty lying face down on the ground, with soldiers holding their hands and feet. Women suffered it kneeling upright, and were immune to punishment while pregnant. Magistrates could also sentence common offenders to periods of forced labor in mines or on public works. Whenever possible, magistrates ordered wrongdoers to reimburse their victims.

Egyptians disliked capital punishment on grounds of practicality and com-

passion; execution deprived the pharaoh of a potentially useful subject, and it dispatched the criminal into the underworld at a moment when he was least able to justify his life before Osiris.

Only three crimes commonly incurred the death penalty: murder (including tomb-robbery, since this could cause the deceased to suffer the "second death"; see *Death and Afterlife*, p. 100), treason and perjury. Anyone who witnessed a murder but did nothing to prevent it was also faced with capital punishment. Treason was punished by throwing the offender into a pool of crocodiles. For other capital crimes, the method of execution was hanging or impalement on a sharpened stake.

On various occasions, pharaohs universally commuted all death sentences to forced labor. Depending on a particular pharaoh's magnanimity, this reduced sentence might also involve amputation of the nose. Pharaohs also occasionally pardoned large numbers of criminals, on the condition that they found colonies in the desert, adding to the number of productive Egyptian townships and providing a buffer against foreign attacks and nomadic raiders.





PHARAOHS AND CONQUERORS

The kingdom of the pharaohs was the union of two ancient lands, Upper and Lower Egypt, which emerged over the course of tens of thousands of years of pre-literate time. And the North African deserts have been the defining force for all of Egypt's existence.



THE DATING PROBLEM

During the reign of Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.) a scribe named Manetho wrote a history of the pharaohs of Egypt up to the Persian period, dividing the long list of pharaohs into 30 dynasties or family lines. While Manetho's writings have disappeared, a number of Greek and Roman writers quoted the original works, and these secondhand accounts, combined with inscriptions and ancient records (see *Ramesses and Seti*, p. 54), allow modern historians to assemble a limited chronicle of Dynastic Egypt's entire 3,000-year history.

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to tell exactly when any given event in Egyptian history took place, because Manetho gave no exact dates, merely recording the length of each pharaoh's reign. Worse yet, some of the dynasties ruled different parts of Egypt at the same time, making it difficult to decide how much the reigns of two pharaohs in simultaneous dynasties may have overlapped. And sometimes, in order to secure an uneventful succession, a pharaoh ended his reign with a number of years of co-rule alongside his heir. Each pharaoh dated his reign independently, so that the 36th year of Pharaoh Ahmose I was also the fifth year of Amenhotep I; if the historian doesn't know that these reigns were in part simultaneous, his dating calculations will be off by five years. Multiply this by the number of co-rules (known and suspected) and entire centuries can be erroneously added to the historical record.

As a result, the reign of Egypt's first pharaoh, for instance, may have taken place at any time between 5702 B.C. and 2000 B.C., depending on which source one believes. Even the carbon-dating of mummies cannot pinpoint dates to the accuracy needed to be truly useful. Certain dates where an event was recorded in both Egyptian and foreign chronicles or when a celestial conjunction can be determined exactly (see *Calendar*, p. 21) are used as benchmarks from which all other dates have to be counted forward or back.

The dates in this book represent the best opinions of reputable Egyptologists.

PREHISTORIC EGYPT: 50,000-5,000 B.C.

During the most recent ice age in Europe, the Sahara was a well-watered grassy plain, home to cattle, giraffes, gazelles and other savanna wildlife, as well as tribes of spear- and knife-armed hunters who followed them across the plains. Other tribes lived on the banks of the Nile and numerous lakes fishing, fowling and gathering the widely-available plant life.

Around 30,000 B.C. the Sahara began to dry up, the grasses turning to sand and the lakes becoming isolated oases. While some tribes died in the harsher conditions, many moved toward the only sure supply of food and water, the Nile valley. The increasing pressure on the food supply prompted these early Egyptians to come up with more efficient food production methods, and agriculture came to replace hunting and gathering as the primary food source for the region.

Agriculture requires a stationary population, so permanent villages replaced temporary camp sites. Settlements led to increasing material wealth in the form of food surpluses and the clay and stone pottery to store them, an array of wooden, bone and stone tools and numerous decorative items.

Many customs we associate with the pharaohs, such as preserving corpses and burying the dead in such a way as to facilitate rebirth in another life, predated the pharaohs by centuries if not millennia. Examples of everyday items were buried with the naturally-mummified dead in cemeteries adjacent to the settlements as displays of their wealth and to provide for the spirits of the deceased in the afterlife. The ritual feast held at the foot of the deceased's grave was a precursor of the continuous food-offerings made to the ka of the deceased in historic times. Some evidence even implies that kings committed ritual suicide at a certain age so that they might be reincarnated in the bodies of their heirs, a practice that had symbolic echoes in dynastic Egypt (see *Narmer*, p. 33).

PRE-DYNASTIC EGYPT: 5500-3150 B.C.

The overall increase in wealth also led to the concentration of wealth and political power in the hands of a few: the village leaders, whether they be strongmen, ruling priests or the architects who planned and maintained the all-important dikes and irrigation ditches – "Scorpion" appeared in the engineer's role, while his successor, Egypt's first unifier, Narmer was depicted as a warrior.

Affluence also led to the development of a system of recording this wealth: hieroglyphic writing (see p. 20). And finally, the combination of material wealth, political power and a method of transmitting one's wishes over distances and time resulted in local rulers extending their empires beyond the confines of their home villages to the desert tribes in their immediate neighborhoods, and then to other settlements up and down the Nile. First a number of pocket kingdoms were established; the 30 nomes of predynastic Egypt, each with its own mythology and gods. Then, centuries later, a sequence of strong nomarchs appeared at Abydos, and they began the process of unifying all the nomes into one Egypt. The confusing situation of multiple, incompatible origin myths all considered "official" in parts of the country (see Chapter 6, p. 111) stems from the attempt to weld the traditions of the 30 nomes into a national mythology.





Because of the different living conditions and lifestyles along the Nile valley and in the Nile Delta, the nomes became grouped into two loose confederations. Upper Egypt (the southern valley) had its capital at Hierakonpolis, and adopted the lotus as its national symbol. Lower Egyptian civilization centered on the city of Buto in the northern Delta, and adopted the papyrus plant as its emblem. Nekhbet and Horus, a vulture-goddess and a hawk-god, watched over Upper Egypt, while Wadjet and Set, a snake-goddess and a jackal-god, were the patrons of Lower Egypt. Myths record considerable conflict between Horus and Set (see *Osiris*, p. 114).

THE EARLY DYNASTIC PERIOD: 3150-2686 B.C.

Dynasty 0: Unification

"Scorpion"

Some time before 3,000 B.C. the king of Upper Egypt (known only as "Scorpion" after a symbol signifying his name on a carved macehead) launched an invasion of the north. The most likely reason for the invasion is that population pressure along the Upper Nile forced the southerners to seize the fertile fields of the north. Alternatively, one may speculate that some tyrant or other malefactor disturbed the peace in Lower Egypt, and "Scorpion" stepped in to restore what he saw as good government to a friendly people (and to thus ensure a continuing market in which to buy grain).

Narmer

"Scorpion" died before his goal was achieved, and his son, Narmer ("Striking Catfish") completed the conquest of the north. Upon defeating Lower Egypt, Narmer assumed the title Bati, "Hornet." Narmer was a fierce and successful warrior, who claimed that, in his campaigns, he captured 120,000 men, 400,000 oxen and 1,422,000 goats.

Either Narmer or some respected member of his retinue must have been an innovator, because this king's victory altered the entire social and religious tradition of Egypt. He established himself as the incarnation of Horus and the ruler of all Egypt. As living gods, the rulers of the new Egypt no longer needed to commit suicide when they grew old. Instead, a ritual of rejuvenation (the *heb-sed* festival) was instituted, giving the pharaoh the grounds to claim that he was still fit to rule. Narmer promoted a symbolic religion emphasizing Isis, Osiris, Set and Horus as a state faith, establishing temples of these gods in communities throughout Egypt. Horus received honor as the highest god over mortals.



THE ANCIENT KINGS

Eight hundred years after the unification of Egypt, scribes attempted to identify some of the men who ruled the Two Kingdoms prior to Narmer. Even in those days, the histories of pre-dynastic Egypt were lost. However some of the ancient pharaohs were worshipped as gods, and Egyptian scholars deduced the names of several from religious texts. Along with Teyew, Neheb, Wazenz and Mekh, about whom nothing can be conjectured, the names included:

Khayu. A ruler of Lower Egypt.

Seka. A ruler of Lower Egypt.

Thesh. A ruler of Lower Egypt.

Insi. Insi ("the Reed King") ruled Upper Egypt, but came from the marshes of the Nile Delta. Archaeologists speculate that he seized his crown by force.

Ro. This king has his tomb at Abydos in Upper Egypt, and may have been active in the worship of Osiris and the cult of the dead.

Ap. Ap was Ro's son. The hieroglyph for his name symbolizes a flowering reed. Ap may be another name for "Scorpion," the pharaoh who started the wars which eventually led to Narmer unifying Egypt.

In campaigns involving conspiratorial or supernatural themes, the heroes or their patrons might wonder why, when the records of pharaonic Egypt have survived for 5,000 years, the histories of pre-dynastic Egypt vanished so quickly. Perhaps the first pharaohs wished to eradicate all knowledge of their predecessors, or powerful people in the Two Kingdoms discovered secrets which they didn't want their followers to learn.



KING LIST

The following is a list of the known pharaohs (others are mentioned in unreliable sources and most dynasties in the intermediate periods included numerous unrecorded rulers) and the dates in which they ruled. All dates are listed in years Before Christ.

Time-travelers will find crux points at the transition between almost every pair of dynasties and especially at the transitions between kingdoms: the intermediate periods. These are the moments when court intrigues, foreign invasions and the crises that follow the death of a pharaoh combined to provide an environment where strangers from the future could easily blend into the confusion and steer a nation in chaos in almost any direction.

Early Dynastic Period: 3150-2686
Dynasty 0: 3150-3050
 "Scorpion"
 Narmer (Bati, Nesu, Menes?)

Ist Dynasty: 3050-2890
 Hor-Aha (Menes?)
 Djer
 (Queen Merneith?)
 Djet (Upper Egypt)
 Khenkhen (Lower Egypt)
 Queen Unneth (Lower Egypt)
 Anedjib/Den
 Semerkhet
 Qa'a

IInd Dynasty: 2890-2686
 Hotepsekhemwy
 Raneb
 Nynetjer
 Sekhemib/Seth-Peribsen
 Khasekhemwy

Old Kingdom: 2686-2184
IIIrd Dynasty: 2686-2613
 Sanakhte 2686-2668
 Djoser 2668-2649
 Sekhemkhet 2649-2643
 Khafu 2643-2637
 Huni 2637-2613

IVth Dynasty: 2613-2498
 Snefru 2613-2589
 Khufu 2589-2566
 Djedefre 2566-2558
 Khafre 2558-2532
 Menkaure 2532-2504
 Shepseskaf 2504-2500

Vth Dynasty: 2499-2345
 Userkaf 2499-2491
 Sahure 2491-2477
 Neferirkare 2477-2467

Continued on next page . . .

The 1st Dynasty: Rebellion and Consolidation

Hor-Aha

Narmer was succeeded by Hor-Aha ("Fighting Hawk"), the founder of the first dynasty to rule an already-united Egypt. Hor-Aha married Nethetep from Lower Egypt, who bore the title "The Uniter," implying that she played an important role maintaining the political union of Egypt, possibly being a priestess of Neith or an important noblewoman in the north.

Hor-Aha's greatest achievement was the construction of a great dam at the border between Upper and Lower Egypt to divert the Nile, creating enough dry land to build a great fortified city, Memphis, to be his capital. According to legend, Hor-Aha died in a battle with a hippopotamus (other versions of the legend change the principals to Narmer and a crocodile).

Djer and Djet, Khenkhen and Unneth

After Pharaoh Hor-Aha came Djer ("Fortress") and Djet ("Cobra"), with Djer's queen Merneith ("Beloved Of Neith") possibly reigning on her own between them. Despite their fierce names, Hor-Aha's son and grandson seemed unable to sustain the power of the first pharaohs, and early in Djer's reign northern Egypt rebelled against the ruler they still regarded as a southerner. A man named Khenkhen ("The Terrible") declared himself ruler of Lower Egypt. Khenkhen's new kingdom found itself fighting, not only to maintain its independence, but to hold off Asiatic tribes exploiting the weakness of a divided Egypt.

When Khenkhen died, his daughter Unneth, a priestess of Set, succeeded him. Unneth not only held off her enemies, but also carried the war into Upper Egypt.

Anedjib and Den

In Upper Egypt, Pharaoh Djet died without an obvious heir. The court placed a young prince named Anedjib ("Safe Is His Heart") on the throne, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that he had a reputation as a weakling. The noblemen of Upper Egypt may have selected Anedjib as pharaoh because they feared the northern rebels and hoped that putting an incompetent prince on the throne would be seen as a peace offering.

Another reason to select the weak Anedjib as ruler was that it allowed another faction in the court (led by his mother, Merneith) to appoint his brother Den ("Spearer") as regent. A warrior by nature, Den raised an army, marched north, and crushed the rebellion. In the years that followed, although Anedjib held the throne, Den ruled in his name.

Den had a deep appreciation for both learning and craftsmanship. Pottery, jewelry and weapon-smithing reached new levels of excellence under his patronage. Den wrote a history of Egypt (a brief account of his heroic ancestors), inscribing his work upon ivory tablets. Coffin inscriptions imply that magicians first "discovered" important parts of the *Book of Coming Forth By Day* (see p. 93) during his regency.

Semerkhet

Although Den was not technically pharaoh, he arranged for his son Semerkhet ("Thoughtful Friend") to succeed him. This decision was evidently contested by Anedjib or his heir. As a result, Semerkhet erased Anedjib's name from some monuments, while some king lists compiled at later dates omitted Semerkhet's name.





Semerkheth was as warlike as his father. Since northern Egypt had been pacified by Den, Semerkheth led an expedition into the Sinai to capture the copper mines there. As the army passed out of Egyptian territory, the desert nomads fell upon its supply trains, but Semerkheth was able to rout them.

Qa'a

Following Semerkheth, Qa'a ("His Arm Is Raised"), a descendant of the weakling Anedjib, took the throne. Little is known about this pharaoh's rule, but one significant change was made to Egyptian funerary practices during his reign: Qa'a had fewer retainers buried surrounding his tomb than any previous pharaoh, and soon after the concept of burying actual servants (as opposed to *ushabti* figures representing servants) went out of fashion in Egypt.

The 11th Dynasty: Religious War Hotepsekhemwy, Raneb and Nynetjer

Almost nothing is known about Qa'a's successor, Hotepsekhemwy ("Pleasing In Powers") except that he wasn't a direct descendant of the previous line of pharaohs. He must have married a female member of that family line, and so a new dynasty was founded.

Raneb ("Ra Is The Lord"), the second ruler of the 11th Dynasty, instituted the official worship of a sun-god named Ra. As part of this new cult, Raneb introduced the worship of the Mnevis Bull at Heliopolis and the Bei Ram at Mendes, both of which represented Ra.

The cult of Set also flourished in this period, and it promoted several northern rebellions, which Raneb and his successor Nynetjer ("Godlike") did not hesitate to suppress with massacres.

Sekhemib/Seth-Peribsen and Khasekhemwy

Egypt's next ruler, Sekhemib ("Powerful In Heart"), began as a worshipper of Horus and started his rule as an incarnation of that god. At some time during his reign, he then changed his name (and his official religion) to Seth-Peribsen ("Set - Hope Of All Hearts").

In order to forestall future uprisings, the next pharaoh proclaimed himself to be an incarnation of both Set and Horus at once. Khasekhemwy ("The Two Powerful Ones Appear") had his name written surmounted by both a hawk and a Set-beast, as opposed to the Set-beast of Seth-Peribsen, or the hawk of his predecessors. The union of gods proved successful, allowing Khasekhemwy to pursue a civil war against the worshippers of Ra congregated in Lower Egypt.

Egypt's civil war encouraged invasions by a Semitic-featured people in the northeast of Egypt and the Nubians in the south. The northern invaders were repelled by force, but the Nubian queen Hapenmaat made peace with Egypt through marriage to Pharaoh Khasekhemwy, temporarily uniting Egypt and Nubia as one realm.

KING LIST (CONTINUED)

Shepseskare 2467-2460
Neferefre 2460-2453
Niuserre 2453-2422
Menkauhor 2422-2414
Djedkare 2414-2375
Unas 2375-2345

11th Dynasty: 2345-2184
Teti 2345-2333
Userkare 2333
Pepi 2332-2283
Merenre 2283-2278
Pepi II 2278-2184

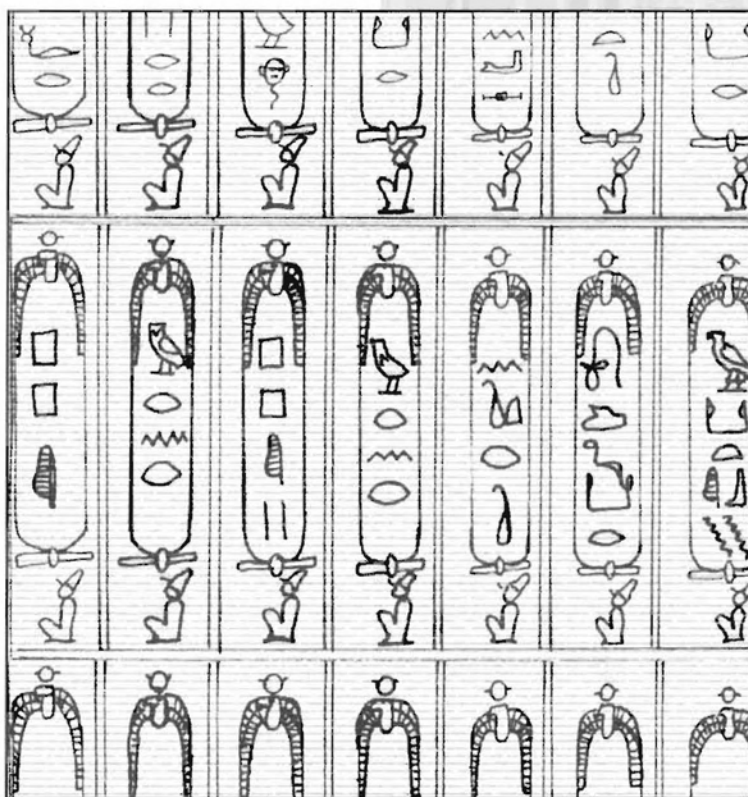
First Intermediate Period: 2184-2040
11th Dynasty: 2181-2160
Seven pharaohs rumored but all records lost.

11th Dynasty: 2184-2160
Merenre II 2184-2182?
Queen Netikerti 2182-2181?
Wadjkare
Qakare Iby

12th Dynasty: 2160-2134
Meryibre
Merykare

13th Dynasty: 2134-2040
Kaneferre
Nebkaure Akhtoy

Continued on next page . . .





KING LIST (CONTINUED)

XIth Dynasty: 2134-1991
Intef 2134-2117
Intef II 2117-2069
Intef III 2069-2060
Mentuhotep 2060-

Middle Kingdom: 2040-1782
XIth Dynasty continued
Mentuhotep -2010
Mentuhotep II 2010-1998
Mentuhotep III 1998-1991

XIIth Dynasty: 1991-1782
Amenemhet 1991-1962
Senusert (Sesostris) 1971-1926
Amenemhet II 1926-1895
Senusert II 1897-1878
Senusert III 1878-1841
Amenemhet III 1841-1798
Amenemhet IV 1798-1786
Queen Sobeknefru 1786-1782

Second Intermediate Period: 1782-1570

XIIIth Dynasty: 1782-1650
Wegaf 1782-1778
Ameny Intef ?-1760
Hor 1760-?
Sobekhotep 1750?
Khendjer 1747?
Sobekhotep II 1745?-1741
Neferhotep 1741-1730
Sobekhotep III 1730-1720
Aya 1720-?
Neferhotep II

XIVth Dynasty: 1720-1663
Nehesy 1720-?
Aermeshoi

XVth Dynasty: 1663-1555
Shesi 1663-?
Yakubber
Khyan
Apepi
Apepi II

THE OLD KINGDOM: 2686-2184 B.C.

The IIIrd Dynasty: The Invention of the Pyramid Sanakhte, Djoser and Imhotep

Another of Khasekhemwy's wives, a northern princess named Nemathap, apparently a Set-worshiper he married to promote national unity as Hor-Aha had done over three centuries before, had two sons who were to become pharaohs. The first, Sanakhte ("Strong Protection"), made raids into the Sinai to secure the turquoise and copper mines there, but is otherwise little known.

The second ruler of the dynasty, Netjerikhet ("Divine of the Body"), was later more commonly known by his birth name, Djoser. Djoser was lucky enough to have as his vizier Imhotep, one of the greatest thinkers in Egyptian history. Imhotep designed the Step Pyramid, a structure made of six almost-square *mastabas* of decreasing size stacked one atop the other, which rose to the height of 197 feet and served as a model for the tombs of later pharaohs. Under the pyramid is an extensive network of rooms and interconnected tunnels and around it is a complex of buildings thought to be a replica of Djoser's Memphis palace complex.

Imhotep was also a scribe and physician, and a philosopher of such repute that the priests proclaimed him a son of Ptah and built a temple in his honor. Some 2,000 years later, Imhotep was declared a god of architecture (as was Amenhotep, son of Hapu, the architect of Amenhotep III's public works) and medicine, associated with Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, and offerings of mummified ibises (the sacred bird of Thoth, god of writing) were made in the area of his tomb.

An incident from the 18th year of Djoser's reign, 2650 B.C., became important two millennia later in the Ptolemaic Period. Apparently, Djoser's reign saw a seven-year period in which the Nile failed to flood the fields and famine swept Egypt. When Prince Medir of the south appealed to Pharaoh asking how to end the hunger (see *Famine in Egypt*, p. 42), Imhotep told Djoser that since the god Khnum controlled the rise and fall of the Nile, the pharaoh should make a special appeal to that deity. Djoser traveled to Khnum's shrine in Elephantine, had the priests purify him with holy water, and prayed at the ram-headed god's idol.

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Supposedly, the statue of Khnum leaned toward Djoser and spoke, explaining that he was angry because the Egyptians had allowed his temple to fall apart. Khnum promised he would bring a bountiful harvest if Pharaoh would restore his sacred places. Djoser promptly granted Khnum's temple land on both sides of the Nile, along with the island of Takompso, and imposed taxes on all trade which went through Elephantine to finance Khnum's cult. According to records kept by Khnum's priests, the famine ended at once.

However, according to records produced by the temple of Isis, Khnum failed to end the famine but Isis descended and saved Egypt from hunger. Therefore, according to this version of the story, the temple of Isis deserved Pharaoh Djoser's gratitude and land grants. Some evidence suggests that this rivalry between the temples of Isis and Khnum in the First-Cataract region began centuries before the conflict recorded during the Ptolemaic Period, and that some pharaohs diverted the proceeds from Elephantine tariffs to Isis' temple.

Sekhemkhet, Khaba and Huni

Very little is known about the remaining pharaohs of the IIIrd Dynasty. Manetho (see *The Dating Problem*, p. 32) counted six more kings in the dynasty, but other sources record fewer. There is archaeological evidence for only three.

Inscriptions of Sekhemkhet ("Powerful In Body") show him to be a warrior pharaoh who may have led raids into the Sinai Peninsula. His incomplete step pyramid was only discovered in 1951, lying under a pile of rubble some 2,000 feet from Djoser's pyramid.

The step pyramid of Khaba ("The Soul Appears") was built near Giza, five miles from the traditional royal burial grounds at Saqqara.

The pyramid of Huni ("The Smiter"), the last pharaoh of the dynasty, was different from its predecessors in two ways: it was built at Meidum (near Lake Faiyum, 25 miles from the royal burial grounds), and, while still a step pyramid in design, it was intended to look like a smooth-sided "true" pyramid. After constructing a step pyramid as a base, the unevenness of the steps was corrected with loose packing stones, and then the whole construct was covered with smooth, pale limestone. For a time, Huni's pyramid must have been impressive, with its limestone sheathing and electrum-capped tip shining blindingly in the desert sun.

The IVth Dynasty: The Pyramid Builders

Snefru

A fourth dynasty began when Snefru ("He Of Beauty"), a son of Huni by a secondary wife, married his half-sister, Huni's daughter by his primary wife. Snefru ended Nubia's influence on Egyptian affairs by sending an army south and devastating the land. Records claim that his troops returned with 7,000 slaves and 200,000 cattle. Snefru was also a great trader who commissioned Egypt's first oceangoing merchant fleet. Under his rule, ships over 170 feet long sailed to Phoenicia, returning with cedar wood and other luxury items.

Snefru had two pyramids built in his honor at a location a mile south of the royal burial grounds. During construction of the first, Huni's pyramid at Meidum collapsed – the sides had been too steep to be stable, and the loose packing material between the steps and the limestone casing acted as a lubricant during the collapse. Snefru's architects hurriedly changed the angle of his pyramid, giving it a

KING LIST (CONTINUED)

XVIth Dynasty (during the reigns of
Apepi I & II)
Anather
Yakobaam

XVIIth Dynasty: 1663-1570
Sobekemsaf
Intef VII?
Tao 1633?
Tao II 1574?
Kamose 1573-1570

XVIIIth Dynasty: 1570-1293
Ahmose 1570-

New Kingdom: 1570-1070
XVIIIth Dynasty continued
Ahmose -1546
Amenhotep 1551-1524
Thutmose 1524-1518
Thutmose II 1518-1504
Thutmose III 1504-1450
Hatshepsut 1498-1483
Amenhotep II 1453-1419
Thutmose IV 1419-1386
Amenhotep III 1386-1349
Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten 1350-1334
Smenkhkare 1336-1334
Tutankhaten/Tutankhamun 1334-1325
Ay 1325-1321
Horemheb 1321-1293

XIXth Dynasty: 1293-1185
Ramesses 1293-1291
Seti 1291-1278
Ramesses II 1279-1212
Merneptah 1212-1202
Amenmesses 1202-1199
Seti II 1199-1193
Siptah 1193-1187
Queen Twosret 1187-1185

XXth Dynasty: 1185-1070
Setnakhte 1185-1182
Ramesses III 1182-1151
Ramesses IV 1151-1145
Ramesses V 1145-1141
Ramesses VI 1141-1133

Continued on next page...



KING LIST (CONTINUED)

XXth Dynasty continued

Ramesses VII 1133-1127

Ramesses VIII 1127-21126

Ramesses IX 1126-1108

Ramesses X 1108-1098

Ramesses XI (Herihor, Piankh, Pinedjem) 1098-1070

Third Intermediate Period: 1069-525

XXIst Dynasty: 1069-945

From the end of the XXth Dynasty through the XXIst Dynasty, the high priests of Amun at Thebes claimed the right to rule Egypt alongside the pharaohs. The dominant high priests are in parentheses.

Nesbanebdjed (Pinedjem, Masaherta, Menkheperre) 1069-1043

Amenemnisu (Menkheperre) 1043-1039

Pasebakhaenniut (Menkheperre, 'Smendes II') 1039-991

Amenemope ('Smendes II,' Pinedjem II) 993-984

Osorkon the Elder (Pinedjem II) 984-978

Siamun (Pinedjem II, 'Psusennes III') 978-959

Pasebakhaenniut II ('Psusennes III') 959-945

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flattened appearance and the name the Bent Pyramid. Unsatisfied with this imperfect monument, Snefru had a second, squat but regular, pyramid constructed. Since its limestone casing was removed during the Muslim period, this tomb has been known as the Red Pyramid after its sandstone interior.

Khufu (Cheops)

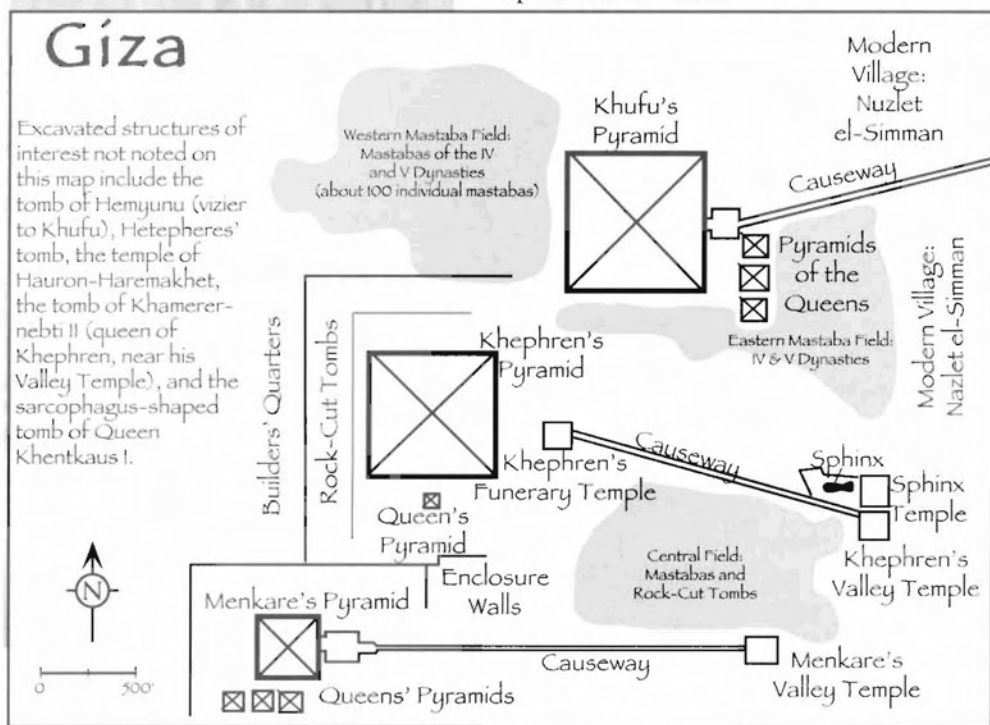
Details on the accession of the next pharaoh are confused. Although there is no surviving evidence of him, various records state that there was a pharaoh between Snefru and Khufu ("Protected By [Khnum]"). As for Khufu, while he was apparently popular in his time, impressing ordinary Egyptians with the majesty of his reign, later Greek historians called him a bigot, largely because he suppressed unorthodox religious cults and closed temples that consumed excessive amounts of money.

Pharaoh Khufu inherited a rich kingdom from Snefru and his military expeditions to the eastern desert and into Nubia added to the wealth. With vast resources and the support of his people, he constructed the 480-foot-tall Great Pyramid (and associated funerary complex) at Giza. The task didn't involve slave labor, as work was only conducted when the Nile had flooded Pharaoh's fields – instead of sitting idle, farmers labored on Pharaoh's tomb. They knew they were building one of the greatest wonders in the world, as their proud graffiti shows.

Djedefre and Khafre (Chephren)

Khufu's eldest son, Djedefre ("Enduring Like Re") had a reign of only eight years; time enough to complete his father's pyramid complex, but not enough time to build more than a rudimentary pyramid for himself.

Djedefre's brother Khafre ("Appearing Like Re") constructed the second major pyramid at Giza (see the map below), building atop an outcropping of rock to create the illusion that his pyramid was taller than Khufu's. Khafre ordered the construction of the Great Sphinx, and an inscription in Khafre's tomb refers to the Sphinx as his father.



Menkaure (Mycerinus) and Shepseskaf

Khafre's son Menkaure ("Eternal Like The Souls Of Re") earned a more charitable reputation from later chroniclers by reopening the temples closed by Khufu and, if the size of the third pyramid at Giza is any indication, reducing the tax and mandatory labor burdens of the people.

Menkaure was also known as an easygoing and pleasure-loving pharaoh. A popular legend says that an oracle at Buto predicted that Menkaure would only reign six years, as punishment for reopening the temples closed by Khufu, after

which Egypt would suffer decades of oppression. Menkaure devoted himself to revelry both night and day, trying to squeeze twelve years worth of merriment





into the six years he had remaining. According to the legend, he failed, dying on the date foretold. In reality, he had a benign 28-year reign.

Menkaure's son Shepseskaf ("His Soul Is Noble") was also a good-hearted and religious man, but his life was short – his four-year reign was only long enough to build a simple *mastaba* tomb at Saqqara.

The Vth Dynasty: Prophecy of the Sun-Kings

Userkaf, Sahure, Neferirkare and Unas

After Shepseskaf's death, the priests of Ra "reminded" the people of a legend from the time of Pharaoh Khufu. According to the story, Khufu had summoned a sorcerer named Djedi to teach him magic. Djedi didn't wish to attend Pharaoh's court, but he couldn't refuse a royal request. Khufu instructed Djedi to locate a particular manuscript that contained lost secrets of Egyptian magic. Djedi went into a trance, and used his power to draw the scroll toward Khufu. At last, the sorcerer announced that his spell had succeeded in a way.

Djedi explained that the three sons of Userre, a priest of Ra, would bring the lost documents to Pharaoh's court. Khufu was delighted until Djedi revealed that Khufu's line would die out after two more generations, and that the priest's three sons would bring the documents to the court on their coronations as the first three pharaohs of a new dynasty.

When Shepseskaf died heirless, the priests of Ra arranged for Userre's first son, Userkaf ("His Soul Is Powerful"), to marry Menkaure's daughter, thereby gaining the throne. (Userre's children also had a less direct claim to the throne, being grandchildren of Khafre's older brother, Djedefre.) Userkaf's brothers Sahure ("He Who Is Close To Re") and Neferirkare ("Beautiful Is The Soul Of Re") went on to succeed him. With the support of these three pharaohs, the cult of the sun-god grew far more popular. The pyramid-building craze subsided somewhat, to be replaced by a period of intense temple-building and expansion.

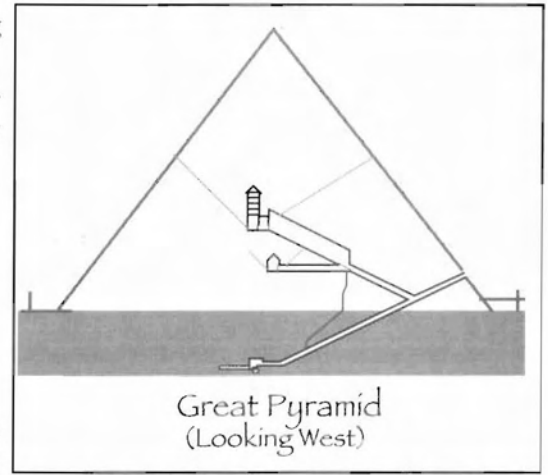
The sun-kings waged continual warfare with the Arabic tribes, pushing across the Sinai peninsula to invade Canaan, and with the Nubians in the south. Sahure also apparently re-established the trade relations with Byblos first opened by Snefru over a century before.

The art of sorcery flourished in this period, and the final ruler of the dynasty, Unas, was the first to have the interior walls of his pyramid covered with magical spells designed to protect the pharaoh in the afterlife. These Pyramid Texts were the precursor to the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts, which themselves became the papyrus-inscribed *Book of Coming Forth by Day* of the New Kingdom (see p. 93). Unas is said to have sent expeditions into Punt to procure magical secrets. The explorers convinced several African shamans to return to Egypt and teach Unas "the dance of the gods."

The VIth Dynasty: The Decline of the Old Kingdom

Teti, Userkare, Pepi, Merenre and Pepi II

Eventually the nomarchs conspired against the descendants of Userre. When Unas died without a son, Teti, head of a family from Memphis, was placed on the throne.



Great Pyramid
(Looking West)

KING LIST (CONTINUED)

XXIInd Dynasty: 945-715

Sheshonq 945-924
Osorkon I 924-889
Sheshonq II 890
Taketlot 889-874
Osorkon II 874-850
(Harsiese at Thebes 870-860)
Taketlot II 850-825
Sheshonq III 825-773
Pami 773-767
Sheshonq V 767-730
Osorkon IV 730-715

XXIIIrd Dynasty: 818-715

Pedibastet 818-793
Sheshonq IV 793-787
Osorkon III 787-759
Taketlot III 764-757
Rudamon 757-754
Iuput at Leontopolis. Peftjauabastet at Herakleopolis. Nimlot at Hermopolis 754-715

XXIVth Dynasty: 727-715

Tefnakht 727-720
Bakenrenef 720-715

XXVth Dynasty: 747-656

Piankhi 747-716
Shabaka 716-702
Shabirku 702-690
Taharqa 690-664
Tanutamun 664-656

XXVIth Dynasty: 664-525

Psamtik 664-610
Nekau 610-595
Psamtik II 595-589
Wahibre 589-570
Ahmose II 570-526
Psamtik III 526-525

Late Period: 525-332

XXVIIth Dynasty: 525-404
Cambyses II 525-522
Darius 521-486

Continued on next page . . .





KING LIST (CONTINUED)

XXVIIth Dynasty continued

Xerxes 485-465

Artaxerxes 465-424

Darius II 423-405

Artaxerxes II (nominal ruler) 405-359

XXVIIIth Dynasty: 404-399

Amyrtaeus 404-399

XXIXth Dynasty: 399-380

Nepherites 399-393

Hakor 393-380

XXXth Dynasty: 380-343

Nakhtnebef 380-362

Djedhor 362-360

Nakhtnebef 360-343

XXXIst Dynasty: 343-332

Artaxerxes III 343-338

Arses 338-336

Darius III 336-332

Macedonian Dynasty: 332-305

Alexander III "The Great" 332-323

Philip Arrhidaeus 323-317

Alexander IV 317-305

Ptolemaic Dynasty: 305-30

Ptolemy I Soter 305-282

Ptolemy II Philadelphus 285-246

Ptolemy III Euergetes 246-222

Ptolemy IV Philopater 222-205

Ptolemy V Epiphanes 205-180

Ptolemy VI Philometor 180-164, 163-

145

Ptolemy VII Neos Philopater 145

Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II 170-163,

145-116

Ptolemy IX Soter II 116-110, 109-107,

88-80

Ptolemy X Alexander I 110-109, 107-

88

Ptolemy XI Alexander II 80

Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos 80-58, 55-

51

Queen Berenice IV 58-55

Cleopatra VII 51-30 (with consorts

Ptolemy XIII Philopater II 51-47 and

Ptolemy XIV 47-44, and her son Ptolemy

XV Philopater Caesar "Caesarion" 44-30)



Twelve years after making Teti pharaoh, the nomarch conspirators decided that he had grown too powerful and assassinated him. A worshipper of Ra named Userkare ("Powerful Is The Soul Of Re") seized power, but his own reign was quickly cut short, bringing Teti's young son Pepi to the throne. Scandals, court intrigues and quests after magical lore were common throughout this era of Egyptian history.

Pepi's first son, Merenre ("Beloved Of Re"), died after a reign of only five years, to be followed by his six-year-old half-brother Pepi II, who ruled for either 64 or 94 years. Pepi II's long reign allowed him to sponsor important expeditions to explore and map Africa as well as trade missions to Punt, Canaan, Nubia and lands further to the south, but from the moment of his youthful ascent to the throne he was a tool of various court factions. When Pepi II died, these factions turned to open warfare, and soon anarchy reigned throughout Egypt.

THE FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD: 2184-2040 B.C.

The chaos which followed the death of Pepi II was so complete that no reliable histories survive. Indeed, some faction in Egypt seemed determined to erase this era from human memory. These vandals traversed Egypt systematically destroying statues and artifacts, and tossing the shards down temple wells. (In an Illuminati campaign, this is almost certainly a period when important conspiratorial organizations staged their own destructions in order to go underground.)

The VIIth & VIIIth Dynasties: 70 Kings In 70 Days

Histories written centuries after this period describe a confusion in which foreigners overran Lower Egypt, the nomes of Middle and Upper Egypt reverted to independent rule under their nomarchs, and Pepi II's descendants barely maintained control of Memphis for two decades as the VIIIth Dynasty; the rule of only two pharaohs from this dynasty, Wadjkare ("Prosperous Is The Soul Of Re") and Qakare Iby ("Strong Is The Soul Of Re"), are actually documented. The historian Manetho poetically described the chaos outside of Memphis as a period when 70 pharaohs in a VIIth Dynasty ruled for a total of 70 days.

Merenre II and Netikerti (Nítocrís)

According to unreliable records, Pepi II was succeeded by his son Merenre II, who was soon murdered by members of his own court. His wife and sister Netikerti assumed the throne and ordered the construction of a palace by the Nile, with its basements sunk into the ground well beneath the level of the river. Netikerti then ordered her most trusted servants to dig a channel between the river and the basements, ending with a sluice-gate.

After Netikerti had ruled for several years, the conspirators who killed her brother began trying to manipulate her with death threats. Netikerti submitted to their demands, and then invited them to a banquet in the rooms beneath her palace. The underground rooms were cool in the heat of the Egyptian summer, and the nobles looked forward to a luxurious feast. Instead, Netikerti locked the doors, trapping the intriguers underground. Then she opened the gates and flooded the basements, drowning everyone within.





Either Netikerti felt remorse or the conspirators had powerful allies capable of avenging their deaths. Netikerti apparently committed suicide shortly thereafter, suffocating herself with charcoal fumes in a sealed room.

Ipuwer's Lament

A memorial from a nobleman named Ipuwer lamented the breakdown of Egypt's social structure in which "she who once looked at her face in the water has a mirror," but "the children of princes are dashed against walls." Apparently, Egypt was enjoying good harvests and prosperity, but the lower class had asserted itself, demanding both the respect and the wealth of its social betters. In Ipuwer's words, "The storehouse of pharaoh [has become] the common property of everyone." Outright banditry was common too, so that travelers were in constant danger.

Ipuwer addressed his complaints to an unnamed pharaoh who lost his throne in some unknown upheaval. Apparently, Ipuwer hoped that he could inspire the deposed king to raise an army and restore order, but nobody knows the result of the plea.

A number of interesting religious documents appeared in this period; social unrest is conducive to spiritual innovation. One pharaoh wrote a letter of advice to his son which explained the judgment of the dead in great detail. Another manuscript promised that a divine savior would come, "bringing coolness to that which is fevered . . . He shall be the shepherd of his people, and in him there shall be no sin. When his flocks are scattered, he shall spend the day in gathering them together."

The IXth & Xth Dynasties: Union and Disunion

The IXth Dynasty apparently managed to establish a shaky hold on the country from its capital of Herakleopolis, but within 30 years it had been replaced by a Xth Herakleopolitan dynasty which only ruled from Abydos northward, the south being controlled by the XIth Dynasty with its capital at Thebes.

A LEGEND OF MENES

Menes, like many pharaohs, loved to hunt. And as a worshipper of Horus he considered it his duty to slay crocodiles, the servants of Set. As Menes was hunting with his most trusted retainers in the swamps around Lake Faiyum one day, a strange passion came over his dogs. The beasts attacked their masters, fighting with such fury that only Menes escaped by plunging into the lake. Lake Faiyum was full of crocodiles, but although Menes swam several miles, he emerged safely.

To commemorate his escape, Menes built an entire city on the shores of Faiyum. Some claim that he even built his tomb there. Whether it included his tomb or not, he also supposedly built an underground labyrinth of over 4,500 chambers in his new city. Over 2,000 years later, Greek commentators described it as being more impressive than the pyramids.

The truth of the story is untested. The city, the tomb and the labyrinth have all yet to be unearthed by Egyptologists, and at least one of the two pharaohs possibly named Menes supposedly didn't survive his encounter with Set's other sacred animal, the hippopotamus.



FAMINE IN EGYPT

These are the words with which Prince Medir addressed Pharaoh Djoser in his plea for deliverance from the famine (see *Sanakhte, Djoser and Imhotep*, p. 36):

"This is to inform you of the great sorrow which has afflicted me upon my great throne, and how my heart aches because of the great calamity which has occurred, for the Nile has not risen [properly] for seven years. There is a scarcity of grain, there are no vegetables, there is no food of any kind, and every man is stealing from his neighbor. When men desire to walk, they have not the strength to move; the child wails, the young man drags his legs, the hearts of the old are crushed with despair, their legs fail them so that they fall to the ground, their hands clutching their stomachs. My councillors have no advice to give, and when the granaries are opened nothing but air issues from them. Everything is in a state of ruin."

THE MAXIMS OF KEGEMNI

In the time of Pharaoh Huni there was a statesman named Kegemni (later to become vizier under Pharaoh Snefru), renowned for his wisdom. Kegemni wrote a book of advice for his children which became a classic of Egyptian literature.

In the introduction, Kegemni explained how, after becoming "thoroughly acquainted with men's characters" through his political career, he sent for his children. When they arrived, Kegemni presented his work, saying "Pay attention to everything which is written in this book, just as if I myself were telling it to you." Kegemni recounts that his children prostrated themselves and pronounced that the sayings were more beautiful than any other maxims known in the land. The children cited the maxims for the rest of their lives, or, to use the Egyptian expression, "both standing up and sitting down."

Typical maxims from Kegemni's book run as follows:

"Do not be pugnacious because it chances that you are muscular."

"No man knows what is going to happen, or what a god will do when he hits out."

"An important person's house is always open to the unpretentious man, and there is plenty of room for he who has a modest tongue, but sharp swords are against him who would push his way in."

Meryibre and Merykare

Meryibre ("Beloved Is The Heart Of Re"), the first pharaoh of the IXth Dynasty, took no chances on losing his power to nomarchs trying to assert their independence, and earned a reputation as a particularly sadistic ruler. The annals state that Meryibre "did harm to all his people," and eventually went mad and was swallowed up by a crocodile (but see also *The 1st Dynasty*, p. 34).

Meryibre's son, Merykare ("Beloved Is The Soul Of Re"), willingly became a figurehead ruler while his courtiers ran the country. Eventually, some of his enemies decided to overthrow him entirely, and a rebel army seized the capital. Fortunately one of Merykare's relatives was a brilliant general, who raised an army, defeated the rebels and handed the crown back to its original owner.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM: 2040-1782 B.C.

The XIth Dynasty: Peace and Prosperity

Intef, Mentuhotep I & II

From 2134 B.C. on, the Xth Dynasty pharaohs shared the rule of Egypt with an XIth Dynasty founded by a Theban named Intef. He and his two successors constantly fought with the northern pharaohs, slowly making gains against them; by the ascension of Mentuhotep ("The God Montu Is Content"; the fourth XIth-Dynasty pharaoh) to the southern throne, the Herakleopolitans had lost fully 50% of their southern territory. Mentuhotep's reign began in 2060 B.C. with warfare on his Nubian frontier, but he started a concerted campaign in the north following an uprising in Abydos 14 years into his reign. By his 20th year, he was the ruler of a united Egypt, and the Middle Kingdom period began.

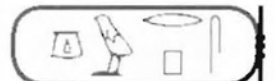
Initially, Lower Egyptians viewed Mentuhotep's victory with horror, as they regarded the Thebans as barbarians, but the new pharaoh's devotion to Egypt quickly calmed their fears. The annals record that Mentuhotep presided over a period of perfect peace.

The next pharaoh of the XIth Dynasty, Mentuhotep II, re-established trade with Nubia and Byblos, and dispatched his steward Henenu to secure a route to the Red Sea. Henenu and 3,000 soldiers established a trail of wells and way-stations between Coptos and Koser, giving Egypt an eastern port. There had always been trade between Egypt and Punt by way of caravans through the eastern desert. With a safe and easy route to follow, trade exploded, as sailors returned from Punt with bitter gums used in alchemical preparation and red marble for royal statues.

XIIth Dynasty: The Co-Rulers

Mentuhotep III, Amenemhet and Senusret

The last pharaoh of the XIth Dynasty, Mentuhotep III, was apparently so weak a ruler that some records refer to his reign as "a period of seven years without a king." His reign apparently ended suddenly when he was overthrown by his vizier, an Upper Egyptian named Amenemhet ("Amun Is At The Heart"), the founder of the XIIth Dynasty.





An Egyptian classic (copied and recopied by student scribes for centuries), *The Instructions of Amenemhet*, describes this pharaoh's end. It takes the form of a letter to Amenemhet's son Senusret ("Man Of The Goddess Wosret") from the pharaoh's ka, his ghost. The letter recalled, with some bitterness, how he had devoted his reign to feeding the poor and bringing previously-overlooked people into the government, only to have his courtiers (and possibly his wife) conspire against him. One night, the plotters locked the gates of Amenemhet's fortified palace and attempted to stage a coup. Although the traitors killed Amenemhet and all the loyal members of his guard, they didn't manage to seize the throne.

Amenemhet had instituted the custom of co-rulership in which the pharaoh shared the throne with his chosen successor for some time before his own death. Thus, when Senusret (then in the tenth year of his co-reign) received news of the coup attempt, he had an established power-base from which to combat the plotters.

Amenemhet II-IV, Senusret II & III and Sobeknefru

For the rest of the dynasty, pharaohs alternated names and experienced peaceful transitions of power via short co-reigns. These pharaohs led expeditions in every direction, for the first time paying serious attention to the oases in the western desert as well as the traditional enemies in the south and north-west.

During a period of prosperity, Amenemhet II made trade agreements with Egypt's powerful neighbors, Crete, Phoenicia and Mesopotamia, financed an expedition to Punt, and improved the canal to Lake Faiyum, greatly increasing its irrigated agricultural land.

Senusret III consolidated his hold on the lands to the south by reopening and widening a canal that allowed war galleys to pass the First Cataract of the Nile, and by adding to a chain of forts in Nubia that had been started by the first two members of the dynasty. This pharaoh added over 200 miles of the southern Nile valley (past the Second Cataract) to Egypt's domain.

After successful wars, tribute poured into the country, and recognizing its prosperity, the desert nomads poured into Egypt to escape a drought. Although the Egyptians initially took pity on the nomads, they were

DJADJAEMANKH'S MAGIC

Once, so the story goes, when Pharaoh Snefru grew melancholy, he summoned the wizard Djadjaemankh to suggest some form of amusement. The sorcerer organized a boating expedition with 20 beautiful women, naked but for fish nets, serving as Pharaoh's rowers, each equipped with a paddle carved from ebony and inlaid with gold. Snefru enjoyed the trip, admiring the scenery both outside and inside the boat.

During the trip, Snefru's chief wife, Mertitefs, lost her turquoise bracelet over the side of the vessel. She began to howl and curse, setting up such a din that Snefru couldn't ignore her. Although he promised to have his artisans make a duplicate of the bracelet, Mertitefs insisted that it could not be replaced.

Pharaoh Snefru ordered Djadjaemankh to recover the lost ornament. The wizard magically made the water on half of Lake Faiyum rise up into the air, and he stacked this mass of water on top of the water in the other half of the lake. Then he walked across the dry lakebed, recovering the bracelet before allowing the water to flow back into the lakebed.



INTEF'S ANCESTORS

Intef of Thebes, the founder of the XIth Dynasty, came from a family of heroes. The IXth-Dynasty tyrant Meryibre committed some unrecorded wrong against Intef's family – the ancestor, also named Intef, raised an army to seek revenge.

In the early phases of the war, the elder Intef suffered enormous losses and had to surrender much of his own territory. When he stormed Abydos, where the body of Osiris lay in its tomb, Meryibre worried that the war would disturb the sacred artifacts. Pharaoh granted large tracts of land to the rebel leader and formally apologized for the insult. Although Intef could easily have tried to seize the throne, he accepted Pharaoh's apology with gratitude and settled into his new estates.

The Herakleopolitan pharaohs remembered the elder Intef's restraint, and future pharaohs advised their heirs to treat this house of Thebes well.

Another ancestor of Intef of Thebes was Thethi, the chief treasurer to Pharaoh Wadjkare of the VIIIth Dynasty. Thethi recalled his service to Wadjkare as follows: "I was a real favorite of the king. I was coolness and the warmth in the palace of my lord, one to whom the arms were drooped in respect among the grandees."

numerous enough to cause hardship in the land and many carried foreign diseases. Worse yet, many continued their traditions of raiding and banditry while guests in Egypt. To control access to Egypt from the east, Amenemhet III built a wall of forts ("The Walls of the Prince") along the eastern approaches to the country. With his hold on the Sinai secure, Amenemhet III developed copper and turquoise mines in the region.

Amenemhet IV died heirless after a short reign, and his queen and sister Sobeknefru ("Beautiful Of The God Sobek") took the throne. Sobeknefru presided over the construction of pyramids for herself and her brother and many more mundane projects, but she also failed to have children, and the unified Middle Kingdom came to an end.

THE SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD: 1782-1570 B.C.

The XIIIth & XIVth Dynasties: Prelude to Disaster

Another period of division with few surviving records followed the XIIth Dynasty. The XIIIth Dynasty ruled from a city 20 miles south of Memphis and had control over most of southern Egypt, and power (but not absolute control) in the north.

Wegaf

A pharaoh named Wegaf succeeded Queen Sobeknefru. There are no chronicles recording a civil war, which suggests a smooth transition, but there are no details of how he gained the throne either. Wegaf fought a mighty campaign to hold Egyptian extreme southern territories which was apparently at least partly successful.

Neferhotep

After five pharaohs about whom almost nothing is known came Neferhotep ("Beautiful And Pleasing"), for whom specific dates and facts are finally recorded. The inscription on a stele of his describes how, "When his majesty ascended the Hawk throne in the palace called Holder-of-Beauty, he spoke to the nobles and peers of his suite and to the expert scribes of the writings and to the keepers of all the secrets, saying: 'my heart has desired to see the ancient writings of Atum, and therefore you are to begin for me a great investigation, so that I may know how he was created, and how the





gods were fashioned, and of what the offerings to them should consist.”

Neferhotep’s researchers discovered a book that described an oracular statue in the south that a selected group of soldiers and sailors recovered. By making offerings to the statue, Neferhotep allied himself with the jackal god Wepwet (similar to Anubis).

Although Neferhotep’s control was apparently strong (e.g., he sent expeditions to the mines in the eastern desert and claimed that the prince of Byblos was his vassal), there were signs of rebellion in the country. His stele’s message concluded with a warning: “I am a king, great in power, excellent in my decrees. He shall not live who is hostile to me; he shall not draw breath who rebels against me: his name shall not survive among the living, he shall be cast out from before this god . . .”

Sobekhotep and Nehesy

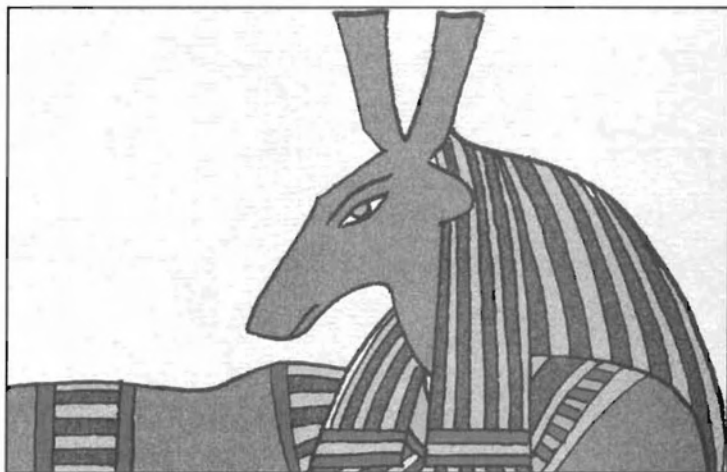
Neferhotep’s son Wahneferhotep died before his father, and the pharaoh was succeeded by his own brother, Sobekhotep (“Pleasing To The God Sobek”). At the end of the Sobekhotep’s ten-year reign, the rebellion that Neferhotep had apparently put down was renewed. The eastern half of the Nile Delta became independent, ruled at least for a time by a Nubian mercenary named Nehesy.

The XVth, XVIth & XVIIth Dynasties: Disaster

For centuries, Asiatic immigrants had been filtering into Egypt from the east. With the breakdown of authority in that quarter of the country represented by the foundation of the independent XIVth Dynasty, conditions were ripe for another uprising. Starting from strongholds in the desert, the Hyksos (“Chiefs of Foreign Lands”) took control of the Delta from the XIVth-Dynasty rulers and then extended their power down the Nile. As the last XIIIth-Dynasty pharaoh, Neferhotep II, fell before them, a new southern dynasty based at Thebes took control of Upper Egypt from the First Cataract to Abydos, maintaining a cultural link to the Middle Kingdom.

Centuries later, the Egyptian historian Manetho recounted the invasion in an exaggerated manner: “[I]t came to pass, I know not how, that God was displeased with us; and there came up from the east in a strange manner men of an ignoble race, who had the confidence to invade our country, and easily subdued it by their power without a battle. And when they had our rulers in their hands, they burned our cities, and demolished the temples of our gods, and inflicted every kind of barbarity upon the inhabitants, slaying some and reducing the wives and children of others to a state of slavery.” In fact, the Hyksos quickly adopted the practices, dress and forms of the native rulers they replaced, deliberately trying to fit into the roles expected of pharaohs.

The Hyksos would seem to have been a mixed group: an invading Indo-European people (part of a wave of Indo-Europeans entering civilized areas across Europe and the Middle East), bands of refugees driven before the invaders, and opportunists following in their wake. The ease with which they conquered Lower Egypt can be attributed to the divided government there and military innovations possessed by the Hyksos, most notably horse-drawn war chariots.



THE EXILE OF SINUHE

When Pharaoh Amenemhet died (see p. 42), Sinuhe, a young prince who had held several important positions, was seized with terror. Amenemhet’s oldest son, Senusert, was away in Libya on campaign, and there was a threat of an insurrection designed to seize power before he could return to claim his throne. Although not part of the conspiracy, Sinuhe feared Senusert would mistakenly identify him as a conspirator or that he would die in the confused struggle about to occur. So while Senusert raced in Egypt from the Libyan desert to the west, Sinuhe fled into the eastern desert, making his way beyond the Egyptian frontier into Canaan.

Sinuhe’s memoir describes how he nearly died in the sands. “Thirst fell upon me, the death-rattle was in my throat, my throat cleaved together and I said ‘it is the taste of death’ when suddenly I lifted up my heart and gathered my strength together, for I heard the lowing of herds.” The cattle belonged to a nomadic tribe, who accepted Sinuhe as one of their own. He eventually married a tribal princess, and rescued the tribe from destruction by defeating a foreign champion in single combat.

However, Sinuhe always longed for his native land, and wished to receive proper mummification and burial upon his death. When he grew old, Sinuhe petitioned Senusert for permission to return, and Pharaoh promised to do him no harm. Sinuhe accepted the offer and wrote his autobiography in order to celebrate the generosity of Senusert. The semi-fictional memoirs became an Egyptian classic, copied as a scribal practice text for centuries.





A PHARAOH'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS

After his succession was confirmed, messages were sent out to the nomarchs announcing Thutmose III's reign. The viceroy of the south had Thutmose's words recorded on a stele:

"This is a royal declaration to cause you to know that My Majesty is risen as pharaoh on the throne of Horus, without equal forever. My titles are to be made as 'Horus the mighty bull, beloved of Ma'at; Uniter of the double diadems, rising as a flame, most valiant; the golden Horus in whose years is prosperity, the giver of life; Lord of the Upper and Lower lands . . . Son of Ra . . . living forever to eternity.'"

"Cause the offerings of the gods of Abu Simbel to be made by the will of the prince . . . Cause the oath to be administered in the name of My Majesty. This is written that you may know it, and that the royal house be safe and strong."

Along with the chariot, the Hyksos introduced the domesticated chicken, an irrigation machine called the *shaduf* (a levered water-bucket that would be the peak of irrigation technology until the Hellenistic period), and a number of foreign gods (such as Reshep, the Canaanite god of sickness, and Astarte; see *Syria*, p. 24) to Egypt.

Sheshi

The first Hyksos pharaoh, Sheshi, had great regard for personal courage. Although he considered Egypt a nation of cowards, he gladly honored those individuals who proved themselves to be exceptions to the rule.

Fearing that the Syrians would invade from the east, Sheshi found the ruins of an ancient city south of Tanis in the eastern Delta and rebuilt them as a fortress. The new capital was called Avaris, and it supposedly supported an army of 240,000 men.

Khyan

The dynasty at Avaris became prominent in the ancient world. A Hyksos pharaoh named Khyan enjoyed a particularly sumptuous reign, commissioning some noteworthy statues of himself. Khyan's name has been found on the lid of a vase in Crete and on a granite lion in Babylon, indicating that Egypt traded extensively during this period. Khyan also maintained a policy of inviting foreign peoples to live in Egypt, thereby ensuring that he would have allies if the native Egyptians rebelled.

For a time, the Hyksos allowed selected Canaanite aristocrats to administer the land. However, after some of the princes grew strong enough to assert their own independence, forming the short-lived XVIIth Dynasty, they ended this practice – along with the upstart dynasty.

Apepi, Tao II and Kamose

For the most part, the pharaohs of the XVIIth Dynasty tried to avoid conflict with their powerful neighbor to the north. The southern country was comparatively poor, and may have been allowed to remain independent more because of its poverty than because of its defensive military capabilities.

Eventually, the Hyksos pharaoh Apepi decided to provoke a rebellion in order to have an excuse to subjugate the south. Apepi sent a message to Pharaoh Tao II complaining that the Theban hippopotamus hunts disturbed his sleep.

Since Thebes was hundreds of miles from Apepi's palace, the claim was preposterous, and Tao saw it as a deliberate provocation. And there were religious undertones to the affair. The Hyksos had adopted Set as their patron deity, and the hippopotamus was one of his sacred beasts. Apparently, the message was a subtle warning about antagonizing the northern pharaohs who presented themselves as incarnations of Set (just as the southern pharaohs considered themselves



manifestations of Horus). Tao knew that whatever his response, the day would come when Apepi moved to destroy him. Therefore, the Theban started a rebellion which escalated into a civil war.

Apparently, the rivals made at least one attempt to settle their dispute without further bloodshed. A much later record recounts that Tao and Apepi convened a meeting of the 30 highest magistrates of Egypt and, with these judges watching, submitted their dispute to a contest of riddles. Unfortunately, there are no records to show what riddles the two pharaohs asked each other, and it seems one side or the other found the results unsatisfactory.

Backed by an Egyptian people who had grown tired of foreign domination, Tao pressed the Hyksos northward, regaining Upper Egyptian territory as far as Lake Faiyum. When Tao died in battle, his son Kamose took the throne. After a short lull, the war was renewed until Kamose's death only three years into his reign.

THE NEW KINGDOM: 1570-1070 B.C.

The XVIIIth Dynasty: Empire to Atenism

Ahmose

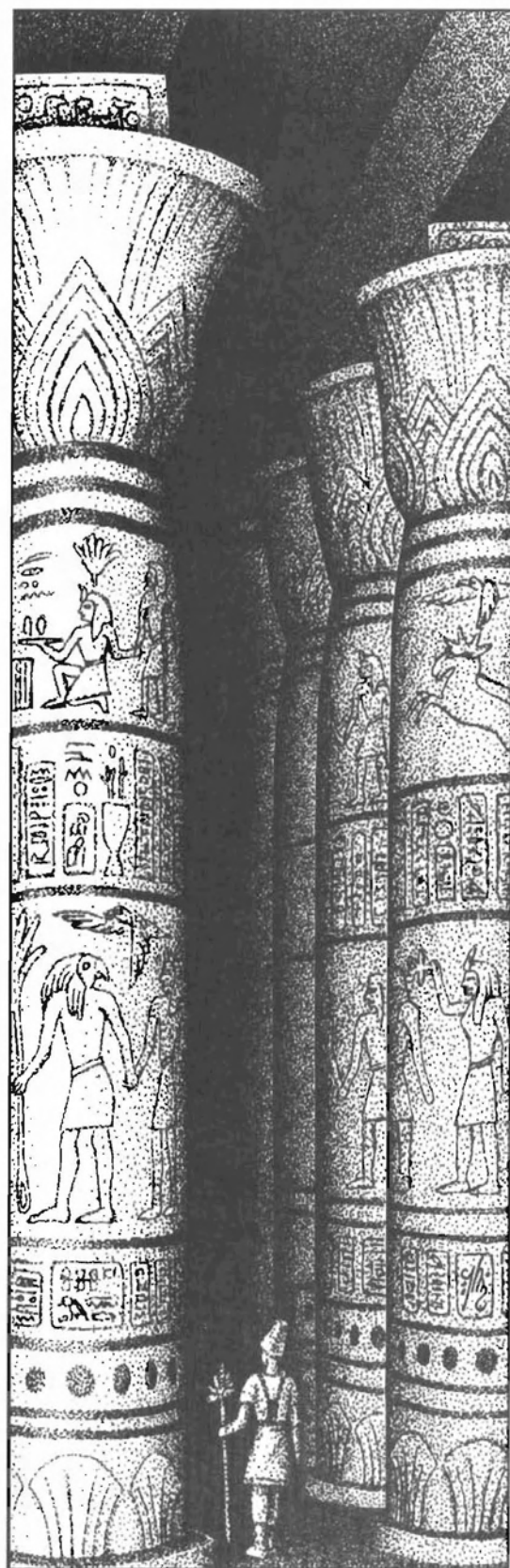
Kamose was succeeded in 1570 B.C. by his younger brother (or son) Ahmose ("The Moon Is Born"). Too young to restart the civil war when he first took the throne, when Ahmose came of age and took the reins of power from his regent (his mother Aahotep) after a dozen years of peace, he quickly led his army to the fortress-city of Avaris. After a siege lasting over four years, the two sides reached a truce, in which Ahmose let the Hyksos leave Egypt with their lives.

Thousands of the Hyksos left Egypt, but upon reaching Canaan they overran the city of Sharuhen and fortified themselves there. As this left them within striking distance of Egypt, Ahmose marched his army northeast and defeated the Hyksos. Then he turned his army around, marched up the Nile, and conquered Nubia in a lightning campaign.

In control of a reunified Egypt, Ahmose and his wife Nofretiri established the XVIIIth Dynasty. Nofretiri's appears in inscriptions as frequently as that of her husband, indicating that the queen had some independent source of political power which she exercised freely.

The Hyksos, paradoxically, had ensured the stability of the new kingdom. Hyksos pharaohs had exterminated those noble families who plotted against them, clearing the opposition for Ahmose. And Ahmose had learned the use of coordinated charioteers, archers and infantry from his enemies.

Ahmose devoted great efforts to restoring the ancient monuments of the land. Among other edifices, he built a massive temple to Ptah at Memphis, another to Amun at Thebes, and a pyramid in honor of his grandmother. Judging by the paintings on temple walls, the new ruler used Hyksos prisoners of war extensively as slave labor on these projects.

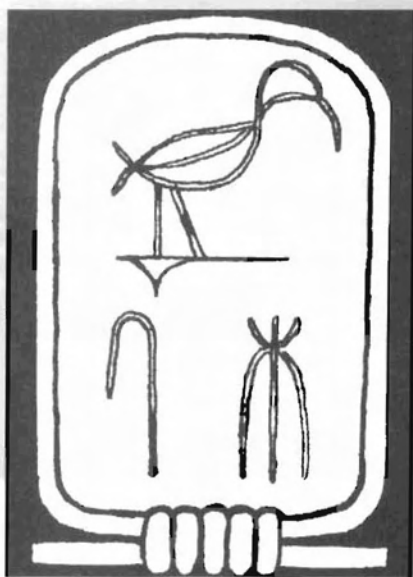


THE MAKING OF AN HEIR

Late in Thutmose III's reign some question apparently arose about his right to rule, based on the fact that he was only descended from the royal line on his father's side, and the confusing situation of his co-rule with his aunt, Pharaoh Hatshepsut. To oppose the rumors, a story was circulated "proving" that he had received Amun-Ra's blessing early in life.

Every year the pharaoh presided over a festival at Karnak honoring the sun-gods. According to inscriptions carved there many years after the fact, when Thutmose III was still a boy he happened to be in Karnak on the day of the ceremony. As the attendants carried the image of Amun through the streets, they suddenly changed their course, receiving directions from the god. Followed by the crowd, they took the sacred statue back and forth hunting for something, until they found Pharaoh Thutmose II's nephew. Then the god's arm rose and pointed directly at Thutmose III, indicating the heir to the throne – in Thutmose III's inscribed words: "My father Amun-Ra-Harakhti granted to me that I might appear upon the Horus Throne of the Living."

Close study of the inscription has revealed that the pharaoh originally supposedly chosen by this oracle had been Hatshepsut – after her death, Thutmose III had recarved his aunt's propaganda texts to support his own reign (as well as carving copies of it that attributed the same story to his grandfather, Thutmose I). The same oracular method was to be used again over 1,000 years later when Alexander the Great became pharaoh in 332 B.C.



The early days of the VIIIth Dynasty were a period of religious turmoil. Nobody forgot that the Hyksos had embraced Set, and the priests of the supposedly more beneficent deities took advantage of this fact to suppress the cults of Set and other gods. Among the victims of the religious persecutions were the Hebrews, viewed (perhaps unfairly) as allies of the Hyksos.

Amenhotep

Ahmose died in his forties, and his infant son Amenhotep ("Amun Is Pleased") inherited the title, but not the power, of pharaoh. Until he reached his majority, the queen-mother, Nofretiri, seems to have maintained her control on the court through an inner circle of supporters including Amenhotep's wife and his sister. Nofretiri seems to have ruled well as Egypt enjoyed a period of prosperity, interrupted only by brief rebellions in Nubia.

Although the site of his tomb has not been positively identified, it was apparently one of the first in the Valley of the Gates of the Kings, and Amenhotep and Nofretiri were worshipped as patron deities by generations of workmen in the valley.

Thutmose

Amenhotep left the crown to one of his generals, Thutmose ("Born Of The God Thoth"). To legitimize this break in the normal line of descent, Thutmose served a five-year co-rule with Amenhotep, and married that pharaoh's sister Aahme. After Nofretiri, it was assumed that the queen would play as large a part in governing as the pharaoh, and therefore Aahme's presence would minimize Thutmose's common blood.

Rebellion against the Hyksos gave Egypt's rulers a new taste for conquest, and many New Kingdom pharaohs were preoccupied with offensive warfare. Thutmose was a small, stubby man who personally led an invasion of Nubia. The Nubians blocked key canals so that Egyptian ships couldn't bypass the dangerous waters of the First Cataract. Without the ability to ship men and supplies south along the Nile, the Egyptian generals couldn't sustain the invasion.

Thutmose ordered the canals cleared, but the process proved time-consuming, so the impatient pharaoh ordered his boats to sail through the rocky cataract. A royal scribe named Ahmose, son of Ebana, offered to serve as captain on the lead vessel. Although Ahmose was probably more than 60 at the time, he successfully made the passage, and Thutmose gave him the "gold of honor"; membership in the Order of the Golden Fly.

As the Egyptian army passed between the Second and Third Cataracts, Nubia launched a counterattack. The pharaoh engaged the Nubian king in personal combat and slew him. The invasion now completed, Thutmose sailed north, hanging the Nubian ruler's corpse upside down from the prow of his boat.

In order to hold the newly captured land, the Egyptians fortified the island of Tombos in the Nile, blocking hostile boat traffic and providing a base of supply for operations upriver. The conquest was enormously profitable, providing Egypt with wood, copper, furs and other precious things.

The inscription on one stele describes Pharaoh Thutmose's performance in the southern campaign: "... Like a young panther amongst a herd in flight, so the fame of his majesty has dazzled them. He has brought the corners of the earth under his dominion, and he patrols the two ends, mighty sword in hand looking for a fight, but finding no one who will face him. His fame has penetrated to regions which his ancestors did not know, and which the former wearers of the double crown had not seen ..."





Having extended his realm in the south, Thutmose invaded Canaan, pushing toward Syria and Mesopotamia. The time was ripe for conquest. Babylon had entered a state of decline, and although Hittite manufactures flooded the markets throughout the civilized world, the Hittites didn't have a mighty army. After routing an army of Syrians, the pharaoh advanced as far as the Euphrates, where he erected a stele in his own honor.

Thutmose II

When Thutmose died, he had no surviving sons by his principal wife, and his son by a secondary wife, Thutmose II, took the throne. Due to pressure from factions within the court, Thutmose II married his half-sister, Hatshepsut ("Foremost Of Noble Ladies").

The Nubians seized the opportunity to revolt but the politics of succession hadn't weakened Egypt in the slightest. The new ruler received news of the revolt gladly, because it gave him an excuse to plunder the south. The young Thutmose "raged like a panther" and swore not to leave a male Nubian alive. The campaign against the south went successfully, and the victorious generals presented Thutmose with the Nubian leader as a slave. Thutmose then turned his attention northward to Syria.

Hatshepsut

After a dozen-year reign, Thutmose II died, leaving as his heir an infant son (Thutmose III) by a secondary wife. Because of the new pharaoh's age, Hatshepsut was appointed his regent.

During the first few years of Thutmose III's minority Hatshepsut played the role expected of her, but some time between his second and seventh regnal years she broke with tradition and seized power in a unique way. She didn't eliminate her step-son, but instead established a co-rule with him. Not as a ruling queen like Sobeknefru (see p. 44), but as a pharaoh – Hatshepsut took to dressing as a man on state occasions, wearing the ceremonial false beard of all male pharaohs, and being referred to in inscriptions as "his majesty"!

To legitimize this strange state of affairs, the female pharaoh undertook an extensive propaganda campaign. She had monuments and temples erected which portrayed her father, Thutmose I, bequeathing the country to her in a prayer to the god Amun, as well as a series of reliefs depicting her mother's liaison with her true father, Amun, and the resulting pregnancy and birth. To keep Thutmose III occupied, he was enrolled in the army, and participated in numerous campaigns at Egypt's frontiers.

Hatshepsut's daughter, Neferure, took many of the titles and duties that Hatshepsut had abandoned in becoming pharaoh, including serving as God's Wife within the temple of Amun and being depicted as the royal consort on temple reliefs. While some have seen this as a sign that Hatshepsut was grooming Neferure to succeed her, it is more likely that the princess was merely fulfilling a ritual requirement of rulership; as pharaoh represented the male half of a divine couple on Earth, he had to have a female counterpart.

Compared to the expansionist reigns of all her XVIIIth-Dynasty predecessors, Hatshepsut's reign was a peaceful one – the campaigns she and Thutmose III conducted were mostly defensive, intended to maintain the empire, not enlarge it.

Hatshepsut capitalized on Egypt's peace and prosperity by funding the restoration of temples damaged during the Hyksos period (consciously trying to recreate the glory of the XIIth Dynasty), the erection of numerous monuments to



THE ROSICRUCIANS

As one of the world's most venerable secret societies, the Rosicrucians are likely to play a role in any Illuminati campaign. This fraternity claims to have its origins in the Osiris cult of ancient Egypt. According to their traditions, the priests of Osiris had access to sacred wisdom which would be ruined if allowed to spread among the ignorant, so they didn't commit it to writing. Instead, they operated secret schools for those they considered worthy, passing the knowledge down from generation to generation.

Pharaoh Thutmose III supposedly became heir to the throne after the priests of Amun made it appear that the god had directly interceded on his behalf (see *The Making of an Heir*, p. 48). Most consider this event pure fakery, but according to the Rosicrucians Thutmose himself felt divinely inspired by the experience and became a great student of the occult. He studied the Osirian mysteries, developed his own mystic philosophy and allegedly founded the Order of the Rosy Cross.

The obelisk that stands in Central Park dates from the reign of Thutmose III. According to the legend, Thutmose ordered his workmen to build a monument which would eventually stand "in the land where the eagle spreads its wings." The hieroglyphs on the obelisk supposedly contain symbols with special meaning to American Rosicrucians.

Akhenaten was supposedly a member of the Order, and Rosicrucians admire the Aten religion. After all, it freed people from pagan superstition, forcing them to contemplate a higher concept of the deity. This heretic pharaoh made his capital in Akhetaten, the site of which is now an Order headquarters. Miriam, Moses' sister, was supposedly a Rosicrucian, and Solomon supposedly studied at Akhetaten, bringing the mysteries of the Rosy Cross into Israel. Mundane history shows no record of the Rosicrucians before 1614 A.D.





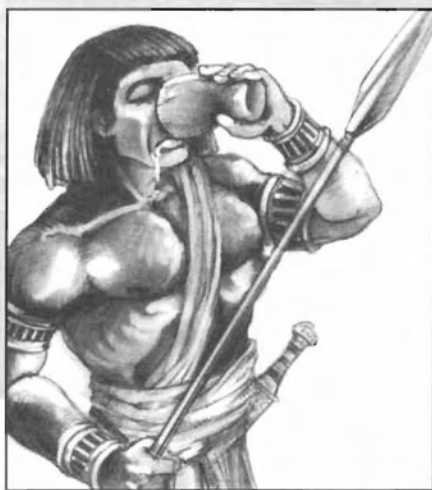
MEGIDDO

When Hatshepsut died, Egypt's Syrian vassals revolted, switching their allegiance to the kingdom of Mitanni. Due to the great distances involved, word of the uprising didn't reach Egypt until the Syrians had already liberated most of their land. Upon receiving the news, Pharaoh struck back instantly, driving his army deep into Phoenicia where Syrian forces held the hillsides commanding the narrow valley leading to the city of Megiddo.

Thutmose's generals advised him to avoid fighting on such unfavorable ground, suggesting that he divide the troops and maneuver through the mountain passes. Instead, Thutmose drove his troops straight down the defile, taking the Syrians by surprise, as they'd assumed he would advance along one of the safer routes.

After a short battle, the Syrians fled in panic, abandoning their possessions, including a number of gold-plated chariots. The Egyptians paused to gather the loot, and the routed Syrians took refuge in Megiddo. The Egyptian soldiers organized a night of revelry in their king's honor, but Thutmose had no use for their praises. He knew that he'd missed a chance to quickly destroy the enemy, and when the soldiers called on him to give a speech, he railed bitterly at them.

Thutmose went on to take Megiddo after a long and hard siege. Having won, Thutmose treated his enemies with surprising leniency. Instead of a massacre, Thutmose installed loyal governments in the rebellious lands and returned to Egypt, having re-established the empire. As a result of his leniency, Thutmose III would have to mount a campaign in Syria every year for the next two decades.



her ancestors, the construction of a marvellous mortuary temple named Djoser-Djeseru ("Holiest of the Holy") adjoining the Valley of the Kings, the opening of new turquoise mines in the Sinai, and a major trade expedition to Punt. The people of Punt were amazed to see the fleet. Although they had legends about the Egyptians, no ships had come from the north for hundreds of years. The mission returned from Punt with ivory, gold, ebony, myrrh, leopard-skins, monkeys, greyhounds, oxen and, most valuable of all, 31 incense trees destined for the garden in the temple of Amun. And the pharaoh was quick to commemorate all of these achievements on temple walls and the sides of monuments, proclaiming to all Egypt how successful her reign was.

Thutmose III

When Hatshepsut died after a two-decade rule, Egypt's Canaanite vassals, led by the prince of Kadesh in Syria, revolted, expecting to find Egypt in disarray. Unfortunately for them, Thutmose III proved to be one of the most able warriors Egypt had ever known.

Thutmose crushed the rebels (see sidebar), but the following year, they revolted again, and again the year after that. To sustain the repeated campaigns Thutmose seized the ports of Phoenicia, so that he could supply his army by sea. With Phoenicia in its grasp, Egypt became a power on the sea, as well as on land.

Throughout the 54 years of Thutmose III's reign (the last 33 as sole ruler) the fighting never ceased. When he wasn't campaigning in the northeast, the pharaoh was sending raiding parties deep into Africa, pushing ever farther south in search of tribute. Thutmose was a superb strategist, who regularly defeated far stronger opponents with minimal losses. His army became increasingly professional, and Egyptian society oriented itself toward sustaining the war machine. Gradually, the productivity of Egypt's farms declined, but the pharaoh fed his people on tribute from the empire's furthest reaches.

Some 20 years after his step-mother's death, Thutmose began a campaign to obliterate all record of Hatshepsut's rule, scratching her name and image off temple frescoes and monuments, often replacing them with his own or those of his father or grandfather (see *The Making of an Heir*, p. 48). He didn't want to cause her "second death" by erasing all instances of her name from living memory (which would cause her to die permanently in the afterlife), just those from the period of their co-rule, effectively rewriting history to turn himself into the sole ruler of Egypt for his entire 54-year reign and thereby retroactively restoring ma'at to the land.

Thutmose's followers even went so far as to desecrate the graves of the female pharaoh's favorite retainers. Anticipating this, her steward Senemut took the precaution of having the magical inscriptions meant to guarantee his joyous afterlife hidden beneath the plaster on his tomb walls, so that the visible desecration would do him no eternal harm. Some believe that Senemut interred Hatshepsut's body in a secret vault within Djoser-Djeseru, where it remains hidden even today.

Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV

The victories continued under Thutmose III's successors. As Egypt pacified the Middle East there was an explosion of trade from Anatolia and Persia to the depths of Nubia. Amenhotep II began requiring the kings of subject countries to have their sons educated in Egypt.

After Amenhotep's death, the succession was not clear, but after Thutmose IV took power he legitimized his position with propaganda similar to that of





Hatshepsut and the sun-kings of the Vth Dynasty: the "Dream Stele" between the paws of the Great Sphinx (see *GURPS Places of Mystery*, p. 34).

Amenhotep III

The pharaohs of this period married Syrian, Mitanni and Hittite princesses to ensure the loyalties of their fathers, and it is possible that the next ruler, Amenhotep III, was the grandson of the king of Mitanni on his mother's side. A generation later, King Kadashman-Enlil of Babylon desired an alliance with Egypt and asked to marry one of Amenhotep III's daughters. The pharaoh refused, saying that "from old, the daughter of an Egyptian ruler has not been given in marriage to anyone." Kadashman-Enlil's response indicates the power of Egypt at the time; rather than starting a war, he replied that he would be satisfied with any woman from the Two Lands, because even a common woman of Egypt was exalted enough to be a Babylonian queen.

In the final years of Amenhotep's reign, Egypt's empire began to crumble. Provinces on the periphery stopped sending tribute, and the Hittites attacked Egypt's tributary cities in northern Syria. The princes of those cities sent letters to Pharaoh pleading for help, but by this time Amenhotep was an old and placid man who did not wish to plunge his nation back into war.

His queen, a noblewoman named Tiye, seems to have helped keep Amenhotep complacent. Tiye was noted for her beauty and her mysterious, dreamy personality. Her family was a powerful one; her father Yuya had been commander of chariots under one of Amenhotep's immediate predecessors, one of her brothers was Second Prophet of Amun and Chancellor of Lower Egypt while another, Ay, would be the father of the next pharaoh's queen and would eventually become pharaoh himself. The tomb of Tiye's parents was one of the richest finds in Egyptian archaeology (see *King Tut's Tomb*, p. 68).

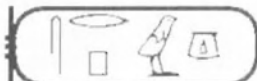


A Flirtation With Monotheism

Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten

If Amenhotep's son had been a warrior Egypt might have punished the Hittites, rescued its loyal allies and restored its power, but Amenhotep III's second son, Amenhotep IV, was a brooding scholar and a visionary. During the reign of Amenhotep III small steps had been taken to try curb the growing power of the temple of Amun. Early in Amenhotep IV's reign the pharaoh completely repudiated the official state religion, replacing it with the sole worship of the solar disc, the Aten (a previously minor aspect of Ra). He changed his name to Akhenaten ("Servant of the Aten"), moved Egypt's capital to a new city, Akhetaten ("The Horizon of the Aten"), and closed the temples of Amun.

Religious strife rocked Egypt's upper class. Ambitious courtiers embraced the new religion, hoping to supplant conser-





NEFERTITI

Akhenaten's primary wife enjoyed a reputation as the most beautiful woman in Egypt. The couple were quite devoted to each other, and most artwork depicting the pharaoh shows her by his side, often with the six daughters.

By all accounts, Nefertiti had a sweet, quiet personality, and many historians have depicted her as a bystander to the religious conflict of Akhenaten's reign, who served only to soften her husband's harsher decisions. However, previous queens had played important roles in expanding the cult of the Aten, and Nefertiti was certainly an Aten worshipper, composing lovely hymns to the new god and serving as the inspiration for many of her husband's religious writings. One might conclude that she worked actively behind the scenes to impose the new religion on Egypt.

Some writers have suggested that Hittite secret agents (in the form of princesses offered to Egyptian pharaohs in dynastic marriages) engineered the rise of the cult of Aten, or at least provoked some of its clashes with the established Egyptian religion in order to undermine Egypt's government.

If Atenism was part of a plot by the Hittites to weaken Egypt, Nefertiti may have been in contact with foreign agents. Otherwise, the Hittites would certainly have kept her under surveillance, since her opinions had such a great influence over the pharaoh. In an Egypt campaign, the party may become involved on any side in this intrigue: watching Nefertiti for the Hittites, protecting her on behalf of the court, or trying to gather proof for the priests of the old gods that she is involved in a conspiracy.

vative older officials. Akhenaten supervised a program of destroying idols and chipping the names of gods (especially Amun) off monuments. In his drive to overturn tradition, he even rejected traditional art styles, having himself and his family depicted realistically, pot belly and all, instead of in idealized form (see *Nefertiti*, p. 52).

Sensing weakness in Egypt, a Syrian lord named Abdashirta organized a rebellion among the empire's tributary princes. Abdashirta's son, Aziru, kept up a correspondence with Egypt, keeping the pharaoh unaware of his father's treachery. Even after the conspirators began seizing caravans and openly attacking cities, Aziru convinced the Egyptian overlords that his father's military operations were deterring an invasion by the Hittites. In fact, Abdashirta was secretly allied with the Hittites, who had promised to make him Syria's king in return for help fragmenting the Egyptian empire.

Although Egypt's loyal vassals called for aid, Akhenaten didn't respond, and Abdashirta was able to conquer some and force others to yield. The only way for these principalities to remain free from Abdashirta was to beg protection directly from the Hittite Empire. With this strategy, the Hittites and their allies absorbed much of the Middle East.

Akhenaten had set himself up as the mortal enemy of the priesthood, and by allowing the empire to slip through his fingers he alienated the army as well. The pharaoh became known throughout the land as "That Criminal." After a 16-year reign, Akhenaten died considering himself a failure.

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Smenkhkare

Smenkhkare ("Vigorous Is The Soul Of Re"), Akhenaten's brother or son (some believe that Smenkhkare was the throne name of Akhenaten's wife Nefertiti, ruling as pharaoh) ruled for only a year or two, in which time he moved the court back to Memphis from Akhetaten.

Restoration of the Old Religion

Tutankhaten/Tutankhamun

When Smenkhkare died, Akhenaten's son Tutankhaten ("Living Image Of The Aten") took power, along with his wife, sister and step-mother (for she had previously been married to Akhenaten) Ankhesenpaaten ("Her Life Comes From The Aten").

Tutankhaten was merely a boy, raised his entire life in the Aten-worshipping palaces of Akhetaten. Within a year of taking the throne, his advisors pressured him into renouncing the heresy of Atenism. His name was changed to Tutankhamun (his wife's changed to Ankhesenamun), the old temples were reopened, damaged monuments and idols were restored, and Akhetaten was abandoned.

During Tutankhamun's reign, some minor battles in Syria and Nubia were fought under the leadership of Horemheb (see p. 53), but with little success. The pharaoh might have accomplished more given time, but he died suddenly at age 18.





His own tomb in the Valley of the Kings was only partially excavated, and custom demanded that he be mummified and buried within 70 days of his death. The nearly complete tomb of a high-ranking nobleman (possibly Ay, who then received Tutankhamun's more extensive tomb for his own burial) was pressed into service, and it was filled with treasures from a number of sources: personal items still inscribed with the pharaoh's -aten name, gifts from high officials, surplus funerary objects of other pharaohs (including an inner coffin and four canopic jars originally intended for Smenkhkare), and many beautiful objects created expressly for Tutankhamun.

After two robberies of the tomb it was buried under the debris of the digging of another tomb in the area, and the tomb (and its occupant) were lost and forgotten for over 3,000 years (see *King Tut's Tomb*, p. 68).

Ankhesenamun and Ay

After Tutankhamun's death, his wife attempted to take power for herself. Unwilling to trust those around her (it's still not certain how Tutankhamun died), Ankhesenamun sent a letter to Suppiluliumas, king of the Hittites, requesting that he send one of his sons to her as a husband, reversing a centuries-old Egyptian policy of refusing to allow foreign princes to marry Egyptian princesses (see *Amenhotep III*, p. 51). Negotiations proceeded for months, and by the time Suppiluliumas sent his son Zannanza to Egypt, Ankhesenamun's enemies (apparently led by Horemheb) had learned of her plan; they waylaid and murdered the prince in Canaan.

Now desperate, Ankhesenamun married her grandfather, Ay, in time for him to officiate at Tutankhamun's funeral and inherit the throne. Unfortunately, Ay was an old man and a known devotee of Atenism. Ay couldn't protect Ankhesenamun against her religious and political enemies, or provide her with an heir — after his four-year reign, this queen under three pharaohs was never heard from again.

Horemheb

Following Ay's death, Egypt seemed ready to slide back into anarchy; followers of the traditional religion squabbled with the young social climbers who had adopted Atenism, several nomes declared themselves independent, and no one had a clear claim to the throne.

Horemheb ("Horus Is In Jubilation"), a soldier who had served under Amenhotep III, eventually becoming Great Commander of the Army and Pharaoh's Deputy under his successors (using the name Pa'atenemheb when Atenism was in vogue), saw the state sliding into chaos and stepped in, ordering soldiers into the streets to keep peace, and marrying Queen Nefertiti's sister in order to establish a link to the royal bloodline.

Upon assuming power, Horemheb embarked on a sweeping program of reform. During the period of weakened government control under the Aten-worshipping pharaohs, army officers had taken to fleecing honest citizens under the guise of collecting taxes. Horemheb made such conduct punishable by 100 blows. In addition, he enacted codes which punished a corrupt scribe or judge with death. To place the temple of Amun safely under his control, he replaced the priests with army officers whom he trusted, while he divided the army's command structure to reduce the chances that he would be replaced by another singularly powerful soldier.

Under Horemheb, trade flourished again, and peace was kept with all Egypt's neighbors, chiefly by conceding the remnants of Egypt's Canaanite and Phoenician empire to the Syrians and Hittites.

HITLER AND THE HITTITES

Our understanding of the politics of the Hittite Empire began with a series of German archaeological discoveries made shortly after the First World War. Adolf Hitler, always fascinated by the early history of the Nordic people, may have read about the exploits of the Aryan Hittites, the first Indo-Europeans to enter the Mediterranean historical record. Some think that when the future dictator decided to stop calling himself Schickelgruber he chose the name "Hit-ler" in a deliberate attempt to invoke the greatness of the "Hit-tite" empire.

In an Illuminati campaign, this coincidence may have great significance. The Hittites employed espionage and subversion on an international scale; if a great conspiracy has dominated human history, they could easily have played a part in it. If there was an occult purpose behind Hitler's apparently insane actions, the explanation may lie in the ruins of Hattusas.





KADESH

Both Ramesses II and the Hittite king Muwatallish knew that the future of Syria and Canaan depended on the war that began early in Ramesses' reign. Therefore, both sides exhausted their treasuries to field the largest possible armies. The Hittite force numbered 20,000 while Ramesses had 18,000 troops. Each side had some 2,500 chariots.

The two armies marched toward each other across Syria. As Ramesses camped in the mountains of Phoenicia, he was able to look down and see the valuable city of Kadesh in the distance. From the mountaintop, he could see no sign of an army protecting it. After a few days to Ramesses' delight, a pair of Hittite deserters came to his camp stating that the Hittite army had retreated, afraid to face the ruler of Egypt.

Always a vain man, Ramesses believed the deserters' flattering story and raced with his army toward Kadesh. Far from retreating, Muwatallish had concealed his forces behind Kadesh's walls, sending the two "deserters" to lead Ramesses into the trap. As the Egyptians advanced the army became strung out across the plain, and the Hittites ambushed the vulnerable Egyptian army from the flank.

The Egyptian army was nearly destroyed, but Ramesses proved to be the hero he thought he was, plunging into the battle, leading his isolated division through the Hittite lines to rejoin the rest of the army. The Hittites failed to press their attack, possibly because Muwatallish had difficulty controlling his troops, allowing Ramesses to rally his forces and drive back their chariots.

The next morning, Ramesses lined up his troops and beheaded the leaders of units which had shown cowardice in the battle. After watching Egypt's pharaoh kill his own men, Muwatallish requested an end to the fighting. Once again, the Hittite king lavished flattery upon Ramesses, and the Egyptian agreed (at least for the moment) to the peace agreement his enemy proposed, returning to

Egypt to declare himself the hero of the "victory" at Kadesh.

Horemheb had been one of the advisors who'd orchestrated Tutankhamun's restoration of the old religion, but that limited rejection of Atenism wasn't enough for Horemheb now that he was the supreme authority in Egypt. He and the priests of Amun attempted to destroy all monuments to the Aten, and to erase the names Akhenaten, Smenkhkare and Tutankhamun wherever they appeared. Horemheb even dated his reign from the death of Amenhotep III, adding 29 spurious regnal years to his own 30 in order to cover the gap in the official records.

Horemheb's eradication campaign wasn't entirely successful (in fact, by dismantling Akhenaten's temple to the Aten at Karnak and using it as fill for his own monuments he inadvertently preserved those carved blocks for archaeologists of our time) but Smenkhkare remains a cipher today, and historians weren't even certain of the existence of Tutankhamun until early this century.

The XIXth Dynasty: Celebrations and Monuments

Ramesses and Seti

Horemheb had no heirs and upon his death, his vizier Ramesses ("Re Has Fashioned Him") became pharaoh, founding the 19th Dynasty. Although this ruler continued Horemheb's reconstruction, he was an elderly man whose two-year reign served primarily to lay the groundwork for that of his son, the energetic Seti ("He Of The God Set").

True to his namesake deity, Seti lost no time in attacking Syria. Although his victories weren't significant, he ordered massive celebrations, marked by grand processions of prisoners of war through major cities. When Libyan tribes then invaded Egypt from the west, he was forced to bring his armies home, where he conclusively defeated the raiders. In addition, Seti won several encounters with the Hittites, the first time Egypt had come into direct conflict with that empire.

Seti completed the process of rebuilding temples begun by Horemheb, and erected several new religious monuments. In the temple of Abydos, Seti commissioned a remarkable carving: the pharaoh and his son, Ramesses II, worshipping before 76 of their royal ancestors in the form of lists of names stretching back across over 2,000 years of history. Understandably, it omitted the hated Hyksos rulers, but it also excluded Hatshepsut and the four Aten-worshipping pharaohs. (See also *Plan of Seti I's Tomb*, pp. 96-97.)

Ramesses II

Ramesses II is the man most picture when they think of pharaohs, as much from his impact on the historical record as from Yul Brynner's portrayal of him in *The Ten Commandments*. He possessed a supreme ego and glorified the land with vast monuments built by plundering stone from the monuments of his predecessors. Despite this economy, the scale of his constructions ultimately emptied Egypt's treasuries. Among other edifices, Ramesses built a massive tomb known as the Ramesseum which featured a 1,000-ton statue of himself, and a temple at Abu Simbel in Nubia that was fronted by four 60-foot-tall stone colossi. Ramesses II had more than eight wives and sired at least 52 sons and even more daughters. He eventually boasted of more than 100 of each, and the tomb he had cut for them in the Valley of the Kings is the largest ever found . . . 95 rooms and still more being excavated!

Ramesses fought one great campaign against the Hittites under King Muwatallish, which culminated in the battle of Kadesh. Although Ramesses, characteristically, claimed a total victory (see sidebar), the war actually ended in





stalemate. After a number of further inconclusive campaigns, Ramesses agreed to a treaty with the new Hittite king, Khattushilish, a treaty that survives today in both Egyptian and Hittite copies. Ramesses married Khattushilish's daughter in a ceremony that the Hittite king attended, and the resulting years of peace were bountiful for both empires. Egypt became a truly cosmopolitan land, a center of trade and culture for the entire Mediterranean world.

Merneptah

Ramesses II reigned for 66 years, and by the time he died, his first 12 sons were dead (see the sidebar). His 13th son, Merneptah ("Beloved Of Ptah"), came to the throne an elderly man.

Merneptah found the country financially exhausted by his father's excesses, and threatened by Libyan tribes that united for a coordinated drive into Egypt. At first, the Egyptian army made no response, and many feared that the Libyans would overrun the nation – Merneptah was purposely waiting for the enemy army to assemble so that he could crush it in a decisive battle. The pharaoh knew that the Libyan army fielded few trained archers. When the battle finally came, Egypt's bowmen devastated the Libyans, allowing its chariots to sweep over a disordered foe. Nubia had taken the opportunity to revolt, but Merneptah's victory over the Libyans had been so easy he quickly moved his army south and crushed the uprising.

Amenmesses, Seti II, Siptah and Twosret

For 17 years after Merneptah's death, Egypt suffered from comparative poverty, invasions from every direction, and political instability compounded by a series of short-lived rulers. Merneptah's heir didn't take the throne immediately after his death – instead, it was usurped by Amenmesses ("Fashioned By Amun"), his half-brother. After Amenmesses' four-year rule, the rightful heir, Seti II, took power and began replacing the usurper's name with his own on a number of monuments.

Seti II ruled for six years and was succeeded by his son Siptah ("Son Of Ptah"). Siptah was still a minor and his step-mother Twosret ("Mighty Lady") served as his regent. Siptah ruled for only six years, at which point Twosret declared herself pharaoh.

The XXth Dynasty: The Ramessides

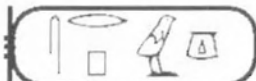
Setnakhte and Ramesses III

Just as when queens Netikerti and Sobeknefru took the throne, Twosret's rule was followed by a period of anar-

DEATH BY UNNATURAL CAUSES

A major occupation of every pharaoh's wives and children was the constant currying of favor with Pharaoh, trying to become his recognized heir. The more children a ruler had, the more fierce the competition and the more desperate the measures used to secure the succession and to cover up those methods. And Ramesses II had as many as 100 sons and potential heirs.

After the disappearance and presumed death of Ramesses' heir, his 12th son, Khaemwaset, the following story arose to explain away the mystery. Khaemwaset was a noted sorcerer, who reputedly gained his books of lore by robbing the tomb of wizards and ancient pharaohs. Acting from beyond the grave, one dead wizard animated the corpse of a lovely woman, and sent her to seduce the prince. Khaemwaset, who didn't know the woman's nature, yielded to her wiles. In the privacy of his palace bedroom, the undead creature tore out the prince's throat and devoured his body (leaving no evidence of the act) before returning to her grave. Therefore, the pharaoh's 13th son, Merneptah, became the heir apparent.



QUEEN TIY'S CONSPIRACY

While fighting over the succession when a pharaoh died was common, regicide was decidedly rare in ancient Egypt. Pharaoh was the embodiment of *ma'at* in the land, and to assassinate him was to invite *isfret* (chaos) to sweep over the country.

One of the lesser wives of Ramesses III, Tiy, was determined to see her son inherit the throne. By the end of Ramesses' reign, the boy, Pentewere, had reached manhood and Tiy had many palace retainers in her conspiracy.

In the first step of the plot, the Royal Superintendent of Cows sneaked into the royal libraries and stole secret books on magic. Following instructions in the books, Tiy made a wax doll that resembled her husband which she pierced with pins, hoping to make Ramesses fall ill. The Great Man of the House had prepared a revolt among the common people while another of Ramesses' wives had convinced her brother, the commander of an army in Nubia, to stage a mutiny. It was hoped that these external crises could be set into motion as soon as Ramesses began to suffer from Tiy's magical attacks, creating the confusion they would need to execute their coup.

Ramesses learned of Tiy's plot and organized the loyal members of his court to root out the conspirators. Since Tiy was a queen with legal authority similar to his, Ramesses couldn't confront her directly, so he ordered his supporters to punish the guilty parties without informing him in advance.

The loyal courtiers forced the participants in Tiy's plot to commit suicide. The mummy of Pentewere, the young man who was to become pharaoh, has been found. Apparently he died in great agony, perhaps from the wrong choice of poisons or even by being mummified alive.

chy and a change in dynasty. In this case, the period was only a few months long, and ended when an unknown nobleman, Setnakhte ("Victorious Is Set"), backed by the religious establishment, put down a revolt by foreign mercenaries led by a Syrian named Aarsu who had attempted to take the throne.

Setnakhte only reigned for three years. Five years after his son, Ramesses III, took the throne the Libyans launched their largest invasion yet. Ramesses easily defeated the attackers, but three years later he faced an invasion of massive proportions. Pushed out of their homelands by a combination of poor harvests and invaders from the Asian steppes, a confederation of European tribes, the "Sea Peoples," launched a full-scale invasion of Egypt (and other countries) by land and sea. Battles occurred at more than one point along the eastern border, as well as within one of the branches of the Nile delta. After a bloody slaughter, Ramesses managed to push the invaders back into Canaan, where they settled, renaming the region after one of the Sea Peoples' tribes: Philistia. We know it today as Palestine.

A grateful Ramesses bestowed numerous gifts on the temple of Amun, the god he thought responsible for his victories. Unfortunately, these riches also allowed the temple to amass a great deal of political power over the next century.

Ramesses IV-XI

Ramesses III had at least ten sons, and while some died young there was much competition amongst the survivors to become Pharaoh's heir. There was at least one plot against Ramesses' life (see sidebar), and while the plot didn't succeed, Ramesses III died of natural causes during the subsequent trial.

The remaining pharaohs of the XXth Dynasty were undistinguished and under their reigns Egypt lost all vestiges of its empire in the northeast. Ramesses IV, V, VI and VIII were all short-reigned sons of Ramesses III, while Ramesses VII, IX, X and XI were sons of Ramesses VI. The period featured confusing co-reigns, a possible civil war, and the first large-scale tomb robberies in the Valley of the Kings. And the priests of Amun were taking advantage of the weakness of the pharaohs to build their own strength behind the scenes.





THE THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD: 1069-525 B.C.

The XXIst Dynasty: Division and Sacrilege

Herihor, Nesbanebdjed (Smendes) and Pasebakhaenniut (Psusennes)

A decade before Ramesses XI's death, a high priest of Amun named Herihor ("Horus Protects Me") declared himself ruler (but not pharaoh) of Upper Egypt, and placed that part of the nation under the direct control of his temple. Ramesses did little to oppose this power-grab, and after his death his dynasty was replaced by one founded by Nesbanebdjed ("He Of The Ram, Lord Of Mendes"), the governor of Lower Egypt.

For the next century, Nesbanebdjed and his heirs ruled the Delta from Tanis as the XXIst Dynasty while the Temple of Amun at Thebes governed the rest of Egypt. At first there was some fighting at the borders, but within two generations the "royal" families were intermarrying and sharing throne names.

Tomb robbery became rampant in this era. The breakdown of the social order had weakened the tombs' traditional defenses: fear of the curses and fear of prosecution. Desperate, temple authorities began disinterring mummies in order to hide them in places of safety. Dozens of pharaohs ended up crowded together in a few secure tombs, including those of Horemheb (which contained four royal mummies), Amenhotep II (containing 16 mummies), Pinedjem II (containing 40 mummies; see *The Royal Mummy Cache*, p. 101); early in this period the valley was abandoned as a royal burial site. At least some of the plundering may have had official backing, providing High Priest Piankh the funding necessary for a major military campaign in Nubia.

The third pharaoh of the XXIst Dynasty, Pasebakhaenniut I ("The Star That Appears In Thebes") is unique; his tomb, discovered under a temple of Amun in Tanis in 1939, is the only intact and unrobbed royal burial ever discovered in Egypt.

EGYPT IN THE BIBLE

Egypt had enormous influence on every aspect of Hebrew, Israelite and Judean life. In fact, some Biblical events may be copied from Egyptian literature. Joseph's first adventure in Egypt (Genesis 39) is the story of his failed seduction by his master Potiphar's wife, a story closely paralleled in the "Tale of Two Brothers" (except that the unfaithful wife was punished in the Egyptian story, while the Biblical account punishes the innocent Joseph), a fable of the XIXth Dynasty. Joseph's seven abundant years followed by seven famine years (Genesis 41) is reminiscent of the famine in the reign of Djoser (see *Famine in Egypt*, p. 42). And the story of the infant Moses being set adrift in the Nile in a basket was also told of the god Horus (see *The Birth of Horus*, p. 114).

The religious practices of the early Israelites were also Egyptian-influenced. Male circumcision, a custom that made Israelites distinct from their neighbors, was first adopted after the Israelite "captivity" in a country where it was regularly performed. The earliest Israelites had burial customs and ancestor-worshipping practices similar to those of Egypt — one of the Ten Commandments may refer to honoring one's parents after their death so that their spirits, as minor deities, would bless their descendants. It's also believed that the Israelites adopted monotheism after exposure to the heresy of Atenism (making the similarities between Psalm 104 and Aktenaten's Hymn significant).

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EGYPT IN THE BIBLE (CONTINUED)

The event charged with the most symbolic import in Israelite history was the exodus from Egypt. In the Biblical account, Joseph, his brothers and their families entered Egypt during a time of famine and unrest in the mid-second millennium B.C. and Joseph rose to a position of influence in Pharaoh's court (Genesis 45). The most likely period for such events was the XVth Dynasty, when the Hyksos rulers, themselves Semitic immigrants, took power during a time of unrest, and during which time at least two Canaanite or Hebrew princes rose to semi-independent rule as the pharaohs of the XVIth Dynasty. The Exodus is attributed to the reign of Ramesses II, making Seti I the pharaoh who slew the male children of Israel at the time of Moses' birth.

In contrast, Israel was almost never a concern to Egypt. In fact, the word "Israel" appears only once in all the surviving Egyptian documents (in a victory stela of Merneptah where he brags about "devastating" Israel, a people without a definite homeland at the time of the victory). Important events in Egyptian history, such as the Assyrian destruction of Thebes (see *Taharqa and Tanutamun*, p. 60), are mentioned in the Bible (Nahum 3:8-10), but the Ten Plagues, the Exodus, the death of Pharaoh in the Red Sea – none of these made any impression on Egyptian scribes.

Siamun and Pasebakhaenniut II

In Canaan, the 12 tribes of Israel had taken advantage of the weakness of the empires surrounding them to establish a unified kingdom, and then to expand it to the borders of Egypt and Assyria. Egypt's pharaohs lacked the military resources to reconquer Canaan, but attempted to control it indirectly. Pasebakhaenniut's grandson Siamun ("Son Of Amun") allied himself with Hadad, crown-prince (and later king) of Edom, offering him a refuge from King David's attacks and giving him one of his daughters in marriage (something which would never have happened in Egypt's more powerful days – see *Amenhotep III*, p. 51).

Siamun's successor, Pasebakhaenniut II, did much the same for David's son Solomon, offering one of his own daughters to the king in marriage and even fighting a war on Solomon's behalf, sacking the Philistine city of Gezer. After winning this victory, the Egyptians withdrew, allowing the Israelites to take over the captured land.

The XXIIth Dynasty: The Empire's Last Gasp

Sheshonq (Shishak)

Upon the death of Pasebakhaenniut II, a Libyan soldier of fortune named Sheshonq staged a coup and founded his own dynasty, ruling from Bubastis in the Delta. By arranging for his son to become high priest of Amun he brought all power in Egypt under his control and reunited the country.

Sheshonq took advantage of the alliances set up by his predecessors. He played the different Israelite factions against each other until he could find a way to conquer them all. When an Israelite leader named Jeroboam rebelled against David's son Solomon, Sheshonq offered him shelter. After Solomon's death, Sheshonq sent this contentious man back to Israel, setting off a civil war there. Once the Israelites were thoroughly embroiled in the war, Sheshonq sent a powerful army across the Sinai, sacked Jerusalem (capital of Judah) carrying off all the treasures there, then continued to Jeroboam's kingdom of Israel, chasing his one-time ward out of the country and re-establishing the Egyptian empire. Edom, to the south of Judah, regained its independence and renewed its allegiance to Egypt.

Osorkon I & II, Harsiese, Takelot II and Sheshonq III

Sheshonq's successor, Osorkon, reportedly opened his reign by receiving 500,000 pounds of gold and silver in tribute from various nations. However, Osorkon's army went on to suffer defeat at the hands of the Judean king Asa, and Egypt once again lost its power over Israel and Judah.

During the reign of Osorkon's grandson, Osorkon II, Pharaoh's cousin, Harsiese the high priest of Amun, declared himself the independent ruler of Upper Egypt. The weakness of the northern pharaohs was revealed when Osorkon did nothing to end Harsiese's ten-year rule, merely waiting for his rival to die naturally before appointing his own sons to the temple high priestships.

Osorkon's son, Takelot II, had a similar experience during his reign when the high priesthood became open and the southerners refused to accept his appointment of his son as priest. Takelot crushed the revolt and



burned the bodies of the rebel leaders (denying them a place in the afterlife), but the rebellion resurfaced four years later, and continued to reappear throughout his reign and that of his successor, his brother Sheshonq III.

The XXIIIrd & XXIVth Dynasties: Divide and Conquer

During Sheshonq III's reign the western Delta declared its independence under Pedibastet ("Wise One of Bastet"), founder of the XXIIIrd Dynasty which ruled from Leontopolis. This situation continued for 70 years until there was a further split that resulted in one ruler from the XXIIInd Dynasty (in Tanis) and three from the XXIIIrd (ruling from Leontopolis, Herakleopolis and Hermopolis)! A fifth pharaoh, Tefnakht of Saïs, founded the XXIVth Dynasty and then persuaded the rest of the northern rulers to join in a coalition against a common enemy.

Throughout this period of northern strife, Nubia prospered, extending its influence down the Nile almost to Thebes, 100 miles north of the First Cataract. In 727 B.C., Tefnakht and his coalition met the army of the Nubian pharaoh, Piankhi, at Herakleopolis, only 50 miles south of the Lower Egyptian border.

Piankhi defeated the coalition and Tefnakht retreated to the Delta. The other pharaohs surrendered to Piankhi and were allowed to continue as governors of their cities in his name. Tefnakht began to regroup his army, and Piankhi was forced to renew his advance. His progress was slow and involved the laborious siege of a number of well-defended northern cities. During the war Tefnakht died and was succeeded by his son Bakenrenef, but when Bakenrenef, Iuput and Osorkon IV (the last pharaohs of the XXIVth, XXIIIrd and XXIIInd Dynasties) had all died, Piankhi was the sole ruler of a united Egypt.

The XXVth Dynasty: The Nubian Pharaohs

For hundreds of years, the cult of Amun had had a strong presence in Nubia, and soon after the rule of the high priests of Amun ended in Egypt during the XXIIInd Dynasty, the priests of Amun's Nubian temple usurped the southern throne, setting up another line of priest-rulers. Centuries later, when the Nubians sailed down the Nile into Egypt, they didn't see themselves as conquerors – they sailed under what they saw as the standard of the legitimate pharaoh of all Egypt, fighting to re-establish the dominance of Egypt's national deity.

Piankhi was the seventh in the line of Nubian pharaohs, but the first recognized as such in Egypt. Despite building projects and temple inscriptions throughout the now doubly large country, the Nubians ruled from their capital



PTOLEMY I COLLECTS TAXES

While serving as Alexander the Great's governor of Egypt (see p. 64), Ptolemy I demonstrated a great ability to raise funds. Many of his techniques were simple extortion.

As Ptolemy traveled across a river, a crocodile carried off one of his slaves. The governor ordered the priests of Sebek to begin slaughtering the beasts. To protect their sacred crocodiles, the priests paid a high tribute.

When Alexander founded Alexandria, Ptolemy went to the merchants of other towns and informed them that, in order to promote trade in the new city, he had decided to close down their local market-places. However, he allowed the traders to keep their markets in return for monetary consideration.

On another occasion, Ptolemy informed the priests of Egypt that, since religion was expensive, he had decided to greatly reduce the number of temples. The priests quickly offered him a tithe of their offerings.



THE MUSEUM AT ALEXANDRIA

Under the auspices of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy I founded the Museum that became the greatest center of learning in the ancient world: a combination library, museum and research institute, a place where the greatest minds of the age could be inspired by the Muses. For example, during his stay in Alexandria, Archimedes invented a form of pump known as the Archimedes Screw, while Heron of Alexandria invented advanced oil lamps and surveying instruments, a coin-operated holy water dispenser and steam-driven gadgets including mechanical puppet theaters, automatic door openers and the famous "steam engine."

Ptolemy II expanded the library: the collection eventually totaled over 500,000 scrolls. A law allowed its staff to borrow and copy any books or documents which travelers brought into the city.

By the time of Ptolemy III the library complex was full, so a secondary library in the temple of the god Serapis was founded. The libraries began a project of translating all the world's knowledge into modern (for the time) Greek.

During the reign of Ptolemy VI the king of Pergamun in Asia Minor founded a rival library which the Ptolemies tried to hinder by banning the exportation of papyrus from Egypt. As a result, Pergamun developed a major parchment industry and its library flourished.

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city at the Fourth Cataract, Napata, and their pyramid-covered tombs were located in royal burial grounds in the south. To strengthen his hold on the government, Piankhi had his sister installed as high priestess at Thebes.

Taharqa and Tanutamun

When Piankhi died he was succeeded by his brother, and then by two of his sons. All of these pharaohs had to deal with a new power in the northeast, Assyria. The first few managed to avoid direct confrontations, preferring to oppose Assyria by supporting Israel, Judah and Phoenicia in their revolts against Assyria. The fourth Nubian pharaoh, Taharqa, was forced to fight his own battles against the Assyrians. He defeated their king, Esarhaddon, at Ashkelon in Philistia in 673 B.C., but in 671 Esarhaddon conquered the Delta and captured much of the Egyptian royal family. A revolt in 669 resulted in the Assyrians executing all of the noblemen of the Delta except for one who had been loyal to Assyria – he and his son became governors of the Delta.

Taharqa had retreated to Napata and eventually died there. His cousin Tanutamun took the throne and immediately began a campaign to drive the Assyrians out of Egypt. Unfortunately, Tanutamun underestimated their power, and after he reconquered Egypt as far north as Memphis, the Assyrians finally drove him out of Egypt, sacking Thebes and ending the Nubian dynasty.

The Nubian line of rulers would continue unbroken for almost 1,000 more years in the south, but they would never again control territory above the First Cataract. Cut off from the cultural influence of Egypt, they clung to the remnants of their Egyptian heritage: the rulers persisted in calling themselves "pharaohs" and "rulers of the Two Lands," their tombs were inscribed with funerary texts in increasingly debased Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the last worshippers of Egypt's old gods weren't displaced by Coptic Christians until the sixth century A.D., long after the worship of those gods had ceased in Egypt itself.

The XXVIth Dynasty: The Saïte Pharaohs

Psamtik

When the elder of the two Assyrian viceroys in the Delta died, the younger, Psamtik, was recognized as pharaoh by his overlords. To legitimize his reign, the new pharaoh arranged for his sister to become high priestess of Amun, succeeding the Nubian priestesses then holding the title. He then established his capital at Saïs.

Under Psamtik and his successors, Egypt revived its ancient culture as everything old, from art to magic, became popular. Trade with Greece (newly emerged





From its Dark Ages and establishing colonies and trade relations around the Mediterranean) brought a return of prosperity to Egypt.

Psamtik's reign lasted over 50 years and during that time the international political situation shifted considerably. Eleven years after the Assyrians confirmed him as pharaoh, Assyria was weak enough for Psamtik to declare Egypt independent. Forty years later, Egypt tried to maintain the crumbling empire as a buffer against the growing power of Babylon but the combined assaults of Medes, Scythians and Babylonians destroyed the last remnants of the Assyrian Empire less than seven decades after Assyria conquered Egypt.

Nekau (Pharaoh-nechoh)

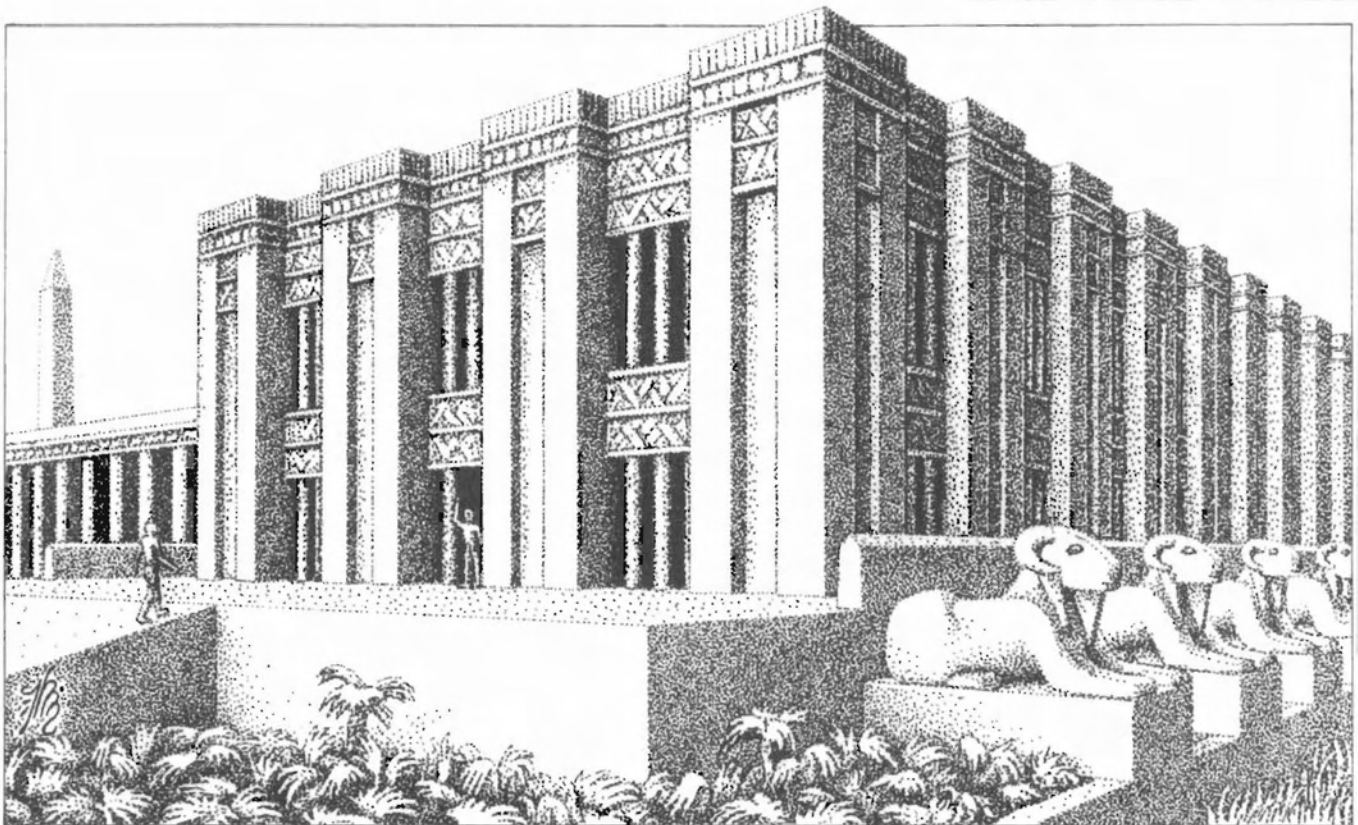
Psamtik's son, Nekau, took advantage of the power vacuum after the fall of Assyria to reconquer Judah, killing King Josiah at Megiddo, imprisoning his successor, Jehoahaz, for life, and setting up Jehoiakim as his puppet king. Three years later, Nekau suffered defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who drove the Egyptians back across the Sinai and asserted his control over Judah.

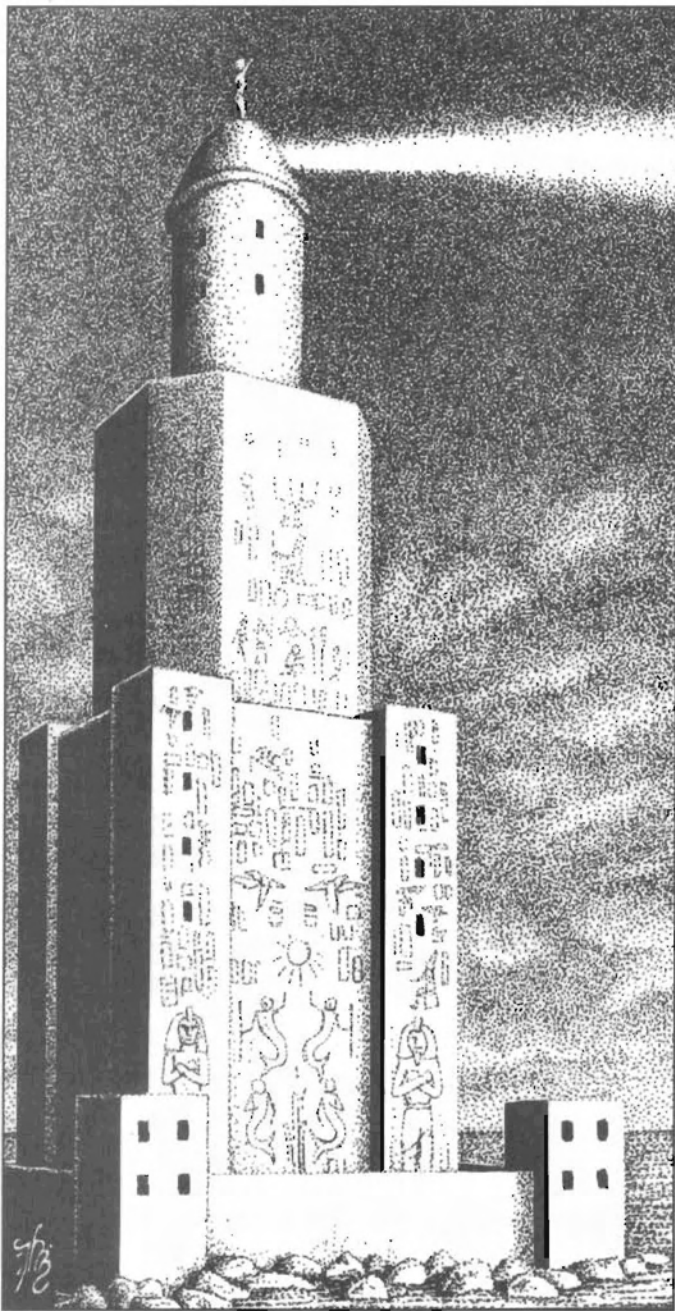
The greatest successes of Nekau's reign were the three-year circumnavigation of Africa by a fleet of Phoenician ships in his employ, and the construction of a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea, wide enough for two triremes to pass. For a time the canal and the increased knowledge of the African coast brought great wealth to Egypt, but during the reigns of his successors the canal silted up and was abandoned. A century and a half later, the Greek historian Herodotus debunked these two claims, saying that the report of the circumnavigation was unbelievable, and that Nekau had never finished the canal, ceasing work on it after an oracle warned him that its completion would only benefit foreign invaders, an attempt to explain why the canal had fallen into disuse.

THE MUSEUM AT ALEXANDRIA (CONTINUED)

In 642 A.D. the Muslim conqueror Amr ibn-al-As destroyed the library. When one of his aides protested, the general supposedly said, "All of the learning in those books either duplicates the wisdom of the Koran or contradicts it. In the first case, there is no need for them, and in the second case, they are works of blasphemy and we should destroy them."

Ibn-al-As was only finishing a destruction that began soon after the Museum was founded. During the civil war between Cleopatra VII and Ptolemy XIII, a portion of the library was destroyed. When Julius Caesar left Egypt to return to Rome, he took thousands of scrolls as a gift from Cleopatra (but these may have been replaced six years later when Mark Antony seized the library of Pergamun). A Roman civil war in 300 A.D. saw the main library burned to the ground. In 389 A.D. the Christian Emperor Theodosius issued an edict calling for the destruction of all pagan knowledge, and his soldiers burned the library at the Serapeum. Ibn-al-As only destroyed those books that had survived the previous fires and thefts.





THE PHAROS LIGHTHOUSE

After the Museum and attached library, the most spectacular accomplishment of the first two Ptolemies in Alexandria was the lighthouse on the island of Pharos protecting the city's harbor. The first of its kind and a colossal engineering feat, the Pharos Lighthouse was one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

(In fact, *pharos* means "lighthouse" – the great structure gave its name to the island, so today when we say "Pharos Lighthouse," we are really saying "lighthouse lighthouse.")

Ahmosé II and Psamtik III

Under Nekau's successors Egypt meddled in the affairs of its neighbors on all sides, usually with little success. Nekau's grandson Wahibre ("Constant Is The Heart Of Re") died while fighting a revolt by his own Libyan mercenaries. The commander of the mercenaries, Ahmosé II, became the new pharaoh. At that time a new force was rising to the northeast of Babylon, the Persian Empire. Egypt formed a joint alliance with Lydia, Sparta, Samos and Babylon against this threat but the Persians defeated these kingdoms one at a time. A year after Ahmosé's death, his son Psamtik III faced the army of the Persian king Cambyses II.

THE LATE PERIOD: 525-332 B.C.

The XXVIIIth Dynasty: The Persian Pharaohs

Cambyses

After easily defeating the Egyptian army, Cambyses demanded Pharaoh's surrender. An enraged mob tore the envoys limb from limb. Accordingly, Cambyses renewed the fighting. After conquering all of Egypt to the Second Cataract, Cambyses held a ceremony at which he executed ten men for every one of his messengers the Egyptians had slain. The Persians took Psamtik back to Persia, where he later died. Ruling from Susa in Persia, Pharaoh Cambyses tried to conquer the lands around Egypt as well, but when the troops sent to Nubia starved in the desert and those sent to the Oasis of Siwah vanished in a sandstorm, Cambyses gave up the effort.

For Egyptians, the Persian domination was a time of national humiliation equal only to the days of the Hyksos.

The Persians defiled Egypt's temples and purportedly slaughtered the sacred Apis bull. It's even said that Cambyses ordered the body of Pharaoh Ahmosé II burned in order to deny him a place in the afterlife.

Darius and Xerxes

Cambyses' successor, Darius, earned some respect as a just law-giver and for such public works as dredging the silted-up Red Sea canal of Nekau. When the Greeks defeated Persia at the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., Egyptian patriots began the first of many revolts. The uprising was crushed by Xerxes, the third Persian king to rule the Nile, a vicious tyrant who ordered the population of Egypt enslaved. More insurrections, led by heroes including the son of Psamtik III and the grandfather of the future Pharaoh Amyrtaeus, followed, gaining Egypt some autonomy during the reigns of the last two Persian pharaohs.





The XXVIIIth, XXIXth & XXXth Dynasties: Short-Lived Freedom

In 404 B.C., Amyrtaeus declared Egypt independent under his rule and Artaxerxes II of Persia was too busy dealing with the deadly palace politics in Susa to contest his claim.

Nefaarud and Hakor

Five years later, a new dynasty, based in Mendes instead of Saïs, took power. The first pharaoh of this line, Nefaarud ("The Great Ones Prosper"), spent much of his short reign trying to legitimize his claim to the Double Crown, and upon his death there was a three-way struggle for the throne. The winner was an unrelated man, Hakor, who associated himself in every way possible with Nefaarud, instead of starting his own dynasty. Hakor allied Egypt with Athens against Persia, and was forced to use a Greek mercenary navy to defeat Persia in a number of minor engagements.

Nakhtnebef (Nectanebo), Djedhor and Nakhthorheb (Nectanebo II)

Hakor was succeeded by the founder of the next dynasty, Nakhtnebef ("Strong In His Lord"), who had to face a combined Greek and Persian seaborne invasion of Egypt from the weakly-defended west. The initial assaults were successful, but before the attackers could march on the capital, Nakhtnebef regrouped and drove the attackers out of Egypt with a counter-offensive.

Soon after taking the throne, his son Djedhor ("Horus Says [He Will Live]") marched on Syria, hoping to take it from Persia's grasp. While he was gone, his grandson, Nakhthorheb ("Strong Is His Lord Horus"), took power, forcing Djedhor to take refuge in Persia!

The first decade of Nakhthorheb's reign were peaceful, but the last seven years saw repeated attacks by Persia's Artaxerxes III. The first of these failed, inspiring other countries to defy Persia, but in 343 B.C. Nakhthorheb's army (one-fifth of which consisted of Greek mercenaries) was soundly defeated by Artaxerxes' (which was also strengthened by Greeks). Nakhthorheb, the last native Egyptian pharaoh, fled to Nubia and Persia once again ruled Egypt.

The XXXIst Dynasty: The Second Persian Period

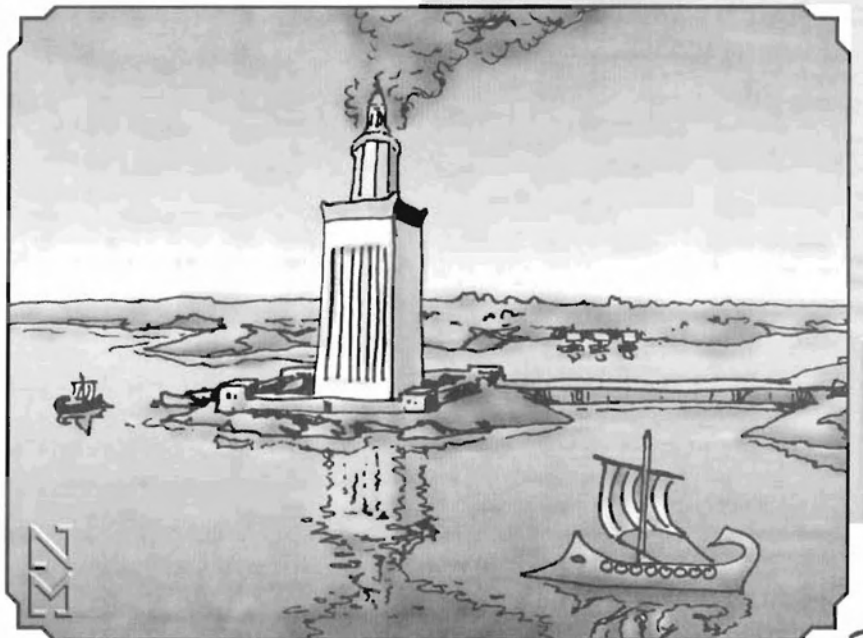
The second Persian domination was a short one. Artaxerxes III was poisoned in Susa five years after becoming pharaoh, his son Arses was assassinated after only two years, and his successor, Darius III, lost Egypt to the next great empire-builder after only four years in power.

THE PHAROS Lighthouse (CONTINUED)

The Lighthouse stood between 350 and 460 feet high, making it the tallest building in the ancient world after the Great Pyramid. Rising from a huge square base, it had three stages: a 230-foot-tall, 100-foot-square first stage, an octagonal second stage 50 feet across and 100 feet tall, and a cylindrical third stage 30 feet across and 70 feet high. The first stage housed mechanics, attendants and a garrison of soldiers, and a ramp spiraled the interior of the tower, allowing fuel to be carted to the top. The outside was decorated with tritons, sphinxes, a 20-foot-tall statue of Poseidon, and colossal statues of Ptolemy I and Berenice I.

Atop the third stage was a domed enclosure where a fire was maintained. Metal mirrors reflected the light so it could be seen for more than 30 miles at night; during the day resinous wood was burned to produce a similarly visible column of smoke.

The Lighthouse functioned as designed for almost 1,000 years, becoming the symbol of the city, found on coins, pottery and even souvenir miniatures! After the lantern collapsed around 700 A.D. a brazier was placed at its top and it continued to be used for 400 years. In the mid-12th century the top of the Lighthouse was converted to a mosque, ending 14 centuries as a navigational aid. In 1375 A.D. an earthquake destroyed the majority of the tower. The remainder was dismantled and incorporated into a fortress in 1477.





THE PTOLEMAIC PERIOD: 332-30 B.C.

The Macedonian Dynasty: Alexander's Empire

In 332 B.C., Alexander the Great marched into Egypt. He was welcomed as a liberator, not as another foreign invader, because he came from Greece, Egypt's traditional ally against the hated Persians, and in the previous year he had defeated the Persians in Syria, Phoenicia and Judea. When Alexander visited the oracle at the Oasis of Siwah, the statue of Amun turned and pointed to him, indicating that he was to become a true pharaoh. The Macedonian became enamored of Egyptian culture, ordering the restoration of the many temples destroyed by the vengeful Persians, and was pleased to discover that, as pharaoh, he was officially a god. As he did in many other countries he conquered, he founded a city called Alexandria, and this Delta city became the chief city of Egypt and a center of learning.

Within a year Alexander's wars took him far from the Nile, but the Two Lands featured prominently in his plans. In 323 B.C. the young conqueror was planning a campaign to capture Arabia, so as to open trade between the rich tribes of Yemen and the Egyptians, but he contracted a sudden fever after a heavy bout of drinking and died. His generals elected to send his body back to Macedon, but Ptolemy, a general serving as Alexander's governor in Egypt, kidnapped the body, burying it in Alexandria.

As jealousies and warfare broke out between Alexander's former retainers, Ptolemy ruled Egypt in the name of Alexander's successors, his half-brother Philip and then his infant son Alexander. Philip was a half-wit and his regent, Perdiccas, invaded Egypt trying to seize Alexander's body for himself, but was defeated by Ptolemy's army and then killed by mutinous officers. Eventually, both Philip and the child Alexander were murdered at the hands of Alexander's other generals, and Ptolemy made himself pharaoh, taking the additional name Soter ("Savior").

CLEOPATRA AND HEROD

Cleopatra VII took advantage of her relationship with Julius Caesar to annex portions of Palestine during the rule of Antipater. His son, Herod the Great, came to the throne in the middle of the civil war following Caesar's assassination, and Cleopatra tried unsuccessfully to seduce him. Instead, Herod plotted to kill Cleopatra.





The Ptolemaic Dynasty: The Final Decline

Ptolemy I Soter

The honors Ptolemy bestowed on Alexander the Great's entombed body made him Alexander's logical successor in the eyes of the Egyptian people, while an early marriage (later abandoned) to the daughter of the last native Egyptian pharaoh (Nakhthorheb) confirmed the legal requirement for his succession.

Since Egypt was rather remote from the other Hellenistic empires, the new ruler had little trouble establishing his rule, and his was the most secure reign of the early successors. It was also a successful reign, in which the pharaoh managed to add Judea and lower Syria to the Egyptian Empire, and which saw the foundation of the Museum at Alexandria (see p. 60) and the start of construction of the Pharos Lighthouse (see p. 62), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Ptolemy II Philadelphus

After a three-year co-rule, Ptolemy I died, leaving the throne to his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus ("Sister Lover"; he had followed the Egyptian custom of marrying his sister, something which was considered noteworthy by Greek historians). His reign was a period of constant contact between Egypt and the Greek world in which religions of different lands mingled. The cult of Isis spread throughout the world, while Ptolemy introduced Hades to Alexandria after he had a dream in which he saw a specific statue of the god. Philadelphus also reopened Nekau's canal to the Red Sea, which had silted up after the reign of Darius, using it to send a trade expedition to the "Cinnamon Land," Punt.

Meanwhile, his daughter Berenice, married Antiochus II, king of the Seleucid Empire, and bore him a son. However, Antiochus' previous wife, Laodice, returned with her own sons to take revenge, murdering the king and seizing the throne. The Ptolemaic princess took refuge in the city of Daphne in Syria, but Queen Laodice laid siege to the city, promising to kill her rival in a horrible manner. Before Ptolemy II could go to his daughter's rescue, he died.

Ptolemy III Euergetes

Ptolemy III Euergetes ("Benefactor") led a colorless life up to the age of 30. However, when he assumed the throne, it was if he'd spent his early life storing up energy for the great deeds he would do as pharaoh.

Euergetes immediately began an invasion of Syria to rescue his sister Berenice, but before his two-pronged attack (by land through Judea and over the sea to the Syrian coast) could reach Daphne, Queen Laodice broke the walls of that city and murdered the new pharaoh's sister and her son. Ptolemy's wife (a Cyrenaican princess also named Berenice) cut off her hair as an offering to the Greek goddess Aphrodite to ensure her husband's safe return. (When astronomers in Alexandria completed the first systematic map of the night sky they saw a field of little stars what resembled a soft, glowing patch of hair. They named it Coma Berenices ("Berenice's Hair") in honor of their queen's sacrifice.)

Taking revenge on Laodice, Ptolemy III spent five years fighting in Syria, going as far as Antioch in northern Syria, where he recaptured statues and other religious artifacts stolen from Egypt during the period of Persian rule.

CLEOPATRA AND HEROD (CONTINUED)

The first attempt came in 36 B.C., when Marc Antony campaigned against Scythia. Although Cleopatra wished to accompany her lover into battle, her pregnancy made that impossible. Returning to Egypt from Syria, she accepted Herod's offer of passage through his kingdom.

Herod invited Cleopatra to Jericho where he planned to murder her. However, his councillors warned him that Antony was still nearby, and would return to avenge his lover's death, so the king didn't carry out his plot. Cleopatra, in return, convinced Antony to cede more of Herod's territory to her as a present; as a Roman client, Herod couldn't refuse Antony's order, and his hatred grew.

After the defeat of the conspirators at Actium, Herod made another attempt on Cleopatra's life by suggesting to Antony that it was not too late for him to blame the revolt on his lover — Antony could kill Cleopatra and present himself to Octavian as the man who conquered Egypt for Rome. Antony refused.





THE ROSETTA STONE

In 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte left Europe to conquer Egypt. Although the combined might of the British and Ottoman Empires threw his army out of Egypt within three years, while there the French made the most important discovery of modern Egyptian history. A military engineer in Bonaparte's army named Bouchard uncovered an odd lump of carved stone near the Delta city of Rosetta. It contained the same message repeated in three different scripts: Greek, demotic (a shorthand version of Egyptian hieroglyphs) and hieroglyphic. Nobody knew how to read ancient Egyptian, but Greek was familiar – therefore, the stone held the key to interpreting ancient Egyptian writings.

A Swedish scholar named Johan David Akerblad deciphered the demotic script, while beginning in 1821 a Frenchman named Jean-François Champollion deciphered the hieroglyphs, using the fact that royal names were set apart from the rest of the text in cartouches, thus making them easy to identify.

The message on the Rosetta stone was a series of verses praising Pharaoh Ptolemy V Epiphanes for bringing prosperity through tax cuts and land grants and for supporting the temples.

Ptolemy IV Philopater

After a long, prosperous reign, Euergetes' son Philopater ("Loving His Father") took the throne. The Greek historian Polybius described him as the most criminal man ever to sit on the throne of Egypt. Certainly, Philopater was a dissolute playboy. Antiochus III heard of Philopater's reputation and took the opportunity to invade Egypt's eastern empire, an attack for which Ptolemy IV was completely unprepared. After taking Phoenicia and Judea, Antiochus agreed to a temporary truce which gave Philopater time to hire Greek mercenaries who put the Egyptian army into condition. The new army defeated Antiochus when hostilities were renewed, but then went on to revolt against Ptolemy's rule, a rebellion put down by more mercenaries.

Ptolemy V Epiphanes

When Philopater was poisoned, his son Epiphanes ("Illustrious"), was only five years old. The new pharaoh's protectors were a Greek named Sosibius, who had encouraged Ptolemy IV's excesses, Philopater's poisoning mistress Agathoclea and her brother Agathocles. Egypt's future looked bleak. Philopater's misrule had led to sporadic riots in Egyptian cities, and with his death, open rebellion broke out across the country.

By the time the revolts ended, Agathoclea and her brother had been murdered and the now-teenaged Epiphanes was forced to placate the citizenry with a series of land grants and tax relief decrees that are recorded on the Rosetta Stone (see sidebar).

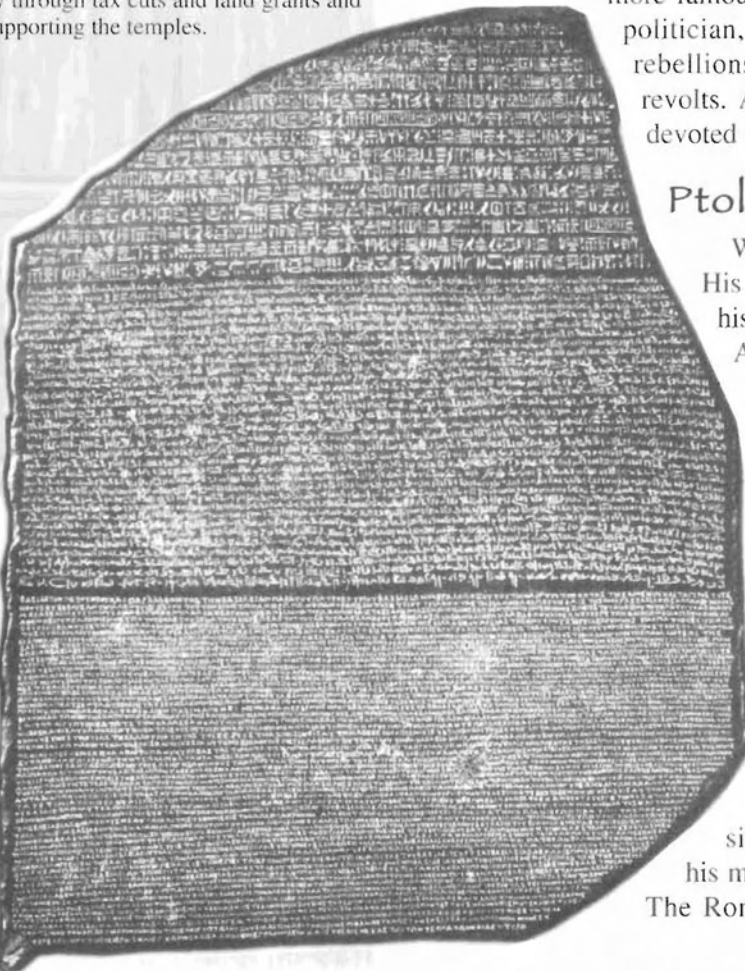
When Antiochus III again threatened war with Egypt, Ptolemy married Antiochus III's daughter, Cleopatra, to ensure peace. This Cleopatra, like her more famous descendant, was both a great beauty and a skilled politician, who deserved much of the credit for suppressing rebellions by mercenary commanders and native Egyptian revolts. Apparently, Cleopatra I and her husband were quite devoted to each other.

Ptolemy VI, VII & VIII

When Epiphanes died, his son Philometor ("Loving His Mother") was only a child, and his mother served as his regent. When she died, two other Hellenistic kings, Antiochus IV of Syria and Philip V of Macedon formed an alliance to invade Egypt in its perceived moment of weakness and split its territory between themselves.

In the ensuing battle, Ptolemy VI was taken prisoner and held in Memphis by the successful Syrians. Some Egyptians supported replacing him on the throne by his brother Euergetes II, and for seven years Euergetes ruled the Egyptian resistance from Alexandria while Philometor ruled (with Syrian backing) from Memphis.

During the third year of this co-rule, Antiochus returned to Egypt, demanding that it relinquish control of Cyprus or face another invasion. Euergetes refused, and when Antiochus began his march on Alexandria, Euergetes asked Rome for help. The Roman Republic regarded Egypt as a friend, largely





because of Philopator's decision to support Rome in its war against Carthage. Instead of an army, Rome sent a three-man envoy to protect Alexandria; Antiochus's father had been defeated by Rome in a number of earlier battles, and the mere threat of Roman intervention now caused the son to abandon the invasion and turn to an easier target, Judea, where his heavy-handed policies soon started the Maccabean Revolt.

The co-rule continued until Antiochus IV's death – Philometor was freed and became the ruler of an united Egypt once more, while Euergetes was given the kingdom of Cyrenaica as a gift from Rome.

After Philometor's death, he was succeeded by yet another child-pharaoh, Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator. Euergetes saw this as a chance to return to Egypt, and his invasion drove Neos Philopator and his mother, Cleopatra II, from Alexandria into exile in southern Egypt. Euergetes made peace by marrying his sister, Cleopatra, but once she produced an heir for him, he had Neos Philopator killed, finally becoming sole pharaoh in his own right.

Euergetes was an unpopular ruler and he soon had to flee to Cyprus. Cleopatra II took control of Egypt but Euergetes soon returned, killed his own heir, and drove Cleopatra to the protection of Demetrius II of Syria.

Ptolemy IX Soter II and Ptolemy X Alexander

Euergetes had also married his niece, Cleopatra III, and with her he had two sons. When he died, his eldest son, Soter II, became pharaoh, but Cleopatra moved to have Soter's younger brother Alexander made co-ruler a few years later. Soon, Soter was implicated in a plot to murder the queen-mother, and he fled to Cyprus while Alexander married his mother and became sole ruler.

Five years later, Cleopatra III was murdered, but by Alexander, not Soter. Alexander ruled for another decade before he too was driven out of Egypt, dying during his flight.

Ptolemy XI & XII, and Berenice IV

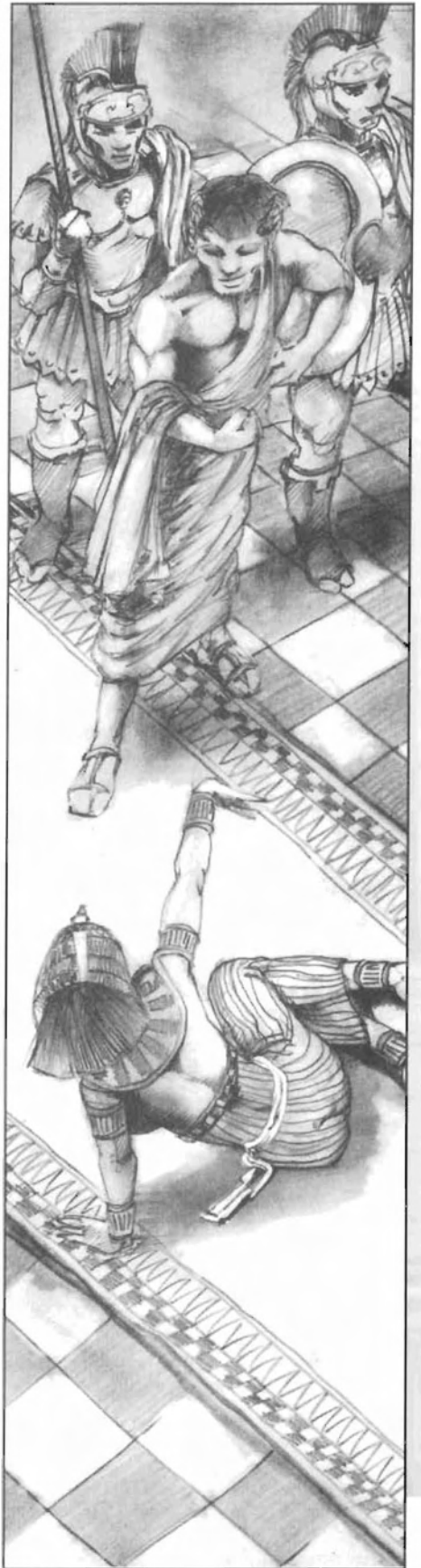
Soter returned to rule again, and when he eventually died, his daughter Berenice took a cousin, Ptolemy XI Alexander II, as her consort. Within a month, Alexander had Berenice murdered, but the Egyptian people lynched him after a 19-day solo reign.

Alexander was succeeded by an illegitimate son of Soter II, Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (nicknamed Auletes: "Flute-Player"), who had been living in exile in Pontus on the Black Sea coast. Auletes levied high taxes on the people and when they revolted, he fled to his backers in Rome. His daughter, Berenice IV, took the throne, marrying a Syrian cousin whom she had strangled within a week to be replaced by a consort from Pontus.

In Rome, Auletes began a campaign of bribing Roman senators to return him to the throne of the Two Lands. To raise funds for this enterprise he borrowed money from Roman usurers. A senator named Julius Caesar proclaimed Auletes "a friend and ally of the Roman people," and with the help of three legions Auletes invaded Egypt, captured and then killed Berenice, and was restored to his throne until he died four years later.

Ptolemy XIII, Philopator II and Cleopatra VII

Auletes's daughter, Cleopatra VII, became queen of Egypt at age 18, marrying her brother Ptolemy XIII Philopator II. Three years into their joint reign, Philopator tried to kill his older sister. Cleopatra fled to Syria, soon returning with an army that besieged Philopator in the eastern fortress of Pelusium.





KING TUT'S TOMB

The location of many royal tombs had been known since antiquity and, understandably, they'd long been emptied of their original contents. They still contained much of artistic and historical value, but excavations in the 19th and early 20th centuries had to produce spectacular treasures in order to maintain their funding.

The first spectacular find of the 20th century was the tomb of Yuya and Tjuyu (Amenhotep III's in-laws) in 1905, a tomb which had been robbed three times in the ancient past. Easily transported jewelry, metalwork, cloth, cosmetics and perfumes had been removed, but the tomb still contained a jumble of furniture, personal items, funerary equipment and two mummies.

The fame of Yuya's and Tjuyu's tomb was soon to be eclipsed. In 1906, a refuse pit outside of the tomb of Ramesses I was found to contain discards from a number of royal graves, including a pitcher inscribed with Pharaoh Tutankhamun's throne name (Nebkheperure, "Lord of Manifestations is Re"). Although small, the find was far from insignificant, as scholars prior to that date weren't even certain that there was a Pharaoh Tutankhamun! (See *Horemheb*, p. 53.) In the next year further scattered Tutankhamun finds were made nearby. Sure they were on the trail of an undiscovered royal tomb, Egyptologists thoroughly excavated the area over the next six years, revealing 16 tombs in the search (including that of Horemheb).

Over a decade later Howard Carter stumbled onto the greatest find of Egyptian archaeology. Carter was a systematic worker. Instead of looking for likely hiding places of tombs and digging in those locations, he spent years progressing down a single branch of the Valley of the Kings investigating known tombs and searching for overlooked sites. While mapping a collection of workmen's huts ignored by other Egyptologists because of the low probability of finding treasure there, Carter's workers discovered the first of a series of steps in the rubble left over from the construction of Ramesses VI's tomb. After three weeks of digging Carter removed a block from a still-sealed doorway and glimpsed a room filled with bundles, boxes, furniture, statues and gold.

At that time, Julius Caesar had just won the civil war with Pompey the Great, who sought sanctuary with Philopator in Pelusium. Ptolemy betrayed Pompey, presenting his severed head to Caesar, and asking for support in the Egyptian civil war. Before making his decision, the Roman ordered the queen of Egypt to appear before him in Alexandria, and shortly thereafter servants arrived at Caesar's tent carrying a carpet with Cleopatra rolled inside. By winter Cleopatra was pregnant with Caesar's child, Caesarion.

Philopator renewed the civil war, leading an army to the Pharos lighthouse. They cornered Caesar but he swam to safety under a sea of arrows, called in a friendly army of Arabs, and crushed Ptolemy's forces.

Cleopatra and Caesar

Philopator died in the aftermath of the battle, leaving Cleopatra the sole ruler of Egypt. She married her youngest brother, Ptolemy XIV, to keep up appearances, but did away with him three years later.

When Caesar returned to Rome, Cleopatra and Caesarion traveled with him. Cleopatra hoped Caesar would marry her, accept the Egyptian religion, seize power in Rome, and found a joint rule in which she would be the goddess-queen of Egypt and he would be the god-king of the outside world. Caesarion would then inherit an empire encircling the Mediterranean.

Caesar openly rejected such notions but found them privately appealing. Caesar took every step he could to consolidate his power, stacking the Senate with his supporters and then having them heap honors on him. After he was declared dictator-for-life he arranged for his retainers to publicly offer him the only Roman title superior to dictator: king. Each time the public seemed restive, so each time Caesar refused the honor.

In 45 B.C., Caesar had himself proclaimed a god in Egypt, and instituted temple services in his name. He also began riding an Egyptian chariot through the streets of Rome, infuriating Marcus Brutus and other patriotic Romans who feared he was Cleopatra's thrall. On the ides of March in 44 B.C., Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators murdered Caesar.

Cleopatra and Mark Antony

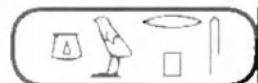
To Cleopatra's horror, Caesar's will mentioned neither her nor Caesarion. After returning to Alexandria, Cleopatra operated a web of spies and informers that allowed her to keep track of the new civil war in Rome.

Mark Antony won the early campaigns of this conflict. When he made his palace in Cilicia, Cleopatra sailed to meet him. Antony lost his head to Cleopatra's charms (and to the power she represented), granting her all the political concessions she asked for.

Mark Antony eventually followed Cleopatra back to Alexandria, where they lived together in opulence. Meanwhile, the powerful men of Rome fought for control of the empire. Loyal troops under Antony's wife Fulvia openly defied Octavian, Caesar's lawful heir. Octavian's forces drove her to Greece, and Antony hurried to join his wife's army, leaving Cleopatra pregnant with his children.

Soon, Fulvia fell ill and died. Antony then blamed the war on her and offered to make peace with Octavian. The two warlords divided the Roman Empire between them – Antony taking control of the rich eastern provinces while Octavian took Rome and the politically powerful west. To cement the arrangement, Antony married Octavian's sister Octavia.

When Cleopatra heard that Antony had conceded Rome and remarried, she flew into a rage so fierce that it brought on childbirth. She gave birth to twins, a



boy named Alexander Helios and a girl named Cleopatra Selene. For three years, the Egyptian queen spent her time grooming her first son, Caesarion, to take his father's role as ruler of Egypt and Rome.

In 36 B.C., Octavian and the Senate assigned Mark Antony to lead a campaign against Parthia. Antony needed funding for his armies and sent for Cleopatra, meeting her in Syria. When he requested gold, Cleopatra demanded kingdoms and that Antony marry her. Antony promised both.

The expedition against Parthia ended in disaster because of betrayals by Octavian and the king of Armenia. Antony became obsessed with the desire to see Cleopatra again. When he finally reached her, she encouraged him to turn his energies toward defeating Octavian.

By the time he assembled his army in Asia Minor in 32 B.C., Octavian had had four years to wage a propaganda war against Antony and Cleopatra.

Ptolemy XV Philopator Caesar

Antony and Cleopatra vowed to conquer Rome on behalf of Caesarion (co-ruler of Egypt as Ptolemy XV Philopator Caesar ("Loving His Father Caesar")) since the death of his uncle Ptolemy XIV in 44 B.C.), the "true" heir of Julius Caesar, and many senators supported this cause.

However, Romans were scandalized by stories that Cleopatra made Antony soft. He wore Egyptian clothing, amused himself at drunken costume parties instead of preparing for war and yielded to Cleopatra's pressure to divorce Octavia.

Cleopatra's war plan called for a delay in the actual fighting. Rome's treasury and granaries couldn't sustain long operations, but Egypt had nearly limitless supplies of gold and grain. However, Octavian seized a port in southern Greece, giving his armies a nearby base from which to fall upon Egypt.

To prevent the invasion, Antony and Cleopatra assembled a fleet that met the Roman Navy on September 2, 31 B.C. near Actium. Following the desertion of some of Anthony's forces, Cleopatra saw the battle was lost and fled. Upon seeing the queen's barge turn east, Antony abandoned his fleet and went in pursuit of his lover.

Pursued by Octavian's fleet, Cleopatra tried to run her ships overland and through Necho's canal to the Red Sea, but the desert nomads were allies of Octavian, and set them afire. As Octavian's armies closed in a year later, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. Octavian put 17-year-old Caesarion and 8-year-old Alexander Helios to death, and declared Egypt his personal estate.

The Last of the Ptolemies

While Cleopatra's sons had been executed, her daughter by Mark Antony, Cleopatra Selene, was married to the king of Mauritania (a Roman client kingdom along the Mediterranean coast immediately west of Carthage in modern Algeria and Morocco) to whom she eventually bore a son, Ptolemy. While Octavian's successor, Tiberius, allowed the child to grow into adulthood, Tiberius' successor Caligula couldn't take the chance that Ptolemy would have himself crowned Ptolemy XVI, and had the last of the Ptolemies killed around 39 A.D. The age of the pharaohs was over.

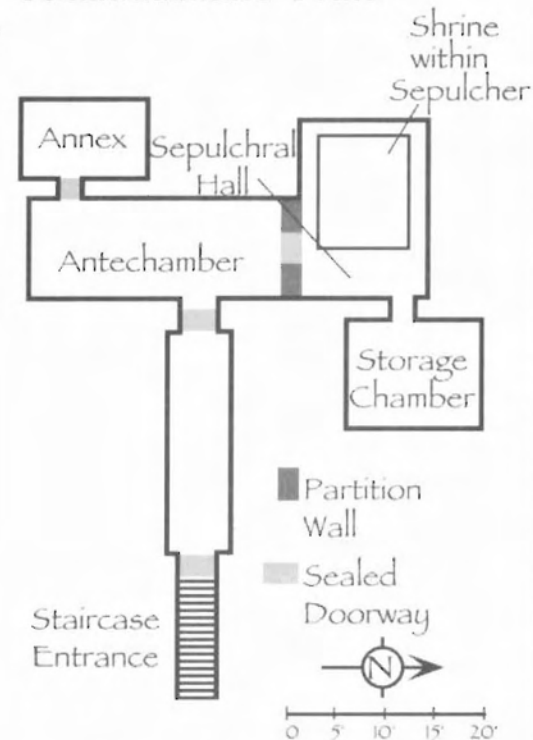
Egypt was an enormous prize for any conqueror; as a saying went, the city of Alexandria alone contained more wealth than all the lands under Rome's rule. Until its modern independence in 1922, Egypt would never again have an independent history, always being a part or pawn of some foreign empire.

KING TUT'S TOMB (CONTINUED)

This nobleman's tomb had been converted for use in Tutankhamun's burial after his untimely death. Burial goods that should have been placed throughout the many corridors and chambers of a proper royal tomb were stacked almost to the ceiling in the four small, partially completed rooms of this vault. Robbers had carted off some of the most valuable items, leaving the rest in a jumble that was only superficially straightened by necropolis officials who resealed the tomb after the robberies. What remained behind included numerous religious artifacts (from the familiar statues of various deities to an Osiris-shaped wooden seedling tray with the remains of sprouted wheat rooted in it), cherished possessions from Tut's childhood as Tutankhaten, the mummified remains of his two stillborn children, and the famous multiple coffins and funerary mask depicting the boy-king in golden glory.

In 1939 a single intact (although not impressive) royal burial was finally found: the pit tomb of the 21st-Dynasty pharaoh Pasebakhenniut I, buried under the temple of Amun at Tanis.

Tutankhamun's Tomb





CHARACTERS

For a realistic historical or historical fantasy campaign, average Egyptians are 25-point characters. Player characters should be built with 100 points, taking no more than 40 points in disadvantages and 5 points of quirks.

More exotic campaigns can be played at higher point levels. If players wish to play the sort of heroes legends are made of, the campaign can begin at 200 points or more, and can incorporate the cinematic campaign rules on p. B183 and in the *GURPS Compendium II*.



APPEARANCE

Average ancient Egyptians had slender bodies, finely-shaped facial bones and predominantly African features. Average height for a male Egyptian was 5'5".

It is difficult to determine their skin color since Egyptian art used color to denote gender and social standing as much as race. They were likely not as dark as their neighbors in Nubia, either because Egyptians were a distinct ethnic type that originated in the northern Nile valley or because they were a mix of African and Asian peoples. Egyptians considered themselves a race distinct from the Nubians to the south, the Libyans to the west and the Canaanites and Arabs to the east.

Whatever their origins, Egyptians have mingled with Arabs, Africans and the Hellenic people during various periods of their history, and all of these racial groups have affected their current appearance.

Age

Average life expectancy in pharaonic Egypt was 30-35 years for those who survived infancy, 30-45 for the upper class, and some Egyptians could expect to live as long as 100 years (Ramesses the Great reigned for 67 years and could have been 92 years old at his death) with women who survived their dangerous child-bearing years living the longest.

CHARACTER TYPES

When designing PCs for an *Egypt* campaign, players must consult with the GM about the reason why their characters have taken up lives of danger. Egypt's culture encouraged people to live quiet lives, and its laws made it nearly impossible for "freelance adventurers" to exist. The government assigned jobs to all citizens, and the system of internal passports made it difficult for most to live outside the law for any period of time.

Naturally, there are ways around these rules, and the following character type descriptions emphasize ways that Egyptians from various backgrounds might end up in exciting situations.

Artisan

Artisans (e.g., sculptors, painters, fine craftsmen) who simply do their jobs have little story potential, but without a professional adventurer class a realistic campaign is likely to involve ordinary people caught in extraordinary situations.

Artisans are among the most socially mobile members of Egypt's population, welcome for their skills on the estates of the rich but not out of place among the commoners. Egyptian rulers recognize artisans as a source of political factions and civil strife. Strict laws forbid craftsman from taking roles in government affairs, and during any sort of political upheaval all parties attempt to either organize or neutralize skilled workers.

Egyptian law defines professions and strictly prohibits anyone from working at more than one trade. In some periods sons are required to adopt the trades of their fathers, but even when Egyptians have a choice of occupations, they normally receive the choice only once and can never change fields. These laws enable the authorities to regulate the number of people practicing each profession, ensuring

sufficient workers for necessary services and preventing undue competition. The laws against crossing trade lines fragment the artisan community, inhibiting political alliances.

Skillful artisans can rise to almost any height in Egyptian society. Pharaoh's chief engineer, for instance, holds a status similar to that of the commander of the army. This influence also carries great responsibility; if anything from desert raiders to worker revolts (or the awakening of monstrous entities in a fantastic campaign) threatens a project, the artisans in charge are forced to set matters right.

Typical advantages: Patron, Status, Wealth (comfortable). As members of the middle class, artisans are likely to be literate and educated.

Typical disadvantages: Greed, Laziness. One major family of historical artisans carried the genes for dwarfism.

Typical skills: Appropriate Craft skills, Savoir-Faire, Streetwise.

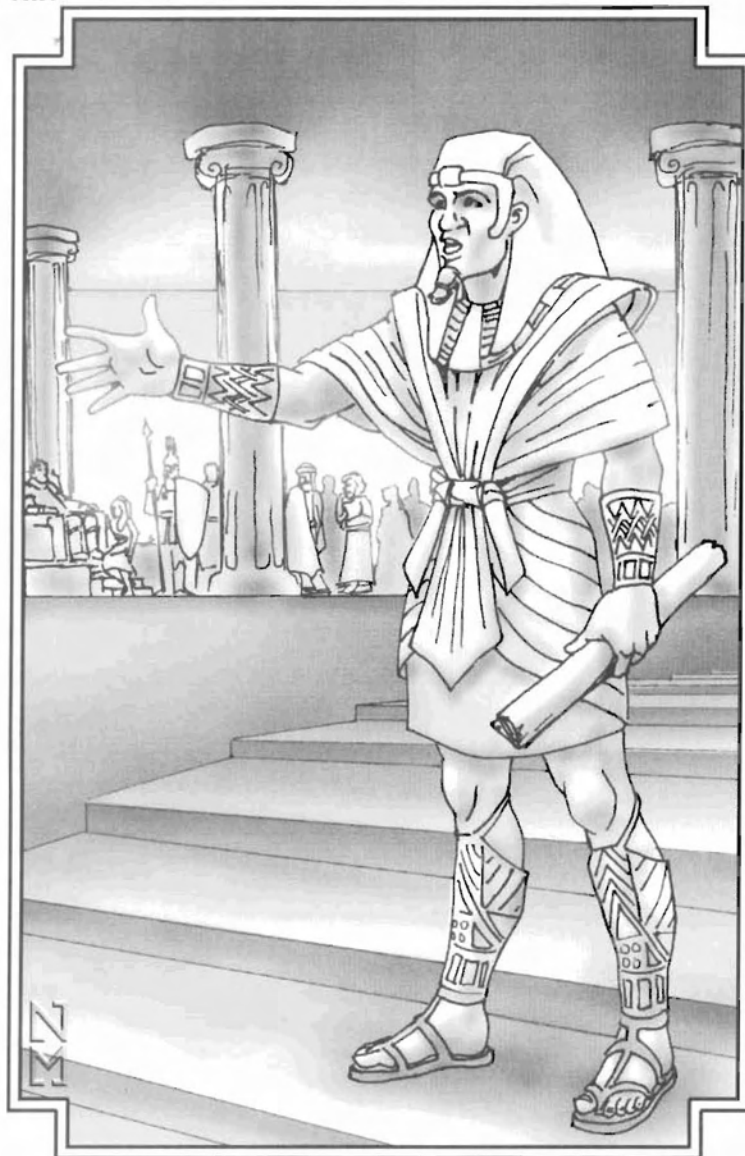
Desert Tribesman

Desert nomads come and go at will, trading wherever they travel. Many tribes are fierce warriors and few turn down opportunities to raid isolated caravans or other tempting targets. As outsiders, nomads have special potential as adventurers because they aren't tied to mandatory jobs or the placid Egyptian way of life. However, most tribesmen travel within family clans and there must be an explanation for a nomad character no longer living with the tribe.

Typical advantages: High Pain Threshold, Toughness. Due to the complex clan system of the desert nomads, these characters are likely to have patrons, allies, dependents and enemies within the tribe.

Typical disadvantages: Enemies, Primitive, 5-point Social Stigma (foreigner). Nomads follow a Code of





Honor similar to the Pirate's Code (see p. B31).

Typical skills: Primary weapon 12+, other weapons 11+, Animal Handling, Gambling, Merchant, Riding (horse, camel or ass), Scrounging, Survival, Teamster.

Diplomat

Among the few citizens who have permission and reason to travel outside Egypt, diplomats are a rare breed. Although Egypt would like to dispatch its most competent and respectable representatives for duty abroad, few Egyptians would choose the diplomat's life. Egyptians like familiar places and things and consider even nearby countries like Nubia strange and dangerous. Therefore, Egyptians who travel abroad come in two categories: those who spend their time abroad suffering from homesickness, writing about how frightening the forests of Syria (where one can't see from horizon to horizon) are, and wondering why the peculiar foreigners fail to follow Egyptian customs, and those who have some mental aberration that

drives them to leave their homeland. The diplomatic corps is diverse enough that individual diplomats are not necessarily of great significance in the court. A diplomatic career offers opportunities for loners, romantics or other voluntary social outcasts.

Since Egypt conducts a great deal of foreign trade, and all trade is the prerogative of the temples and the government, there is a great demand for ambassador merchants (who could double as smugglers and pirates). Adventuring ambassadors will frequently find themselves playing the roles of explorers or secret agents. During later periods of Egyptian history, of course, diplomatic adventurers may become involved in the affairs of Greece, Rome, Persia and the rest of the classical ancient world.

Egyptian envoys operate under orders from the pharaoh or one of the temples authorized to conduct foreign relations. The fact that both of these institutions conduct their own potentially conflicting foreign policies could lead to adventure possibilities (see *Temples and Trade*, p. 22).

Typical advantages: Literacy, Status, Wealth.

Typical disadvantages: Alcoholism, Chauvinistic, Enemy (unknown), Phobia (Claustrophobia), Homesickness (quirk).

Typical skills: Diplomacy, Intelligence Analysis, foreign Languages, Merchant, Savoir-Faire.

Foreign Merchant

Foreigners aren't tied to mandatory jobs and are more likely to have adventurous spirits than native Egyptians. The roving merchants of the ancient world are happy to go on epic quests, as the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece illustrates. And since Egyptians considered outsiders reckless, anyone hiring for dangerous work is likely to turn to foreigners first.

Foreigners have advantages if they wish to operate outside the law. Contacts outside the country make it easier to smuggle or fence stolen items and if they need to run, they can always head home, unless they are wanted criminals there as well. To combat this, Egypt strictly regulates the activities of foreigners – limiting outsiders to certain city districts for instance. Foreigners must also remember that all their trade is ultimately with the government or the priesthood – an outlaw cannot easily do business in Egypt.

Advantages, Disadvantages and Skills: The exact skills and culture of a foreign merchant depends largely on his homeland. Northern Nubians and tribesmen from nearby oases may have grown up with the same religion and culture as Egyptians, while those from Canaan, Syria or further afield would have less in common with their hosts (see the sidebars on these nations on pp. 23-30). From 1000 B.C. on, Greek travelers become common throughout the





Eastern Mediterranean – *GURPS Greece* provides background material for such characters. *GURPS Imperial Rome* has information about the Romans who entered Egypt during the Ptolemaic Dynasty.

All foreigners in Egypt receive a 5-point Social Stigma.

Foreign Priest

Most of what was said above about foreign merchants also applies to foreign priests; however, the priests have special allies and special interests. Ancient Egypt is a land of mystics and divine lore where even priests of foreign gods are likely to find much of interest.

Priests of deities from polytheistic pantheons, such as those of Greece or Babylon, have no trouble fitting into Egyptian society. Even if they disagree with local religious practices, they find the Egyptians accepting of varying points of view. Those with completely alien beliefs may provoke hostile reactions from the established priesthood, especially if they proselytize. However, Egyptians are fond of arcane philosophies and those preaching heretical ideas may accumulate followers.

Typical advantages: Clerical Investment, Magical Aptitude, Status, Wealth. In his homeland, the priest would have patrons, status and authority, but in Egypt anyone traveling openly as a priest of a foreign god will come to the attention of the temple bureaucracy, automatically gaining either a powerful network of contacts or a powerful enemy.

Typical disadvantages: Enemies. All foreigners in Egypt receive a 5-point Social Stigma.

Typical skills: Languages, spells, Theology, skills appropriate to his deity's sphere of influence.

Magician

Egyptians take magic for granted and magicians have the same position in society as any other educated professionals (see *Magic in Daily Life*, p. 91, for a description of a wizard's work). Magicians constantly seek arcane knowl-

edge, inspiring them to risk dangers that few other Egyptians will face.

The government and temples keep track of practicing magicians and may call on their services; however, wizards also maintain "private practices," and can accept job offers from adventuring parties with no official ties.

A player may wish to design a spell-using PC who holds a job other than magician. If such a character uses his powers publicly, he may fall afoul of the law, not because of the magic use, but because he's encroaching on another's profession.

Still, officials aren't all fools, and if a mage appears who can do things that other magicians cannot, he can expect a fine welcome from other wizards wishing to learn his new craft and prominent officials wanting to take advantage of the exceptional magician's powers. The Biblical Joseph became one of Pharaoh's most trusted advisors because of his skill at interpreting dreams.

The dead require magical assistance just like the living, and there are magicians who specialize in providing such services: priests of the mortuary cults who perform daily magical rituals which involve the dead (see *Cities of the Dead*, p. 26), and necromancers who specialize in magical protection for those apprehensive about the judgments in the afterlife (see *Tuat*, p. 100).

Any grave-robber who takes the curses on tombs seriously will hire a necromancer for his magical abilities and for the camouflage he provides the tomb-robbers, since the necromancer would have a legitimate excuse for lingering near grave sites.

Typical advantages: Literacy, Magical Aptitude, High Status, Wealth.

Typical disadvantages: Age, Combat Paralysis, Cowardice, Greed, Overconfidence, Megalomania, Vow (to honor some spiritual taboo).

Typical skills: Six or more spells, Alchemy, Physician, other Scientific skills.



Nobleman

Egypt's noblemen are servitors of Pharaoh and adventuring nobles will likely spend their careers solving the problems of the realm, pursuing Egypt's criminals or fighting Egypt's enemies abroad. If there is enough peace in the land for noblemen to pursue personal interests, other adventures are possible.

For Egypt's nobility, life revolves around the royal court. Pharaoh is a god and even noblemen deep in the hinterlands look to the capital as the seat of civilization. Most adventuring noblemen will experience some combination of private homesickness and outward determination to do their duty. If an aristocrat actually *likes* danger, the officials in charge of such things will be happy to send him on the government's most exciting missions. Whether others would regard him as heroic or psychotic depends on his other traits.

Typical advantages: Literacy, Status 4+, Wealth (comfortable or better). Egypt's nobility wasn't truly hereditary; while a nobleman's son might end up with the same title as his father, he received it as a gift from Pharaoh, not through inheritance. Before becoming pharaohs, princes are taught to let as many Egyptians as possible enjoy the fruits of national prosperity so that they will feel a personal stake in the health of the realm. For every 10 points a nobleman character spends on Status, he must spend 5 points on the Patron advantage as well.

Typical disadvantages: Cowardice, Fat, Gluttony, Low Pain Threshold, Overweight, Weak Will.

Typical skills: Administration, Calligraphy, Law, Literature, Politics, Savoir-Faire, Professional skills appropriate to government position.

Physician

The people of the ancient world credited Egypt's physicians with amazing skill at the use of herbs and other drugs (see *Medicine*, p. 7), and most doctors also practiced magic, although they did not cast the same spells as professional magicians.

Typical advantages: Literacy, Magical Aptitude, Status, Wealth (comfortable).

Typical disadvantages: Age, Cowardice, Greed, Phobia (disfiguring patients).

Typical skills: Diagnosis, Physician, Herbalist. Six or more healing spells.

Priest

Egyptian priests wield great social influence and, in turn, have a duty to society. The temples ensure that Egypt enjoys the blessings of the gods and the temple bureaucracy administers Egypt's affairs on behalf of its divine rulers. Therefore, clergymen have a personal interest

in pursuing criminals, upholding Egypt's national interests and resolving threats to Egyptian society, whether on a small or large scale. Priests also have their own quests and concerns, related to the teachings of their gods and goals of their temples. Although the priests of all the Egyptian gods are, officially, members of the same organization, priests of individual temples compete vigorously for political and magical power. Junior priests have ample opportunities to travel as their service to the temple occupies only one month out of three.

Priests who subscribe to mystery doctrines may have powers, allies and adventure opportunities closed to other characters. Egypt's philosophers keep in contact with one another, exchanging ideas and occasionally forming secret societies. Since members of these societies know things beyond the common understanding, they are among the few groups likely to deviate from standard Egyptian attitudes, striving to achieve secret goals ranging from competition with other mystery cults to obtaining lost collections of lore.

Typical advantages: Clerical Investment, Magical Aptitude, Status, Wealth. While the details vary from temple to temple, priests enjoy immunity from many of Egypt's laws (see *Legal Immunity*, p. 78). As individual priests take orders only from the temple hierarchy, and high priests answer directly to Pharaoh, priests act with a great deal of independence. Lectors with the training and authority of scribes must buy the Scribal Powers advantage (see p. 80).

Typical disadvantages: Age, Cowardice, Greed. A priest must maintain a reputation for purity, and most are phobic about both physical and spiritual cleanliness (see *Temples and Worship*, p. 22).





Tomb-Guardian

These specialized warriors live in the cities of the dead, protecting tombs from robbers. If thieves break in despite their efforts, it is their duty to recover the stolen goods and capture the burglars. Although the legal penalty for theft is a beating, defenders of the graves may use any force necessary to protect the tombs and make arrests. The training of a tomb-guardian emphasizes combat, but such warriors may learn spells as well.

Tomb-guardians are employed by the mortuary temples in a particularly honorable task, especially when they defend the graves of their own family members.

Tomb-guardians have obvious reasons to participate in adventures involving the dead, even if they are not directly combatting robbers. Dealing with an undead horror, for instance, would be the responsibility of these troops, although they might be inclined to side with the undead against mortals who trespass in the graves. If the party has a legitimate reason to explore a grave (such as the tomb restorations undertaken throughout Egyptian history and missions undertaken by priests in the XXth and XXIst Dynasties to spirit mummies away before the robbers could destroy them) tomb-guardians might protect both the explorers and the dead.

After years in the desert surrounded by corpses and priests of a gloomy religion, many of these soldiers may develop grim personalities. When role-playing tomb-guardians, players should consider the reasons why their characters took up such careers, and how they have adjusted to their life among the dead.

Typical advantages: High Pain Threshold, Toughness. Since tomb-guardians have no license to pursue criminals except grave-robbers, they spend only 5 points for their Legal Enforcement Powers.

Typical disadvantages: Alcoholism, Bully, Enemies.

Typical skills: 12 for primary weapon, 11 for others, Carousing, Detect Lie, Fast-Talk, Gambling, Streetwise.

Tomb-Robber

Tomb-robbers are the most despised criminals in Egypt because the treasures and magic tokens they steal are intended to ensure the entombed's eternal afterlife – pillaging a tomb is the afterlife equivalent of murder. But despite the social and religious consequences, the lure of gold created a community of tomb-robbers, from the actual thieves to necromancers specializing in overcoming the magical protection of the dead, fences to dispose of grave goods and engineers willing to sell information on the locations and mundane defenses of tombs.

Most grave-robbers break into recent graves, some infiltrating work-gangs constructing tombs in order to

Typical skills: Spells, Alchemy, Literature, Physician, Theology, assorted Scientific skills. Priests do not study arts associated with the rougher professions, so few priests have combat skills – if temples must contend with violence, priests rely on poison, magic, fanatical worshippers and perhaps hired assassins. Priests of combative deities, such as Set, Horus and Anhur, may have as much weapons training as any warrior.

Scribe

In a country that administers all resources through a national bureaucracy and tracks the movements of citizens through a universal system of passports (see p. 21) the scribes who prepare these documents wield enormous powers. A scribe is a combination customs officer, records clerk, contract lawyer and notary public, in addition to having great prestige. Their legal prerogatives and encyclopedic knowledge make them indispensable when detective skills are needed.

In addition to their other duties, scribes record the deeds of heroes for posterity, and have considerable freedom to write the truth as they see it. Although visual artists are bound by strict stylistic guidelines, writers place great emphasis on creative inspiration and on the enduring value of ideas. Scribes believe that their learning puts them in a position to criticize the rest of Egyptian society.

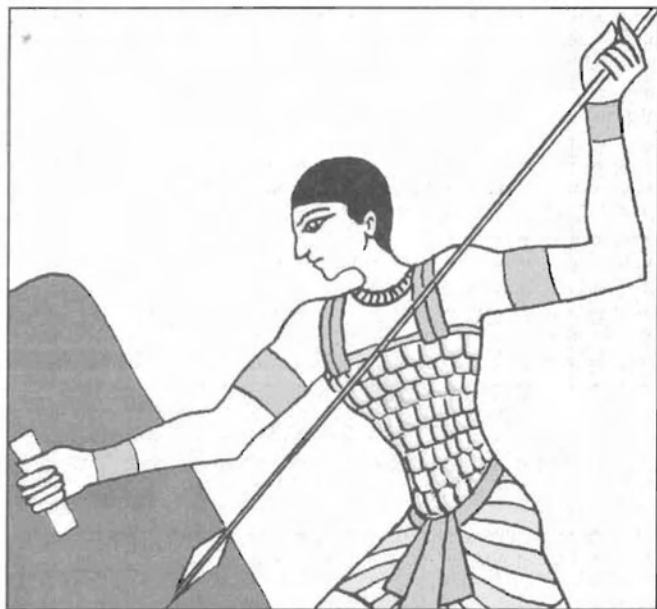
Those with a penchant for smuggling, espionage, fraud, anti-government conspiracy or fencing of stolen goods couldn't ask for a more useful contact, but only the most extraordinary circumstances would lead most scribes knowingly into crime.

Typical advantages: Literacy, Mathematical Ability, High Status, Wealth. A scribe must buy the 15-point Scribal Powers advantage (see p. 80).

Typical disadvantages: Cowardice, Fat, Gluttony, Greed, Low Pain Threshold, Overweight, Weak Will.

Typical skills: Administration, Artist, Calligraphy, Languages (especially Akkadian, the *lingua franca* of diplomatic correspondence), Law, Literature, Politics, Savoir-Faire. Scribes receive more breadth and depth in their education than members of other professions, and should have a number of Scientific skills.





gain early access to the contents (see *Tomb Defenses*, p. 95). The more scholarly attempt to locate forgotten and unguarded tombs from the distant past, but with prominent necropoli close to most major cities, only the promise of forgotten magic lore or rumors of vast treasures will make this seem worthwhile.

Many grave-robbers were common laborers who, after building a rich man's tomb, couldn't resist the urge to claim a bit of his treasure as extra compensation. As well, tomb-guardians and priests of the funerary cults have daily opportunities to rob graves, and some succumb to temptation.

The possibility exists of becoming an *honest* tomb-robber! At times Pharaoh or the temple hierarchy found a need to open sealed tombs so that they could repair the damage done by thieves and nature, or remove mummies from accessible tombs to be safely hidden away, or even to officially desecrate the tombs of pharaohs whose successors didn't think they deserved eternal life.

Typical advantages: Acute Hearing, Acute Vision, Alertness, Ambidexterity, Danger Sense, Double-Jointed.

Typical disadvantages: Enemies, Laziness, Secret.

Typical skills: One weapon skill, Area Knowledge, Disguise, Escape, Lockpicking, Poisons, Shadowing, Stealth, Traps. A tomb-robber's most important feature is his public profession.

Warrior

Egypt is not a martial society and few see warfare as a path to glory. Students practice their penmanship by copying essays discussing the miseries of military life and exhorting young people to study hard so that they won't have to become soldiers. Still, Egypt's military is well-equipped and highly motivated, and the troops seem to take pride in their service.

To ensure loyalty and inspire bravery, pharaohs take care to give soldiers personal stakes in the defense of Egypt. The government grants every soldier a plot of land (large enough to support one person) to farm for his own profit, and after a battle soldiers receive bonuses based on the total number of enemy dead (counted by collecting the right hands or the phalluses of the dead). Soldiers who captured live prisoners received extra rewards.

Prior to 1600 B.C. the Egyptian army is made up entirely of infantry: spearmen, archers, slingers and heavy infantry armed with maces and swords. Infantrymen are usually conscripts who serve for their entire useful lives, but since Egyptians are accustomed to the government choosing their jobs, conscription and life-service don't seem excessively harsh.

At the end of the Second Intermediate Period, Egypt drove the Hyksos rulers of the XVth Dynasty from the country with their own advanced military technology: war chariots. Charioteers are volunteers who consider themselves an elite. Since they provide their own weapons, only the wealthy can enter this service. Charioteers fought with spears and bows as the shock troops of the ancient battlefield.

Egypt also has a navy, but it's never considered a high priority. Its main role is transportation of infantry to a foreign battle site, not fighting wars at sea.

Life-long service and laws forbidding soldiers becoming freelance mercenaries make it difficult for PC soldiers to participate in non-military scenarios. Occasionally the army temporarily detaches soldiers to perform special tasks for the government or temples. Veterans who leave the army due to age, wounds or other exceptional circumstances keep their weapons and other gear, so a hero with these disadvantages will at least be well-equipped.

A more easily justified PC soldier can be drawn from the pool of foreign auxiliaries and mercenaries: Nubian archers, Greek sailors, or slingers and other lightly-armed troops from Libya and Arabia. Foreign soldiers receive generous pay but they don't receive land grants and are only hired for the duration of a specific campaign or crisis. The native Egyptian infantry tends to be reasonably competent. Foreign auxiliaries may have less discipline and fewer social graces.

Typical advantages: Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold, Military Rank, Toughness, Reputation and Status (for charioteers).

Typical disadvantages: Alcoholism, Duties, Primitive (for foreign troops only), Low Status (for infantry), Overconfidence, Enemies (for charioteers).

Typical skills: Bow or Spear at 13 (charioteers), other weapon skills, Carousing, Driving (chariot).





Egyptian Women

Egypt had a male-dominated society. Most women took care of their homes and performed such domestic occupations as spinning, weaving, needleworking and grinding grain. Upper-class women could serve as priestesses, oracles, magicians and scholars. Physicians could be either male or female with the same training and status. (For reasons which are not recorded, nearly all the specialists in diseases of the digestive tract were women.) And while the throne normally passed to the pharaoh's eldest son, queens often served as regents for underage pharaohs and on a few occasions became rulers in their own rights.

In most cases, Egyptian law recognized gender equality. Egyptian wives had the right to divorce their husbands, and while the law allowed men to strike their wives, a famous royal decree ordered magistrates to discourage this practice. Social custom dictated that husbands and wives treat each other as partners and equals, and the Egyptian wedding vows called on a groom to swear that he would accept his wife's "commands" in matters regarding the household.

The worship of strong female deities, notably Isis and Hathor, further improved the role of women in society. Unlike some ancient cultures, Egyptian goddesses weren't just the consorts of the important gods; they were independent deities worshipped in their own right, and Egyptian women were expected to treat their goddesses as role models. There were female equivalents for each of the male priestly ranks except Lector (because of the lower literacy level among women), although priestesses became rare after the XVIIIth Dynasty, when the primary roles for women in temples were as musicians.

Female characters do not suffer any automatic disadvantage in *Egypt*.

Undead Characters

The core mythology of ancient Egypt made little mention of the undead. From prehistoric times Egyptians believed in hostile ghosts, and one purpose of the complicated and expensive funerary cult was to keep the souls of the dead satisfied, so they wouldn't return to harm the living. In later times, there were well-known spells designed to help the souls of the dead visit places they knew in life. Building on these facts and the gruesome spectacle of partially-decayed linen-wrapped corpses, modern fantasy and horror writers have created their own "ancient" Egyptian tradition of individuals who managed to find rituals that not only preserved their bodies, but allowed them to return from death.

Egyptians were comfortable with the idea of death, and if they had encountered undead beings, they would probably have reacted with less prejudice than most peoples.

Therefore, if the GM wishes to allow it, a campaign may include undead PCs using the new advantages and disadvantages on pp. 79-82, starting with Undead on p. 81. The GM should decide on an appropriate Unusual Background cost for all undead PCs.

Motivations

A player designing an undead adventurer must decide *why* the character returned from the dead. The reason that corresponds most closely to actual Egyptian belief is that the undead being wishes to avenge damage to its tomb or body, and perhaps recover stolen artifacts. In a similar vein, people may return from the grave to protect their families or uphold some other cause they found dear in life. Osiris might also return particularly holy people to the world to further the ends of his religion. The Terminally Ill disadvantage (p. 82) is useful in defining some undead.

Characters might also have more selfish reasons to become undead. An Egyptian who has lived an evil life may seek undead status to postpone the judgment of the dead. Those who have lost faith in the concept of an eternal afterlife may prefer the certainty of existence in undead form to the unknowns of death. The morals of someone who chooses to turn his back to the entire Egyptian belief system are likely to differ from those around him, but a self-created undead character *could* be repentant or at least honorable.



Undead PC Types

One form of undead character, grounded more in horror movies than in Egyptian folklore, is the spirit of a dead person who takes control of a living body. This form of possession may be voluntary or not, for either party. Possession may occur when a spirit with no body returns to the world for some purpose, or the possession may be a form of reincarnation (the result of divine reward or punishment), and the spirit may have forgotten some or all of its past life.

Disembodied ghosts played a part in Egyptian folklore. There were two forms of ghost (see pp. 105-106): the *ba*,

or ordinary soul, and the *ka*, the “spiritual twin.” *Ba* ghosts had typical undead motivations: revenge, unfulfilled goals, the shock of an unexpected death, etc. The *ka* had a will independent of its owner, resembling a person’s conscience. A *ka* ghost returned with a *moral* purpose: to undo something that he had done in his lifetime or to continue serving a deity he held dear.

A mummy was defined by the force that animated it, the *ka* or *ba* of the undead soul (see pp. 107-108). Mummy characters are built like normal characters, starting with the Undead and Undead Spirit Form advantages (see p. 81) and using the descriptions of *ba* and *ka* mummies as guides.

ADVANTAGES

Clerical Investment see p. B19

Egyptians take divine miracles for granted and priests are important, so Power Investiture (p. CI42) and/or additional Rank (Religious) (p. CI29) may be appropriate.

Composite Forms

Among the best-known features of Egyptian mythology are its animal-headed deities and strange composite creatures. In a high fantasy or modern horror campaign an otherwise human player character can have the body, limbs, head, eyes or other organs of an animal. Animal heads, limbs and tails are proportionate to the character’s torso, and characters with animal torsos automatically have the appropriate legs for their form – beings with quadrupedal bodies will rarely have hands.

The costs and effects of animal features fall into the following categories:

Animal Head: An animal head costs no points on its own, but players may wish to buy sensory advantages which reflect the abilities of the animal. See *Strikers*, p. CI67 for animal heads that have bite or horn attacks, and *Venom*, p. CI 71 for snake heads.

Animal Limbs: Animal legs can substitute for human legs at no cost. (See *No Fine Manipulators* disadvantage, p. CI103, and *Claws*, p. CI67.)

Body Size: Whether the character’s torso is that of a large creature (e.g., an elephant or hippopotamus) or a small one (e.g., a bird or snake), his body will be approximately human-sized, with weight between the extremes of the Fat and Skinny disadvantages (see pp. B28-29).

Wings: See *Winged Flight*, p. CI56. Unless the character has a bird torso, composite characters have wings attached to their arms.

Depending on the campaign, the GM may require that an Unusual Background be bought along with these advantages. Also, the composite form should cause *some* modifier to reaction rolls based on how strange and dangerous the character looks.

Legal Immunity see p. C27

At times officials of certain temples enjoy immunity to civil law. Those with this status never pay customs duties, perform involuntary government service or face prosecution in an ordinary court. However, the temples revoke the immunity of those who abuse the privilege to commit crimes. During times of political upheaval, the government may cancel the immunity of rebellious temples. Standard religious Legal Immunity costs 10 points. Priests from Abydos, the sacred site of the earliest Pharaonic tombs, always retain their privilege – a grant of Legal Immunity from Abydos costs 15 points.

Literacy see p. B21

Literacy allows a character to read and write the demotic and hieratic scripts. In order to write in the more complex hieroglyphic script, one needs Artist or Calligraphy skill (see p. 82). Between one and five percent of Egypt’s male population was literate, with female literacy much lower.





Military Rank

see p. B22

The command positions in the historical Egyptian military correspond to *GURPS* ranks as follows:

Rank 8: Commander of the armies, i.e., pharaoh

Rank 7: Army Commander (5,000 men)

Rank 6: Commander over Fifty (50 chariots)

Rank 5: *Pedjet* Commander (1,000 men)

Rank 4: *Sa* Commander (250 men) or Commander over Ten (10 chariots)

Rank 3: Commander over Fifty (50 men)

An Egyptian "army" is roughly equivalent to a modern division; multiple armies, each named after a different god, operated together during major battles.

Social Status

see p. B18

In Egypt those who hold positions in the temples or government have powers and responsibilities much like those of military officers. Temple officials cannot demand obedience from the public, although most people treat them with respect. Government officials may give orders to anyone in the course of official work. Anyone who somehow holds positions in both hierarchies (such as a priest who becomes advisor to a local government official) has to pay full points for both of his effective ranks.

The bottom-ranking position in each of these hierarchies, Scribe and Pure One, are the equivalent of Status 3 and 1 respectively, but the official doesn't need to buy Status for those positions, only Scribal Powers or Clerical Investment as necessary.

The wife of a priest or bureaucrat has a Status one less than her husband, unless she holds her own position with equal or higher Status.

Government Positions

Level	Examples	Monthly Cost
8	Pharaoh	\$25,000+
7	Vizier, Nomarch	\$12,000
6	Advisor to Pharaoh	\$6,000
5	Inspector (City Functionary), Advisor to Nomarch,	
	City Governor	\$3,000
4	Chief Scribe,	
	Advisor to City Governor	\$1,500
(3)	Scribe (See above)	\$750

Temple Positions

Level	Example	Monthly Cost
8	Pharaoh	\$25,000+
7	God's Wife (women only)	\$12,000
6	High Priest, First Prophet	\$6,000
4	Father of the Gods, Second Prophet	\$1,500
3	Servant of the Gods, Third Prophet	\$500
2	Lector, Fourth Prophet	\$250
(1)	Pure One (See above)	\$100

For those outside of the temple and government hierarchies, high status is usually rare.

Private Positions

Level	Example	Monthly Cost
3	Literate Professional (e.g., Magician or Physician)	\$400
2	Artisan/Craftsman	\$200
1	Illiterate Professional (e.g., Shopkeeper or Embalmer)	\$100
0	Peasant	\$50
-1	Slave	0
-2	Foreign Captive	0

NEW ADVANTAGES

Fear Projection

15 points

This advantage allows an undead character to subject an opponent who can see him to an unreasoning fear of death and the dead. The subject of the attack must win a Quick Contest of Wills with the undead being or suffer a Fright Check. If the victim wins the Quick Contest, he is not subject to the fear attack while the undead remains in sight. The victim must still roll a Quick Contest of Wills if the undead reappears after an absence of an hour or more.

The undead character must concentrate for one turn to use this power, and it can affect only one opponent per turn; the ability to affect all enemies who can see him may be bought for 6 points. Fear Projection doesn't affect other undead.

Note: This is equivalent to the Terror power from *GURPS Undead* (base 30 points) with the limitations

Resisted by Will (-20%), Single Target (-20%) and Takes Extra Time (-10%).





Rotting Touch

28 points

This advantage allows an undead creature to inflict a flesh-destroying disease on the living by touch. The victim may avoid the effects by making an HT roll, but if this fails, the rot inflicts a point of damage, the affected flesh turning gray, becoming mushy, and rubbing away. Every 24 hours until dead, the victim loses another point of HT (if he fails an HT roll), unless he has a critical success on one of his HT rolls (which halts the progression of the rot) or someone cures the condition magically or surgically.

Up to an hour after the Rotting Touch attack, the victim may excise the rotted flesh, suffering 1d-2 points damage. Someone making a successful First Aid roll can remove the infected tissue without causing additional damage. After the initial hour, only amputation or surgery can medically arrest the decay, and trained surgeons willing to perform such operations are rare in Egypt (see *Medicine*, p. 7).

Scribal Powers

15 points

This advantage allows its holder access to government records (such as the lists of travelers who have legally entered a given town) and the power to issue legal documents (such as passports and travel authorizations).

Note: Scribal Powers is simply a setting-specific version of the Status advantage. It describes the social benefits of Status +3 [15] in an ancient Egyptian setting.

Stone Soul

170 points

Some undead creatures have an innate form of the Stone Soul spell (see *GURPS Grimoire*, p. 42). This advantage allows a person to separate his *sekhem* (life energy) from the other parts of his soul, the *ba-sah* and *ka-khaibit* (see *Death and Afterlife*, p. 100), effectively making him immortal. Although his body or spirit can still be injured (by whatever means are appropriate to the form), he may not be killed as long as the stone soul that contains his *sekhem* is safe.

He gains Immunity to Disease (p. B20), Immunity to Poison (p. C158), Unaging (p. C169) and Vampiric Invulnerability (p. C170).

If the stone soul is destroyed, the undead individual takes 1d damage per minute until dead. This is irreversible. Death may also come from other sources, such as a Planar Visit failure. In almost all cases, the hiding place of the character's *sekhem* is his tomb, or more accurately a particular *ushabti* figurine or item inscribed with the his true name. A rich man's tomb may have numerous inscriptions covering its walls and furnishings, but only one instance of his name serves as the stone soul, so killing him in this way may require destroying every appearance of his name.

The various advantages listed above cost 190 points. The disadvantage of this condition is equivalent to the External Soul version of the Weakness disadvantage (p. C1106), which costs -20 points. That gives Stone Soul a net cost of 170 points.





Undead

32 points

The character is a mummy. This amounts to Doesn't Breathe (p. CI53), Doesn't Eat or Drink (p. CI53), Doesn't Sleep (p. CI53), High Pain Threshold (p. B20), Immunity to Disease (p. B20), Immunity to Poison (p. CI58), Imperturbable (p. CI26), Injury Tolerance (No Blood, Brain or Vitals) (p. CI58), Temperature Tolerance 10 (p. CI30), Unaging (p. CI69), Disturbing Voice (p. CI81), Hideous Appearance (p. B15), Social Stigma (Dead) (p. B27), Sterile (p. CI84), Unhealing (p. CI106) and Vulnerability (2d from Fire) (p. CI106).

Undead characters can take other advantages such as Stone Soul (p. 81) and Undead Spirit Form (below); be sure to reduce Stone Soul's cost 40 points to reflect previously

purchased components. Some Egyptian undead require food and drink, as grave offerings, to maintain their existence. The need is more ritual than actual; the undead creature loses 1 HT permanently for every *year* without proper offerings. This is a very minor Dependency (p. CI81) that can be used to reduce the cost of Undead by 5 points.

Undead Spirit Form

25 points

This advantage gives a corporeal undead being (a ba or ka mummy) a spirit form (a ba or ka *ghost*; see p. 105). When his corporeal form is "killed," he is not destroyed, but returns in his spectral form instead. This is a special form of the Extra Life advantage (p. CI36) that can only be taken by characters with the Undead advantage (above).

DISADVANTAGES

Code of Honor

see p. B31

The universal Egyptian Code of Honor is *ma'at* – the principle of finding your place in the cosmic scheme of things and then working to stay in that place, maintaining the harmony of the universe (see *Good, Evil and Ma'at*, p. 26).

Most Egyptians believe in *ma'at*, but not all are wholeheartedly devoted to it. A devotee has to weigh each word he speaks carefully because he believes that the things he says could shape the universe. People who allow their thoughts and conversations to revolve around unpleasantness risk becoming unpleasant themselves. Those who consistently make their words and ideas strong and uplifting tend to become just and successful people.

Under the doctrine of *ma'at*, lies and idle boasts are both shameful and dangerous. People who speak falsely cheapen the value of their ideas, degrading their characters to the point where they can no longer use or understand true concepts at all.

For those who are truly devoted to *ma'at*, this Code of Honor is a 5-point disadvantage. Priests personify *ma'at* as a goddess, and people who take this Code seriously usually wear some piece of jewelry bearing her image.

Offenses Against Ma'at

A number of mental disadvantages, including Alcoholism, Bad Temper, Berserk, Compulsive Lying, Impulsiveness, Kleptomania, Laziness and Lecherousness, are all worth 5 points more in ancient Egypt because these behaviors were seen as offenses against the cosmic order, *ma'at*, causing a -1 to all reaction rolls from other Egyptians in addition to all normal consequences of the disadvantages.

Secret

see p. CI78

All Egyptians have mandatory jobs, but some demand daily attendance and offer no excuses for travel and adventure. Each time a PC with such a job needs to get away from work, he must find a way to settle matters with his superiors or find a substitute. Such behavior constitutes a Secret, with the point-value of the disadvantage depending on the likely consequences of his deception: a serious reprimand is worth -5 points, loss of the job is worth -10 points, imprisonment or exile is worth -20, and death at the hands of individuals or the law is worth -30 points.

Social Stigma

see p. B27

Egyptians consider their culture vastly superior to all others, and outsiders face the dangers of bureaucratic whim in a country that makes a fetish of the routine. Local officials must decide how to deal with strangers without passports or defined social roles, and some may be more restrictive than others. For most foreigners this is a 5-point disadvantage.



81



Occasionally, when a group of outsiders seems large, cohesive and threatening, the government may impose drastic measures. Those from an officially proscribed background have a 10-point disadvantage.

Split Personality see p. B37

In modern Egyptian fantasy or horror campaigns, a split personality may indicate that a person is sharing a body with an ancient undead spirit. If the spirit has integrated itself into the life of the body's real persona (either because of a desire to live a normal, uninterrupted life or because it has forgotten that it's a separate entity), the character has the 10-point version of the Split Personality disadvantage. If the spirit uses its own name and acts as a separate being when it's in control of the body, the victim has a 15-point disadvantage. If the spirit can leave the host body (even temporarily), the undead personality gains no character points for the Split Personality.

The undead being can only decide to leave its primary body when it's in control. When that happens, the body becomes dormant, as if in a deep sleep. If anyone attempts to awaken the dormant body, or if it suffers an injury, the undead spirit (wherever it is) must make a Will roll. If it fails the roll, the body's other personality becomes dominant and the spirit form instantly returns to the body.

Terminally Ill

see p. C184

Some people return from the grave for some specific reason; when they have completed their goals they return to the realm of the dead, leaving the game. As with other Terminally Ill characters, the anticipated "life" expectancy of the undead PC determines the disadvantage's point value. If the GM expects the PC's mission to last one month or less, it's worth -100 points. Between one month and one year is worth -75 points, and from one to two years is worth -50 points. More than two years is worth nothing.

In a one-shot adventure, or if the campaign is not expected to last beyond the accomplishment of this goal, the GM should disallow this disadvantage. The GM should also enforce the single-mindedness of a character with this disadvantage almost as if he has an Obsession (see p. C193) or has taken a Vow (see p. B37); a mission-bound undead PC should not be allowed to ignore his goal in order to pursue other unrelated tasks.

If the undead PC *abandons* his goal, he must immediately buy off the disadvantage (or dedicate all necessary future experience points to buying it off if he doesn't have enough points at that time). If the goal was given him by some god, then the deity might decide to terminate his undead condition – the GM decides how much deviation from the goal will be tolerated.

NEW DISADVANTAGES

Breath Hunger -30 points

Undead with this condition must drain the breath of living beings to continue existence. At least one breath must be drained daily to avoid losing a point of life essence, represented by IQ. If IQ reaches zero, permanent death results. Lost IQ can be restored by stealing more breaths, at one IQ point per breath stolen over the daily requirement.

Stealing breath requires mouth-to-mouth contact and a Quick Contest of Wills. The breath donor suffers no pain, but sensitive people, or those deeply devoted to a religion that condemns the undead, may feel a strong sense of unease.

This special version of a Dependency is worth -30 points, but often is linked to a powerful attack worth 95 points, turning it into a 65-point advantage! When Breath Hunger is an advantage, the undead's victim loses 1d points of IQ per breath stolen. The same Quick Contest of Will applies to both the Dependency and attack effects.

The IQ losses only become apparent when the victim tries to use an IQ-based skill. Those who lose IQ to an undead creature recover 1 lost point per day. If the breath-stealer drains a person to 0 IQ, the victim becomes an empty shell, living but incapable of thought.

SKILLS

Acrobatics see p. B48

Acrobats, especially female acrobats, are popular entertainers in Egypt. A slave who excels at this skill is worth two or three times her ordinary value, and a free acrobat may be a celebrity.

Artist and Calligraphy see p. B47

A literate ancient Egyptian character can write using the hieratic and demotic scripts and demotic

shorthand. Writing in hieroglyphs requires the artistic talent of the Calligraphy skill for small-scale work or the Artist skill for large-scale work (such as tomb- or monument-carving).

Driving (Chariot) see p. B68

This is the skill of driving a war-chariot and maneuvering it in formation. Chariots didn't appear in Egypt until the invading Hyksos rode in on them (see p. 45).



Physician

see p. B56

Egyptian doctors enjoy high status in Egypt and good reputations abroad. Physicians often specialize in a specific area of the body. Surgery is almost unknown in Egyptian medical practice; alchemy and herbal medicine involving dietary prescriptions and special exercises are much more common. (See *Medicine*, p. 7.)

In order to protect patients from the experiments of Egyptian physicians, Egyptian law stipulates standard treatments for known illnesses. Although doctors aren't required to follow the standard procedures, if an experimental technique is used within the first three days of illness and the patient subsequently dies, the doctor is considered guilty of murder. If the patient shows no signs of

improvement after three days under the standard regimen, the physician can embark on any form of treatment without legal consequences.

Riding

see p. B46

Ancient Egyptians do not normally ride on horseback; horses of the period are too small to make good mounts, especially in battle. Syrian charioteers often learn Riding, so that if their chariots tip over they can unharness the horses and ride away to safety. Some Egyptian charioteers might borrow the technique.

Under Greek and Roman influence, late-period Egypt uses bareback riders as messengers and scouts.

NEW SKILL

Embalming (Mental/Hard)

Embalming is a Craft skill that allows a character to preserve a corpse, using the technique described on p. 93. It can also be used to repair damage to mummies (dead or undead; see *Medicine*, p. 7, and *Ba-Mummy*, p. 107).

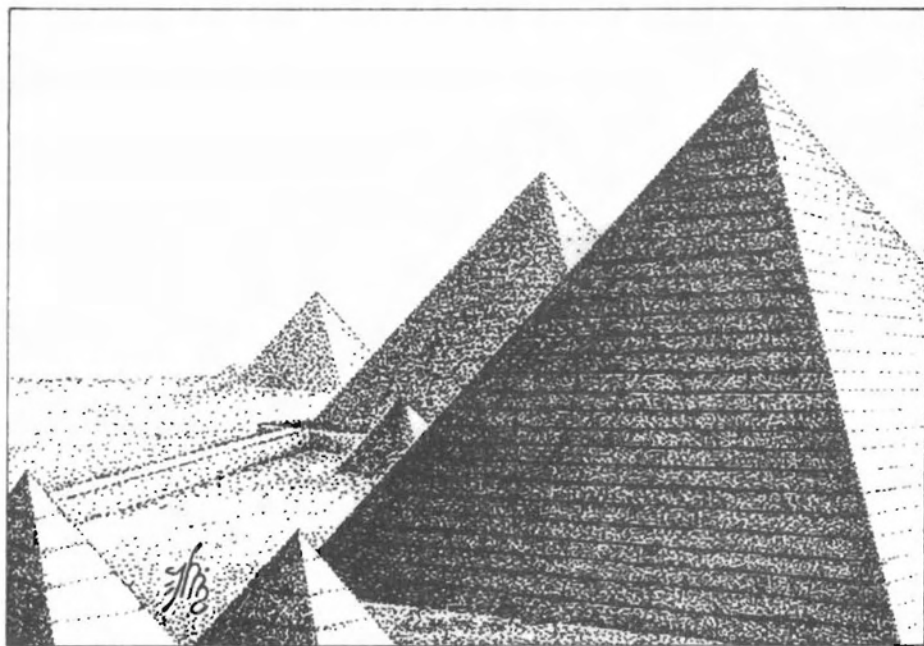
Defaults to IQ-5 or Thanatology-5

This skill is the TL2 equivalent of the Mortician skill in *GURPS Undead*, which details more applications of it. In the ancient Egyptian setting, it also defaults to Physician-3, Vet-3 or Alchemy-5.

STARTING WEALTH

Compared to members of other ancient societies, the average Egyptian had little in the way of material possessions: some clothing, the tools of his trade, household implements and likely a magical amulet or scroll. If he was a farmer he technically owned no land; it was the property of Pharaoh. If he had a house, a shop, or a factory, it belonged to the temple or government bureaucracy that administered his city or neighborhood. One thing that he *did* own was his tomb and its contents, and Egyptians of all classes began investing in their afterlives as soon as they were able, purchasing the tomb, commissioning carvings and magic scrolls, and collecting valuable items to be used as grave goods when they died.

The average starting wealth for *Egypt* PCs is \$500, of which 75% was in the form of tools, clothing, personal and household items and dedicated grave goods. The remaining 25% would be available for "adventuring" gear such as weapons and armor (an infantryman would receive his weapons free and a charioteer could use 100% of his starting wealth to pay for his equipment).



Excess wealth was unlikely to be in cash; goods produced in home industries, such as food animals, vegetables, furniture or bolts of cloth, were more common. Houses, shops, farmland and the like would be provided for gainfully-employed Egyptians by the state. The wages of government employees were paid in grain, farmland and the right to part-time use of government-owned slaves.





JOB TABLE

Job Requirements, Monthly Income

Success Roll

Critical Failure

Poor Jobs

Laborer** (none), \$15	ST	2d/4d
Peasant** (Agronomy 11+), \$20	PR	2d/-2i

Struggling Jobs

Bird-Hunter* (Net 11+), \$30	PR	-1i/2d
Embalmer's Assistant (none), \$20	IQ	-1i
Fisherman* (Fishing 11+), \$20	PR	1d/-2i, 1d
Game-Hunter* (Spear 11+), \$40	PR	1d/-2i, 2d
Mourner* (Acting or Savoir-Faire 11+), \$30	11	-1i/LJ, -1i
Papyrus Stripper* (none), \$20	IQ	-1i/2d
Servant** (Savoir-Faire 11+), \$50	PR	1d/2d
Thief* (Four Thief skills at 15+, or three at 17+), \$75	Best PR	2d/2d, -2i

Average Jobs

Acrobat (Acrobatics 13+), \$100	PR	1d/1d/-1i
Artist (Artist 13+), \$75	PR	-1i/1d, -1i
Boatman (Boating 12+), \$50	PR	1d/2d, -1i
Constable** (Any Weapon 11+), \$50	PR	2d/3d
Dancer (Dancing 11+), \$75	PR	1d/1d, -1i
Infantryman** (Spear or Bow 11+), \$75	PR	2d/4d
Musician (Musical Instrument or Singing 11+), \$50	Best PR	-1i/21
Sailor (Seamanship 13+), \$50	PR	1d/3d
Sculptor (Sculpting 11+), \$100	PR	-1i/1d, -1i
Tomb-Guardian** (Any Weapon 11+), \$75	PR	2d/3d

Comfortable Jobs

Artisan (Any Craft 13+), \$240	PR	-1i/1d, -1i
Astrologer (Astrology 13+), \$200	PR	-1i
Charioteer** (Driving (Chariot) 11+, Bow 11+), \$150	Best PR	2d/3d
Embalmer (Embalming 13+), \$150	PR	-1i/-2i
Farm-Owner (Agronomy 11+), \$250	PR	3i/LJ
Government Official (Administration 11+), \$100	PR	-2i/LJ
Innkeeper* (Merchant 11+), \$100	PR	-1i/-2i
Magician* (Magery 1+, at least 5 spells at 14+, and Survival, Diplomacy or Merchant at 13+), \$200	IQ	-1i/Magic Disaster
Magistrate (Law 11+, Status 2+), \$200	PR	-1i/LJ
Merchant (Merchant 11+), \$100	PR	-1i/1d, -2i
Mortuary Priest (Theology 11+), \$150	PR	2d/Magic Disaster
Physician (Physician 13+, Magery 1+, at least 2 healing spells), \$250	Worst PR	-1i/LJ
Priest (Administration 13+, Theology 11+, Status 2+), \$200	Best PR	-1i/Magic Disaster
Scribe (Literacy, Scribal Powers, Law 11+, Writing 13+, Literature 11+, Calligraphy 11+), \$250	Best PR	-1i/-2i
Shopkeeper* (Any Craft or appropriate Professional skill 13+, Merchant 11+), \$150	PR	-1i/-2i
Tomb-Robber* (Any Thief or Weapon skill at 15+), \$400	PR	3d/3d, Magic Disaster

Wealthy Jobs

Advisor (Accounting 13+, Administration 13+, Law 11+, Politics 11+, Status 4+), \$150xBest PR	Best PR	-2i/LJ
City Governor (Accounting 13+, Administration 13+, Law 11+, Politics 11+, Status 5), \$2,500	Worst PR	-2i/LJ
High Priest (Accounting 13+, Administration 13+, Law 11+, Politics 11+, Theology 13+, Status 6), \$4,000	Worst PR	-2i/LJ

Key to Table

* Freelance occupation; see p. B193.

** A person with this job receives food, clothing and other necessities from his employer and has no living expenses.

PR = prerequisite; LJ = Lose Job and be reassigned by the bureaucracy; "d" means dice of damage suffered; "i" means months income lost. When two possible critical failures are listed, the second occurs only on a natural roll of 18.



NAMES

Common Egyptians had no family names and few rules for naming. Instead of picking names months in advance, parents named children as quickly as possible after birth, drawing their inspiration from recent dreams or other omens. Some names were quite short, such as Ti, Abi and To, while others were entire sentences, such as Djedptahioufankh ("Ptah says that he will live"). After choosing a name parents registered their child with a temple agency called the *Per-Ankh* ("the House of Life") where officials kept population records and provided each child with a free lifetime horoscope.

Many parents worked the names of deities into the names of their children, invoking the god's protection for the child. Therefore, it was common for children to have a name such as Hori (Horus), Seti (Set) or Amen (Amun). The suffix "-hotep" meant that a certain god had "walked ahead of" the child who bore the name. The suffixes "-emhat" and "-sert," and the prefix "Sia-," all meant that the god was the child's honorary parent. The suffix "-merit" meant "beloved of."

In the course of life, people added new syllables to their names to reflect their ambitions and accomplishments or merely for identification. The name of the pharaoh reigning at the time a person was born was so common among that generation that most would modify their names as adults.

When more than one person in a family had the same name, Egyptians used numbers to differentiate between them. Parents might also use large numbers for simple effect – Nekhtiseka-Khanu, for instance, means the Thousandth Mighty Warrior. Names may contain the following numerical suffixes:

- First: Uaynu
- Second: Sennu
- Third: Khemetnu
- Fourth: Aftunu
- Fifth: Taaunu
- Sixth: Sasnu
- Seventh: Sefkhnu
- Eighth: Khemennunu
- Ninth: Pestnu
- Tenth: Metnu
- Twentieth: Tautnu
- Thirtieth: Maybnu
- Hundredth: Saaynu
- Thousandth: Khanu



The colors white (*hedj*), black (*kem*), red (*tesher*), purple (*tjemes*), blue (*khesbedj*), green (*wadj*), yellow (*ketj*) could also be used to differentiate names.

Egyptian aristocrats used the titles listed below.

- Lord/Lady: Thesas
- Prince: Stenu
- Princess: Hequit
- Queen: Heqt
- Pharaoh: Peraya



Some typical Egyptian names:

Name	Meaning
Aayrt	Serpent
Abebayankh	Lover of Life
Abebuher	Lover of Dogs
Abebmaat	Lover of Ma'at
Abebtchaas	Lover of Knowledge
Abebusert	Lover of Power
Akhetsau	Wooden Pillar (valuable)
Akhu	Light
Arihem	Friend of Crocodiles
Aritchert	Friend of Falcons (blessed by Horus)
Arqur	Silver
Arya	Nile
Athutuait	Dawn Breeze
Atenmest	Sunborn
Atensef	Sunfire
Atentchet	House of the Sun
Atentem	Sun Sword
Ayam	Palm Tree
Ayamhati	Clear Mind
Ayath	Mist
Ayhahest	Battle Born
Aybtep	Horned Head
Ayhaiaten	Heat of the Sun
Baaikha	Soul of a Desert Spirit
Bahati	Wise Soul
Bahi	Soul of Music
Baq	Shining
Baseka	Soul of Warrior
Bat	Quality





Behkat	Forethought
Benumau	Tomcat
Berner-Ib	Sweet Heart
Djaou	Stick
Hatihekaï	Wise Magician
Heni	Song
Heriabgher	Midnight
Het	Smoke
Hurta	Illusion
Inuheni	Music of the Waters
Kamen	Dark
Katsiu	Star Woman
Khartshma	Desert Demon
Khaut	Skin
Maaukepu	Lion Hunter
Mauabu	Cat Dancer
Mauresi	Memory of Dream
Mestnusen	Hater of Evil
Nayaari	Good Friend
Nayahau	Good Family
Nayakepu	Good Hunter
Neferneshmt	Beautiful Gem
Nefertegi	Beautiful Garden
Neferuntu	Beautiful Cow (blessed by Hathor)
Nehainusen	Few Faults
Nekhti	Mighty
Netermest	God-Born
Pesshetaup	Half Beast
Resiheku	Dream Magic
Saayrek	Hundred-Age
Sabt	Mountain
Sbeqt	Moon
Sekht	Meadow
Sentchtemt	Fears Nothing
Sethtcheb	Fur-Clothes (i.e., barbarian)
Shedou	Leather Bottle
Shery	Little One
Sheshattechs	Skilled With Tools
Sheshattepit	Skilled With Bow
Shesher	Arrow
Shtat	Vulture
Siunetherit	Star Eyes
Ska	Plow
Sma	Lake
Tamit	Lady Cat
Tamert	Sky
Teb	Fig
Tehenayai	Heat Lightning
Tehenraau	Distant Lightning
Tek	Spark
Tekhenteser	Holy Ibis (blessed by Thoth)
Thaparthal	Iron Man

Thasou	Star Man
Tiraa	Door
Tuaitthesit	Dawn Lady
Uakht	Oasis
Ururath	Strong Fortress
Utshepit	Bronze Hand
Uttait	Bronze Gate

Royal Names

Naming conventions for pharaohs were different than for commoners. While a prince received a name in the normal manner, once he became pharaoh the priests of the dominant temple attached the title *sa-re* ("Son of Re") to his birth name and *assigned* him new names based on arcane formulas and concrete political agendas. The earliest pharaohs had only one secondary name, the Horus name, written in hieroglyphs with a hawk sitting atop it. Starting with the IVth Dynasty pharaohs received a separate throne name (enclosed in a cartouche and prefixed by the title King of Upper and Lower Egypt).

In some early dynasties, and consistently after the XIIth, a fourth name, the *nebti* or "Two Ladies" name was used (prefixed by the title He of the Two Ladies; Wadjet and Nekhbet, patron goddesses of Buto in the Delta and Nekheb in Upper Egypt). Another early name and title, the Golden Horus name (designated by a hawk and a gold necklace), became standard with the XIth Dynasty.



The five names were rarely used together, and the most common were the throne name, birth name and Horus name. Beginning in 1906, Egyptologists in the Valley of the Kings began finding funerary objects marked with the throne name Nebkheperure ("Lord of Manifestations is Re") but it wasn't until his tomb was discovered and opened in 1922 that inscriptions with that pharaoh's birth name, Tutankhamun ("Living Image of Amun") were revealed.





EQUIPMENT

The following are common items and valuables for an ancient Egyptian campaign. All are Tech Level 1, although TL0 items were still found through much of Egyptian history.

Weapons and Armor

The *Ancient/Medieval Hand Weapon Table* on p. B206 covers all the common weapons of ancient Egypt, including maces, hatchets, axes, spears, slings, knives and short bows (long bows after the Hyksos invasion). Throwing sticks (p. CII36) were used for hunting but not in combat.

Many weapons had stone parts (e.g., knife-blades, mace-heads, and spear- and arrow-points) for much of Egyptian history (requiring Stone Knapping instead of Armory to make or repair; see p. CII37) and most metallic weapons were made of bronze. Bronze weapons are considerably weaker than iron weapons, and have a 2/3 chance of breaking in a hard parry against an iron (or magic) weapon. All bronze or iron weapons are considered *cheap* quality; *fine* or *very fine* weapons are more lavishly ornamented than average weapons, but do no more damage and have the same chance of breaking during a parry against a weapon of a superior metal (bronze against iron, iron against steel). In terms of breakage, stone blades and points are considered *cheap*, while stone axes and mace-heads are considered *average*.

Weapons of rare metals (bronze in the Old Kingdom and before, iron in the Middle and New Kingdoms, steel in the Late Period) are considered one class higher than their actual quality when figuring cost. Weapons of the common material cost as listed in the *Basic Set*.

All Egyptian warriors carried shields, and after the Hyksos period those who could afford to wore cloth or scale armor (see p. B210). Cloth armor could be strengthened with bronze studs and lengthened to cover areas 6, 8-14 and 17-18 with PD 2, DR 3 (PD 1, DR 1 to impaling and bullet attacks) for \$200, 20 lbs. For increased maneuverability, some Egyptians wore suits of scale armor that covered only the torso (from the armpits down), giving PD 3,

DR 4 to areas 9-11 but PD 3, DR 0 to the vitals (areas 17-18). A tunic of this sort costs \$375 and weighs 25 lbs.

Khopesh: The traditional Egyptian sword was the *khopesh*, a sickle-shaped blade with a long handle ending in a pommel – a broadsword for gaming purposes.

Panther-Hide Armor: Nubian warriors often wore armor made from the hides of panthers (or leopards), as much for symbolic purposes as for actual protection. The armor covered areas 9-11 and 17-18 and provided PD 1 and DR 1. \$200, 5 lbs.

Whip: Charioteers often prided themselves on their decorative whips, with embossed leather and jeweled handles. Such tools cost from \$100 to \$500.

Transportation

The Nile provided Egypt with its chief form of long-distance transportation, but other vehicles and methods were used for a variety of land-based purposes. For riding animals, see p. 103.

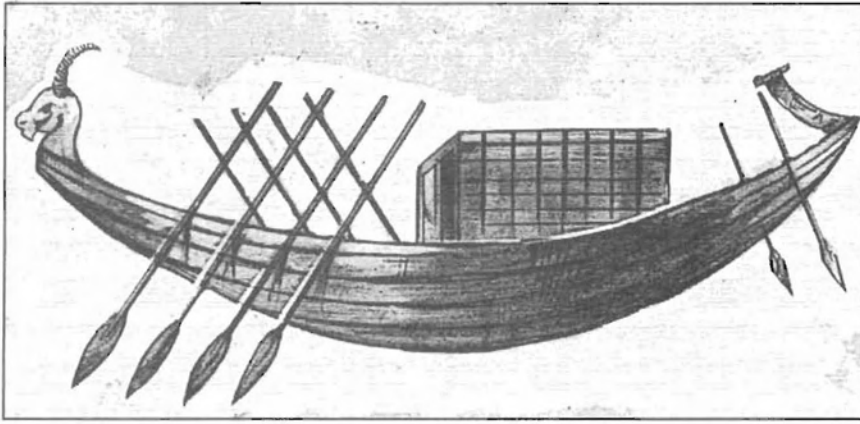
Cargo Barge: This was a great crescent-shaped barge, so large that the prow and stern rose entirely out of the water. A cargo barge had one huge sail for propulsion (maximum speed 11 mph), was 30 yards long, 5 yards wide, 3 feet in draft, and carried 150 tons of cargo, 30 crewmen and 35 passengers. \$25,000.

Chariot: This could carry two people or one person and 200 pounds of gear. The wealthy often rode chariots for convenience, and young noblemen took pride in racy chariots. A decorative chariot might cost as much as \$2,000. War-chariots carried two-man teams: a bowman and a driver. \$300, 250 lbs.

Dahabieh: Noblemen traveled in floating palaces mounted on hulls like those of cargo barges. A *dahabieh* had the same stats as a cargo barge except that it had only 135 tons of cargo capacity and cost \$50,000.

Kebenit: This was the chief sea-going craft of Egypt. A *kebenit* was somewhat broader and lower to the water than a river barge and, like most Egyptian ships, it employed a seemingly outsized sail and oars in case of calm. It was 30 yards long, 7 yards wide and 7 feet in draft, carried 100 tons of cargo, 30 crewmen and 35 passengers at a maximum speed of 11 mph. \$50,000.





Litter: Egyptians didn't ride on horseback, but some used donkey litters for transportation. \$50, 30 lbs.

Pilgrim's Barge: These ceremonial boats were narrow with high prows and sterns. A pilgrim's barge could be from 10 to 30 yards long and carry up to 40 people. The prow usually featured a pair of horns or a statue of Hathor, who watched over travelers. The boat often had a metal oven so that travelers could have their servants slaughter and roast oxen on board. \$8,000.

Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

Egypt always had a strong tradition of chemical knowledge (see *Medicine*, p. 7).

Acid: By 1300, Egyptian alchemists could produce an acid capable of eating through fine pieces of metal in 2d minutes. Sulfuric acid causes 1d damage if spilled on flesh. \$100, weight negligible.

Contraceptives: Ancient Egyptians employed condoms (made from sheep intestines), female contraceptives (made from sea sponge, herbal preparations and even crocodile dung) and intra-uterine devices (made from smooth stones). Such items cost \$2 each.

The insertion or removal of an IUD requires a Physician roll, and the consequences of a critical failure are grim, including sterility, ectopic pregnancy and fatal toxic shock.

Malachite Paste: Physicians painted wounds with an ointment of powdered malachite similar to a common Egyptian cosmetic. This substance was an effective anti-septic, allowing a +1 bonus to a First Aid roll. \$5 per dose, weight negligible.

Sleeping Draught: A person who ingests a dose of this must pass an HT roll or fall asleep. Shaking and other violent disturbances can wake the victim, but he will be drowsy (-3 to all rolls). A sleeping draught's effects last for 2d hours. \$25, weight negligible.

Stimulants: A dose of mild stimulants restores 1d of Fatigue loss for 1d hours. At the end of that period, the user regains all that Fatigue plus 1d more. Each additional stimulant dose within a 24-hour period doubles

the number of additional Fatigue points lost when the stimulants wear off (i.e., a total of 1d×2 if two doses are taken, 1d×4 if three doses are taken, etc.). \$25 per dose, weight negligible.

Strong stimulants can revive someone who has fallen unconscious due to wounds or a sleeping draught, or help him resist the onset of unconsciousness. Upon receiving a strong stimulant the recipient attempts an HT roll to regain/retain consciousness. If successful, not only is sleep or unconsciousness banished, but the user gains the Berserk dis-

advantage for the 4d hours the stimulant remains effective. On a critical failure, he suffers 1d-1 hit points damage. \$50, weight negligible.

Miscellaneous Items

Books: Books were written on papyrus scrolls and their value varied greatly depending on their length and content. Typically around \$300, 1 lb. or more.

Cloth, Linen, one bolt: \$2, 1 lb.

Cosmetics: Egyptian women went through an elaborate toilette, involving an array of lotions, paints, stains and powders. A commoner's makeup costs from \$15 to \$30, but a single jar of the most valuable unguents could cost from \$100 to \$500. The kits for applying makeup were highly decorative, with pots carved to resemble tiny animals and figurines of people placed to hold brushes and mirrors in handy positions. This equipment could cost from \$100 to \$1,000, even empty. The weight for a cosmetics set varied, but seldom exceeded a few pounds.

Drum Set: Three to four kettle drums, one large barrel-shaped drum and three to four pairs of dancer's castanets. \$3, 25 lbs.

Handcuffs: These carved wooden manacles held the hands in a rigid posture, with the elbows forcibly bent and the fingers pointed in opposite directions. \$10, 2 lbs.

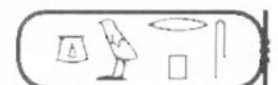
Map: Egyptians mapped both cities and desert routes. \$100, 1 lb.

Mirror: A bronze mirror costs \$10. A gold mirror costs \$200. Either kind weighs 1 lb.

Papyrus, 10 sheets: This paper-like material was made by beating the fibers of a common reed. \$1, weight negligible.

Pen and Ink: Enclosed in a wooden or ivory box. \$3, 1 lb.

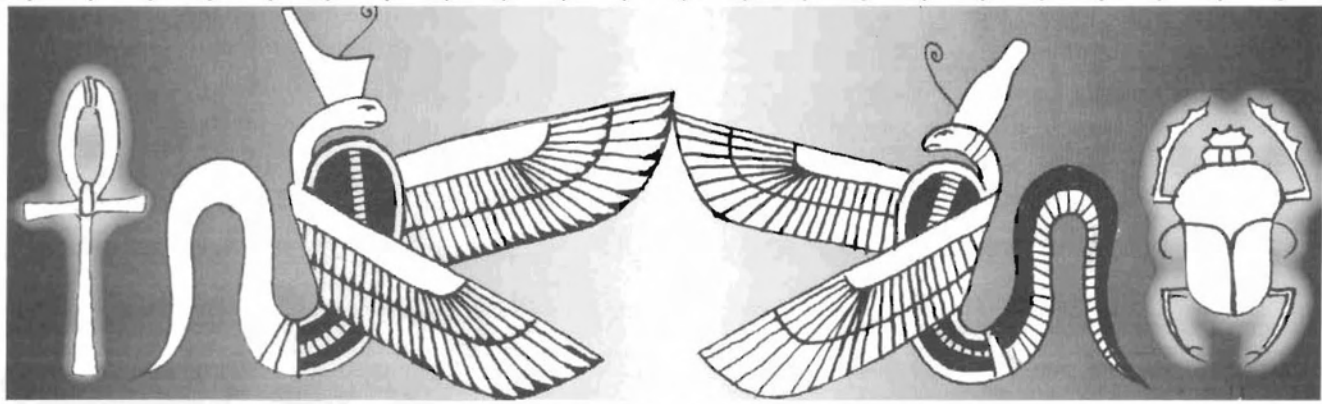
Water Clock: First available in 1500 B.C., a tank with a tiny spout which dripped water into a basin. The higher the water rose, the more time had passed. \$30, 50 lbs. In the Ptolemaic Period more complex water clocks that rang bells or moved automata to mark the hours were invented, costing ten or more times as much as the older version.



An illustration of an ancient Egyptian scene. On the right, a seated figure with a large, ornate headdress and a long, curved beard (likely a deity or high-ranking official) holds a staff. On the left, a woman in a long dress performs a ritual, holding a bowl and pouring its contents towards the seated figure. The background is a wall covered in hieroglyphs. In the foreground, a scroll with various symbols and drawings lies on the floor. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border of hieroglyphs.

4 THE SUPERNATURAL

Ancient Egyptians considered heka (magic) an extremely useful science. Professional sorcerers were highly trained scholars from middle-class backgrounds.



MYSTIC SYMBOLS

Ancient Egyptians had a strong belief in the power of magical symbols, as talismans (see p. 97) and as objects for contemplation by those seeking higher states of understanding, using them in jewelry, magical devices and tomb decorations. A GM might allow rune magic (see p. M81) in an Egyptian setting.

Prominent magical symbols included:

Ankh: A cross with a loop at the top, symbolizing life, health and fertility.

Bee: A symbol of Lower Egypt.

Boat: A symbol of the solar barge that carried Ra through the sky in the day, and along the perilous voyage through the underworld at night.

Cobra: Representing Lower Egypt.

Djed: A column with a rounded top, circled by three rims. This pillar represented the backbone of Osiris, a symbol of stability and renewal.

Heart: An oval with two protruding stubs representing the coronary arteries at the top. Hearts symbolized life, love and the *ka* portion of the soul (see p. 100).

Scarab: The scarab beetle symbolized Ra, the sun and renewal, due to the Egyptian belief that beetles appeared spontaneously in dung and to the way scarab beetles rolled balls of dung across the ground (likened to the sun rolling across the sky).

Sa: A loop with the two ends hanging downward representing vital energy and magical power. A pair of sa flanking an ankh meant "all protection and life."

Sedge: A marsh-grass that symbolized Upper Egypt.

Sen: A circle set upon a bar (i.e., the sun rising above the horizon) symbolizing eternity.

Udjat: The Eye of Horus; an eye with a curlicue beneath it. This symbol protected the user from harm, and watched out for supernatural danger. It also symbolized the pharaoh.

Vulture: A symbol of Upper Egypt.

Wheat: A spike of wheat symbolizing rebirth and renewal.

The basis of Egyptian spellcasting was the belief that every word had inherent power. By speaking or writing properly crafted sentences, one could bring about changes in the nature of things. Since the gods symbolized powerful concepts and forces their names often appeared in incantations, but casting a spell was a pragmatic attempt to produce some effect, not a matter of religious devotion. Magicians invoked the names of gods with neither more nor less reverence than they reserved for other words of power.

Magic words were symbolic keys to a deeper form of power. The true goal of sorcery was to attain a state of consciousness in which one saw the true nature of the universe and could change the universe through sheer will. Along with this power came a true understanding of one's place in the cosmos (*ma'at*), and most true magicians quickly became extremely moral people (see *Code of Honor*, p. 81).

Learning and Using Magic

A campaign reflecting Egyptian folklore should have a normal mana level, in which anyone can learn spells but only those with Magical Aptitude can make them work. In a campaign where magic is common, Egypt has a high mana level, allowing anyone to use sorcery although spell formulas remain the trade secrets of priests and professional wizards. Less demanding magical arts such as dream interpretation are widespread at any mana level.

Egyptian magicians recorded their spells on papyrus manuscripts. If a book was important, wizards could have it copied for sale or distribution through the temples. Works of magic tended to change over time, newer copies containing more up-to-date and complete interpretations of common spells, but older copies featuring rare or forgotten spells. The best-known Egyptian spellbook was the *Book of Coming Forth By Day* (see p. 93), known in modern times as the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*. Other popular spell collections include *Amduat* (*That Which is in the Underworld*), the *Book of Gates*, the *Book of Overthrowing Apep*, the *Book of the Divine Cow* and the *Litany of Re*.

Most sorcerers learned their art from their parents or as apprentices to professional magicians. Temples taught magic in a classroom setting.

Available Spells

With professional magicians making systematic studies of sorcery and deities such as Isis, Thoth and Ptah inspiring their own traditions of magical inquiry, it seems likely that if a spell exists in the game world someone in Egypt knows it. However, no one person or institution should have ready access to all available spell formulas. Magicians, members of mystery cults and priests of different deities take different approaches to magic and tend to make different discoveries. And as always, individual mages have their secrets. Even the priests of





Thoth, who see as their mission the recording of every known spell formula, don't have every spell at their fingertips. Each individual temple's spell collection may be radically different, and indexing is so rudimentary that the priests of a given temple may not be aware of all of the formulas in their own library, let alone those of other temples.

Rather than attempting to decide in advance who possesses every spell, the GM should assign spells to different types of magician as needed. The following guidelines suggest which wizards are most likely to have which kinds of magic. (To enhance the Egyptian flavor of the campaign, standard spells like Fireball should be given Egyptianized names like The Spell of Casting a Sphere of Flame.)

Animal Spells

Animal spells are relatively rare in ancient Egypt, and belong mainly to priests of temples that keep sacred beasts.

Body Control Spells

These spells appear primarily among professional magicians. Spells to speed labor and childbirth were the province of priests of Hathor and Isis.

Communication and Empathy Spells

Priests of Ptah are most likely to use these spells.

Elemental Spells

Theories of elemental magic appear among Egypt's mystery cults and these organizations are likely to have a full range of elemental spells. Priests may have elemental spells appropriate to their deities: Geb's clergy might cast Earth spells, Shu's might cast Air spells and Set's might use Fire spells.

Enchantment Spells

All magic-using organizations employ these spells. Weapon and armor enchantments are rare, appearing only among a small circle of professional magicians and priests of war-gods. The limiting enchantment Name (p. M46) was used with many Egyptian magical items; the wizard didn't give the item a name, but instead crafted it so that it could only be used by someone who discovered the item's True Name (see p. 99).

Food Spells

These spells appear among the priesthoods of beneficent gods, such as Isis and Osiris.



MAGIC IN DAILY LIFE

Ancient Egyptians consulted professional magicians on a regular basis. Healing magic was the most sought-after sorcery, although Egyptian magicians refused to deal with illness they believed were caused by the gods. Love potions and charms for locating lost objects were common items of trade.

As with most magic-believing peoples, ancient Egyptians liked to have insights into the future, and many forms of divination were common. Many diviners employed young boys to gaze at burning lamps and describe what they saw in the flames (see *Knowledge Spells*, p. 92), and some folk believed that insane people had been "touched by the gods" so their ravings contained prophecies. People viewed every dream as a potential omen, predicting the future and revealing magical techniques which lay outside the realm of standard practice such as cures for diseases that the temples and ordinary magicians had declared incurable.

Egyptians feared hostile sorcery (especially that of the foreign magi and witch-doctors on Egyptian borders), and frequently consulted magicians to have curses lifted and to buy amulets to ward off magical threats (see *Amulets and Talismans*, p. 97).

LIFE ENERGY

Every living creature (as well as unliving things of supernatural significance) contained a source of energy, the *sekhem*. It was the force that kept the rest of the soul vital (see *Death and Afterlife*, p. 100), and anything which injured this basic force caused lethargy, madness and, ultimately, death.

Magicians use the *sekhem* as a reserve of power for casting spells, paying ST points to access it. Wizards also devised spells and magical items to focus, gather or safeguard this source of power. Typical magical items involving the *sekhem* included:

The Ankh, an ankh amulet that works once per day to momentarily focus the *sekhem*, effectively doubling the wearer's HT score for one roll or for the casting of one spell. \$20,000.

The Khema, an obsidian rod that continuously drains life energy from all within ten feet except for its user, lowering their ST and HT scores by 1 point as long as they remain near the rod. The rod's user gains extra power for casting spells, at a rate of 1 energy point per living being in the rod's area of effect. \$100,000.



PAUT

This inky fluid, made from silver and pure water (among other ingredients), served Egyptian wizards as a medium for storing and releasing magical energy, a sort of liquid powerstone (see p. B161). Since paut is liquid, a mage can measure out the amount needed for any spell, without worrying about the distinction between small and large powerstones. The rituals for making paut (it cannot be recharged) are highly secret, and likely off-limits to beginning player characters.

Drinking paut restores energy lost through spellcasting (1 point per ounce), but not fatigue from other activities. Medicines were often prepared in bowls inscribed with magical phrases written using paut as ink; some of the mana in the ink would enter the brew, granting the drinker a +1 bonus on his HT roll to recover from his ailment. (An example of a trial by ordeal using paut can be found in the Bible - Numbers 5:23-24.)

Every ounce of paut holds 1 mana point and costs \$700, assuming that one can find a seller.

DREAM INTERPRETATION

The following are typical dream interpretations from Egyptian books on the subject.

"If one dreams of opening one's mouth, one will receive a great opportunity."

"If one dreams of seeing a serpent enter one's beer, it is a good omen, indicating that one's heart will overflow with joy."

"If one dreams of drinking wine, it indicates that one is living righteously."

"If one dreams of seeing a large cat, it means that one will receive a large harvest."

"If one dreams of sitting in an orchard in the sun, it means that one will have pleasure."

"If one dreams of capturing a female slave, it means that one will obtain something satisfying."

"If one dreams of drinking warm beer, one will suffer."

"If one dreams of seeing one's face in a mirror, one will soon divorce and remarry."

"A dream of two serpents symbolizes the Two Lands."

Gate Spells

These spells are rare in Egypt, although Planar Visit (*GURPS Grimoire*, p. 45) may be of use to some professional adventurers.

Healing Spells

Healing magic is found throughout Egyptian society, from priests and professional magicians to ordinary physicians.

Illusion and Creation Spells

Any spellcaster may use Simple Illusions, Complex Illusions, Illusion Shells and Illusion Disguises. The worshippers of Ptah have a full range of Creation spells.

Knowledge Spells

Priests of Thoth invented these spells, but most (especially Divination) became common for all users of magic. Egyptian fortune-tellers made their predictions by gazing into the flames of lamps (pyromancy) or by interpretation of dreams (oneiromancy), but contrary to the rules on p. M55, Egyptian lamp divination requires no special herbs, and dream interpretation usually involves the dreams of others. The Egyptians were also aware of astrology and haruspicy, but these were more common in Babylon.

Divination was far more common in Egypt than the spells listed as its prerequisites. The GM may want to waive the prerequisites, but have Divination spells provide only enigmatic visions to represent this.

Light and Darkness Spells

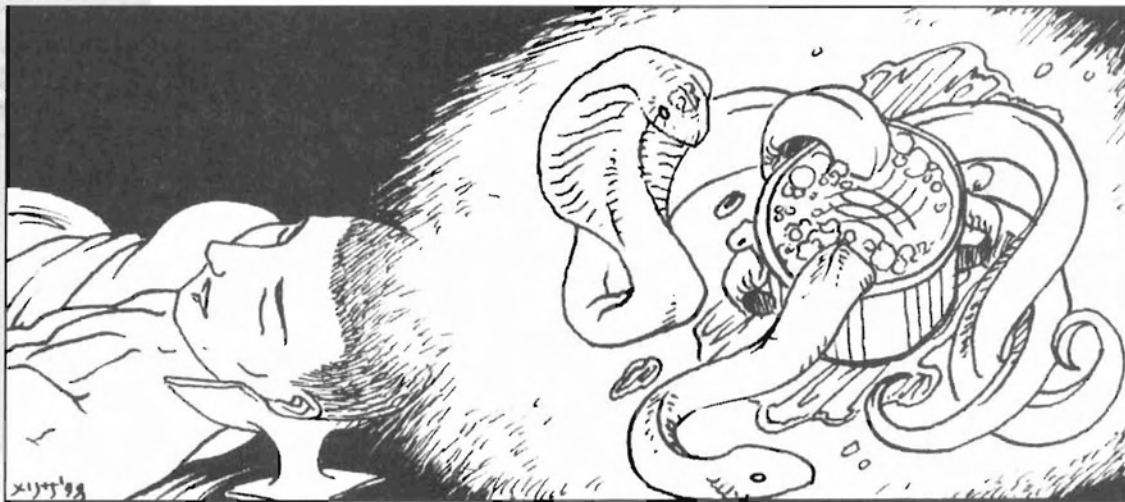
These spells are available to professional magicians and priests of sun or night deities as appropriate.

Making and Breaking Spells

These are common among professional magicians.

Meta-Spells

Except as otherwise mentioned, these spells belong to the clergy of Thoth and Isis. Counterspell, Curse, Dispel Magic and Remove Curse are common among all sorcerers. Bless is common among all priests but rare among secular magicians. Priests of Ptah, rather than priests of Thoth, are most likely to employ Linking spells.





Mind Control Spells

Priests of Ptah and members of mystery cults have the greatest access to these spells. Undead sorcerers and worshippers of Set may also employ them.

Movement Spells

Movement spells are rare in Egypt.

Necromantic Spells

Egyptian necromancy emphasizes ways that the living can serve the dead. Spells intended to restore sight, hearing and other powers to the dead are supposed to function in the afterlife, not the ordinary world. Necromantic spells are found among professional magicians and priests of the mortuary cult.

Plant Spells

Priests of Isis and Osiris are most likely to employ these spells.

Protection and Warning Spells

Professional magicians have the best stocks of these spells, although priests of the mortuary cult employ them for defending tombs.

Sound Spells

These spells aren't common but appear most often among professional magicians.

NEW SPELLS

All spells are Mental/Hard skills unless specified otherwise.

Coming Forth By Day

Coming Forth By Day is a composite spell, indicating that the caster has learned the basic incantations in the *Book of Coming Forth by Day*. The component spells help the deceased pass the dangers which threaten his soul, retain possession of the grave goods buried with him, and begin a happy afterlife. A special part of the spell, 'Opening Of The Mouth,' gives the dead person the ability to eat, drink, see, hear, touch and otherwise fully experience life after death. Some stages of the dead soul's journey are so perilous that this spell temporarily merges the dead soul with the spirits of various deities, so that the deceased becomes, for a brief time, one with the gods.

For maximum protection, funeral rites involve casting this spell in as many varied ways as possible in case one or more version is incomplete. Mortuary priests even cast Coming Forth By Day on the bodies of paupers as a matter of course. Wealthy people had their coffins, tomb walls, jewelry and other possessions covered with inscriptions from the *Book of Coming Forth by Day* (or other such spell collections; see p. 90), and literate people tried to learn certain key



MUMMIFICATION TECHNIQUES

In prehistoric Egypt dead bodies were buried in the desert where the sun and sand desiccated the corpses. As mummification became a science instead of an accident, professional embalmers mummified corpses according to one of the following procedures.

In the most expensive method of mummification, the embalmer began by extracting the corpse's brain through the nostrils with an iron hook. Then he opened the belly with a stone knife, withdrew the internal organs, washed them in palm wine, replaced the heart (so that it could speak for the deceased in the afterlife; see *Tuat*, p. 100) and packed the abdominal cavity with fragrant substances (and in the case of Ramesses III, with figurines of minor funerary gods) and other parts of the body with sawdust to prevent them from completely collapsing in on the bones. After sewing up the abdomen, the embalmer packed the body in alkali salts known as *natron* and left it to dry for over six weeks. It was then ready to be soaked in sticky gum or bee's wax, draped in magic amulets and wrapped in bandages. On most occasions, the dead person's internal organs were kept in canopic jars, decorated with the heads of the four sons of Horus, near the sarcophagus. Others had their viscera ceremoniously deposited in the Nile, while Lector priests chanted prayers to Ra and professional mourners wailed and tore their clothing. The funeral itself occurred 70 days after the subject's death.

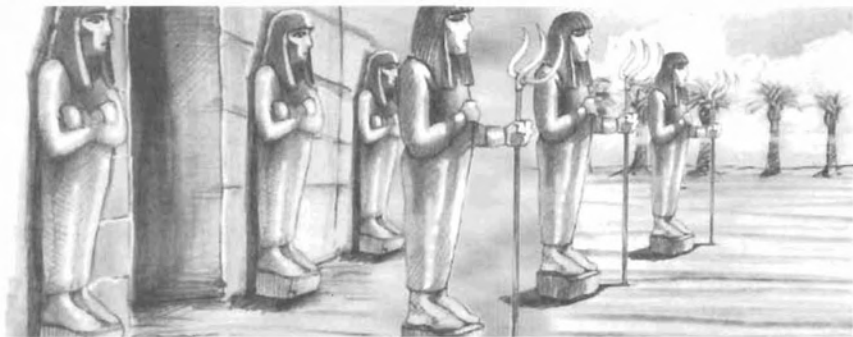
Embalmers often employed assistants to slit the abdomen of the corpse. After the procedure, the assistant would run madly from the embalmer's workshop, in a ritual expressing shame for causing injury to the dead (see *Medicine*, p. 7).

In a cheaper form of embalming the mortician injected the corpse with powerful cedar oil, salted it and left it to dry for almost 10 weeks. At the end of this period, the oil would have dissolved the internal organs. Poor Egyptians underwent a similar technique, which employed the less expensive caustic substance called *symea* instead of cedar oil.

By the Late Period, while coffins were as elaborate as ever before, many of the secrets of mummification had been forgotten, so mummies from this period were as likely to crumble into dust in their coffins as bodies that hadn't been embalmed at all.

Special





TAKING IT WITH YOU

When Osiris judged the dead (see *Tuat*, p. 100) he rewarded virtuous people with rank and property in the afterlife. Even people who were poor in life could have luxurious lives in *Tuat*. The dead could also bring items from the world of the living to the world of the dead. This wasn't an attempt to cheat the justice of Osiris – Egyptians considered the afterlife to be so similar to normal life that it was perfectly natural for people to transfer property from one world to another.

For the dead to receive property from the living, priests of the mortuary cult had to either bury the items in the tomb or place them in a shrine at an appropriate temple with the proper rituals. Nobody believed that the dead used the actual objects left in tombs. The offerings were symbolic – an offering in the world of the living created a similar item in the afterlife.

In some cases a representation of the item sufficed. For instance, during the early dynasties pharaohs surrounded their tombs with the *mastabas* of their loyal retainers (Egyptologists disagree on whether the retainers were immediately sacrificed or whether they died of natural causes years later). In later periods, the dead were buried with *ushabtis* (see p. 97), wooden carvings of people that became animated servants in the land of the dead, tilling his fields, performing household chores and substituting for the dead soul if Osiris ordered him to perform labor in the afterlife just as Pharaoh did in life.

The *ka*, or conscience, conveyed offerings from the tomb to *Tuat* and *ka* ghosts often lingered around tombs, hoping to acquire offerings and otherwise look after their interests in the real world.

incantations while alive for use after death (the realm of the dead being a high mana setting, where anybody who knows this spell can use it).

During play, *Coming Forth By Day* is more likely to appear as a funeral ritual than as a spell with important game effects. However, the spell includes the True Names of several dozen demonic beings (in order to protect the dead soul from them) which could be used in the *Summon Demon* spell (p. M65). A successful casting of *Coming Forth By Day* could prevent

dead people from returning as vengeful ghosts or ensure that undead beings return to the world with their faculties and sanity intact. As any of these usages is more likely to be central to a scenario than just one spell cast among many, the GM should develop details to suit that particular adventure.

If the GM wishes to run an adventure in the afterlife, heroes receive benefits for having this spell cast on them; a bonus of +1 on all rolls made in the afterlife. Those who know the spell themselves will be able to renew the spell if some hostile magic dispels it. Jewelry, papyrus scrolls and other valuables inscribed with specific component spells from *Coming Forth By Day* give the owners an additional +1/item to rolls against a monsters, traps or other dangerous encounters specifically mentioned in those spells. Players can use a modern translation of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* as a list of the hazards that their PCs will want protection from, but they should be warned that there were multiple versions of the book with as many as 200 separate component spells, so their precautions are unlikely to be complete. Arcane lore, discovered during preparatory adventures, can supplement their information.

Coming Forth By Day also renders a body immune to the *Steal The Heart* spell.

Duration: One journey to the afterlife.

Cost: 5.

Time to cast: 1 day.

Items: Verses of this spell may be inscribed on amulets or other items included in a tomb. Each inscription requires a minimum of \$1,000 in materials.

Know True Name (VH)

Regular/Resisted by
Will+4

This spell allows the caster to determine the True Name (see p. 99) of a creature or object from some piece of its body, such as fingernail clippings or hair, or one of its possessions. The magician must acquire the item or body remains no more than one hour after they leave their original owner.

Some material components are more effective than others. Actual bodily fluids or remains allow a caster to use the spell without penalty. Scraps from a target's familiar possessions or linens and other equipment used in a body's funeral preparations allow one to cast the spell at -2. Something which the subject has merely touched involves a penalty of -6.

If the spellcaster uses this spell successfully, and the victim fails to resist (at +4), the magician learns the target's True Name, gaining great power over him. The victim becomes immediately aware that someone is attempting to learn his True Name, and within one night receives a dream containing a clue to the spellcaster's identity. The meaning of this dream can be determined through a Divination (Oneiromancy) spell or by roleplaying out the puzzle.

A mage may never cast this spell more than once on the same target.





Duration: Instant.

Cost: 5, one attempt only.

Time to Cast: 1 hour.

Prerequisites: Aura and Trace.

Malefice (VH)

Enchantment; Special Resistance

Through this foul enchantment, the caster can hold sway over a victim. He must fashion a doll (usually of wax, but clay, straw and other materials may be appropriate with the GM's permission) with something embedded in it which is personally relevant to the target. Parts of the target's body (nail clippings, hair, blood, saliva, etc.) allow a casting at base skill. Other items will allow a casting at various penalties; for example, threads from a shirt worn for years might be worth -2, while dirt from a fresh footprint might be worth -6. Inscribing the target's True Name (see p. 99) on the doll allows casting at base skill.

The doll can be used by its maker (and no one else) to cast harmful spells (such as Pain) on the target, at normal fatigue cost, *while ignoring distance penalties*. The caster uses the lower of his skill with Malefice and his skill with the channeled spell. The target resists all such attacks, even if the spell is normally not resisted (he then resists with HT). It is also possible to use Malefice for the benefit of the target – to cast Healing spells at a distance, say. Note that the target *must* roll to resist these “good” spells!

If the victim breaks the *very first* spell cast on him through the doll, he immediately breaks the enchantment. Otherwise, every later successful resistance simply weakens the Malefice. Upon reaching Power 0, the Malefice dissipates. A critical failure by the channeled spell or a critical success by the subject also breaks the enchantment. At Power 3, it can no longer do harm, but can be detected.

Destroying the doll by fire or some other means breaks the spell, but it also inflicts on the target a Deathtouch (see p. M27) of as many dice as the caster's effective skill with Malefice divide by 5 (round up, maximum of 3 dice). Remove Curse will free the target from the Malefice without harming him.

There are rumors of an improved version of this spell that allows the doll to be used by *any* caster. A model of a ship or building with an actual piece of that construct can be used to cast spells on that inanimate object in the same way.

In any society where people know about this spell and believe in magic, possession of a Malefice model may serve as incriminating evidence in court.

Cost: 250. The wax, clay, straw or other special ingredients cost \$500.

Prerequisite: Enchant and Seeker.

Not Allowing The Heart To Speak The Truth Regular

A simple version of this spell is part of the Coming Forth By Day spell, protecting a soul in the judgment of the dead by ensuring that his heart will not lie during the judgement. This version of this spell *causes* the heart to lie, denying the soul's wrongdoings. As well as being popular among sinful people nearing death, this spell is much in demand among tomb-robbers.

For the spell to function, the caster needs to know the recipient's major crimes, so as to properly disguise them. Therefore, someone buying this spell must confess all of his sins to the spellcaster, giving him an obvious opportunity to blackmail his client. The recipient *could* silence the magician by killing him after he casts the spell, but that murder would be a fresh sin.

TOMB DEFENSES

In early dynastic Egypt, people made their tombs accessible so that priests of the mortuary cult would have full access to their bodies – living warriors kept robbers away from the graves. As centuries passed, it became impossible for the cult to defend all the tombs of Egypt. Therefore, corpses began to be buried in places separate from the mortuary temples, and various mechanical and psychological measures were taken to protect the dead.

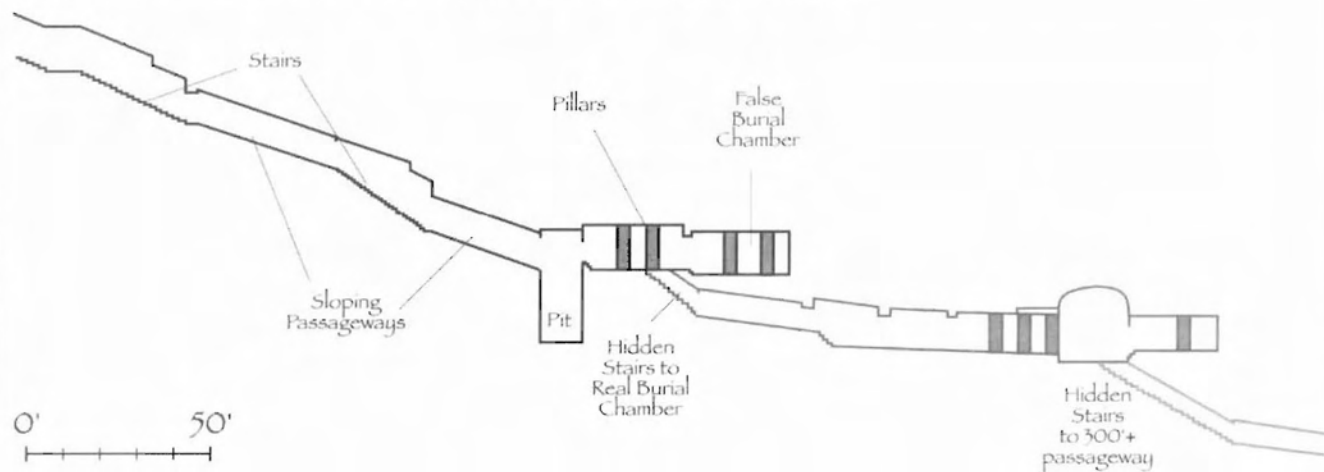
Most tomb defenses were rather simple. False tombs, sometimes equipped with small amounts of treasure so as to fool robbers, were built in accessible locations, while the actual tombs were in secret, wilderness places, their entrances blocked with enormous slabs of stone. The mortuary cult also propagated the idea that the ka of a dead person protected the grave, either as a ghost or by animating a mummy. Some wealthy people had the bodies of animals or commoners mummified and placed in their tombs to become undead guardians. Egyptians didn't perform human sacrifice to create tomb-guardians, although in a fantasy campaign some particularly ruthless magician might do exactly that.

Egyptian tombs also contained a variety of traps: pits, mechanisms that fired poisoned darts, blocks of stone positioned to fall either on or behind intruders, killing them or sealing them in, and so on. Tombs seldom contained enough space for elaborate mazes, but some contained twisting corridors that led to dead ends and decoy graves. Any of the traps which appear in fantasy dungeons might show up in an Egyptian tomb, although probably not in the usual profusion.

Continued on next page . . .



THE TOMB OF SETI I (side view)



TOMB DEFENSES (CONTINUED)

If magic exists, magical tomb defenses are common. Medieval Arabs believed that Egyptian sorcerers had turned the most valuable grave goods invisible, and that only those capable of speaking the appropriate passwords could ever find them. Because of their antiquity and the status of their owners, magic amulets stolen from royal bodies or magic spells copied from royal tombs were assumed by usurpers to be more powerful than those commonly available – the spells designed to protect the dead could actually attract robbers centuries later.

Of course, none of these defenses could protect the tombs from those who worked in the royal cemeteries – the priests of the mortuary temples and the workmen who dug and decorated the tombs. In Nubia is an example of a tomb robbed by way of an underground tunnel dug by a construction crew as they were building a tomb adjacent to it! Similar incidents occurred in Egypt proper, but only when workmen accidentally intruded on an old tomb while digging a new one.

The worst thefts in the Valley of the Kings were officially sanctioned under the guise of restoration and protection during the XXth and XXIst Dynasty reigns of High Priests Herihor, Piankh and Pinedjem, when dozens of royal mummies were removed from their tombs, unwrapped and “mined” for gold, and then rewrapped and hidden in a number of mass caches. The high priests also reused some of the “excess” grave goods in their own funerals – Pinedjem was buried in two recycled coffins of Thutmose I!

The safest way to use this spell is to learn it and cast it on oneself. Therefore, in a campaign where people buy and sell spell formulas, the text of this incantation costs three or four times the usual rate.

Duration: Permanent.

Cost: 5.

Time to Cast: 1 hour.

Prerequisite: Coming Forth By Day.

Reunion

Area

This spell marks a path for the ghost of a dead person to follow to a designated spot. The caster may decide whether to open a way for the *ba* or *ka* of the target (see p. 100). Casting Reunion doesn't automatically give the mage the power to compel the ghost, it simply opens the path so that the soul *may* come at will.

By speaking the target's True Name (see p. 99) while casting the spell, a wizard can force a soul to appear and obey one command (remembering the limitations of its spirit form) before returning to the afterlife. The soul retains all of its usual knowledge, intelligence and personality, and if it isn't well-disposed toward the caster, it may attempt to twist the order.

Duration: Permanent.

Cost: 5.

Time to Cast: 1 day.

Prerequisites: Coming Forth By Day.

Steal The Heart (VH)

Regular/Special Resistance

With this incantation a magician can steal the *ka*, the spiritual “heart,” of a dead person, preventing him from attaining a happy afterlife. The wizard may then use the life energy of the *ka* to fuel other sorcery. He can even steal the “heart” of a *living* person, making this spell an effective means of assassination as well as an odious source of mana.

Normally, one casts this spell on a corpse. Successfully casting the spell gives the caster a number of power points equal to the HT of the victim in life. The caster must use this energy within one turn or it is lost.





To cast Steal the Heart on a living being, the caster must prepare a doll similar to that used in the Malefice spell (see p. 95). The caster may then attempt to tear the victim's life from his body by damaging the doll, harming it once every 24 hours at the stroke of midnight. Each attack causes the victim damage equal to that inflicted on the doll (PD and DR having no effect) unless the victim makes an HT roll. Pricking with a pin causes only a single point of damage (more useful in extortion schemes than assassinations), while a blow with a sword causes the usual damage based on the attacker's strength but destroys the doll. If the attack causes the victim's death, the necromancer may claim the victim's life energy as usual.

Since most Egyptians know of this spell, people suspecting that they're being victimized by it usually use the multi-day attack period to hunt down their attackers. Even simple possession of a doll appropriate for use in a Steal the Heart spell can be dangerous to the owner if discovered.

Duration: Instant.

Cost: 10.

Time to Cast: 1 hour.

Prerequisites: Malefice, Steal Health.

Ushabti

This spell allows the caster to animate a statuette to serve a person in the afterlife. *Ushabtis* normally function only in the afterlife – the spells for making an *ushabti* which can function in the world of the living have double the usual power cost.

Duration: Permanent.

Cost: 100. The statuette itself can cost anywhere from \$5 to \$500.

Time to cast: One day.

Prerequisites: Coming Forth By Day, Golem.

Enchantment

Amulets and Talismans

Every Egyptian wore jewelry featuring holy or magical symbols to ensure good fortune (see *Mystic Symbols*, p. 90). Although any magician would claim to sell magic items, it may take more than a large sum of money given to a charlatan to procure a *working* amulet for a player character . . . and as the effects of many amulets aren't apparent to their wearers or were easily explained away, detecting a fraud may not be easy.

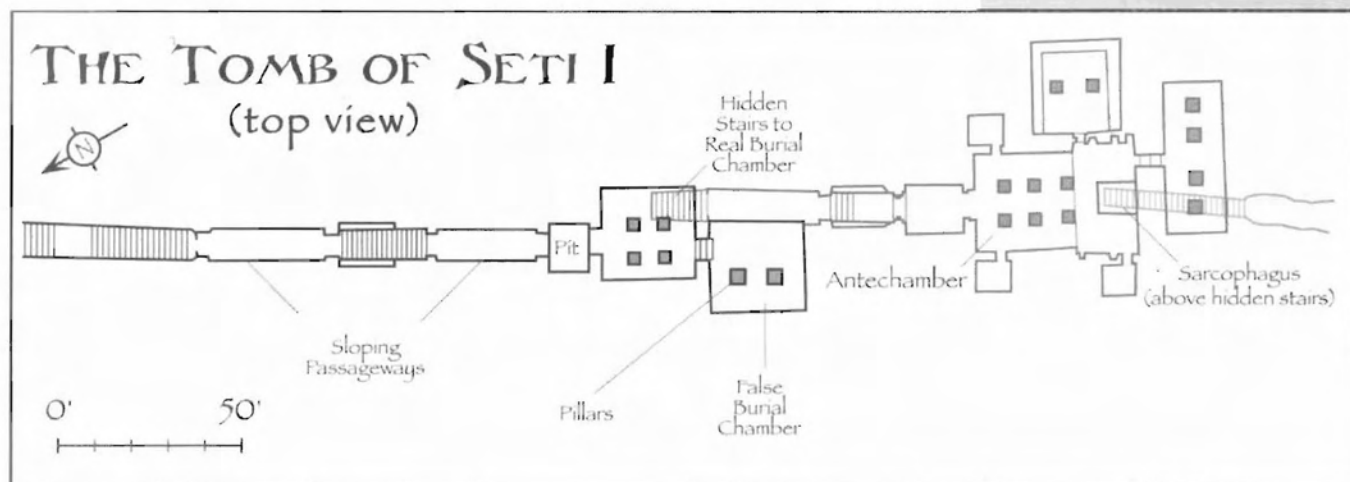
CURSE OF THE PHARAOH

Inscriptions in Egyptian tombs often included reminders that tomb-robbers could expect no mercy from Osiris after their own deaths. Some added that misfortune would pursue thieves in the world of the living. The tomb of a royal courtier named Meni contained a curse which read, in part, "Let the crocodile be against him in water and the snake be against him on land. I have never done anything against him and the god will judge him for it." These curses made strong impressions on Islamic alchemists, many of whom sought ancient lore in tombs.

In 1924, Egyptologist Arthur Weigall published a book describing purported manifestations of Egyptian curses in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Weigall reported that he had once fallen asleep in a room containing the sarcophagus of a cat. He was awakened by a crack like a rifle. Immediately afterward, a huge gray cat leapt into the blankets with him. Weigall fled, and when he returned the next morning, he found the cat sarcophagus empty and shattered on the floor.

Weigall also reported an incident in which the wives of prominent Egyptologists attempted to put on a play at the entrance to the Valley of the Queens. As their first play opened, one woman was suddenly struck blind, while another suffered severe abdominal pains. The club chose a new location for its performances, and both women recovered.

There is also a legend that the British Museum once possessed the lid of a mummy case containing a particularly powerful curse. To escape the curse, museum officials sold the lid to an American institution and arranged for its transportation on the luxury liner *Titanic*.



TOMB ARTIFACTS

Typical tomb offerings included:

Golden plates to cover the incisions made during embalming, with inscriptions to keep evil spirits from possessing the body.

A broad collar of gold, shaped to resemble wings and inscribed with spells to attract the attention and protection of Isis.

Copies of the *Book of Coming Forth by Day* and other magical texts.

Sprouting grains of wheat in an Osiris-shaped seedling bed symbolizing the rebirth of the soul.

Amulets of lapis lazuli, nephrite (green feldspar) and carnelian, often chased with gold. A typical mummy might contain hundreds of amulets including scarabs, belts and girdles dedicated to Isis, djed pillars, statuettes of deities, images of various body parts, and images of sacred animals.

Masks of gold and silver, representing the deceased in idealized form.

Secondary sarcophagi, in addition to those holding the mummies.

Miniature representations of walking-sticks, tools and other useful items, often worked in precious metals.

Food, drink and cooking utensils (or sculpted replicas of food, etc.).

Furniture, including couches, beds, chariots, boats, coffers, chests and arm-chairs.

Weapons, both functional and decorative.

Ankh Amulet

The *ankh* represented life and fertility. One version of the *ankh* amulet gives a bonus of +2 to all HT-based rolls for avoiding bodily harm – this amulet costs \$75,000. An amulet carved from hippo tusk (sacred to the goddess Taweret) and designed to give a +2 to the HT rolls of pregnant or birthing women would cost only \$25,000. Another kind of *ankh* amulet gives wearers an aura of vitality worth +1 on all reaction rolls, +2 to the reaction rolls of the opposite sex. The third type costs \$50,000.

Scarab Amulet

The scarab (or dung beetle) symbolized renewal. A scarab amulet gives the wearer +2 on all HT checks to recover from disease or injury. Cost: \$25,000.

Scroll Amulets

An amulet of this type consists of a tiny scroll inscribed with an incantation and sealed in a leather pouch. Each contains a limited number of charges, each granting the user a +2 bonus on some appropriate roll – “appropriate” depending not on the type of roll, but on the reason why the wearer wants to make it. For example, one scroll amulet might give the wearer a +2 bonus on the next five rolls he makes in combat, whether they are attack rolls, defense rolls, rolls to cast spells, or rolls to execute tactical maneuvers. Another scroll amulet might give the wearer +2 on the next ten rolls he makes in an attempt to impress the opposite sex: reaction rolls, rolls to perform various attention-getting stunts, or IQ rolls to notice subtle social cues. The GM is the judge of when a situation automatically activated the amulet. In all cases, a scroll amulet can only affect the actions of a person: while it could affect a gambler’s ability to spot a cheater, it couldn’t affect the random movements of the dice.

If a wearer has two amulets dedicated to the same purpose their effects are not cumulative – wearing two combat scroll amulets won’t give him +4 on combat rolls, but it *will* use up one charge from each amulet per roll. If the purposes of differing two scroll amulets happen to coincide, the wearer receives both bonuses. Thus, a man wearing the two scroll amulets described above would gain +4 on combat rolls made in defense of the woman he loves.

Most scroll amulets cost \$5,000 per charge. An amulet that functions in a broad range of life-or-death situations is worth double that amount. A scroll amulet with a restricted role, such as one for use in fighting tomb-robbers, costs only \$2,500 per charge.

Cursing Scroll Amulet

Instead of assisting their wearers, these scroll amulets harm his enemies. Whenever anyone of a particular type acts against the owner of the amulet in some proscribed way, the device expends a charge and the wearer’s opponent suffers a -2 penalty to his next proscribed roll.

Like a normal scroll amulet, a cursing scroll amulet expends its charges automatically without the wearer’s knowledge. For instance, an amulet designed to ward off attacks by followers of Set will use charges





to penalize the Stealth rolls of a Set-worshipping assassin sneaking up behind the wearer even if the amulet's wearer is unaware of his approach.

A cursing scroll amulet costs \$10,000 per charge. As with normal scroll amulets, a cursing scroll amulet can be made more or less expensive by making it more or less restrictive. Universal protection from harm costs \$20,000 per charge, while protection from a single individual or attack form costs only \$5,000 per charge.

Talismans

Egyptians believed that knots were magical, and wizards used knotted ropes to make inexpensive talismans and amulets (see the *GURPS Grimoire*, p. 38) that had their effects when the knots were untied. Powerful talismans required complicated knots with special conditions for tying them ("tie knots, one at the moment of sunrise, one at the moment of sunset, every day until eight knots are created").

Udjat Amulet

The *udjat*, or eye of Horus, gives its wearer a special form of the Danger Sense advantage (see p. B20) in which all warnings come as visual cues. Cost: \$30,000. A temporary *udjat* can be created by applying the symbol on one's face using a special makeup blended with *paut* (see p. 92); each dose of makeup costs \$5,000 and provides the Danger Sense advantage for one day or until the makeup is washed off, whichever comes first.

TRUE NAMES

Ancient Egyptians believed that every person and thing had a True Name that defined its essence. True Names weren't the names used in ordinary speech; indeed, most people didn't know their own True Names.

The simplest way to learn a True Name is the Know True Name spell, but since this technique can fail, some Names leak out by more interesting routes. Thoth, Isis and a minor goddess named Renenet knew the True Names of all beings and could send dreams to the faithful containing enigmatic clues to the Names of important beings. Certain ancient ruins and magical works could list the True Names of spirit beings and if someone discovered his own True Name, it could later be found inscribed in his tomb. Locating an important Name is an obvious adventure idea, but *protecting* a secret True Name may be more interesting and lucrative.

True Names play a role in many Egyptian spells such as Malefice (p. 95) and Reunion (p. 96). Optionally, the GM may rule that a True Name can be important when casting *any* spell upon a specific target – a spellcaster who knows the True Name of his target gaining a +4 bonus, but one who doesn't know the relevant Name suffering a -4 penalty. It's important to remember that inanimate objects also have True Names, and knowing the Name of the barge carrying Pharaoh down the Nile (or even of one of the trees that became part of the hull) could be as useful as knowing Pharaoh's True Name in a magical assassination attempt.

Under rare circumstances, people may voluntarily reveal their True Names, so that sorcerers can aid them or as a sign of trust. Under most circumstances, trying to learn somebody's True Name is a highly hostile action that people might kill to prevent.



MUMMY ALCHEMY

During the Middle Ages, the Arabs believed that Egyptian mummies (named from the Arabic word for the tarry bitumen used in later-period embalming) had magical properties. This idea spread to Europe, leading to a trade in mummy parts among students of the occult. Europeans swallowed mummy powder to cure stomach ailments and boiled mummies down to make an oil to cure wounds. With more complex alchemical treatments, mummies could have far more miraculous uses. Mummy oil, for instance, was used to make the skin invulnerable to weapons.

Before the 16th century, a mummy was worth about \$2,000 to an Arabic alchemist, and might have fetched twice that in Europe. There was also an active trade in fake mummies which might have reduced the prices in some areas. Although the use of mummies in medicine was not illegal, those who engaged in this activity were constantly under suspicion by Church authorities.

By the 1500s, some physicians questioned the validity of mummy alchemy. The French surgeon Ambrose Pare wrote a treatise titled *Discours Contre La Momie*, stating that the use of mummy potions gave patients severe stomach pains, caused foul-smelling breath and induces dangerous vomiting. The craze diminished, but didn't disappear for centuries.

In a fantasy campaign, a dose of mummy-based armor salve confers PD 2 and DR 2 for one day, cumulative with any other armor or protective devices. A dose can cover the user from head to toe and costs \$5,000.





USES OF MUMMIES

During the 19th century Europeans treated mummies as commodities and cheap curiosities. Victorian gentry often went on package tours through Egypt, and these trips invariably involved visits to tombs. On these stops, tour guides amused their guests by unrolling mummies to reveal the preserved corpses. To the guides an unrolled mummy was useless, and so the tour companies discarded the corpses afterward. There was no reason to worry about exhausting the supply; along with as many as 200 pharaohs' mummies, there were the rulers' multiple queens, princes and princesses, priests and multitudes of commoners all waiting to be despoiled.

Augustus Stanwood, an American paper manufacturer, purchased several tons of mummy wrappings for use as pulp. Stanwood was disappointed to find that the linen was discolored and could only be used for brown wrapping paper. Public health officials later traced an outbreak of cholera to the mummy-based paper products, and Stanwood had to abandon the operation. Scientists now believe that the Egyptian corpses could not possibly have harbored active cholera pathogens, but in a fantasy campaign . . .

Chemical firms used a dye known as "mummy brown." The British also sold mummies to railroad companies as a substitute for coal – in *Innocents Abroad*, Mark Twain reports hearing a train engineer calling out, "D--- these plebeians, they don't burn worth a cent! Pass out a king!"



DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

Just as deities had multiple aspects, the Egyptians believed that human souls had seven primary components. While a person was alive the different parts of the soul usually remained united. Upon death they separated and each traveled to its own fate. The parts of a person's life were:

Khat: The physical body.

Ba: The conscious mind, which made the body work.

Ka: The "heart;" a person's conscience. Although the *ka* was generally in harmony with the *ba* it had a mind of its own. Not only did the *ka* attempt to veto unworthy actions, it inspired the *ba* with noble ideas and served as an intermediary to the spirit world. When the *ba* and *ka* came into conflict, the soul was in a state of emotional crisis, cut off from all that was spiritual.

Sekhem: A person's life energy (see p. 91).

Sah: A spiritual body. A living person's *sah* served no function, although the *ka* could use it as a vehicle for supernatural journeys. After death, the *ba* used the *sah* as a body in the afterlife, while the *ka* adopted the *khaibit*.

Khaibit: The "shadow" cast on the universe by a person's presence. A person without a *khaibit* can dwell in the world but will leave no lasting impression on it.

Ren: The basic principle of personality which drew all the other aspects of the soul together and maintained the link between *khat* and soul after death. One could express the *ren* as a single word, which completely defined a person's purpose in life, his True Name (see p. 99).

The *ka* and *ba* were essentially indestructible, meaning that all human beings were immortal. Furthermore, only the most horrible supernatural misfortune could damage the *khaibit*. However, the *sah* had needs much like those of the physical body and could die from spiritual injuries. One who suffered this second death couldn't live in the underworld any more than an ordinary dead person could live in the realm of the living. They lost their memories and underwent reincarnation into new bodies, becoming entirely new beings.

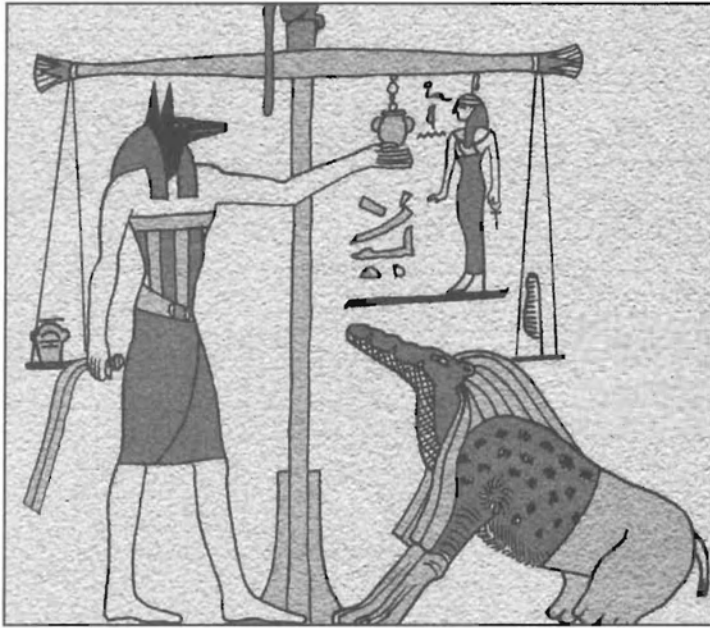
When discussing the afterlife, the term "soul" refers to the *ba-sah* union in which most people hoped to exist after death. The *ka* and *khaibit* spent most of their time merged with this entity.

Tuat

Tuat was the underground land where souls dwelt after death. To reach Tuat, a soul had to journey west to the sunset and then pass through one of seven great gates into the underworld. From there, it crossed the entire length of the underworld to reach the Fair Ament, where Osiris judged the souls of the dead. Although Osiris served as a supreme magistrate, the goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Hathor and Ma'at sat in judgment as well, Anubis stood by to keep order, and 42 minor gods examined the dead for specific types of crime. Am-mit, a monster with the body of a hippopotamus, the claws of a lion and the head of a crocodile, lurked in the shadows, ready to devour sinners.

The dead person swore that he had not committed any grievous sins, disavowing a standard list of crimes in a ritual known as the "negative confession." At this point, the dead person's *ka* would speak up (unless magically prevented; see the Not Allowing The Heart To Speak The Truth spell, p. 95) to reveal sins the person would rather have kept hidden.





Finally Thoth weighed the dead person's heart against the Feather of Truth. If the judges believed that the dead person had lived a proper life, the heart proved lighter than the Feather, the soul received property in Tuat and the heart was stored with those of other virtuous people in the Hall of Hearts. If the deceased had led a sinful life, the heart sank on the scales and Anubis unleashed Am-mit to devour the dead man's *sah*.

Locations in the Underworld

The primary parts of Tuat were:

The Seven Halls: Vast underground realms like an idyllic version of Egypt itself. Most dead souls came to live there.

The Pillars of the West: A region containing 21 caverns, similar to the Seven Halls, but supported by vast pillars and protected by guardian deities and demons. To pass through this region, one recited magical passwords at each of the 21 pillars.

The Fourteen States: The Egyptian Hell, with demons, eternal flame and volcanic activity. Osiris didn't condemn anyone to live here, but souls had to pass through this region on their way to and from judgment. Those with the proper magical protection could call on Anubis to protect them in this region.

The Fair Ament: The palace of Osiris, set in the midst of a heavenly garden.

The Twelve Hours of Night: Gloomy caverns deep beneath the rest of Tuat, along an underground river. Each night Ra sailed through them so that he could rise in the east when morning came. The golden beetle Khepri served as pilot in Ra's boat, and one of Hathor's daughters served as a guide.

Dead souls who either could not pass the gates of Tuat or did not dare face the judgment of Osiris dwelt in the Twelve Hours. A variety of gods, serpents, demons and monsters lived in these caves too, some friendly to Ra, others trying to sink his boat. The journey through the Twelve Hours was always perilous, and Ra took the souls of particularly worthy dead people on the voyage to help in the nightly battle. The most dangerous creature there was Apep, the serpent that wished to devour the world. A helpful snake named Buto defended the boat in the darkest part of the night, but eventually the chaos demon overcame this guardian and threatened to kill Ra. Then, at the nick of time, the cat-goddess Bast arrived to kill Apep and allow the sun to rise triumphant in the east, but by evening all the combatants were back, ready to fight again.

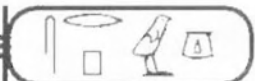
THE ROYAL MUMMY CACHE

In 1871 the Abd el-Rassul family discovered a concealed tomb outside the village of Qurna near the Valley of the Kings. Inside the grave, the Rassul brothers discovered a system of tunnels leading to sarcophagi marked with the cobra of the pharaohs. They kept their find a secret, and to discourage other tomb-robbers the Abd el-Rassuls spread rumors of a troubled spirit that haunted that section of the desert. The Abd el-Rassuls also killed a donkey and left the carcass to rot in the pit, hoping the smell would discourage wanderers.

For ten years the Abd el-Rassuls prospered, selling illuminated papyrus scrolls and jeweled amulets a few at a time. Rumors about the source of their wealth spread, and the story eventually reached Gaston Maspero, the head of the Egyptian Service des Antiquités. Maspero contacted the authorities who arrested the Abd el-Rassuls. Despite severe beatings, none of the brothers revealed the location of the tomb.

The police kept a close watch on the district where the Abd el-Rassuls lived, making daily life unbearable, and their neighbors pressured the Abd el-Rassuls to give the authorities what they wanted. After a series of sharp arguments within the family, the police were led to the tomb.

Under Maspero's direction, archaeologists conducted a complete excavation. The grave held the mummies of Seti I, Amenhotep I, Thutmose I, II and III and numerous other figures from Egyptian history; 40 mummies of pharaohs, queens, princesses and others in all. (Caches containing 20 more royal mummies were found elsewhere in the Valley of the Kings in 1898 and 1908. The mummies of ten XVIIIth-Dynasty princesses were found cached in a nearby valley, evidence that Pinedjem went beyond the royal graves in search of treasure.)





5 EGYPTIAN BESTIARY

Egypt was not a land known for its hostile animals or monsters. The former were common outside the Nile valley but, with the exception of crocodiles and snakes, almost unknown within. The latter were more common in the afterlife than in the world of the living.

Habitat: Each creature has one or more of the following letter-codes to indicate where it is found within Egypt: creatures with an **M** appear in the mountains bordering the Nile valley, while animals with a **D** are found in the deserts beyond the fertile valley. Animals found throughout Egypt are marked "All." Some creatures have special habitats which are explained in the text.

A "#" sign means that the information given is supplemented in the text.

NATURAL CREATURES

A number of animals were common to Egypt or the surrounding deserts, figuring in Egyptian myth and ritual (see *Sacred Animals*, p. 17) or playing more mundane roles in Egyptian life as food, draft animals, or occasional menaces (both real and poetic). Commonplace animals such as baboons, dogs, jackals, oxen (cattle) and snakes can be found in the *GURPS Bestiary*.

Cat

Domesticated cats were popular in Egypt as pets, for vermin control and as sacred animals in the temples of Bast.

Big cats such as cheetahs (see p. BE11) and leopards (see p. BE20) were both hunted by the pharaohs and raised as hunting animals by them. A breed of desert lion was once common throughout the Middle East, and was hunted by the pharaohs to prove their bravery. (See p. BE21 for lion stats, using the lower end of the attribute ranges to represent the smaller desert lions.)

Crocodile (see p. BE11)

Crocodiles were sacred to Set and crocodile attacks could be considered grounds for religious persecution. Crocodile hunting was a popular pastime of the pharaohs (see *The 1st Dynasty*, p. 34, and *Meryibre and Merykare*, p. 42, for examples of the result of crocodile hunts).

Elephant (see p. BE15)

The Egyptians encountered elephants in the Nubian south. The Nubian pharaohs of the XXVth Dynasty certainly employed elephants in some capacities in their home country and might have used them in battle, but this wasn't common until the Ptolemaic

Period. African elephants are larger than the Indian breed; their statistics are at the upper end of the ranges in the *Bestiary*.

Hippopotamus (see p. BE18)

This river animal was sacred to Set and could live peacefully in a river alongside Set's other sacred beast, the crocodile. Although usually peaceable herbivores, if annoyed a hippopotamus could be quite dangerous to a man in a fragile fishing boat. The pharaohs hunted hippos for sport (see *The 1st Dynasty*, p. 34, and *Apepi, Tao II and Kamose*, p. 46, for examples of the political/mythical implications of hippopotamus hunts).

Ostrich (see p. BE25)

These flightless birds were prized for their luxurious plumage, and despite being almost completely inoffensive, provided some thrill to hunters because of the speed with which they fled Pharaoh's chariots.

Riding Animals

The most common beast of burden in ancient Egypt was the donkey (see p. BE45).

The camel (see p. BE45, and *GURPS Arabian Nights*, p. 95) was not a popular pack animal in ancient Egypt until the Muslim era. Camels were used in the deserts surrounding the Nile valley and would certainly have been familiar to Egyptians.

Horses in ancient Egypt were smaller than those of the Muslim era, with -5 to the usual Strength scores by type of animal on p. B144. For this reason, Egyptians seldom rode on horseback. For Arabian horses, see *Arabian Nights*, p. 94.



SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

Many of the monsters of Egyptian myth and folklore should be considered as individuals with their own advantages, disadvantages and in some cases spells, instead of as examples of a generic type.

Anubis Beast

ST: 15	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1
DX: 12	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 50 lbs.
IQ: 10	Damage: 1d+3	Habitat: Tombs
HT: 12	Reach: C	

These dog-sized creatures resembled the deity Anubis and served as guardians for the dead. Nobody knew what they ate or what sort of society they had because, with the exception of tomb-robbers, living people seldom saw them.

Anubis beasts fought in packs, with the members cooperating in intelligent ways using their own language. They knew the layouts of their local tombs well, and could lock doors, set traps and use back passages to good advantage.



Anubis beasts attacked either by biting or by using weapons. While their hides provided them with some protection, they could also wear armor.

Typical advantages: Combat Reflexes, Magical Aptitude, Psionics, Toughness.

Typical skills: Traps, Poisons, Weapon skills.

Typical spells: Curse Missile, Shatter, Terror.

Bennu Bird

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 2
DX: 15	PD/DR: 3/4	Weight: 100 lbs.
IQ: 20	Damage: –	Habitat: D
HT: 10	Reach: C	

Bennu Bird was the Egyptian name for a being whom the Greeks called the Phoenix. She was a gloriously beautiful creature, with feathers the color of flame, highlighted with coal black. Although the Bennu Bird was a unique being, she could appear in more than one place at a time. Once per year, this bird died, immolating herself in her nest, only to rise from its ashes, rejuvenated.

The Bennu Bird was one of the most sacred beings in the Egyptian pantheon. If someone killed the Bennu Bird, she would still rise from the dead, one year later. Still, pious Egyptians would go to any length to punish her killer, and supernatural beings could join the hunt.

Despite the fact that the Bennu Bird was sacred, there were many who would gladly hunt her. Some malevolent deities, notably Set, would reward worshippers well for killing her. Furthermore, every part of the Bennu Bird had great magical properties. Her feathers could turn iron into steel of remarkable quality – armor made of it having 1.5 times its usual PD and DR, weapons inflicting an extra die of damage. A potion made by boiling down her viscera could restore life to a corpse. Other parts of this bird were vital components in magical substances involving fire, transformation, healing and rejuvenation.

The Bennu Bird would not kill, even in self-defense, but she had numerous magical abilities she used both to foil hunters and to help kindly people who came to her attention. The Bennu Bird can cast the following spells at level 21: Create Fire, Shape Fire, Extinguish Fire, Fireproof (permanent), Resist Fire, Purify Food, Create Food, Minor Healing, Major Healing, Cure Disease, Neutralize Poison, Restoration and Sense Danger.

The Bennu Bird flew with a Move of 16.

Demons

Just as Egypt had many gods, it also had many demons. Malignant spirits haunted the deserts and lingered near ancient ruins. Although the art of summoning demons was not popular in Egypt, magicians were certainly aware of it and believed that Mesopotamians and Assyrians were particularly adept in the arts of demonology. As Christianity replaced the old religions, the old gods of neighboring countries became demons in Egyptian folklore.

Demons came in many varieties. To generate nether beings of moderate power, use the rules on p. 113 of *GURPS Magic* and the expanded tables in the *GURPS Grimoire* (pp. 82-83). GMs can extrapolate from those tables to produce both stronger and weaker demons as needed.





According to Egyptian folklore, honey was poisonous to evil spirits. At the GM's option, this substance can burn demons like acid, a 12-ounce container inflicting 1d-2 damage per turn unless the demon makes a DX roll at -2 and spends a turn doing nothing except scraping off the honey – warm water automatically removes the honey in one turn. Although honey doesn't stick to an incorporeal being, it does damage a bodiless demon that "touches" a honey-coated object. Eating honey doesn't harm demons possessing the body of the eater unless those demons are directly affecting the gastrointestinal tract.



Djinn

Djinn did not figure prominently in the mythology of ancient Egypt, but with the coming of Islam and Arabic cultures, belief in these beings became popular. Even in dynastic Egypt the desert nomads were aware of djinn, and they were believed to be common in Punt. Descriptions of djinn in general and individual djinni can be found in *GURPS Arabian Nights*, pp. 97-99.

Ghosts

The soul of an Egyptian has seven elements, and after death these components could become separated (see *Death and Afterlife*, p. 100). Under certain circumstances, two of them, the *ka* and the *ba* (as well as two other components that served as spiritual vehicles for them), could return to the world of the living as ghosts.

Ka and *ba* ghosts moved through a world of the living that seemed like a confusing dream to them. They appeared as ghostly versions of the people they were in life, equipped with ghostly versions of the possessions in their graves. They could speak, but had no power to touch anything physical, unless they had appropriate magic or psionic powers.

Although physical attacks cause no damage to ghosts, their reflexes can betray them, causing them to lose their orientation in the material world. Whenever an attack succeeds at "hitting" (actually, passing through) a ghost, it makes a Will roll. If it's successful no harm is done, but if it's failed the spirit lapses into a nightmare state, fading to an almost invisible (visible only after a Vision roll at -2) form and losing all power to move or act. The ghost may attempt a Will roll each hour to recover from the nightmare state.

Ghosts can walk through walls and other physical barriers, but such unnatural movement disorients them. To go

through a solid object, a spirit must make a Will roll. If it's failed, the spirit is stopped and develops a phobic fear of that barrier. For that reason, tombs were built with small windows or "air vents" that allowed *ba* and *ka* ghosts free passage from the entombed body to the outside world without making access any easier for the living.

Spellcasters can use Exorcism (see p. M27) to drive ghosts from small buildings or other areas, the radius of the spell being the caster's IQ in yards. A ghost resists Exorcism with its Will, but if the Exorcism succeeds the spirit flees the area and does not return. The spells Turn Spirit, Repel Spirits, Astral Block, Materialize and Solidify (see the *GURPS Grimoire*, pp. 84-87) also affect undead spirits.

Ghosts are soundless, odorless and have an easy time fading into shadows, gaining +3 bonus on Stealth rolls. The Sense Spirits spell (p. M63) automatically reveals the spirit's presence. Outside of fantasy Egypt, seeing an undead spirit can be the occasion for a Fright Check.

Ba Ghost

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 5/5	Size: 1
DX: 10	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 0
IQ: 10	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 10	Reach: C	

A *ba* ghost is the residue of someone who becomes lost or sidetracked on the journey to the land of the dead. They are more often pathetic than dangerous, although a stranded *ba* may act out of desperation in an attempt to reach Tuat. On rare occasions, a *ba* may have returned from the afterlife with some errand, but in most cases it is the *ka* (see p. 100) which undertakes missions between worlds.

Typical advantages: Undead and Undead Spirit Form (mandatory), Fear Projection.

Typical disadvantages: Breath Hunger. *Ba* ghosts may be attached to living people, creating dual beings with Split Personalities.





Ka Ghost

ST: 12	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1
DX: 12	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 0
IQ: 12	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 12	Reach: C	

The *ka*, or conscience, of a dead person could freely travel back to the land of the living on errands. *Ka* ghosts were more common than *ba* ghosts, and their motives were usually more stable. Although *ka* ghosts were merciless in their pursuit of tomb-robbers and other special enemies of the dead, they had no grudge against other people, except when the dead person had been so severely wronged that his *ka* turned against all of humanity. *Ka* ghosts were more powerful than *ba* ghosts, often possessing psionics and spellcasting abilities, even if the dead person had no such skills in life.

If the deceased's tomb has a properly-maintained shrine, the *ka* ghost may pass between the land of the dead and this holy spot without difficulty. Otherwise, the *ka* must find its way from its place in the afterlife to its destination, a process which may take it on a convoluted route through the lands of the dead and the living (but see the *Reunion* spell, p. 96). Keeping the shrines of the dead in good order reduced the number of wandering ghosts.

Just as the *ka* of a dead person can visit the land of the living, the *ka* of a living person can visit Tuat. If a party goes on a supernatural adventure, it may encounter the "ghosts" of living people.

Typical advantages: Undead and Undead Spirit Form (mandatory), Fear Projection, Magical Aptitude, various psionics.

Typical disadvantage: Breath Hunger. *Ka* ghosts are less likely than *ba* ghosts to cause Split Personalities in living people except for very important reasons.

Hawks

Human-Headed Hawk

ST: 15	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1
DX: 15	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 10 lbs.
IQ: 10	Damage: 1d cutting	Habitats: D, M
HT: 12	Reach: C	

These rare creatures lived in the wilderness, serving as guardians of sacred places or as avengers of wrongs. They were sacred to Horus.

Human-headed hawks flew at a speed of 15, doing cutting damage with their talons.

Typical advantages: Acute Vision, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, Magical Aptitude, Toughness.

Typical disadvantages: Berserk, Bloodlust, Code of Honor.

Typical spells: Combat spells.

Ram-Headed Hawk

ST: 15	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1
DX: 12	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 30 lbs.
IQ: 5	Damage: 1d crushing/cutting	Habitats: D, M
HT: 12	Reach: C	

Ram-headed hawks dwelt near sacred places, attacking anyone who disturbed the sites. Although they did not speak and had only limited intelligence, they were holy, magical beings, and often had innate spellcasting or psionic abilities.

Ram-headed hawks flew with a Move of 15, doing either crushing damage with a head butt (+2 ST for determining knockdown) or cutting damage with talons.



Lesser God

ST: 35 **Move/Dodge:** 17/17 **Size:** 1
DX: 35 **PD/DR:** 5/8 **Weight:** varies
IQ: 35 **Damage:** # **Habitats:** All
HT: 35 **Reach:** C

Egypt abounded with gods, and lesser deities sometimes made appearances on request or even dwelt in physical form at their temples. The GM may make up lesser gods to represent any locality, natural force or sphere of activity desired. Most will appear in the forms of beasts (see *Sacred Animals*, p. 17) or as recognizable deified human ancestors.

The statistics above are merely a starting point for the creation of a lesser god. They could be more powerful, especially in areas which reflect their special talents, have large repertoires of spells, which they cast without energy cost, have advantages such as Fear Projection or Undead Spirit Form, and so on.

Mummies

Mummies were dead bodies animated by the *ka* or *ba* of the deceased, or by other spirits entirely. All mummies have the Undead advantage (see p. 81), feel no pain or fatigue, and automatically pass all HT rolls to avoid unconsciousness. Toxins that affect the heart or nervous system have no effect on them and when they receive wounds from cutting or impaling attacks they suffer only the weapon's basic damage because of their lack of vital organs.

Spells such as Death Vision (see p. M63) do not frighten a mummy, but a Control Zombie spell (see p. M64) can control a mummy that fails a Will roll. The mummy may attempt a new resistance roll every 24 hours unless the spellcaster knows its True Name (see p. 99).

Mummies were dry and vulnerable to fire. An animated corpse that takes more than 4 points of fire damage in one round is instantly immolated, suffering 1d damage per round if the fire isn't doused. The mummy's makers could perform expensive rituals to protect their most valuable creations from fire – a player can spend an extra 5 points for a PC mummy who is not fireproof but at least not exceptionally vulnerable to flames.

Excessive moisture could cause mummies to rot. Every 24 hours after an inundation, a mummy must pass an HT roll or lose a point of HT permanently, the decay continuing until the mummy is thoroughly dried out by spending a week in the desert sun or until an embalmer arrests the decay with a successful skill roll. In humid climates, animated corpses must make HT rolls against rot each week, even if they manage to keep dry.

Mummies heal according to the ordinary rules, substituting Embalming skill for First Aid, Physician and Surgery if medical treatment is needed.

Mummies had dark, desiccated skin, emaciated bodies, and stitches from the embalming process, partially covered by the linen bandages wrapping them. In a fantasy world, polite Egyptians may suppress their revulsion at a mummy's appearance (a -3 on reaction rolls) but animated corpses always frighten animals and children. Outside Egypt, animated corpses are viewed as monsters, suffering -5 on reaction rolls.

Most mummies were equipped with items (including weapons and magic amulets) from their tombs.

Ba Mummy

ST: 18 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 2/2 **Weight:** 50 lbs.
IQ: 10 **Damage:** # **Habitats:** All
HT: 15 **Reach:** C

A *ba* mummy is a preserved corpse animated by a *ba*. Few people voluntarily bind their souls into corpses (thereby preventing themselves from reaching the pleasures of the afterlife), so most *ba* mummies have unsavory origins; at the hands of wizards creating undead slaves, at the command of magistrates turning executed criminals into tomb-guardians, or on their own volition as an attempt to avoid the judgment of Osiris.

The statistics above are for a *ba* mummy intended as a tomb-guardian; its extraordinary Strength represents its willingness to abuse its body in ways no living being would endure. Those with other purposes may be less formidable. A person who has voluntarily become a *ba* mummy will have a Strength similar to that he possessed in life. The mummy's light weight is a result of the embalming process.

Typical advantages: Fear Projection, Rotting Touch.

Typical disadvantage: Breath Hunger, Appearance (Monstrous).





Ka Mummy

ST: 15 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 2/2 **Weight:** 50 lbs.
IQ: 12 **Damage:** # **Habitats:** All
HT: 15 **Reach:** C

A *ka* mummy occurred when the *ka*, or conscience, of a dead person occupied a preserved corpse. Their motivations and activities were similar in most respects to *ka* ghosts (see p. 106). *Ka* mummies were more common than *ba* mummies because they had personal motivations to return from the dead.

Typical advantages: Fear Projection, Rotting Touch.

Typical disadvantage: Breath Hunger, Appearance (Monstrous).

Pure Soul

ST: 15 **Move/Dodge:** 8/8 **Size:** 1
DX: 15 **PD/DR:** 1/2 **Weight:** 100 lbs.
IQ: 15 **Damage:** 3d **Habitats:** All
HT: 20 **Reach:** C

After death, a pharaoh or other mortal of surpassing greatness could return to the land of the living as a pure soul, a combination of his *ba* and *ka*. Pure souls were servants of the gods, and performed deeds of importance to all Egypt.

A pure soul appeared as a bird the size of a human, with a human head and arms. In addition, most were equipped with amulets, weapons and other devices from their tombs.

Pure souls can wield weapons, cast spells, or strike with their claws for the damage shown. They may also have numerous *ka* ghosts and *ka* mummies serving under them.

Pure souls had material bodies, but to attack them with physical weapons, one had to win a Quick Contest of Wills. Otherwise, the attacker failed to muster the determination necessary to harm such a noble entity.

Typical advantages: Charisma, Reputation, Status, Strong Will, Voice, Wealth.

Typical disadvantages: Code of Honor, Overconfidence.

Typical skills: Administration, Diplomacy, Leadership
Typical spells: Most pure souls had magical and psionic abilities and could typically cast Panic, Loyalty, Suggestion and Mass Suggestion at level 20.

Set Beast

ST: 15 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 150 lbs.
IQ: 10 **Damage:** 2d **Habitats:** D, M
HT: 15 **Reach:** C

Sacred to the god they resembled, packs of these poison-fanged jackals prowled the deep desert, guarded (un)holy spots, served powerful priests and generally exercised their malice toward other living things. These creatures were as intelligent as humans, fighting in packs, using magic and speaking their own language.

The bite of a Set beast was mildly poisonous. A victim must make an HT roll or take an additional 1d damage. Furthermore, the poison inhibits healing, causing the victim a -1 on all HT rolls to recover from bite and poison damage.

Typical advantages: Combat Reflexes, Magical Aptitude, Psionics, Toughness.

Typical disadvantage: Bloodlust.

Typical Spells: Curse Missile, Deathtouch, Explosive Fireball, Panic, Terror.

Snakes

Great Serpent

ST: 20 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 4
DX: 15 **PD/DR:** 5/5 **Weight:** 270 lbs.
IQ: 10 **Damage:** 4d **Habitats:** D, M
HT: 15/20 **Reach:** C

These enormous snakes came in two varieties: the vicious form representing Apep, and the wise, helpful form representing Buto (see *Locations in the Underworld*, p. 101). Both kinds of great serpent appeared most often around holy sites.





Each had a poisonous bite, and any of their attacks which penetrate their victim's armor inflict an extra 5d poison damage in 1d seconds.

Hawk-Headed Snake

ST: 12 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 1-3
DX: 15 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 20 lbs.
IQ: 4 **Damage:** 1d **Habitats:** D, M
HT: 12 **Reach:** C

These creatures had the intelligence of animals and attacked humans as prey. Nevertheless, hawk-headed snakes were sacred, representing good luck.



Human-Headed Snake

ST: 15 **Move/Dodge:** 7/7 **Size:** 2-4
DX: 15 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 40 lbs.
IQ: 15 **Damage:** 2d crushing **Habitat:**
HT: 15 **Reach:** C Underground

Human-headed snakes sought to capture humans for use as slaves, food and sacrifices to gods of the occult. Failing this, they sought simply to kill people because they despised humankind. Most human-headed snakes were female, and enjoyed using illusions to appear as voluptuous women and lure men toward doom. People encountered these monsters throughout Mesopotamia and the Middle East, as well as in Egypt.

Human-headed snakes attacked by constriction. They lived in caves and ancient tombs.

Typical advantages: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Magical Aptitude, Rapid Healing.

Typical disadvantage: Sadism.

Typical spells: Charm, Reptile Control, Perfect Illusion, Illusion Shell, Illusion Disguise, Madness.

Lion-Headed Snake

ST: 20-25 **Move/Dodge:** 6/6 **Size:** 7-11
DX: 13 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:**
IQ: 4 **Damage:** 1d cut/2d crush 150-300 lbs.
HT: 12/15-25 **Reach:** C **Habitats:** D, M

These beasts were predators that attacked humans. They had lion heads (that could bite for 1d cutting damage) and python bodies up to 30' in length (that could constrict for 2d crushing damage after successfully grappling victims – see p. B111). Lion-headed snakes usually followed the habits of snakes more than those of lions.

Sphinx

ST: 30 **Move/Dodge:** 8/8# **Size:** 3
DX: 15 **PD/DR:** 1/1 **Weight:** 1,000 lbs.
IQ: 18 **Damage:** 3d cutting **Habitat:** D
HT: 20 **Reach:** C

Sphinxes resembled lions with the heads of humans, hawks or rams. They dwelt alone in the wilderness, hunting for food and standing guard over oases. On rare occasions, a male sphinx could have a harem, but the females of the race tended to be more aggressive and intelligent than their mates. Many sphinxes knew ancient lore that other races had forgotten. (The description of a particular, riddle-loving, sphinx can be found on p. 102 of *GURPS Greece*.)

All sphinxes can attack with their lion claws for 3d cutting damage. A ram-headed sphinx can charge into combat, inflicting 7d damage on the first attack as long as it has a chance to run for at least 20 feet to build up speed. Hawk-headed sphinxes can attack twice per round, once with claws for usual damage and once with their beaks for 3d. Human-headed sphinxes are often spellcasters. The Move and Dodge given above are for ground combat. In the air they flew with a Move of 20 and a Dodge of 10.

Typical advantages: Absolute Direction, Absolute Timing, Acute Senses, Mathematical Ability, Toughness, Strong Will.

Typical disadvantages: Bad Temper, Greedy, Impulsive, Laziness.

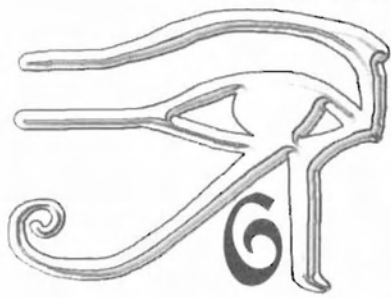
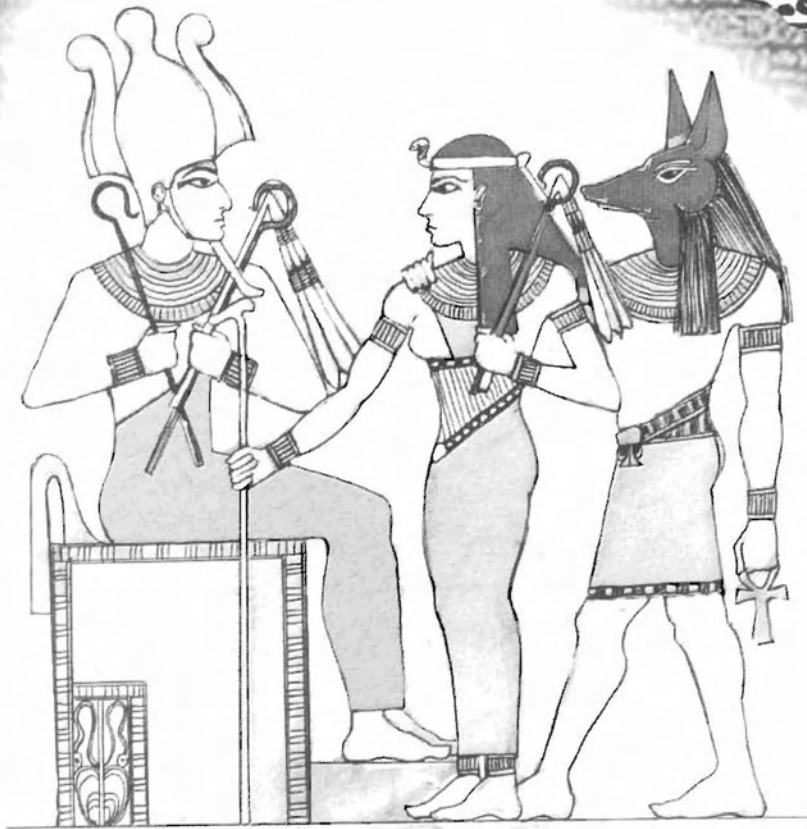
Typical Skills: Spells, Scientific skills.

Snake-Headed Vulture

ST: 10 **Move/Dodge:** 5/5 **Size:** 1
DX: 12 **PD/DR:** 0/0 **Weight:** 30 lbs.
IQ: 5 **Damage:** 2d **Habitats:** D, M
HT: 10 **Reach:** C

This being had the body of a vulture, with a cobra's neck and head. When a snake-headed vulture struck from the sky, it caused 3d damage on its first attack. A snake-headed vulture's bite causes 2d damage and injects venom which causes 1d damage, or 4d if the victim fails an HT roll.





REIGN OF THE GODS

Egyptian mythology went through considerable development in the 3,000 years of Egyptian history and the unrecorded centuries before that. The myths that have survived to the present day combine a number of earlier traditions into a semi-coherent whole, with a variety of creation myths followed by a succession of divine kings, the details dependent on which temple recorded which thread of the myth. Some of these stories (such as the hostility between Set and Horus) apparently mirror real-world events, and the names of some prehistoric pharaohs survive only in lists of the gods (see *The Ancient Kings*, p. 33).



IN THE BEGINNING WAS DISAGREEMENT

All ancient Egyptians believed that the universe was once a formless dark ocean known as Nun. At some point, a great serpent, Apep, appeared in Nun, hoping to keep the universe in a state of chaos forever. Aside from these basics, different Egyptian cities and their temples and priests had different creation myths.

Upper Egyptian worshippers of the ram-headed god Khnum maintained he shaped the world out of clay, just as he shaped the souls of mortals. Lower Egyptians claimed that Neith, goddess of weaving, wove the world on a great loom. Others credited Khepera with the creation (see sidebar), while the priesthood of the sun-god claimed that Ra created the universe while temporarily assuming Khepera's form. Osiris' cult said that Khepera was actually another name for *their* deity. A particularly widespread tale said that Isis gave birth to the universe.

The "official" Egyptian creation myth begins with Ptah, the god of art, wisdom and inspiration, and continues with a series of stories with Ra as a dominant god, followed by an Osiran cycle.

Ra's Children

Ptah spontaneously emerged from Nun and created the gods Ra, Atum, Amun and Mut. Ra and Atum went a step further and created new deities, possibly against Ptah's will. The decision to create them turned out to be wise, since Bast, one of Ra's children, became the only deity capable of keeping Apep from destroying all that Ptah had created, and Thoth provided the technical information necessary to put Ptah's ideas into action. With the help of his children and grandchildren, Ptah created the rest of the world.

Ra ruled as the first divine pharaoh, and invented most of the useful crafts and the concept of society.

The Birth of Nut's Children

As the universe developed, the earth-god Geb and Nut, the goddess of the heavens, developed a secret love for each other. Ra disapproved of their match, both because Nut was his wife and because he knew that Nut was capable of giving birth to new gods who could complicate the relationships among the existing gods.

Ra's prohibition couldn't keep the lovers apart, and soon Nut was pregnant with five children. Ra laid a curse on Nut, preventing her from giving birth to her children in any month of the year. Thoth had sympathy for Nut's case, and he decided to help her. He went to Khensu, the moon-god, and proposed a game of *senet*. Both deities played for high stakes and the god of knowledge won. Khensu paid his debt by giving Thoth the 70th part of his light. From that day onward, the Moon has waxed and waned, straining to stretch his remaining light over the entire lunar disk.

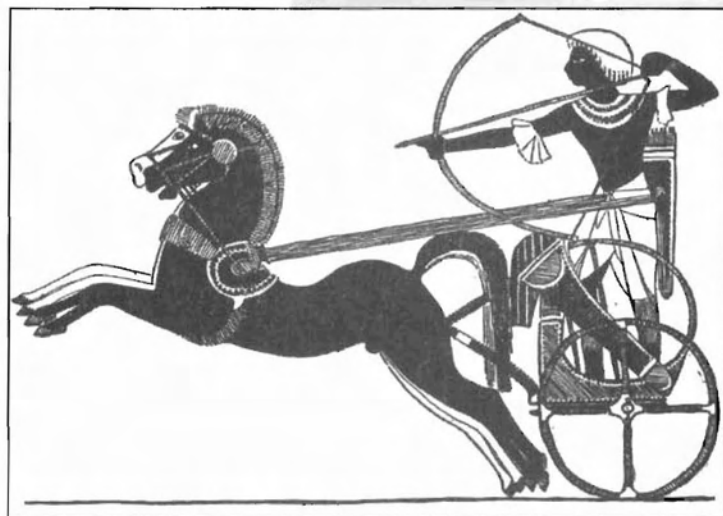
THE MYTH OF KHEPERA

Several of Egypt's creation myths feature the god Khepera. A manuscript written during the reigns of the first Ptolemies contains Khepera's own account of how he created the world:

"Heaven did not exist and earth had not come into being, and the things of the earth and creeping things had not come into existence in that place, and I raised them from out of Nun from a state of inactivity. I found no place whereon I could stand. I worked a charm upon my own heart. I laid a foundation in Ma'at. I made every form. I was one by myself. I had not yet emitted from myself the god Shu. I had not yet spit out from myself the goddess Tefnut. There was no other being who worked with me."

Khepera enumerated the myriad things which he created and explained that, even after he created the universe, an age passed in which his eye remained hidden behind impenetrable clouds. After an eternity the goddess Tefnut and the god Shu rose up out of the ocean Nun, took Khepera's eye out of his head, and placed it in the sky where it became the sun.

Upon losing his eye, Khepera cried and his tears became mortal men and women. Khepera then created another eye, the moon, for himself, while Shu and Tefnut went on to create a host of other gods.



A SELECTION FROM THOUSANDS

The following are some of the most prominent Egyptian gods. Certain divinities, such as Isis, are best known by their Greek names; the Egyptian names for such deities are listed in parentheses.

Amun: This god appeared as a man with a ram's head. In various myths Amun was the eldest god, and the ruler of the heavens. Since this role overlapped with that of Ra, the two deities often appeared in combined form (Amun-Ra). The cult of Amun was popular in the hinterlands of Egypt, where life was harsh, people were simple and the culture of the desert nomads mixed with that of Egypt. Amun's best-known aspects were wind, fertility and secrecy, although myths referred to him as being "rich in names" (i.e., spheres of influence).

Anubis (Anup): Anubis, appearing as a jackal-headed man, guided and protected the spirits of the dead.

Anhur: This four-armed war god was slow to anger but terrible when roused.

Apep: This primordial serpent wished to restore the chaos which existed before the universe came into being. Egyptians didn't worship Apep, but it had power equal to that of the gods.

Aten: The worship of this deity had its roots in the cult of Ra, but Atenism was a heresy that denied the existence of Egypt's other gods (see *Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten*, p. 51). Atenism was a philosophically demanding religion, which didn't give its god a personality or anthropomorphic form; Aten was simply the sun.

The Aten-cult expounded its own ideas about the afterlife, stating that when the sun rose, the souls of the dead rose with it and lived ghostly lives alongside the living. When the sun set, these spirits returned to their graves, and spent the night trapped in the dead flesh of their bodies.

Aten's worshippers probably had other superstitions and a comprehensive system of metaphysics, but orthodox Egyptian priests destroyed all record of these beliefs.

Bast (Bastet): This goddess appeared as a slim woman with the head of a lioness or cat. Bast was the goddess of cats, and had all the aloof grace which this implies. Both Bast and her worshippers were quick to seek their own pleasure, and the festivals of Bast often served as an opportunity for young people to meet and tryst.

Thoth used his newly-won light to add five extra days to the year which were not part of any month, giving Nut time to bear her children. On the five consecutive days Nut gave birth to Osiris, Heru-Ur, Set, Isis and Nephthys. After that, Ra ordered Shu, god of the sky, to place himself between Nut and Geb, so that the two could never produce children again.



Ra's True Name

The young Isis was clever, curious and ambitious. As a deity of magic, she learned the True Names of everything except for Ra himself. Isis would not let even the king of the gods keep a secret from her, so she bided her time until she saw Ra spit in the dirt. Isis gathered the wet earth, used this material to fashion a snake, and then placed the serpent along a path near Ra's celestial palace.

As Ra took his daily walk across the sky, the snake sprang out and bit him. Ra collapsed in agony, his bitten leg swelling to enormous size, his body paralyzed by the pain of a poison made from his own divine essence.

The sun god's servants carried their master back to bed and he sent for every god except the children of Geb and Nut whom he still distrusted and disliked. One by one, the gods tried to draw the poison from Ra's wound, but failed. At last, Ra allowed Isis to approach him and her incantations gave him some relief.

Isis claimed to know a technique that would restore Ra's health entirely, but she explained that she couldn't use that treatment unless she knew his True Name. First, Ra gave her abbreviated versions of his title. Although each of these explained some vital aspect of Ra's personality, none summed up the god's entire being, and Isis' spells remained only partially effective. At last, as the poison began to freeze Ra's heart, he relented and told Isis his True Name. She immediately cured him, as promised, but from that day on, she had even the king of the gods under the power of her magic.

Ra Destroys Mankind

As the eons passed, Ra became more and more removed from the affairs of mortals. Soon all of Ra's worshippers noticed the sun-god taking on the aspects of a senile human. The cults of other gods grew in influence and some implied that the sun-god's idols were mere statues.

Ra wasn't so infirm that he'd let such opposition go unpunished. He called a council of the gods, meeting in secret so that no mortal would know the result. The sun-god called upon the deities to support his decision to prove his power by smiting the blasphemers by turning his fiery eye upon the world, burning the disrespectful mortals to ash.

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With the approval of the assembly, Ra set to work punishing his detractors, but the mortals fled from his scorching gaze, taking refuge in the shadows of mountains. Raging, he decided to send his eye down into the world, so that it might destroy mortals where they hid. Ra selected his daughter Hathor for the task of destroying humanity; the myth doesn't record how the goddess of love felt about this command, but Ra was her beloved father and her sense of duty would have compelled her to obedience. Hathor merged with the war-goddess Sekhmet, and the combination of Love and War proved fierce beyond Ra's expectations.

Hathor-Sekhmet descended to Earth and destroyed a tenth of humanity. "At last, I have been mighty among mankind," Hathor told her father. "It is well pleasing to my heart." The avenging goddess continued to slay, until Ra feared that she would exterminate the human race. When she ignored his order to stop, Ra commanded his servants to bring 7,000 jars of barley beer, and to mix them with a sleeping draught.

Ra poured the drugged beer into the Nile, causing it to overflow its banks. When Hathor-Sekhmet saw the flood of beer, she realized how thirsty she was, and knelt to drink the liquid. Although Hathor was renowned in other myths for her skill at drinking, a river full of beer and sleeping potion was enough to put her in a stupor.

When morning came, Hathor and Sekhmet awoke as separate goddesses, exhausted and ashamed. Ra had proven his power, but after this episode nothing could restore the sun-god's influence. Therefore, Ra stepped down from his position as divine king, and the air-god Shu took his place.

Ra's Successors

Shu meant well but had neither Ra's prestige nor his power. Egypt lay in ruins from Hathor-Sekhmet's depredation, demons walked in the night and Apep stirred in the abyss, seeing an opportunity to rise and destroy the Earth. Geb, Shu's avowed enemy because the latter stood between Geb and his love, Nut, demanded Shu's abdication, asserting that Shu was allowing Ra to continue his misrule from behind the throne.

While Shu gave in to Geb's demands, Shu's wife, the lion-goddess Tefnut, refused to give up power easily. For nine days, Geb and Tefnut fought, sending tempests careening back and forth across the world. By the time Tefnut conceded to Geb, Ra had hidden the crown of heaven – as the sun-god stated, if the gods could not peacefully decide who should be ruler, none of them deserved the title.

Geb searched for the lost headdress, but when he found it he learned that Ra had imbued it with the heat of the sun, so that it burned whomever touched it. Geb suffered terrible burns, but took the pain as an omen, returning to the rest of the gods in a state of humility. Shu and Tefnut accepted Geb's attempts at reconciliation, and Geb took the throne as a wiser god, with the support of the Egyptian pantheon. Geb went on to subdue Apep, destroy the demons, and restore harmony to Earth.

A SELECTION FROM THOUSANDS (CONTINUED)

Bes: Arguably the ugliest of Egypt's gods, Bes was a bandy-legged dwarf with a bushy beard and distorted facial features, usually with his tongue sticking out to complete the image – some believe that Bes represented a southern African pygmy brought as a slave to an early pharaoh's court. Bes was the protector of pregnant women and newborn children, and knife-armed statuettes of him were found in many houses and most birthing rooms.

Geb: The god of the earth and the lover of Nut, the goddess of the heavens, eternally separated by Shu, god of the air. Geb appeared as a man with rich, earthy-brown skin, often depicted with a goose on his head or a golden crown.

Hathor: This deity appeared as a woman with a voluptuous body and the horns or head of a cow (or as a cow with a placid human face). Hathor was a deity of love, beauty and plenty, who loved to luxuriate in the pleasures of life. She was also a goddess of cattle, and had an air of bovine contentment about her.

Hathor had 12 daughters, all goddesses of prophecy.

Heru-Ur (Horus the Elder): A god of the sky and brother to Isis, Osiris and Set. Heru-Ur had the head of a falcon on the body of either a man or a lion.

Horus (the Younger): Horus appeared as a man with the head of a hawk. The stern son of Isis and Osiris, Horus was born in the days after Set slew his father for the first time (see *Set's Plan*, p. 114).

Isis (Eset): Isis appeared as a tall, slim woman. She was a goddess of ideas, who solved problems and thought of new things – one of her titles was "smarter than a million gods." When Set murdered her husband Osiris and most of the gods despaired, Isis tracked down each piece of his dismembered and hidden body, and when it proved impossible to find his phallus, she crafted an artificial substitute. Isis then invented the process of mummification, making it possible for Osiris to live again as god of the afterlife. Isis invented many of the social practices (such as the custom of marriage) and useful tools which the Egyptians valued.



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A SELECTION FROM THOUSANDS (CONTINUED)

The invention of many traditions of magic was also attributed to her. In her role as goddess of magic, Isis roamed the world of dreams, fighting off nightmares and sending her worshippers messages about things which would be useful in their lives.

Khnum: This ram-headed god molded unborn children in the womb.

Ma'at: Ma'at was a goddess of wisdom, and appeared either as a woman or a white ostrich feather. She was one of Ra's daughters, and bore the title "Eye of Ra." The principle of cosmic harmony that she represented (see *Good, Evil and Ma'at*, p. 26) was central to the Egyptian philosophy of life.

Min (Menu): This fertility god had numerous temples in southern Egypt. Lettuce was sacred to him, and Egyptians wore lettuce perfume to attract the opposite sex. The most constant aspect of his depictions was his erect phallus.

Mut: This fertility goddess appeared as a woman with a lioness or vulture head, and had a special interest in queens and other powerful women.

Neith (Nit): This goddess could appear as a slim woman with long hair, a cat or a spear. Neith served as the primary goddess of wisdom.

Nephthys (Nebt-Hut): Nephthys appeared as a woman or a bird of prey. She was a guardian of wealth and the dead and was a scourge to tomb-robbers. Although Nephthys was married to Set, she abandoned him after his murder of Osiris and helped her sister Isis resurrect the slain god.

Nut: Goddess of the sky, Nut was eternally separated from her true love, the earth god Geb, and was the mother of five of the younger gods. Nut was depicted as a slim woman with night-blue skin or as a cow with star-sprinkled skin.

Osiris (Ausare): As the god of growing things and the husband of Isis, Osiris was credited with the invention of farming, along with most other Egyptian industries and traditions. After his brother Set murdered him for the second time, Osiris became so attached to death that he took up the role of protecting the dead as well. Osiris dwelt in the realms of the dead and ruled there. He appeared as a human, usually bearing the crook and flail of a pharaoh and often mummified.

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OSIRIS: KING OF EARTH AND THE AFTERLIFE

Heeding the examples of Ra and Shu, Geb abdicated long before anyone tired of his reign. His son Osiris assumed the throne, becoming the most glorious pharaoh the world had known. Osiris devoted himself to improving the life of people on Earth, teaching mortal craftsmen techniques known only to the gods and introducing new ways of life, such as agriculture. Isis was an even greater inventor than her husband, and the mortals of those days recognized her as the most important of all the gods.

Soon, Isis and Osiris began to expand their influence. Foreign rulers came to Egypt, freely offering their kingdoms to the divine lord Osiris. Perhaps it was this which first roused Osiris' brother Set to jealousy. As a god of violence, Set could not bear the sight of his siblings achieving so much through kindness and understanding. Set began plotting against his brother, joining forces with Queen Aso of Nubia and 72 other mortal rulers.

Set's Plan

Isis warned Osiris not to trust Set, but since the divine pharaoh had no evil in his own heart, he could not comprehend the possibility of treachery from others. Therefore, when Set invited Osiris to a grand feast, the ruler of the gods did not hesitate to attend.

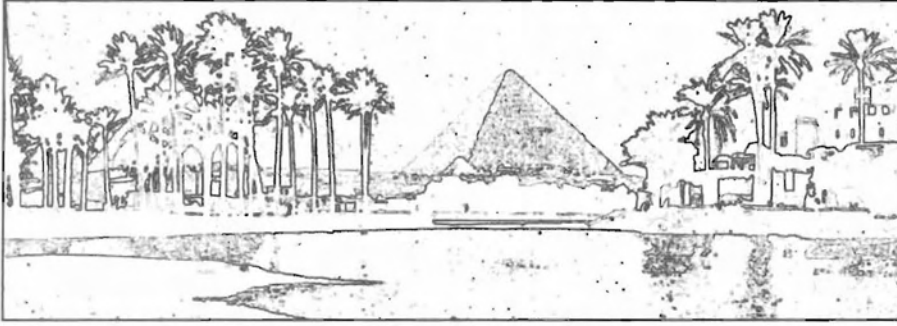
At the banquet, Set unveiled a fabulous chest, carved from precious woods and adorned with jewels. Set remarked that he would give the priceless box to anyone who would fit comfortably inside it. Each of the dinner guests tried to lie in the chest, but none was quite the right size or shape. At last, Osiris lay down in the box, and fit perfectly. Immediately, Set slammed the box shut, nailed down the lid and coated it with a thin layer of lead, so that there would be no leak where Osiris might escape. Then Set and the conspirators dumped the coffin in the Nile.



The Birth of Horus

With Osiris dead, there was nobody to stop Set from spreading his power across the world. Isis was in an advanced stage of pregnancy and was helpless to intervene. Isis had her baby in hiding, but knew that Set might discover her at any time. Feeling that she couldn't properly protect her child, Isis placed the baby Horus in a basket made of bulrushes and set him afloat on the Nile. Shortly thereafter, a mortal family found the god-child, and raised him as their own. Thus, Horus grew up thinking of himself as a mortal.





A SELECTION FROM THOUSANDS (CONTINUED)

Ptah: Ptah was a god of art, creativity and profound abstractions. He appeared as a bald man with deep blue skin. Worshippers of Ptah tended to be mystics.

Ra: Ra was arguably the most powerful god in the Egyptian pantheon. Each day, he guided a sacred barge through the sky and looked down at the world through his blazing eye, the sun. At night, his boat became a dark funeral barge, passing through the land of the dead to reach the eastern sky again the next morning.

Once in the distant past the sun god served as the implacable and occasionally harsh ruler of the universe, but he found mortal affairs tiresome and maintained an imperious distance between himself and humanity. Ra was depicted in many forms, notably those of a scarab beetle and a beetle-headed man with winged feathers upon his arms.

Set (Sutekh): Set was not born, but ripped himself from his mother Nut's womb and emerged as a god of war, snakes and the open desert. By murdering his brother Osiris, Set established himself as the god of the dark passions in every soul. The nomadic tribes who raided Egypt's frontiers, as well as many people in Lower Egypt, worshipped this god. Set appeared as a man with the head of an unidentified animal – Egyptologists have suggested donkey, camel, okapi and other animals but jackal is the most popular guess.

Set's religion appealed to lovers of violence. Although his worshippers occasionally held rank in the pharaoh's court and the temple held sway over a small number of pharaohs, most of his followers were seen as crude and arrogant men who followed the "might makes right" philosophy.

Priests called Set "the red god," and associated his color with evil. Most Egyptians viewed red-haired people with distaste, although a red-haired man with a devotion to Set would become one of Egypt's greatest pharaohs – Ramesses II. Scribes used red ink to write about tragic events. (See *Good, Evil and Ma'at*, p. 26, for more details on the role of evil in Egyptian theology.)

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The Search for Osiris

Isis then tried to recover her husband's body. No adult whom she asked could recall seeing Set dispose of the coffin, but a group of children playing on the riverbank told her that they had seen Set throw a huge lump of lead into the Nile. Isis was so grateful that she gave children throughout the world the gift of speaking truths that their parents had forgotten.

Given the starting point of the coffin's sea voyage, the goddess used magic to trace the path of the chest to the Phoenician city of Byblos. There, a great tree had sprung up, enclosing the box in its trunk. Melkart, the god-king of Byblos, had cut the tree down for use as a pillar in his palace.

Isis arrived at Byblos and, instead of immediately revealing herself, she became a wet nurse for the queen's young son. After she'd worked her way into the queen's confidences, the goddess told the queen everything. After recovering from her shock, she took pity on Isis and persuaded her husband to give Isis the pillar containing Osiris. Isis then removed her husband's corpse and took it back to Egypt. For many centuries the treasury of Byblos contained a mass of splinters said to be the pillar which once held Osiris' body.

Osiris' Second Death

Isis used sorcery to raise Osiris from the dead but their reunion was short-lived. Set now knew no limits to his power, and attacked them openly, killing Osiris once again, and then dismembered the god's body, spreading the pieces throughout Egypt. Isis set out to rescue Osiris from death a second time, roving from place to place in a papyrus boat searching for his body parts.

After years of searching Isis had reassembled Osiris except for one piece – a crocodile had devoured the dead god's phallus, forcing Isis to replace it with a wooden substitute. Without a complete body, Isis' magic couldn't resurrect Osiris again, so after two deaths and a dismemberment, Osiris became fully attached to the realm of the dead as its ruler while Set claimed rulership of the land of the living.

Horus the Avenger

Meanwhile, Horus grew to adulthood as a surpassingly strong and handsome young man. Upon discovering his divine identity, Horus vowed to destroy Set, whatever the cost to himself. For years, or perhaps centuries, Horus carried on a lonely campaign against the god who ruled the world.

Only Isis, Anubis, Thoth and Nephthys supported Horus in his struggle, and as he grew increasingly driven he lost even those few allies. The clash came when Isis, goddess of mercy, released some of the prisoners Horus had taken in battle. Horus flew into a rage and struck off his mother's head; because of Thoth's skills the wound wasn't fatal, but after this event Horus found himself completely alone.





A SELECTION FROM THOUSANDS (CONTINUED)

Shu: Shu, who appeared as a handsome man, was the god of the atmosphere, and one of his prime tasks was to keep Geb and Nut separated. Egyptian mythology painted Shu as a noble-spirited god, always ready to do his duty to Ra.

Taweret: The guardian of pregnant or birthing women, this goddess appeared as a hippopotamus standing erect, armed with a long knife and magic amulets of protection.

Tefnut: Lions were Tefnut's trademark, and she appeared as a woman with a lioness' head. As the goddess of water, Tefnut could be gentle at one moment and devastating the next, both moistening the crops and sending storms.

Thoth (Djehuty): Thoth represented accumulated scientific and mathematical knowledge. Although Thoth had three books which contained all knowledge of the universe, he kept them well-hidden and gave insights only to those who labored for them. This god appeared as either an ibis-headed man or a baboon.

THE MARRIAGE OF SET

Set was once married to Nephthys, the sister of Isis. She was ideally suited for him, as she symbolized decay, corruption and immobility. The Egyptians did not consider Nephthys a particularly frightening or "evil" goddess — she was a theological partner of Isis, and priestesses from the two temples regularly performed rituals together.

Isis and Nephthys shared wisdom, cunning and a strong sense of compassion. Although Nephthys was a goddess of death, she also represented the hope for spiritual immortality and was responsible for the souls of people who could not enter Tuat.

According to one legend, Set was impotent and Nephthys found her marriage frustrating. As Set grew increasingly obsessed with his hatred of Osiris, he treated Nephthys with less and less concern. To spite her husband, Nephthys talked Osiris into sleeping with her. Subsequently, she gave birth to Anubis, guardian of the dead. When Set murdered Osiris, Nephthys divorced him, and she, along with her son, were among the few deities who never faltered in supporting Isis.

Horus in Nubia

Seeking to isolate Set, Horus attacked Nubia, one of Set's principal allies. Horus began by assuming the form of Ra, and blasting Nubia with sunbeams. This attack left countless people blind, and the remainder of the Nubian troops slew one another in panic.

Horus then gathered a group of magic-armed mortal followers, the *Mesinu*, and sent them down the Nile to take possession of Nubia. (*Mesinu* means "workers in metal," suggesting that their "magic" weapons could have been copper or bronze used against a Stone

Age army.) Since most of

Nubia's troops were dead, Set transformed the remainder into hippopotami and crocodiles who attempted to overturn the boats of Horus' flotilla. Armed with

metal-tipped harpoons and formulas from the *Book of Slaying the Hippopotamus*, the *Mesinu* killed or captured Set's transformed followers with impunity.

Seeing the slaughter of his followers, Set appeared on the scene to rally them. Seeing Set's arrival, Horus rushed toward him and the two fought on the riverbank. During the horrific battle, Horus ran his spear through Set's throat, but instead of dying, Set berated Horus with such a stream of insults and magical curses that Thoth added a new epithet to Set's True Name; forever afterward, Set was known as the "Foul Mouthed." The single combat between Set and Horus ended in a draw, although Nubia fell under Horus' control.



The Trial of Horus and Set

Neither god was satisfied with the outcome; both continued to fight battles that scarred the land, sending armies of mortals against each other and meeting in person for great duels. At last, Ra summoned the gods to a council, warning them that, if the war went on unchecked, Horus and Set were capable of destroying the world. Therefore, the gods compelled the two enemies to settle their dispute through arbitration.

The trial of Horus and Set lasted for 80 years. Ra openly favored Set, while Set bolstered his position by threatening to treat those who sided with Horus as he had treated Osiris. Eventually, the council agreed to accept a judgment by Neith, the goddess of wisdom. Neith promptly selected Horus to be pharaoh.

Upon hearing the judgment, Set attacked Horus and the two fought a ferocious battle. When the two gods had beaten each other into a state where neither could carry on the fight, the other deities separated them and healed their wounds.

Through his courage, Horus had recovered the respect of Isis, Thoth, Anubis and Nephthys. Thoth suggested that the gods ask the opinion of Osiris, and Ra yielded to this suggestion. A furious Osiris condemned all the gods for standing by for so long while Set wreaked havoc in the world, and demanded that the deities honor Neith's decision.

Chastened by the god of the harvest and the dead, the other gods compromised. They confirmed Horus as pharaoh of the Black Land, Egypt, while Set became the lord of the Red Land, the deserts surrounding it. Centuries of direct divine rule were to occur before human pharaohs, the living incarnations of Horus, came to the throne.





Ancient Egypt is an ideal location for a campaign where the PCs' lives fit into the larger scheme of things. Not only do the laws and culture make it difficult for heroes to live as wandering freebooters, the "hack and slash" style of play wastes the roleplaying advantages of the setting. Egyptian adventurers know what they risk their lives for: the chance to *build* on their accomplishments, whether this means rising in the temple hierarchy or establishing a desert outpost where once there were only hostile nomads. In Egypt it was actually possible for a low-born man to work his way up to the peak of society, becoming vizier, the founder of a powerful family or even Pharaoh himself!

CAMPAIGN CROSSOVERS

Egypt's legendary riches, mysterious tombs, magical traditions, intellectual activity and strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean make it a prime setting for adventures in almost any genre or time period.

CURPS GREECE

When Greek civilization came into being, Egypt had already existed for millennia. There was a great deal of contact between these cultures – trade, the hiring of mercenaries, alliances, war (with the Greek component of the “sea peoples”) and eventually a Hellenistic dynasty ruling Egypt. Egyptian ideas influenced Greek thought on scientific, philosophical, religious and supernatural matters.

On a mythic level, the story of Atlantis (see *GURPS Places of Mystery*, pp. 7-17) originated in Egypt, and after the Trojan War the Greek hero Menelaus found himself stranded on the island of Pharos (location, almost 1,000 years later, of the Pharos Lighthouse; see p. 62) for weeks and had to wrestle with Proteus, a magical being with the ability to transform into any creature or form, to discover how to return to Sparta.

CURPS CHINA

Ancient Egyptians imported medicines and cosmetics from ancient China via the caravan route later called the Silk Road, passing through the hands of numerous middlemen. There are no records of an Egyptian explorer who traveled from Egypt to China, but if PC explorers undertake such a journey it would be epic.

In a campaign where magic or psionics allow direct communication across continents, Egypt and China understand the true scope of each others' realms and motives for such journeys would be easier to find. Both these empires evolved rich occult traditions, and sorcerers in either realm would like to learn the secrets of the other.

The heyday of ancient Egypt occurred during the Hsia, Shang and Chou dynasties, well before Chinese historical records became reliable. Although China had a civilization and empire then, the GM has a great deal of license to decide exactly what was going on in Asia.

LONG-TERM GOALS

The GM must pay special attention in designing the campaign background, because the characters need solid motivations for adventuring. This effort may save the GM labor in designing scenarios: the heroes' goals should suggest any number of individual missions.

A campaign shouldn't be based entirely on a quest that the PCs can solve in one quick step; if they have only to remove a corrupt official from the bureaucracy in order to solve their problem, the heroes will quickly find themselves left with nothing to do. Making the villain too powerful for the party to fight just changes the nature of the problem. Most players try to tackle problems head on, and when the GM makes the task suicidal, they soon become frustrated and their characters may soon become dead.

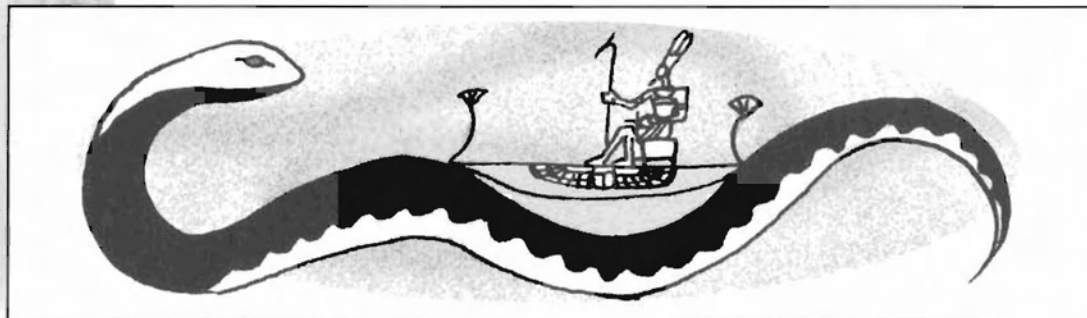
Instead, the GM should create a more general threat, so the heroes can have the satisfaction of defeating individual enemies without resolving the entire situation.

Whatever the player characters' personal goals, the GM must remember that the overall goal of all of Egypt, from Pharaoh down to the workers in the fields, is the restoration and maintenance of *ma'at*; peace, tranquillity and, above all, stability.

CAMPAIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The Game Master must decide how much to rely on Egyptian tradition, and how much to accept of contemporary fantasy. Modern writings have made Egypt a spooky, morbid place, but the historical Egyptians took almost the opposite point of view. An acceptable compromise between accuracy and adventure would allow such modern plot devices as animated mummies when used with a setting that remains as faithful as possible to the cultural details of ancient Egypt. This gives the players the horror-tinged setting they expect while allowing the GM to make full use of the historical material available here and in any library.

The GM must also decide the scale of the game. The adventurers can be mighty heroes, personal agents of Pharaoh or a god fighting for cosmic stakes with beings such as the serpent Apep, the embodiment of chaos that seeks only to destroy the world. Or the campaign can focus on relatively obscure people and events, giving PCs room to advance, facing challenges suited to beginning characters: lesser undead and supernatural beings, ambitious, corrupt or vindictive army, government or temple officials, foreign agents or enigmatic threatening oracles.





SPONSORS

Egypt was a society of organizations, and nearly every PC will have ties to a group that could sponsor an adventuring party's activities. The following are some of the most likely sponsoring organizations for an ancient *Egypt* campaign.

The Government Bureaucracy

Government officials at any level make obvious sponsors for heroic enterprises. The party might find itself acting as a special police force, working against thieves in the cities of the living and tomb-robbers in the cities of the dead. During periods of political intrigue, smuggling became common as private factions attempted to establish sources of income other than the government. Confronting smugglers could be an independent undertaking of concerned Egyptians or it could be a government-appointed task.

Adventurers could play roles in Egypt's foreign affairs. The most basic foreign-affairs task is a mission to fight one of Egypt's enemies: raiding desert tribesmen for a coherent party or a foreign army for unrelated PCs who could be conscripted into a larger military unit. The government could also license the PCs to trade, gather tribute, carry messages and perform espionage in other countries. In the south, such Egyptian special agents acted aggressively, since they were generally dealing with petty tribal kings who owed allegiance to Pharaoh. Envoys to established nations such as Syria and the Hittite Empire had to be clever and secretive; customs of diplomatic immunity were imperfectly applied in the ancient world.

The Temple Bureaucracy

Adventurers serving the temples undertake missions similar to those of government agents, plus those involving the supernatural, from the recovery of ancient relics to dealing with dangerous undead or other horrors.

The temples did not coordinate their activities with the government's, and servants of the temples could find themselves acting outside the law or at least the knowledge of the secular authorities. In periods of political uncertainty, or when a particular temple's power is in serious decline, the party's superiors will expect them to avoid trouble by keeping their activities discreet.

CURPS CLIFFHANGERS

Egypt is a staple of *Cliffhangers* adventures. Pulp heroes and their enemies routinely go in search of unopened tombs with great treasures, traps, animated mummies and stranger things. Egyptian curses dog them long afterward, and the resulting bad luck traps the victims in adventures until they undertake appropriate quests to lift the curses. Even with less emphasis on magic, Egypt makes a wonderful place for fighting fanatical tribesmen or rescuing explorers from the desert. The country is a magnet for Arabic swashbucklers, sneering slave-traders, experienced desert guides and European colonialists of all stripes.

CURPS HORROR

The Egyptian obsession with death makes Egypt a natural setting for horror adventures. An Egyptian theme is particularly appropriate in the Victorian era when Egyptology was a fashionable avocation for the British upper class. Archaeological exhibitions could unleash undead beings in foreign cities, eccentric academics could pursue an unhealthy interest in necromancy, and the souvenirs a tourist brings home from Egypt could spread a terrible curse in any era.

Ancient Egyptians didn't consider the dead menacing – when crafting a horror campaign, the GM must relate Egyptian beliefs to the terrifying things that the PCs will face. Perhaps the Egyptian cult of the dead was an exercise in denial in which mortuary priests created a comforting façade to conceal the shocking reality.

CURPS PLACES OF MYSTERY

Although Egypt's historical religious tradition was already rich and varied, modern enthusiasts couldn't resist adding to it, using Egyptian themes as the basis for new occult speculations. *Places of Mystery* discusses pyramid mysticism, pyramid power and other recent fringe theories concerning Egypt, as well as providing more information about Egypt's neighbors including Meroe (in Nubia), Petra and ancient Palestine.





CURPS ESPIONAGE

Although modern Egypt cannot match the other oil-producing countries of the Middle East for sheer wealth, Egypt's population, armed forces, relatively modern economy and control of the Suez Canal make it one of the strongest players in the Middle East. In the last 50 years Egypt has gone from being a sometimes ally of Great Britain to a key supporter of the Soviet Union to a friend of the USA, all the while asserting its political independence.

Foreign spies sometimes find themselves simply trying to guess where Egypt's loyalties lie and entertaining hopes of influencing Cairo, subtly or through threats and political assassinations.

Internally, Egypt faces a continual threat from Islamic fundamentalists who oppose its secular government. The proximity of revolutionary Algeria and Libya increase the danger of terrorism and insurrection.

From an intelligence-gathering standpoint, the Suez Canal offers a convenient spot to count, identify and photograph foreign ships. Strategically, the Canal would be a chokepoint in any war involving a European and an Asian power.

Significantly, China has set itself up as an arms supplier to Egypt. China has also attempted to arrange cooperative ventures in military research and development with Israel. If another Arab-Israeli war breaks out, China may hope to emerge as a mediator and influence the outcome of the dispute.

CURPS ARABIAN NIGHTS

For most of the Islamic era, Egypt was an important player in Middle Eastern politics, whether as the pawn of Arabic or Turkish rulers, or as the seat of rebellions to overthrow these leaders. When the Arabs took over Egypt, Arabic folklore (with its emphasis on djinn and demons) and other outside influences displaced the monsters of Egyptian tradition with those of the deserts of North Africa and the Arabian peninsula.



Minor Temples

The temples of Egypt's minor gods had a different flavor from that of the national hierarchy. Minor cults often involved a bit more fervor and oddity and were likely to be in direct communion with their gods, or at least to claim that they were. This could inspire them to sponsor quests for all sorts of treasures or mystic knowledge their gods desire, without providing their agents with the protection from the government that the larger temples did. The deity's goals could be as simple as giving a town better access to the Nile floods or as lofty as spreading a new philosophical doctrine throughout Egypt.

The Worshippers of Set

Set's worshippers play a variable role in *Egypt* campaigns. Historically, Set's cult was just one of many struggling for dominance in Egypt's religious politics, little different from the cults of the other official state religions: Osiris, Ra, Horus and Amun. But when the history was rewritten after the fact by the cults that replaced Set's (and again, much later, in modern horror novels) the worship of Set became tinged with a wholly un-Egyptian concept: evil. Thus in historical campaigns, Set's worshippers should be treated the same as any other major temple's. In a fantasy *Egypt* campaign, things will be a little different.

The fantasy version of Set's temple would sponsor crime, political sedition and research into the less savory kinds of magic. Set's worshippers would conspire to snatch magical artifacts away from the priests of more respectable deities.

The cult would always be trying to increase its political influence with Pharaoh but, except for the eras when Set's worship was ascendant, Set's followers will not have the Legal Immunity advantage.





Secret Societies

Members of these cults were typically obsessed with gaining more and deeper knowledge of things occult. This thirst for knowledge could involve alchemical experiments, invocations to forgotten gods or searches for lost books of lore, but the usual way to obtain such knowledge was to locate others with the information and induce them to reveal their knowledge.

Secret societies also devoted considerable energy to protecting their own secrets, and to accumulating material resources. Megalomaniacal members of these societies might wish to dominate the temples or even Pharaoh, out of a lust for power or because they sincerely believe that they possess the answers to the great questions of mankind.

Criminal Gangs

Instead of being part of one of Egypt's hierarchies, the PCs could set themselves in opposition to these organizations – they could be criminals. They will have to maintain cover occupations, due to Egypt's passport system, and will find it difficult to fence stolen items except by forming ties to established gangs of thieves. Therefore, criminal campaigns often involve underworld rivalry and struggles for power.

ADVENTURES

The Abou

This adventure is set in a time when ancient Egypt had at least nominal control of lower Nubia. The story begins when the heroes are commissioned to serve as an irregular company under Akhmet-Sa, a commander of chariots near the Nubian border. Akhmet is responsible for collecting tribute from the local tribes, and he pursues this activity with vigor. Recently, a group of tribal warriors called the Abou have begun ambushing Akhmet's men, and the local nomarch hopes that a small group of skilled fighters can track down and eliminate this threat.

When the PCs arrive in the region they discover a series of little villages where people live in an imperfect but sincere attempt to replicate the culture of northern Egypt. Akhmet is a dashing, jovial fellow, who freely rewards his "specialists" with food, drink and gold. The chariot commander is a rare Egyptian who enjoys the thrill of combat and finds the necessity of extending Pharaoh's empire a happy excuse for pursuing his avocation. Akhmet isn't sadistic, but it's not uncommon for him to burn farmhouses, confiscate a tribe's cattle or execute a few warriors to teach a local tribe a lesson.

Abou warriors live in the villages during the day, and assemble at night to take revenge for Egyptian offenses. The party may have some success in using decoys to ambush the ambushers, but there are too many Abou for adventur-

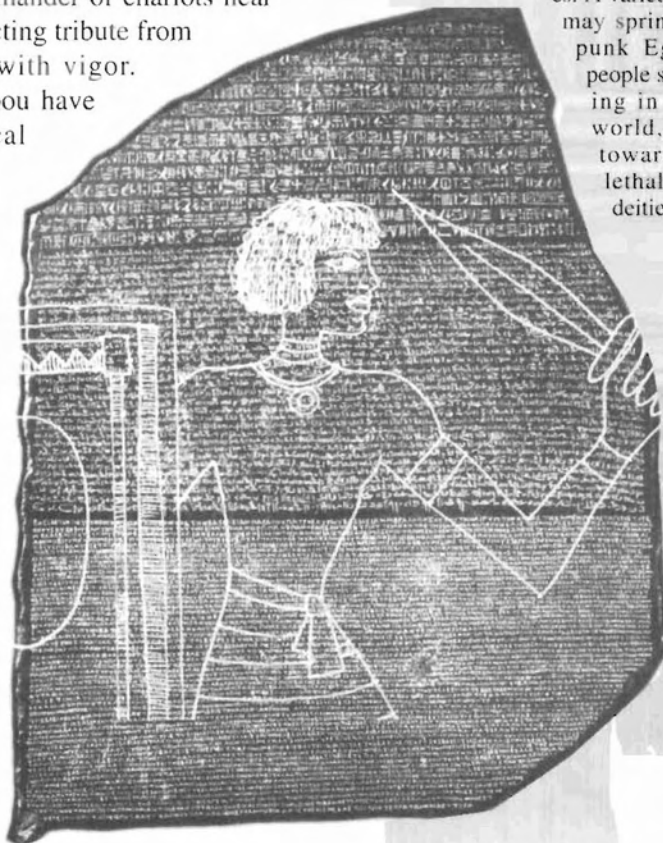
CURPS CYBERPUNK

If the campaign involves magic or Illuminati-style conspiracy, Egypt's role is obvious. In a game emphasizing the technology of the dark future, Egypt's control of the Suez Canal takes precedence.

In the future, Egypt's legacy becomes a matter of pure commercialism. There will be pharaonic theme parks and virtual reality, allowing tourists to battle animated mummies and explore Hollywood versions of the ancient tombs. The real pyramids will return to their original purpose, as ultra-wealthy executives seek places to be buried in appropriate splendor. Meanwhile, the streets of Cairo become indistinguishable from those of Los Angeles, Kobe, Singapore or Berlin.

The expansion of the "global village" will strand the semi-rural Egyptians in a world they find horrifying. Future Egypt is likely to contain whole clans of homeless people with little hope of finding jobs, who see the new society as a symbol of sin. The corporate governors may re-settle, brainwash or exterminate this population, or the displaced may become bandits, smugglers and revolutionaries.

Religious fanaticism may play a large role in a cyberpunk campaign. Extremists can form terrorist organizations of their own, but corporations may manipulate zealots for their own purposes. A variety of exotic cults may spring up in cyberpunk Egypt as jaded people search for meaning in a dark future world, gravitating toward the most lethally fashionable deities such as Set.



THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN





CURPS FANTASY

An Egyptian land on Earth, Yrth, or another world offers fantasy adventurers an interesting and somewhat familiar place to visit. GMs may wish to modify Egyptian culture to reflect the possibilities of a fantasy world, for instance, giving the land a level of magical "technology" well above the standard for the game world because of the stability of Egyptian civilization and the prevalence of professional sorcerers there.

He must also decide how fantasy Egyptians view the undead. If they accept the once-living as citizens, free-willed undead from throughout the world might flee to Egypt. They might eventually grow so numerous that Pharaoh could identify them as a threat and take harsh measures against them . . . assuming of course, that he is powerful enough to master them.

If other countries view the undead as abominations, Egypt may be a target for crusades. Given the Egyptian priesthood's interest in complex theological theories, a holy war of this nature could spawn a clash of rival ideas and magical traditions as well, with extremist sects and heresies on each side.



ers to defeat this way. Furthermore, although the villagers appear docile, most are Abou sympathizers, including the servants in Akhmet's fortress; unless the PCs act in complete secrecy, the Abou are likely to know their plans. If the party becomes too successful, the Abou may attempt assassinations.

To subdue the Abou, the party must either identify and eliminate the guerrilla leaders, members and sympathizers (a time-consuming process) or address the social conditions allowing this movement to flourish. The nomarch might be willing to replace Akhmet with a more palatable commander, which would, of course, make Akhmet furious.

The Abou call on an aspect of Set to protect them, drawing his symbol near the sites of their operations. This may lead the PCs to believe that they're dealing with a cult, rather than a resistance movement. In some campaigns, the Abou may have magical capabilities as well.

The Nefertep Dynasty

This adventure can take place at any point in ancient Egyptian history. It begins with the death of Nefertep, a priestess of Bast noted for her beauty and wealth. Nefertep has three surviving daughters, all hoping to claim her inheritance. Nefertep's will has vanished and the temple of Bast orders the adventurers to find and enforce the will.

The claimants live in the priestess' villa and are underfoot as the party searches. They may overhear the second daughter, Tefamen, having several fierce arguments with the youngest, Menetes. They disagree over what jewelry should go into their mother's tomb, Tefamen accusing Menetes of trying to keep the best pieces for herself. The charges are untrue, but Menetes has a saucy, defiant personality, and responds to the charges, not by denying them, but by taunting her sister into greater heights of rage. An eavesdropper may hear the siblings threaten to kill each other, although neither actually intends to commit murder.

The truth of the matter is that Isotep, the eldest, tore up the real will and threw it down a well. Only a few servants guess what happened and they are either in Isotep's pay or terrified of her. Isotep seems quite shocked by her mother's death and spends much of her time overseeing the embalming rites. The priestess and her eldest daughter were estranged after Isotep's marriage to the son of one of Nefertep's old rivals – the real will didn't mention Isotep at all. In the absence of a will, Egyptian law says, "Let the possessions be given to him who buries," and Isotep intends to ensure her share of the inheritance by playing the role of the dutiful daughter now.

Isotep is greedy and ruthless, but skilled at maintaining a façade of piety. If she believes that the investigators might discover her crimes, she will try to kill them, either by bribing strong servants to serve as assassins or by poisoning their food.

In a campaign with working magic, divine intervention or just a "high coincidence rate," Nefertep's huge gray cat, Eyelash, knows what happened, and may try to lead adventurers to the well.

Thief Upon the Sand

This fantasy adventure begins when a charming magician named Jostep murders a priest of Thoth and steals a sacred book listing the True Names of desert spirits. The temple guards pursued the wizard into the desert, but once outside the city walls, Jostep used the book to summon a sandstorm demon and drive them off. Temple authorities direct the adventurers to track down Jostep and recover the book.





After venturing into the desert, the party may be able to pick up Jostep's trail across the sand. However, this leads them into the territory of the Bedouin. Two rival tribes wander in this area, the Horeb and the Braazal. Either may try to rob the party, but if the PCs are brave and respectful, they may convince a sheikh to accept them as guests.

Long ago, Jostep saved the life of a Horeb prince and that tribe owes him a debt of gratitude. The magician is living with them, using his sorcery to dominate their young sheikh. If he learns of the PCs and their mission, he sends tribal assassins against them. Jostep can also summon desert demons to aid these forces. However, the party may attempt to disguise its purpose and infiltrate this tribe.

The Braazal dislike the Horeb and gladly help the heroes against them. If the adventurers make contact with this tribe, they can gain information about the numbers, habits and location of the Horeb. The PCs may even persuade the Braazal to stage a cattle-stealing raid against the Horeb. Although this distraction may help the adventurers seize Jostep, it may also alert the Horeb warriors. Furthermore, Jostep remains a powerful magician, and he devotes his efforts to destroying the party, not defending the cattle.

Orkaht's Tomb

In this fantasy adventure, priests of the mortuary cult suddenly summon the adventurers for an immediate expedition into the tomb of an ancient sorcerer. Robbers have just broken into the tomb and the PCs must descend into the tomb at once to stop the robbers before they can escape. If the thieves escape with their booty, the sorcerer Orkaht is likely to send undead servitors to seek revenge, and the matter could run out of control.

The robbers are using an amulet that allows them to walk through solid stone. Although the device has a limited number of charges, they have bypassed the most dangerous traps, leaving them for the party to contend with. If the thieves end up fighting the party, they may use the amulet to escape or to maneuver to attack from behind. Fortunately, the amulet doesn't have enough charges to get the users out of the tomb entirely.

The longer this mission takes, the greater the chance that Orkaht's undead guardians will awaken. These beings have been dead for so long that they make few distinctions among the living, and are as likely to attack the heroes as the robbers.

After the robbers escape or are captured, some questions may arise. How did the priests of the mortuary cult find out about the robbery so quickly? And why didn't they, with their magic and divine protection, move to combat the thieves themselves?

CURPS ILLUMINATI

The very symbol of the Illuminati, the eye in the pyramid, suggests Egypt. Either Egypt was the birthplace of the conspiracy or someone has gone to considerable trouble to make people suspect that it was. Rosicrucians trace their beliefs to the cult of Osiris, and Hermes Trismegistus, the mythical founder of the Western alchemical tradition, purportedly lived in Egypt.

In *Illuminati* campaigns the heroes may seek answers to the following questions: Why were Egyptians so concerned with preserving corpses? What was the reason for Egypt's decline and fall? Who really built the pyramids, and why? Did Egyptians have contact with beings from outer space? Why did Pharaoh Akhenaten try to abolish Egypt's old religion, and did he really fail? What really happened to Napoleon during his invasion of Egypt? Why did Tutankhamun's tomb survive virtually untouched until the 20th century, and how did Howard Carter stumble upon it?

CURPS IMPERIAL ROME

Julius Caesar and Mark Antony each had celebrated love affairs with Cleopatra. Antony's affair ended in the battle of Actium, which forced Egypt into the Roman Empire.

Egypt offers a place for Roman adventurers to explore and politicians to use as a power base, and it can also become a breeding ground for anti-Roman sentiment.

CURPS RIVERWORLD

The Egyptians would see the Riverworld as the afterlife promised by their religion. In fact, if Osiris was actually a historical figure predating the earliest known pharaohs, he may be an active figure by the River: he might not resemble the god as depicted after millennia of myth-making, but it would be him. The biggest shock to Egyptians would be discovering that their ideas about taking wealth into the afterlife were all wrong.





CURPS SPACE

Believers in UFOs have long claimed that aliens helped build the pyramids. Certainly, Egyptian society could have accepted contact with a highly technological race and absorbed the details of such meetings into its theology.

Alien visitors could be brought into an existing ancient Egyptian campaign, or Egyptian artifacts discovered in the near future could provide clues to extraterrestrial visits, and might even contain working samples of alien technology. Adventurers may also discover that Egyptian culture existed on other planets.

CURPS SUPERS

Ancient Egyptian rituals have often been used to explain how certain characters acquired their extraordinary powers, and in a campaign based on Egyptian myth, *Supers* may be a useful source of advantages and disadvantages for undead characters or creatures of semi-divine origin.

Superhero characters can operate in an Egypt like that described in the sidebars on *Cliffhangers*, *Horror* and *Space*.

CURPS TIME TRAVEL

As an advanced country in the distant past, Egypt offers a tempting destination for time-travelers. Cross-time travel offers a new twist to tomb-robbing, but the curses of the pharaohs might pursue thieves even across the eons. Alternatively, Egypt's gods could have been time-travelers, and Egyptian magic may have been no more than advanced technology. Even without aliens and magic, Egypt was a major (although isolated) power in the ancient world, and changes to Israelite, Roman and Greek history could be made indirectly by manipulating affairs in their neighbor.

The Serpent's Lair

In this fantasy scenario, Bukemet, one of Pharaoh's sons, has fallen into a coma. Physicians can find nothing wrong with him, but when the priestesses of Isis examine him, they state that something has taken the *ba* from his body. From the stench in the royal bedchambers and the patterns in the prince's horoscope, they determine that a great serpent named Tumht is the culprit. The adventurers are ordered to defeat Tumht and save Pharaoh's son.

Since Tumht has a legendary horde of treasure, this is an potentially rewarding quest. By following maps in certain ancient tomes, the party can locate Tumht's lair, deep in the western desert. Along the way, they meet an old beggar woman. In staging this event, the GM should take care not to make the encounter seem significant, by having the beggar appear during a period when the players aren't taking the game seriously or by including this encounter among others of greater and lesser apparent import.

When the adventurers enter Tumht's lair, they find themselves in the Twelve Hours of Night (see p. 101), the horrific tunnels that Ra passes through nightly. If they defeat the serpent, they must then escape the caverns. Unfortunately, the heroes cannot exit the Twelve Hours the same way they entered; they must continue through the entire underworld until they reach the exit on the eastern horizon. If the party treated the beggar woman well, they discover that she was an incarnation of the goddess Hathor, who leads them toward safety.

Scholars' Mousetrap

This adventure can take place at any time in the New Kingdom except during the reigns of the heretical Aten-worshipping pharaohs. It begins when party members wish to obtain spells, develop psionic abilities, or learn some other mystic art; magic doesn't have to actually function in the campaign for the scenario to work. The Academy of Cumot, a magic institute, invites the adventurers to enroll. Like many such schools, the Academy requires an initiation ritual, oaths of secrecy and other rites.

Upon entering the Academy, the party meets several wise teachers, all of whom are elderly. If the students demonstrate any promise, they come to the attention of Kut, an arrogant and domineering sorcerer who has the job of recruiting magicians into a secret society dedicated to overthrowing Egypt's temple hierarchy so that "pure knowledge" can prevail over religion. Kut has many loyal followers, and they make life miserable for any who defy them.

Kut is merely a spokesman for a more widespread, more secretive movement. Followers of the monotheistic Aten religion have infiltrated the scholarly community of wizards, and are using the language of science to attack traditional theology. An Aten-worshiper named Maht quietly runs the Academy, and picks instructors to serve his interests. A few older scholars remain, but Maht has undermined their influence.

If the adventurers accept Kut's offer, the GM should begin a series of scenarios in which they fight against the temples. Most PCs will turn down Kut's offer, which will force them to fight Kut, and may eventually bring them face-to-face with Maht and his forces. The adventurers may be able to call on the loyal older instructors for help in this battle.





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GLOSSARY

Ankh: A cross with a loop on top. The symbol of life.

Apis: A sacred bull, believed to be the living incarnation of Osiris.

Book of Coming Forth By Day: A series of incantations designed to ensure the dead a happy life in the underworld, found in the form of papyrus scrolls or painted on the walls of tombs.

Demotic: The simplest form of Egyptian writing, used in correspondence, informal records and some texts.

Djed: "Spine." A pillar symbolizing the spine of Osiris with ritual significance.

Hellenistic: Foreign cultures based on Greek traditions following the time of Alexander the Great.

Hieratic: A form of shorthand hieroglyphics used for government records and other important documents.

Hieroglyphics: The oldest and most elaborate form of Egyptian writing, used in tombs and on temple and monument inscriptions.

Hyksos: "Lords of the Desert." Barbarians who ruled Egypt from 1663 B.C. to 1555 B.C. as the XVth Dynasty.

Isfret: Chaos and disruption; the condition of the cosmos before the creation of the world, and the feared consequence of a time without a pharaoh.

Khopesh: A sickle-shaped Egyptian sword.

Ma'at: A moral concept of truth, righteousness, order and stability. *Isfret* was the absence of ma'at.

Mastaba: An early form of tomb, which resembled an ordinary stone house with a burial chamber underneath.

Nilometer: A device for measuring the height of the Nile, thereby determining the ideal time to plant crops.

Nome: A Greek word for an Egyptian *hesput*, "province." The ruler of a nome was a nomarch.

Paut: An inky fluid used to inscribe magical writings.

Pharaoh: A deity combining aspects of Horus, Ra and other gods. The king (or queen) of Egypt was considered a physical manifestation of Pharaoh.

Rosicrucians: A secret society dedicated to the study of mental discipline. The Rosicrucians played a large role in medieval alchemy, and influenced the Freemasons. According to historical

sources, the Rosicrucian order appeared in the German principalities near the end of the 16th century. The Rosicrucians claim that Pharaoh Thutmose III founded their order by 1450 B.C.

Serdab: A secret chamber in a *mastaba* that contained a statue of the occupant, placed there so that it could assume the vital functions of the body if the body was destroyed.

Tuat: The portion of the underworld where Osiris had his kingdom. As long as a dead person could maintain both a *ba* and a *khat* he could live a normal afterlife in Tuat.

Twelve Hours: A dangerous, mysterious region beneath Tuat where the sun passed during the night.

See also *Names*, p. 85.





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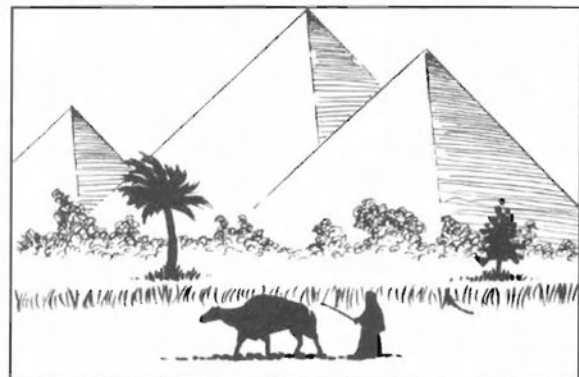
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RULERS OF THE WORLD

No one rebels against me in all lands.
All foreign lands are my subjects,
He placed my border at the limits of heaven . . .

The Egyptians knew that their land was the center of all things.
Their priests and wizards were the wisest, their cattle were the fattest,
and Pharaoh, child of the gods, was the earthly protector of order.
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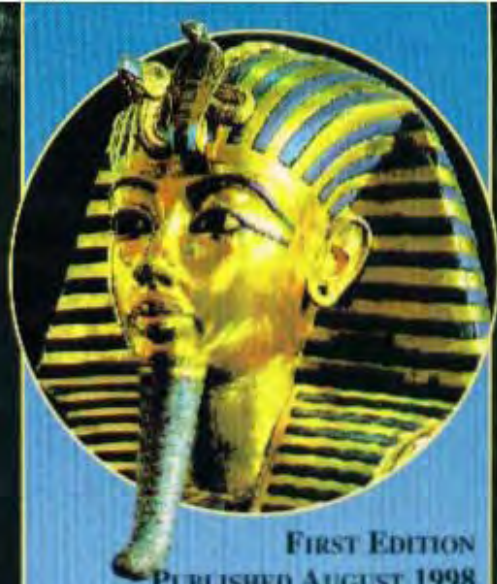
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. . . My reward from my father
is my sovereignty,
On the Horus throne
of all the living,
eternally like Re.



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