

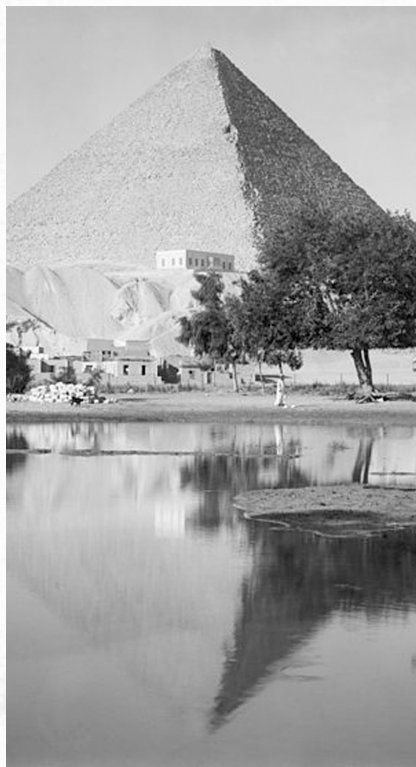
# TOMB-HOUNDS OF EGYPT



**KENNETH HITE**  
**TRAIL OF CTHULHU**

  
Pelgrane Press





## TOMB-HOUNDS OF EGYPT

Publisher: Cathriona Tobin

Author: Kenneth Hite

Artwork: Melissa Gay

Layout: Cathriona Tobin

# KEN WRITES ABOUT STUFF

Tomb-Hounds of Egypt is part of the *Ken Writes about Stuff* subscription series, featuring new and original Hite goodness every month for twelve months. A subscription costs \$24.95 and as well as giving you a generous 30% discount on the individual article price of \$2.95 or more, we'll be offering an exclusive extra later in the year to all subscribers.

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# Tomb-Hounds of Egypt

"GOD! ... IF ONLY I HAD NOT READ SO MUCH EGYPTOLOGY BEFORE COMING TO THIS LAND WHICH IS THE FOUNTAIN OF ALL DARKNESS AND TERROR!"

- H.P. LOVECRAFT, "UNDER THE PYRAMIDS"

## INTRODUCTION

The Depression has hit Egypt, too. Funding for major expeditions has dwindled; minor expeditions have almost dried up. Formerly, Egyptologists could look forward to recouping their costs by selling half their finds overseas, to museums or collectors. Now, however, the increasingly nationalistic Egyptian government pressures the Service of Antiquities to keep all such new-found ancient treasures in the country.

But the European and American market for Egyptian antiquities remains, stoked to ever-higher heat by Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamen's golden tomb in 1922. With fewer expeditions guarding and excavating the tomb sites, and fewer artifacts coming onto the legitimate market, real opportunities have opened up. Those who know enough Egyptology to know where to dig, and who know enough shady dealers to know how to sell what they dig up, can name their own price for a spectacular item. Of course, there's always that little matter of a curse – but no true tomb-hound lets the possibility of a curse interfere with the certainty of a profit.

Wonderful things await -- all you need is a map and a bullwhip.

## YOUR TOMB-HOUND

"BESIDES, HE WAS GETTING OLD, AND AFTER A SCORE OF YEARS IN EGYPT ALL ARCHAEOLOGISTS ARE A

LITTLE MAD. ... OVER ALL IS AN AIR OF FORBIDDEN THINGS LONG DEAD, AND IT CREEPS INTO THE BLOOD."

-- ROBERT BLOCH, "THE OPENER OF THE WAY"

Create your Tomb-Hound as a standard *Trail of Cthulhu* Investigator. Plenty of chases and terrifying scrapes in underground catacombs lie in wait for him, so leave General Abilities at 65 build points.

The most common nationalities for Tomb-Hounds are British, Egyptian, or French, but any Mediterranean or Balkan national could easily wash up in Egypt after the Great War or while preparing for the next. Americans, Germans, Irish, exiled White Russians, even Chinese – pulpish, polyglot Cairo can feature them all. By the 1930s, female and Egyptian archaeologists are uncommon but hardly unknown. Tomb-Hounds needn't be stuffy Englishmen or even scruffy American men.

## Occupations

The most common Occupations for Tomb-Hounds are Antiquarian, Archaeologist/Egyptologist, Criminal, Dilettante, Military (probably cashiered or retired), or Pilot (who may have a boat instead of a plane). A corrupt Police Detective comes in very handy, but can easily be an NPC. The Forger and Occultist occupations from *Bookhounds of London* also make very plausible Tomb-Hounds.

Tomb-Hounds may also choose from two new Occupations:

### Reis

The foreman of the dig, the fixer of all matters native and local, you play the crucial role of intermediary between oblivious or imperious Europeans and desperate or devious Egyptians.

**Occupational Abilities:**

Archaeology, Assess Honesty, Athletics, Bargain, Bureaucracy, Intimidation, Languages, Preparedness, Streetwise

**Credit Rating:** 3-5

**Special:** Once per adventure, you know someone who can do that thing, provide that tool, sail that felucca, remember that rumor, even cast that spell. This is the fixer's equivalent of the Antiquarian special ability, but rather than "an item back in the shop" it's "a person in Egypt." You only have to use Interpersonal abilities if you're trying to convince your contact to endanger themselves; otherwise, they owe you a favor and follow through regardless of Credit Rating.

A gifted interlocutor between West and East, you never need to spend extra points (*ToC*, p. 169) for Interpersonal ability use across cultural or racial lines in games using that rule.

### Smuggler

You specialize in moving things across borders or checkpoints without unduly troubling the authorities.

**Occupational Abilities:** Bargain, Conceal, Forgery, Outdoorsman, Riding, Sense Trouble, Streetwise, either Driving or Piloting

**Credit Rating:** 2-4

**Special:** Use the Criminal special ability (*ToC*, p. 13), especially for your



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Conceal tests. You can adjust your Conceal result while being observed by customs officials, border guards, or other interfering types.

You begin the game with either a truck (Driving) or boat (Piloting), of unprepossessing appearance and hidden depths.

### Drives

The most likely Drives for Tomb-Hounds are Adventure, Antiquarianism, Curiosity, Follower, Scholarship, and Thirst for Knowledge – but In the Blood and Sudden Shock no doubt have their place among the pyramids and tunnels.

The Greed Drive from p. 12 of *Bookhounds of London* is even more apropos here.

### Abilities

For the very specific “fish in someone else’s water” feel of 1930s Egyptian adventure, use the rule on p. 169 of *Trail of Cthulhu* requiring an Interpersonal spend for interactions between strangers of different races. It’s up to the Keeper how many race lines to draw besides the overarching “Westerners” vs. “Egyptians” – Jews and Greeks, for example, also counted as “separate races” to most people of the era.

Some *Trail of Cthulhu* abilities drift a bit in the sands and souks of Egypt.

**Archaeology:** Also, of course, covers organizing and running a dig.

**Art:** Forgers and similar may wish to specialize, especially in Sculpture or Jewelry.

**Bargain:** This ability covers bribes. You may bribe anyone susceptible (which is most people in this setting) of your own Credit Rating or of one level lower. Bribing further down requires a spend. These same rules apply to bribes using Streetwise.

**Conceal:** Used to spot traps in tombs when you expect to find them. Difficulty is 4, abstractly modified by the skill of the trap-builder.

**Craft:** Like Art, forgers may wish to load up rating points to gain specialties: Ceramics, Metalwork, Papyrus-Making,

**Credit Rating:** In the hothouse environment of the colonies, a Westerner of Credit Rating 4-6 can mingle with other Westerners at Shepherd’s or other hotels and resorts as though they were of the same Credit Rating. (Balkan or Levantine Investigators don’t count as Western for this purpose.) Credit Rating 7+ types still know their own.

**Forgery (ToC, p. 212):** This ability plays a major role in the setting, and can be used to forge artifacts or antiquities as well as papers or books. It is available to Criminals as an Occupational ability.

**Languages:** The primary language in Egypt is Arabic, although English, French, Greek, and Turkish are not uncommon. Jews (80,000 in Egypt, almost entirely in Cairo and Alexandria) mostly speak Arabic but read and write Hebrew. The Coptic language is nearly extinct; Coptic Christians mostly speak Arabic or Greek. For the dramatic purposes of this setting, Arabic includes all forms and dialects of spoken and written Arabic, Greek includes Byzantine and Classical Greek, and all ancient Egyptian languages and scripts (Demotic, Middle Egyptian, Old Egyptian, hieratic, hieroglyphic, etc.) fall under Ancient Egyptian.

**Sense Trouble:** Used to spot traps in tombs when you don’t expect to find them, or when you’re in a hurry. Difficulty is 5 (normal) or 6 (in a hurry), abstractly modified by the skill of the trap-builder.

**Weapons:** A bullwhip does -1 damage. Using a bullwhip to pull yourself up out of a chasm, catch yourself before falling in, or grab an idol or knife switch is also a Weapons test, although kindly Keepers may let you spend Athletics on it.

### New Ability: Egyptology (Academic)

To avoid over-burdening Tomb-Hounds with too many “mandatory” Investigative abilities, this setting includes the “catch-all” Academic ability Egyptology.

Egyptology covers those aspects

of Archaeology, Art History, History, Occult, and Theology related to ancient Egypt (ca. 3500 B.C.-30 B.C.). Tomb-Hounds with 3+ rating points in Egyptology can also read and speak Ancient Egyptian.

Use this ability primarily as a backstop, and don’t step on player niches – a Tomb-Hound with Occult 3 should still get the mummy-magic clue more often, or more spectacularly, than the Tomb-Hound with Egyptology 1 and Occult 0.

Egyptology is available to Tomb-Hound Antiquarians, Archaeologists, and Occultists (and of course Professors) as an Occupational ability.

## NIGHTED, NECROPOLITAN EGYPT

“NOWHERE HAD THE PAST SURVIVED AS IT DID IN AGELESS EGYPT. WITH EVERY MUMMY, THE EGYPTOLOGISTS UNCOVERED A CURSE; THE SOLVING OF EACH ANCIENT SECRET MERELY UNCOVERED A DEEPER, MORE PERPLEXING RIDDLE.”

– ROBERT BLOCH, “FANE OF THE BLACK PHARAOH”

Egypt has technically been an independent Kingdom since 1922, but British colonial rule is slow to depart. British troops garrison the country until 1936, when a new treaty withdraws them to the Suez Canal – only to see them return three years later. French archaeologists run the Egyptian Service of Antiquities, and everywhere foreigners dig up Egypt’s ancient treasures.

### Excavations

Excavation season comprises the fall and winter, usually from October or November to April or May. Even then, daytime temperatures regularly climb over 100°F in the field or in the

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desert. Troops of peasants, or *fellahin*, do the actual work of digging, under the supervision of a foreman, or *reis*. The archaeologist looks over finds turned up by the diggers, plots new excavations, and only ventures into the trench when absolute care – or secrecy – are paramount.

Most digs establish a tent city for the workers (unless their village is nearby) and erect or rent a more permanent “excavation house” for prize artifacts and Western academics. Multi-year expeditions like the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute in Luxor or Harvard at Giza maintain excavation houses with many private rooms, offices,

kitchens, artifact vaults, libraries, and photographic and other laboratories.

Legitimate archaeologists must get a license from the Service for Antiquities to dig in a specific area. Obtaining a license requires:

- A scholar with tenure (Credit Rating 5+; or Academic Reputation 8+ (*Mythos Expeditions*, p. 24))
- A connection to a university, museum, or archaeological institution (Archaeology or Egyptology 3+)
- A 2-point Bureaucracy spend with the Service of Antiquities

Failing that, Tomb-Hounds can either use Interpersonal abilities to weasel themselves into licensed digs, use Stealth and Filch and allied abilities to sneak into licensed digs, or mount their own “wildcat” dig (without enough workers and time, essentially a tomb-robbery) somewhere remote and fast before word gets back to the officious Cairo authorities. Such a tomb-raid necessarily includes:

- A research phase to discover a potential rich find (Library Use, Languages, Oral History among other diggers, Piloting for aerial survey)
- Covert collection of key diggers, explosives, and other equipment (Negotiation, Streetwise) and possibly of fake credentials (Bureaucracy, Forgery, Negotiation)
- Secret travel to and from the site (Driving, Outdoorsman, Riding, Disguise or Reassurance to bluff past checkpoints)
- Examination of the site and planning the “dig” (Archaeology, Geology)
- Rapid entry to treasure chamber, temple, or other key site (Explosives, possibly Architecture, Languages: Ancient Egyptian)
- Identification of treasure (Art History, Archaeology, Chemistry to identify gold, Occult or Cthulhu Mythos to identify trouble)
- Legitimate scholarship, if there’s time (Archaeology, Evidence Collection, Photography)
- Finding and making the sale to the buyer (Archaeology, Assess Honesty, Streetwise, Shadowing or Conceal depending on who talks to whom, Forgery along with Art or Craft if you decide it belongs to you)



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or – what the heck – in a museum); Muhammed Mohassib is the king of antiquities fences, and may be your customer or your cutthroat rival

Plus, lots of Firearms, Weapons, and Scuffling for rival thieves such as the al-Rassoul clan of Kurna (across the river from Luxor) or for Bedouin bandits. And don't forget Mechanical Repair for traps, Fleeing for mummies and ghouls, and Sense Trouble and Preparedness for everything else.

### Ongoing Digs

The major Egyptian dig sites in the 1930s include:

**el-Ashmunein:** The major nexus of Thoth worship (the classical Hermopolis), along with shrines to Set. Günther Roeder of the Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim excavates here (1929-1939) recovering rubble blocks dumped here from Akhetaten. Sami Gabra, the Coptic curator of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, heads the Egyptian University excavation of the 19th-31st dyn. Tuna el-Gebel necropolis and catacomb complex (1930-1939).

**Deir-el-Bahri:** Hatshepsut's mortuary temple across the Nile from Luxor is the focus of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's digs here until 1936. Herbert Winlock, a friend of Howard Carter's, leaves Egypt (and the Met's spectacular "America House" near the Valley of the Kings) in 1932 to become director of the Met.

**Faiyum:** A prehistoric lake in northern Egypt, home to Neolithic settlements and the worship of Sebek at Crocodilopolis (Shedet). Excavated by Gertrude Caton-Thompson and the geologist Elinor Wight Gardner of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1925-1927), and by Arthur Weildan of Tulane University until his mysterious death in 1938.

**Giza:** Plateau adorned by the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. The convenient Mena House hotel provides luxurious expedition housing; Cairo is

only 12 miles away. Dominated by the Harvard Camp (1902-1942) headed by the nearly blind George Reisner, and by the Deutschen Archaeologischen Institut (DAI) dig (1925-1939) of Fr. Hermann Junker, a dedicated Austrian Nazi and Cairo University professor. Smaller digs have licenses for individual pyramids: Ronald Galloway of Miskatonic University digs near the Third Pyramid, looking for the tomb of Nitocris. Selim Hassan, the first major native Egyptian archaeologist, has a roving commission to dig at Giza and Sakkara (1929- ); he surreptitiously sells such licenses.

**Karnak:** This vast temple complex 2 miles north of Luxor falls under the license of the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology (IFAO), based in Cairo and headed (1928-1940) by Pierre Jouquet.

**Kharga Oasis:** Southernmost major oasis in Egypt, 26th-30th dyn. temple of Set and Amun. Excavated by Caton-Thompson and Gardner (1930-1933).

**Luxor:** The ancient Thebes, the New Kingdom capital of Egypt and holy city of Amon-Ra, Luxor is one enormous open-air museum. The "Chicago House" of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute serves as headquarters for the Epigraphic Survey: transcribing and translating every inscription in Egypt. Its director since 1924 is the genial Harold H. Nelson. The mystical theosophist R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz seeks magical insights in those same inscriptions, living in Luxor from 1937 to 1950.

**Sakkara:** The ancient burial ground of the Old Kingdom capital of Memphis, 19 miles south of Cairo, Sakkara holds the earliest known pyramids. Selim Hassan digs here occasionally; Jean-Philippe Lauer of IFAO digs (1926-1936) at the Step Pyramid of Zoser, designed by the great Imhotep. Walter Emery of the Egypt Exploration Society digs here from 1935-1939, uncovering mummified animals.

**Tanis:** Capital of Egypt in the 21st-22nd dynasties, located in the eastern Nile delta. Excavated (1929-1940) by Pierre Montet, who discovers the royal tombs of Psusennes I, Amenemope, and Shoshenq II in 1939. Rumored to be the resting place of the Ark of the Covenant.

**Tell el-Amarna:** Formerly Akhetaten, the abandoned capital city of Akhenaten (18th dyn.). Excavated (1930-1936) by the young, one-eyed, energetic John Pendlebury of the Egypt Exploration Society.

**Valley of the Kings:** Across the Nile from Luxor. Burial site of pharaohs from the 18th-20th dynasties, including Tutankhamen, whose tomb Howard Carter discovered in 1922. Excavations here end in 1930.

### Undiscovered Tombs

Although a century of digging has uncovered much of Egypt's history, plenty remains to be found. Isolated temples lurk in the deserts at abandoned oases, cult shrines could be cut into the rocks along the Nile, and any number of priests and wizards lie undisturbed in lonely tombs – so far.

Sorcerer and smuggler Sir Ronald Barton, following his excavations on Giza, dies with his son Peter in an unknown temple of Anubis in 1936; the antiquities trader, smuggler, and slave-dealer Dr. Stugatche (a.k.a. Dr. Carnoti) dies in the Western Desert in 1936 seeking a lost temple of Thoth-Set.

Even the tombs of some pharaohs and other major figures have escaped desecration and cataloguing:

- Scorpion King, legendary warrior-king of predynastic Egypt
- Menes, unifier of Egypt and wonder-worker of Ulthar
- Imhotep, magus and architect of the pyramids
- Sekhemkhet, 3rd dynasty pharaoh; his "Buried Pyramid" is discovered at Sakkara in 1951

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### 1930s Alexandria: One Look

**Population:** 700,000 (a little smaller than Boston); including ~170,000 foreign nationals

**Languages:** French is the lingua franca of the city; Arabic (among native Egyptians) and Greek (in the large merchant community)

**Currency:** Most trade is in the hands of the Greek community; in addition to pounds, dollars, and francs, Greek drachmae (Dr) are common in Alexandria. \$1 = ~120 Dr.

**Best Hotel:** Claridge's (150 pt/night) features a roof garden with a view of the city and the harbor. Most wealthy Egyptians (and Alexandrian Greeks) keep summer villas along the shore of the city and invite friends and honored foreigners to stay with them.

**Bad Neighborhood:** Gabbari, to the southwest of Pompey's Pillar and the Muslim cemetery, is a native Egyptian neighborhood cut by train tracks and the Mahmoudieh canal.

**Special Rules Effects:** Spends of Bargain, Credit Rating, and Streetwise get "a little something extra" in this city of smugglers and sellers: treat them as 1 point higher. All Credit Rating bands operate two levels "down" and one level "up" from normal:

*Willoughby Boothroyd (Credit Rating 6) can find clues, spend, and schmooze as though he has Credit Rating 4-7 while in Alexandria.*

### 1930s Cairo: One Look

**Population:** 1.3 million (a little smaller than Los Angeles)

**Languages:** Arabic; English is the language of government and trade (for now)

**Currency:** The Egyptian pound (£E or LE) is divided into 100 piastres (pt) or 1,000 millieme (mill). It is pegged to the British pound at 0.975-to-1, ~US\$4.90. One piastre equals about \$10 in 2015 U.S. purchasing power, although European goods (including railway fares) are relatively more expensive (1 pt = \$2-3 in 2015).

**Best Hotel:** Incontrovertibly Shephard's Hotel on the Sharia Kamil (£E1-2/night). Only open during the season (November 1 to May 15), the social center of Cairo's European population with nightly balls and concerts. The doors are never locked, the safe has never been robbed, and unexplored tunnels run into its cellars. Wait, what?

**Bad Neighborhood:** The red-light district (with bars catering to Westerners and to bad Muslims) of Wazzir begins just northeast of Shephard's. The 19th-century Abbasiyya district north of the medieval quarter becomes a truly frightful slum in its northeast neighborhoods.

**Special Rules Effects:** Cairo's narrow streets and large crowds impede free or inconspicuous movement. Westerners add +1 to Difficulties for Shadowing or otherwise trailing or evading locals.

- Nephren-Ka, the "Black Pharaoh," last pharaoh of the 3rd dynasty, overthrown and erased from all records, Captain Philp Carteret disappears in 1937 searching for his tomb beneath Cairo
- Menkauhor, 5th dynasty pharaoh; by 1994 the "Headless Pyramid" of Sakkara is ascribed to him by default
- Nitocris, 6th dynasty sorceress, pharaoh, and legendary Queen of the Ghouls
- Mentuhotep IV, last pharaoh of the 11th dynasty, possibly betrayed and murdered by his vizier Amenemhet
- Ahmose I, founder of the 18th dynasty, his pyramid in Abydos was the last built, Maspero discovered his mummy in 1881, but his tomb remains undiscovered; X-rays in 1980 demonstrated the mummy thought to be Ahmose was not him
- Ramesses XI, last pharaoh of the 20th dynasty, never buried in his Valley of the Kings tomb because of rebellion and Nubian invasion
- Herihor, rebellious High Priest of Amun at Thebes during Ramesses XI's reign
- Alexander the Great, buried in Alexandria by the Ptolemies, his tomb last definitively seen by Emperor Caracalla in 215 A.D.

Happy digging!

### Cairo, Nest of Spies

The linchpin of the British Empire, Egypt attracts spies and covert agents from all over Europe and the world, both freelance and otherwise. They piggyback on the smugglers' routes in and out of Cairo and Alexandria, provide covert funding for expeditions (in exchange for planting a radio



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transmitter or just an accurate survey of a desert well), and otherwise cross paths repeatedly with fellow demimondaines such as the Tomb-Hounds.

Against them (and you, often) the British and Egyptian governments deploy three main lines of defense. First, the Cairo Police, under its implacable Commandant Sir Thomas Wentworth Russell, better known as "Russell Pasha." Russell focuses his attention on narcotics rings and other threats to decent order, leaving internal and external subversion to his able lieutenant Salim Zaki, head of the Cairo Police Special Branch. Theoretically above, and definitely separate from, the Cairo Police looms the Special Section of the Egyptian Interior Ministry. Its Foreigners Department monitors non-Egyptians, while its Labor Department thwarts foreign and domestic Communist infiltration. Finally, Egypt (as part of the Commonwealth) technically falls not under MI6 but MI5, Britain's internal security agency. MI5 only assigns a Defence Security Officer (DSO) to Cairo in 1937, the vastly overworked Brig. Gen. Raymond Maunsell.

The most immediate threats to Egypt's internal security are the radical wing of the Wafd Party independence movement (including Vengeance Squads of assassins) and the fascist "green shirts" of the Young Egypt Society (YES). Egypt's Interior Ministry also considers the British a threat, bugging and surveilling the British High Commissioner and military garrisons. This becomes a real problem after King Fuad dies in 1936; his successor, the young King Farouk, is a fascist sympathizer.

The German Abwehr agent in Cairo, Johannes Eppler a.k.a. Hussein Gaffar, works in his own way with the Wafd and YES. His girlfriend Hekmet Fahmy is a belly-dancer and Wafd asset who entertains the influential in her houseboat on the Nile. Less romantically, the Italian Servizio Informazioni Militare (SIM) maintains numerous listening posts in Italian Libya across the border, coordinating its Cairo

activities through the Cavaliere Munari, a shipping agent for the Lloyd-Trestino line. Even the Hungarian fascists have their man in Egypt, Laszlo Almasz, an aviator (and Templarist mystic) and member of the "Zerzura Club" which seeks that lost oasis and the legendary "city of doves" within. Among his Zerzura Club-mates, the engineer Ralph Bagnold and surveyor Patrick Clayton are both likely working under the table for British Army Intelligence.

## MAGIC, MUMMIES, AND THE MYTHOS

"IT GRADUALLY DAWNED ON ME THAT THE ELDER MAGIC OF EGYPT

DID NOT DEPART WITHOUT LEAVING TRACES, AND THAT FRAGMENTS OF A STRANGE SECRET LORE AND PRIESTLY CULT-PRACTICES HAVE SURVIVED SURREPTITIOUSLY AMONGST THE FELLAHEEN ..."

- H.P. LOVECRAFT, "UNDER THE PYRAMIDS"

It's not just spies and falling rocks that get you in the tomb-hound game. The weird and eldritch hazards of Egypt are, if anything, even worse than the bandits and pitfalls normally associated with Pulp archaeology. Mastering the magics of nighted Khem may give you the edge on such dangers – while exposing you to truths more dire than the fate you thought to escape.

## Bookhounds of Egypt

Seekers after knowledge haunt the Bazaar of the Booksellers, covering three blocks on the east side of the vast Khan-el-Khalili souk in Cairo. Twenty stalls heaped with manuscripts, loose pages, unbound galleys, and books from all over await the eye. Other book stalls adorn the Maidan Ataba between the "European" Ezbekiya district and medieval Cairo.

Prices depend on Bargain spends only. Finding a given title in any Cairo bookshop requires Library Use and Languages (Arabic) or waiting for the bookseller to find it on a long index sheet, something that usually only happens after the customer makes a foolishly or impatiently high bid for the item.

If you can't afford the original, hiring a copyist is simple -- although scribes have a tendency to "correct flaws" in the manuscript they reproduce.

### Libraries of Cairo

**Al-Azhar University:** The oldest university in the Islamic world, its library holds millions of pages of manuscripts going back to the 9th century. A professor's permission is required to read them. Dedicated 3-point pool for any research into Islam or its heresies.

**Egyptian Museum:** The 25,000 books and site reports in the library are open to the public. Dedicated 2-point pool for any Egyptological research.

**Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte:** Its excellent library is open only to members. Dedicated 2-point pool for any Egyptological research.

Free 1-point Library Use spends are available at the libraries of the **American University of Cairo**, the **Egyptian University**, and the **Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale** (also 1-point dedicated pool for Archaeology).

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### God-Beasts and Monsters

The desert, and the tombs and ruins secreted within it, burgeons with things that want to kill you. Egypt's natural predators include scarabs and scorpions (use rat swarm rules *ToC*, p. 157; Difficulty 6 Health test when stung, +2 extra damage on failure), cobras (*ToC*, p. 157), crocodiles (*ToC*, p. 155), and wild dogs or jackals (wolves with Athletics 6, Scuffling 5, no armor; *ToC*, p. 158). Any of these creatures may be imbued by their patron deity: Ra or Kheperu (scarabs), Selket (scorpions), Wadjet (cobras), Sebek (crocodiles), or Anubis (jackals). Such god-beasts add +3 to Health and always re-roll 1s. They may be able to enter an unwatched door, window, or campfire site without detection (or +3 Stealth modifier). They can understand Ancient Egyptian and may communicate (by signs, tracing hieroglyphics, telepathic hissing, etc.) instead of attacking those who use suitable Interpersonal abilities.

### Animated Statue

Often enchanted to guard the grave or temple site, almost never able to leave it. Within the precincts of its tomb or fane, however, it can show remarkable cunning.

In any contest of Athletics involving strength, each point it spends counts double. It can spend points from Athletics or Scuffling to trigger stone traps anywhere in its mortuary complex, pyramid, etc. Apply those points against the Tomb-Hounds' Difficulties to detect (Conceal, Sense Trouble) or evade (Athletics) such traps.

**Abilities:** Athletics 13, Health 13, Scuffling 18, Weapons 12 (if carved holding a weapon)

**Magic:** Curse (see below) costs 2 Health

**Hit Threshold:** 2 (stone)

**Alertness Modifier:** +3 (in tomb or fane, not affected by darkness)

**Stealth Modifier:** +1 until seen to move, then -2

**Weapon:** +2 (stone fist), +3 (stone

weapon or bite/beak if animal-headed)

**Armor:** Immune to any weapon doing less than +1 normally; -2 against other weapons. Immune to fire.

**Stability Loss:** +0

### Ushabti

Small statuettes buried with important figures to act as servants in the afterlife, animated ushabtis make great spies and not-great fighters. They can, however, prick foes with poison needles, slit water-skins, drive off camels, and otherwise make life hell for those who would desecrate their master's resting place.

**Abilities:** Athletics 8, Health 3, Scuffling 7, Weapons 5

**Hit Threshold:** 5 (tiny and quick but still stone)

**Alertness Modifier:** +3 (in tomb or fane, not affected by darkness)

**Stealth Modifier:** +2 (tiny)

**Weapon:** -4 (stone fist), -3 (tiny knife or needle)

**Armor:** Takes no damage from hand-to-hand combat or edged/pointed weapons. Immune to fire.

**Stability Loss:** +0

### Mummies

The "standard" mummy in the corebook (*ToC*, p. 156) is the commonly encountered shambling tomb-guardian.

Animal-headed mummies do +1 damage with their bite or beak, or +2 if ferocious (crocodile- or lion-headed mummies, for example). Stability Loss +2.

Warrior mummies have weird leaf-bladed Egyptian weapons (+1 swords, +0 spears) and sometimes bronze or leather armor (-2 to first hit, -1 to next hit, useless afterward); add Weapons 11. Sometimes these mummies can spider-climb along walls or ceilings. They seldom regenerate.

Animated skeletons, similar to warrior mummies, have Hit Threshold 4 but only 3 Health and no armor. Impaling weapons are still useless against them.

Master mummies retain independent thought and action. They tend to be priests of evil gods such as Set or Nyarlathotep, courtiers or cultists of Nephren-Ka, or similarly puissant necromancers. Double all ability ratings, and add any number of vile spells (and perhaps a mummified rat-thing), plus Heka 12+.

Master mummies can never be killed until all four of their canopic jars have been found and destroyed.

Master mummies also, of course, have the ability to Curse the defilers of their tomb.

### Curse

Curses — from mummies, inscriptions, or just plain bad luck — come in two general types: instant, and ongoing.

Instant curses are usually for NPCs, at least at first. They almost always manifest as sudden, plausibly accidental (but not really) death or the summoning of a killer monster such as a god-cobra (see above) or a Mythos creature: a dimensional shambler, byakhee, star vampire, hunting horror, etc. Even instant curses wait until after the curse has been read or heard, sometimes days after. Instant curses can continue once per month (or week, or year) until all those cursed have been destroyed.

Ongoing curses weaken the target successively night after night. The Keeper might simply reduce the victim's Health or Stability rating by 1, impose an increasingly onerous Health or Stability test each night, disallow spends on one life-or-death test per session, or present anything else dangerous enough to impel investigation but not so deadly as to preclude it.

Breaking a curse almost always involves finding the original inscription, amulet, etc. and either destroying it or (more often) developing a counter-ritual. If a master mummy cast it, destroying the mummy can sometimes break the curse. After a curse is broken, you can spend experience to rebuild lost rating points.



## Tomb-Hounds of Egypt

### Set Beasts

These mysterious animals (known as *sha*) symbolize the god Set in Egyptian art. They resemble black dogs with stiff, forked tails, long, tapered noses, and flat-topped, upright, wedge-shaped ears. They exist in a dark dimension wrapped around Egypt, tangent to the Dreamlands, the Tuat or land of the dead, and the higher vibratory plane of the mi-go and sand-dwellers.

Their appearance portends evil and the return of Set or his chosen followers – such as Nephren-Ka.

**Abilities:** Athletics 15, Health 8, Scuffling 15

**Magic:** 8+; Dominate (*Rough Magicks*, p. 19)

**Hit Threshold:** 5 (evasive and lithe)

**Alertness Modifier:** +2 (by scent)

**Stealth Modifier:** +1 in desert

**Weapon:** +0 (claw), -1 (bite); may make two claw attacks and one bite attack in a round; on a 6, bite transmits exo-dimensional poison for +6 damage, Health save Difficulty 6 to lower damage to +2.

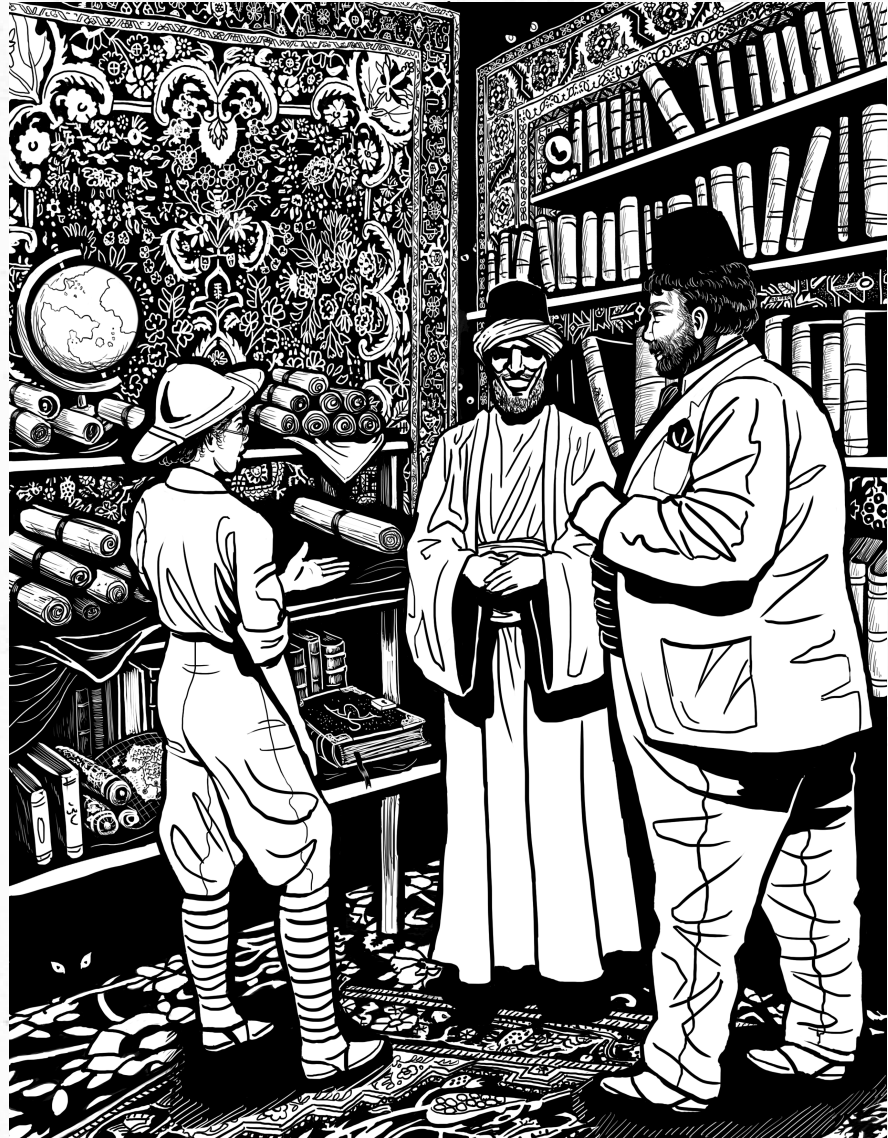
**Armor:** if foe's attack roll is 1-4, armor is -1 through -4; no armor if attack roll is 5-6

**Stability Loss:** +1

### Other Mythos Monsters

Ghouls are the most common Mythos creatures in Egypt, dwelling in their thousands beneath the oldest cemeteries in the world. Cairo's Cities of the Dead surround the city on the east and south, contrary to the ancient Egyptian practice of keeping the necropoleis on the western bank of the Nile. Cairo's poor build shacks among the tombs or pick through the rubbish for salvage, and hope not to incur the gluttony or the wrath of the *ghilan* who truly rule here. A Tomb-Hound who could find something the ghouls truly want might receive clues to undiscovered tombs or even cities millennia old – or might be harried until her death.

Sand-dwellers inhabit the Western Desert, far from the routes even of the



Bedouin. Alterations in geometries, powerful earth-magics, or the will of Hastur or Nyarlathotep can reconnect them with human perception.

Crocodile-folk known as petesouchi (after Petesouchos, the sacred crocodile of Sebek worshipped in Crocodilopolis in the Faiyum) dwell in the reeds and marshes of the Nile and Faiyum. Possibly related to the masqut or the serpent-folk, they keep to themselves unless the hunger for meat or worship becomes too strong. Then another boat goes under, lured into the reeds and lost with all hands. (Use crocodile stats for the petesouchi,

with Magic 4+ and +1 Stability loss.)

Tunnels under tombs and pyramids may hold formless spawn of Tsathoggua, masqut, more ghouls, mummified serpent-folk wizards, or even a flying polyp alert for Yithian intrusion into the chambers of knowledge.

Egyptian necromancers, master mummies, or curses might well summon byakhee, dimensional shamblers, hunting horrors, rat-things, servitors of the Outer Gods, or star vampires.

Deep Ones do not flourish in the shallow water of the Mediterranean

## Ken Writes About Stuff

coast and Nile delta. There is a Deep One colony between Greece and Crete, and another in the Red Sea. Deep Ones may also lurk in the Sudd, the great swamp of the Sudan where the ancient priests of the Ogdoad (that inchoate frog-fish-snake entity of the early Old Kingdom) fled when Ra arose in might.

Lemurian civilization thrived in primordial Valusia, Egypt before Egypt, and some Lemurians may yet guard desert monoliths or acoustic chambers beneath pyramid quarries.

### Cults of Egypt

Egypt has boiled with Mythos cultism since before it was Egypt, or even before it was Khem. Valusia and Stygia both plotted with outer deities against mankind, and it was while on the throne of the pharaohs that Nephren-Ka did that thing that caused his name to be blotted out of all records.

His legacy continues in the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh (*BoL*, p. 62), a society of murderous Nyarlathotep worshippers headed by Othman Shakti, a wealthy cotton planter. The Brotherhood's rival sects include Maxlan al-Wahsh, the "Paw of the Beast," a Bedouin cult worshipping the mighty Thing below the Pyramids, and the Liwa al-Akrab, the "Banner of the Scorpion," a society of sorcerous narcotics and vice lords (see *Hsieh-Tzu Fan*, *BoL* p. 63) increasingly tied in with the most radical anti-Western factions of the independence movement.

Here, they meet the Ahnenerbe (*ToC*, p. 160), Himmler's occult specialists seeking the Ark of the Covenant and other, darker artifacts. Japan's Black Dragon Society (*ToC*, p. 161) monitor the Suez Canal from Cairo; Yithian agents (*ToC*, p. 165) monitor Egypt's fanes and libraries likewise for their time-traveling alien masters. In Egypt's far south, a Ghatanothoa cult makes mummies of strangers and favored ones; in Cairo's

### Egyptian Magical Papyri

Individual spell scrolls have Heka potential point values of 0 or 1.

Heka potential point values are for the *original* painting, inscription, or papyrus. A careful archaeological transcription reduces these values by at least 1. A popular publication (or a transcription read by someone with no Archaeology or Egyptology rating) reduces them by 2 or more.

**Book of Coming Forth By Day:** Better known as the *Book of the Dead*, this New Kingdom text provides spells and lore for the journey through the afterlife. Every copy is different; a full copy has over 150 spells and provides 3+ Heka potential points.

**Brooklyn Magical Papyrus:** A 30th dynasty scroll dealing with snakes, scorpions, spiders, their bites, and drugs. Held in the Brooklyn Museum after 1932, and in a Paris hotel left-luggage vault before then. Provides 2 Heka potential points for words such as Snake, Spider, Poison, Scorpion, etc.

**Coffin Texts:** Mostly found inside Middle Kingdom coffins, these spells helped the dead in many ways. A given coffin provides 1 or 2 Heka potential points; a compilation of all 1,185 Coffin Texts might provide 3+.

**London-Leiden Papyrus:** Greco-Egyptian magical text from the 3rd century A.D. written in Demotic, incorporates many Gnostic demons and entities as well as Egyptian gods. Torn in half; one half is in the British Museum, the other half in the Leiden Museum of Antiquities. Each half provides 2+ Heka potential points.

**Papyrus Ebers:** A major medical text from ca. 1500 B.C., held by the University of Leipzig. Provides 2+ Heka potential points for words such as Health, Sleep, Madness, Illness, Wounds, etc.

**Pyramid Texts:** Spells and hymns carved into the Saqqara Pyramids during the Old Kingdom, focusing on travel and flight through the afterlife, reanimating the body, and similar dead pharaoh needs. No single pyramid holds all 759 Pyramid Texts; reading a text in situ provides 2+ Heka potential points.

Tombs of the Mamluks a 500-year-old English necromancer (a former correspondent of Joseph Curwen) tortures even older mummies for the lore of 'Umr at-Tawil.

### Egyptian Magic

Egyptian magic, or *heka*, works on three different principles: the power of the gods (all magic comes from the gods; their images and names contain their power), the power of dates (certain spells can only be cast at auspicious times; events and conditions recycle), and the power of words (knowing a thing's True Name gives the magician control over it;

anyone can read a magical papyrus).

To cast a written spell from a papyrus scroll or other text, a Tomb-Hound needs only to have Languages: Ancient Egyptian or Egyptology 3+. She must read the spell aloud. Casting a spell costs Stability (usually 2-12 points) and may involve a further 4-point Stability test to withstand its effects. An enchanted amulet "self-casts" its spell, draining the required Stability from the wearer; it loses its magic if the wearer's Stability drops below 0. The Keeper controls how often such scrolls or amulets fall into the Tomb-Hounds' hands.



## Tomb-Hounds of Egypt

### The Heka Ability

To design and cast ceremonial or spontaneous spells requires the ability Heka.

This ability is a **special ability**; to gain the first rating point in Heka requires expenditure of 5 build points, either from character generation points or experience. Later rating points in Heka cost 1 build point each, as normal. Only characters with Languages: Ancient Egyptian or Egyptology 3+ can gain Heka.

Heka also requires previously gained **potential points** (*Rough Magicks*, pp. 7-10; *Bookhounds of London*, p. 38). Tomb-Hounds mostly gain Heka potential from reading magical papyri, although sleeping in a pyramid's inner chamber, communing with Thoth or another god (Ptah, Isis, Set, Bast, etc.), or even learning from another wizard are other possibilities. A Tomb-Hound's Heka rating can never exceed her accumulated Heka potential points.

It's up to the Keeper whether to allow Heka at character generation; the Keeper and player must explain the previous "off-screen" gain of potential points either then or later. It's also up to the Keeper whether other Magic ability points (Magic, Voodoo, etc.) count as Heka or can even be spent on Heka tests.

Heka refreshes after one full 24-hour cycle, of which 8 hours must be spent in prayer to the gods, meditation in a museum, or similar contemplation.

### Heka Spells and Effects

For each rating point in Heka, the Tomb-Hound selects one word of power: Light, Death, Scorpion, Wound, Tomb, Speech, etc. As normal in GUMSHOE, she doesn't have to select it immediately, but once selected she cannot change it.

He can cast any spell involving or invoking that word or concept as a test of the Heka ability at a Difficulty determined by the Keeper based on the spell's physical power or effect

and on the tenuousness of the spell's connection to the word. The stronger the spell effect, and the farther away from the core meaning of the word of power, the higher the Difficulty.

He can spend Heka, Astronomy (establishing the "correct date" of the spell), or Stability on this test.

If he casts the spell ceremonially – over a period of hours, in a dark room hung with images of the gods, using new implements or components – his Difficulty lowers by 3 (-1 for each condition mentioned).

Difficulty to resist the spell (if possible), Health damage done (or healed) by the spell, spell duration in minutes (or hours for "easier" spells) and other game-mechanical effects derive from the total of the caster's spend and roll.

Creating scrolls and amulets can only be done after decades of training under priests of Thoth.

## SOURCES AND RESOURCES

All due praise should go to Lovecraft's hysterical "Under the Pyramids" (ghostwritten for Houdini!); note also his other archaeological tale "The Nameless City" and HPL's out-of-Egypt shocker "The Haunter of the Dark." But Robert Bloch does the real heavy lifting for the Egyptian Mythos in six stories: "The Faceless God," "Fane of the Black Pharaoh," "The Eyes of the Mummy" (and its New Orleans-set prequel, "The Secret of Sebek"), "The Opener of the Way," and the non-Mythos but still creepy "Beetles." All but the last are in the Chaosium collection *Mysteries of the Worm*, along with "Brood of Bubastis," which is set in Cornwall and involves an unnervingly ghoulish Bast.

Keepers and players might also wish to read the Amelia Peabody series of Egyptological mysteries by Elizabeth Peters. While set in Victorian and Edwardian times, they still combine

Egypt, artifacts, and mystery in properly GUMSHOE fashion.

In game books, the first recourse should be the magnificent *Cairo Guidebook* by Marion Anderson for *Call of Cthulhu*. Its only flaw (that it's for the 1920s) is rectified by *Pulp Egypt* by Peter Schweighofer, an "Any-System Sourcebook" for Egypt in 1933-1939 from Griffon Publishing. Also check out *GURPS Egypt* by Thomas M. Kane for gameable info on ancient Egypt.

*Cairo* by André Raymond covers the history of the city; *Signs and Wonders Upon Pharaoh* by John A. Wilson is a good, idiosyncratic history of American Egyptologists specifically and Egyptology more broadly. Fred Bratton's *A History of Egyptian Archaeology* is an adequate, broad primer.

*Egyptian Magic*, by E.A. Wallis Budge (1899), and *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, by Geraldine Pinch (1994), are both excellent in their own ways, and also as an illustration of how Egyptologists have changed in the last century.





