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COMPANION



OSIRION, LAND OF PHARAONS



PATHFINDER[™]

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Osirion, Land of Pharaohs

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Editor-in-Chief • James Jacobs

Art Director • Drew Pocza

Developer • Sean K Reynolds

Editors • Christopher Carey and James L. Sutter

Editorial Assistance • Jason Bulmahn, F. Wesley Schneider,
and Vic Wertz

Graphic Design Assistance • Sarah E. Robinson

Managing Art Director • James Davis

Publisher • Erik Mona

Contributing Authors • Jason Nelson and Todd Stewart

Cover Artist

Ralph Horsley

Contributing Artists

Bentobox Studios, Jeff Carlisle, Concept Art House,
Julie Dillon, and Ben Wootten

Paizo CEO • Lisa Stevens

Vice President of Operations • Jeff Alvarez

Director of Marketing • Joshua J. Frost

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OSIRION

LAND OF PHARAOHS

A nation of prideful people who till the current century chafed under the yoke of foreign rule, Osirion now stands independent once more, and both it and the rest of Golarion's nations look to its past to divine what the future holds.

Since the cataclysmic fall of the *Starstone* in the Age of Darkness, the desert nation has played host to one of the first flowerings of civilization as humanity clambered its way out of barbarism. Untouched by the influence of the first humans of Azlant, the native Garundi of Osirion charted their own destiny as a nation and a culture, potentially with deific influence from one of their own ascended or even with aid from worlds beyond the dark tapestry of night. Whatever the means, Osirion rose to legendary heights during the Age of Destiny, led by majestic, all-powerful pharaohs revered as living gods by their subjects.

From their apex under the rule of the ancient god-kings, Osirion's civilization suffered periodic rises and falls under different royal dynasties, dying a slow death through complacency for most of a millennia before ultimately succumbing to the conquering Qadiran armies of the Keleshite Empire. Ironically, it was this oppression that galvanized the Osirians once more, and under Keleshite rule they suffered but refused to break. Now, less than a century after the death of their last foreign sultan and the resumption of native rule, Osirion finds itself led by a powerful and equally mysterious autocrat versed in elemental magics and linked by blood to the pharaohs of the Age of Destiny.

Although Osirion is often assumed by foreigners to be a monolithic sea of wind-blown sand, this view is a flagrant overgeneralization. While it is true that hot, sandy deserts comprise much of the arid landscape, and

that the elemental-fueled *khamzin* storms define Osirion's yearly cycles as much as the River Sphinx's annual floods, Osirion is packed with vibrant history, and sites of enormous character and historical importance cover its breadth from mountains to shores.

An, the City of Triangles

The first of Sothis's trio of southern sister cities, An was founded in -107 AR by Pharaoh Hirkoshek I as a permanent outgrowth of the temporary worker city housing the laborers and artisans working to construct his pyramid. Originally lacking a title, An's "City of Triangles" appellation comes from both the distant Mount Na-Ken and its surrounding peaks to the city's northeast and the pyramids visible on the southern horizon. Like mirror counterparts to the mountains, the pyramids include those of Pharaoh Hirkoshek himself and his minor dynastic successors Hirkoshek II, Zahur I, and Kamaria the Brazen (infamously known as the only pharaoh to openly revere an aspect of Rovagug).

As prominent as they are, the pyramids that lend An its title were plundered long ago. Despite this, they still provide for a steady stream of explorers hoping to uncover a hidden chamber, reveal an ancillary tomb overlooked through the millennia, or prey upon other explorers like themselves. Adventurers still do occasionally uncover small tombs along the outskirts of the principal necropolis, though the ruins hold the danger of desert beasts, enraged mummified guardians, and bandits. The pyramid of Kamaria, though long since scavenged of any valuables, is a danger in and of itself, due to its prominence as a place of unholy pilgrimage for the cult of Rovagug. To this day, the cult remains underground but entrenched within An, preying upon visitors to the pyramids and drawing monsters from out of the Salt Hills into the ruin complex and occasionally the city itself.

Eto

A central point along the trade routes from Thuvia, and from Shiman-Sekh to Sothis, the city of Eto has seen its fortunes rise in recent years as foreign trade has waxed, first under the reign of Khemet I and continuing with his son the Crocodile King and currently the Ruby Prince. The city's residents and its merchant elite would have been overjoyed by that alone, but in the last year they have seen their coffers swell as Eto has become a nexus for adventurers seeking to explore Osirion's central deserts. With the ingress of native and foreign treasure hunters alike, the population has risen with a concurrent influx of laborers, tradesman, and merchants eager to supply the explorers with everything they might need, as well as many luxuries they don't. Similar to the events in Sothis

since Khemet III's announcement opening the deserts to foreign exploration, the situation has benefited the city greatly, but brings risks as well as rewards.

Not a day goes by without trade caravans and parties of adventurers arriving at the city gates with horses and camels loaded with treasures from the depths of the desert. While dozens of merchant houses have joined those already plying the interior trade routes and gold-hungry mercenaries flock to exploit the desert's buried wealth, bandits and less archaeologically adept adventurers have taken to raiding excavations in progress as well as targeting poorly defended merchant caravans. This would be expected with Eto's economic explosion, but in the 6 months since the last *khamzin* season, the situation has devolved dramatically, with attacks becoming both more frequent and more deadly. Rather than human bandits and unscrupulous treasure hunters, the few survivors of the latest attacks tell of organized packs of bloodthirsty gnolls and even summoned demons raging out of the desert depths.

Footprints of Rovagug

Osirion's western deserts, encompassing a region roughly bound between the Barrier Wall Mountains, the Junira, and the Crook, are largely free of windblown sand. While just as parched as the majority of western Osirion, the dunes give way to hundreds of square miles of desolate, rocky terrain. More than just the foothills to the Barrier Wall, this region, known widely as the Footprints of Rovagug, is dotted by several regions of hot springs—like mocking, mirror counterparts to desert oases—and Osirion's only volcanoes: Sokar's Boil and Asuulek's Mouth. Despite the daunting terrain, Osirian nobles frequent the region's springs in the belief that bathing in their waters carries a rejuvenating and healing effect.

The two volcanoes are separated by 50 miles of rocks and ash from ancient eruptions. Today only Asuulek's Mouth is active, and for the past few centuries it has maintained an active magma lake at its shallow, open summit. While the Mouth froths and emits a constant plume of steam and smoke, its only recorded eruptions have been minor affairs with little danger outside of the sparsely populated rocky desert around its base. The Boil, on the other hand, may be a lurking nightmare.

Travelers wisely avoid Asuulek's Mouth, and not only for its periodic but minor eruptions. Rather than the volcano, the true danger is the burning mountain's namesake: Asuulek, an ancient red wyrm who lairs somewhere inside of the cone, potentially within the molten lake itself. Asuulek has historically alternated between decades of near-hibernation and equally long stretches of activity marked by destructive raids and fierce responses

by whatever dynasty held power at the time. Oddly, since the start of the current dynasty, the dragon appears to have broken his historical pattern, remaining active but eschewing attacks on human cities and desert caravans. Instead, he has been largely preoccupied along the flanks of his volcanic lair's long-cold twin, even to the extent of leaving his lair apparently unguarded. Yet any potential raiders of the dragon's hoard still have the daunting task of locating his actual den, avoiding the constant danger posed by an eruption, and dealing with any creatures or traps left in place while the drake is otherwise occupied.

At first glance, the heavily eroded, ashen flanks of Sokar's Boil epitomize the time-battered walls of a long-dead volcano—cold and quiet. To those who have studied the geology of the surrounding landscape, however, it speaks only of repressed fury. Preserved by the desert climate, the range of the explosively ejected volcanic rock and frozen lava flows points to the last eruption having been cataclysmic in scope, and whatever natural or unnatural phenomenon has kept the Boil in a quiescent state for the last 3 millennia has been a welcome miracle. Over the past 3 years, however, the ancient peak has been the subject of increased attention.

During the reign of Khemet II, illegal excavations along the southern flank of the Boil uncovered a number of ancient structures built into the mountain, including a temple and what appeared to be several large, sealed doors leading into the mountain's interior. With government interest piqued by what the adventurers had found, excavations sponsored by the pharaoh continued and have only increased following the death of the Crocodile King and the coronation of the Ruby Prince. Curiously, the increase in royal interest in the Boil's cryptic ruins roughly coincides with Asuulek's odd activity and the appearance of Khemet III's elemental companion Janhelia.

At present, Asuulek and the pharaoh's Osiriontologists have had little direct interaction, though they remain wary and watchful of the others' movements and activities along the barren slopes. Whether the two are looking for the same thing, or if either even knows precisely what the mountain holds, is an open question, and one that anyone besides the dragon and the pharaoh themselves can only speculate upon. From what few details of the original excavation leaked out, the buried structures are Osirian in origin, but exceedingly old, dating back to the Age of Destiny.

The Glazen Sheet

Between the city of Shiman-Sekh and the western border with Thuvia as defined by the Junira River, the desert's characteristics change and the region grows more and more parched and desolate. Slowly the sand dunes of

the western desert give way to a region of limestone flats broken in their uniformity only by the pockmarks of dry salt lakes and glittering ribbons of ancient riverbeds now choked by a rime of salt and fine gypsum dust. As inimical to most life as it is, even for creatures adapted to the desert, the landscape is telling about Osirion's past climate in that it suggests the entire area was once covered with water. Some ancient geological event must have radically shifted rainfall patterns, leading to the present extreme



desiccation, as evidenced by the evaporated riverbeds and powder-fine alluvial salts.

Carrying this idea further, the entire northern coast of Garund, extending into modern-day Thuvia, might have once been free of its current desert clime. The date of this climactic change is unknown, but if the saline content in northwest Osirion is any indication of saltwater inundation, it might stem from the impact of the *Starstone*.

The Hungry Sepulcher

Kemusar I was not considered a true pharaoh, but rather a crown regent of Osirion who ruled from -1768 AR to -1757 AR from the imprisonment of An-Hepsu XI till a year prior to the young Pharaoh Sekhemib I reaching the age of maturity. A rumored victim of court intrigue by jealous rivals to the child pharaoh's ear, or potentially the impatient young ruler himself, he was killed in his sleep and the body hurled to a pack of hungry crocodiles. Eleven days later, Kemusar's unfinished tomb disappeared from a royal necropolis on the western bank of the Asp, and over the following year, 10 members of the royal court likewise vanished. Those close to the missing courtiers—some would say conspirators—were plagued by nightmares featuring a vision of the vanished step-pyramid and a sense of something hungry and furious beneath the sands.

Any story involving the death of Kemusar I would be incomplete without mentioning that prior to his appointment as crown regent of Osirion, he was one of the last wizardly apprentices to An-Hepsu XI. The fall of the Incorruptible Pharaoh is said to have included Kemusar's explicit cooperation, though perhaps many in the royal courts felt that he remained in the shadow of his deposed teacher and was a potential threat on the same scale should he himself ever seek a legacy of undying rule. The truth behind Kemusar's murder might be something darker still: the killing might have been part of an attempt to free his imprisoned predecessor.

Betrayed by members of the royal court, Kemusar's rage, combined with his violent death and potent understanding of necromancy, might have allowed him to anchor his vengeful spirit to its empty tomb, or he might have already prepared spells to capture and bind his soul into undeath in the event of an early demise. Little is known about the matter, other than a repeating message sent via nightmare to members of the royal court: "Till my betrayers and their heirs are dead, sand and soul are one. An-Hepsu XI must never be freed."

Other than the contemporary clerics of Phasasma, Kemusar I was one of the few people who knew the location of the Incorruptible Pharaoh's prison-tomb (see the Pyramid of An-Hepsu IX) and the wards and magical

bindings put in place to maintain the undead pharaoh's imprisonment. After Kemusar's murder and subsequent rise as some kind of undead, he may have taken all records of this knowledge along with his magically mobile tomb into hidden seclusion, fearing its potential misuse. Now, over 6,000 years later, his spirit remains hungry for the descendents of those who escaped his wrath, perhaps serving as an undying warden of an even greater evil.

Ipeq

The city of Ipeq is the largest city in southern Osirion, situated at a strategic point along the banks of the Crook. Since its legendary founding, the city's history has been linked to the nation's defense and the projection of pharaonic power and influence toward the south, and even today it houses the second-largest permanent garrison of troops in the nation, surpassed only by the capital itself.

According to legend, white-walled Ipeq was called into being by the Pharaoh of Blades as he stood at the head of his army along with a massive contingent of noble genies pledged to his cause. Considered one of the greatest interactions between the god-kings and the desert elemental spirits, the construction of Ipeq was the first stage of the Osirian invasion and subjugation of Katapesh. The summoned city would serve as the staging grounds for the Pharaoh's conquering army, and even in later years, after the wane of pharaonic influence in the south, it served as a bastion of Osirian power against any foreign invasion from across the Brazen peaks.

To this day, any army seeking to invade the nation from its southern border has to cross the river either at the natural shallows at Ipeq or via the great stone bridge known as the Khopesh Span, built in -2370 AR. In modern Osirion, invasion from Katapesh is of little concern, and the garrisons of Ipeq, including its large maritime force, are mainly used to protect trade across the border, though many are held in reserve for rapid deployment anywhere along the length of the Sphinx or its tributaries should some internal emergency or unexpected foreign invasion call for it.

The Labyrinth of Shiman-Sekh

Twenty years ago, during the reign of the Crocodile King, a pair of farmers digging a well for a new field on the outskirts of Shiman-Sekh made an unprecedented discovery. Ten feet below the rich topsoil of the Golden Oasis, amid the debris of what they had presumed to be the foundations of an earlier dwelling, they uncovered a black glass obelisk, broken in half and situated atop the floor of a buried, white marble plaza. They reported their find to the city's minister of antiquities, and he gathered a team of diggers and a priest of Nethys to explore the dig and compensate the farmers if anything of value was

discovered. What they found traces a dire path through Osirion's history, invokes the names of two of the nation's darkest rulers, and causes the modern rulers of Shiman-Sekh to sleep fitfully.

Constructed at ground level millennia earlier, the obelisk lay adjacent to a sealed portal in the floor of the ancient plaza. Against the advice of the priest of Nethys, the diggers broke through the stones of the seal and discovered the entrance to what appeared to be an expansive network of twisting, labyrinthine passages, choked with muddy silt and ashes. A larger group of diggers was gathered to clear the passage, but their work was halted when three men were killed by falling stones, and one survivor claimed that something in the darkness had caused the accident to occur. While the man was initially mocked as delusional and superstitious, the portal was resealed that evening after a dozen local residents vanished along with a trio of guards posted to the excavation, leaving behind only a small amount of blood and burn marks on the stone. Whatever killed them, the labyrinth has remained sealed since that time for worry of releasing something into the city, especially given the information later gleaned from the portal and its accompanying obelisk.

The portal was a curious thing, having evidently been opened at some point in the past and then resealed. The iconography on the original and reconstructed stones showed that it had been sealed first during the reign of the Song Pharaoh, and then resealed during the rule of the Pharaoh of No Rain, nearly 11 centuries later.

The obelisk, once its writing was translated, told a more expansive story in two parts. Just like the sealed portal, it held two sections, both ancient but one slightly younger. The decipherable portion of the elder script read:

"Declaring himself a living god... a pact with the Seraph of Devastation. His bargaining was belatedly told to the priests of Nethys—only after would their objections come, too late—and completely hidden from the clergy of Pharama. Heady with his own power and that of golden, imperial Osirion, the Pharaoh...

...only to see them ignore his commands and the terms of the pact. The Legions of the Seraph obliterated Umen-Sekh and devoured...

...bound them in the name of Nethys and locked...

...constructing holy Shiman-Sekh above their prison of screaming ashes and..."

The Pharaoh of Forgotten Plagues (predecessor to the Song Pharaoh) is openly named on the monument, though the symbols for his personal name were chiseled off by later generations, perhaps hoping to forget him entirely except by his title. The identity of his partner, the "Seraph of Devastation," is not entirely clear, and the

partially defaced glyph is distinct from those of both Lamashtu and Rovagug.

An addition to the monument written during the late An Dynasty states that the hubris of the Lich Pharaoh led him to free the fiend Zelishkar of the Bitter Flame from his bindings within the labyrinth. While An-Hepsu XI did indeed manage to exert control over Zelishkar with magic that bordered on godhood, the creature had significant free will in how it carried out his instructions. This act is repeatedly referred to as the pharaoh's greatest error, and though the text is badly worn by time and vandalism in such manner as has defeated all attempts at magical restoration, it suggests that An-Hepsu sought to use Zelishkar and its lesser kindred in a preemptive war against the Shory aeromancers. The text is unclear if the "greatest error" was in freeing Zelishkar or in initiating this otherwise unknown conflict with the Shory, but the last portions of the monument indicate that the fiend and its servitors were sealed within the labyrinth, and presumably remain bound in situ, locked below the foundations of the modern city above.

Lamashtu's Flower

Unbeknownst to the victims, and to the adventurers and mercenary bands employed to guide trade caravans across the desert, many of those merchants and travelers killed by gnolls near Eto are actually victims of betrayal. While nominally led by an albino gnoll chieftain, **Nathrek the Pale**, Devourer of Virgins (CE male gnoll fighter 9), in reality the tribes owe their fealty and fear to his consort **Alashra** (CE female human were-hyena cleric of Lamashtu 16). The lycanthrope priestess and self-proclaimed Eighth Witch of Lamashtu leads a double life as Shai-Nefer, a wealthy merchant-queen and owner of one of Eto's premier trading houses. Her status within Osirion's human society allows her to enrich her legitimate business interests by ordering attacks on her rivals' richest shipments, while avoiding suspicion by willingly sending a portion of her own to the slaughter.

Under her bloodthirsty influence, the Osirian gnoll tribes have consolidated in the worship of Lamashtu as their primary deity, and this success has only fueled her hunger for power on both sides of the racial divide. While many of her followers' victims are devoured and the remains left to rot in the desert sun, others simply vanish, and in truth, those left for the desert's scavengers to feast upon are the lucky ones. Shai-Nefer prefers to be present in human form when the captives, carted off like screaming cattle, arrive for their sacrificial slaughter at the center of her cult's activity, only shifting into her bestial form once the doomed traders realize her role in their capture.

Located in a hidden oasis in the central desert of western Osirion, some 80 miles from Eto, this desert depression



and the ancient temple it contains are collectively termed Lamashtu's Flower—a play on words entirely appropriate for her faithful. Paved with floors of fossil-studded limestone that resemble carpets of gnawed bones, this sanctum devoted to the Mother of Monsters is populated by nearly a hundred idols carved from the defiled statues of other gods and long-dead pharaohs. Now, newly awash in blood and echoing with the discordant sounds of prayers and frenzied ritual copulation, the temple plays host to Alashra's Lamashtu cult as she attempts to extend its festering influence into Eto and Shiman-Sekh, fostering human cults to their goddess. Eventually, given success among the humans, they might seek to foment friction and then open revolt against Sothis with the deranged long-term view of creating a demon-worshipping splinter state in western Osirion.

Whether this plan is viable or not is questionable at best, but Alashra is convinced of its potential and claims that her goddess directly speaks to her, that the multitude of idols whisper to her and that she hears roaring commands in her victims' screams—all things

that point to her divine favor, her complete and utter madness, or both. Whatever the truth, it bodes ill for Osirion's future.

The Lost Fortress of Mekshir

Lost in the heart of the western desert for nearly 50 centuries, the fortress of Mekshir guarded the trade routes from Osirion to the then-province of Thuvia. Located in rough proximity to the ruins of the ancient provincial capital of el-Amara, the fortress was as much a victim of Osirion's fading imperial star in the latter days of the brief and little-remembered Apsu Dynasty as it was of the ferocious desert storms. As Osirion gradually retreated from the peak of its influence across the north of Garund, abandoning outposts, forts, and even entire cities to the desert and barbarism, the fortress remained something of a holy grail for treasure hunters due to the suggestions of a single fragile legend.

To preface that tale, the fortress was never properly abandoned, but rather was buried along with all of its inhabitants by a ferocious sandstorm in the khamsin



season of -841 AR, and so, barring any subsequent looting, its original cache of magical weapons and armor and several months' payroll for its soldiers remains intact. It might hold more, as legend tells that a trade caravan lost that same year along the trade route secretly carried a majority of the assets once held by the Thuvian provincial treasury and its last Osirian governor. Sothis's pregnant silence after the governor's death was not one of apathy, but one of condemnation. The rulers knew their hold on Thuvia was untenable, and of little worth as their power slowly ebbed from its imperial peak, and so their withdrawal from that western province was not by happenstance with the governor's death, but rather a planned abdication sped along by his unexpected (or perhaps expected) death.

As much wealth as the fortress might still hold if that legend were true, none of its rumored contents have ever appeared in the legitimate antiquities markets of Sothis, nor in their unregulated, illicit counterparts, and for good reason. Due to causes unknown, but perhaps related to their sudden deaths or some artifact held within the Thuvian trove, the soldiers of Mekshir never abandoned their posts. The dead still man the ramparts and patrol its grounds, either as skeletons bearing desiccated flesh on

their bones, or drifting as specters through the sand like passing sharks, leaving behind trails of frost in the desert sand that vanish with each sunrise. Even if the fortress were to be found, any treasure-seekers face the daunting task of confronting an entire regiment of Osirian troops, each soldier augmented by undeath.

Monastery of Tar Kuata

While most of Osirion's cities contain shrines or small temples to the Master of Masters, Irori's faithful are not predisposed to massive shows of religious fervor and grandeur, nor are their centers of worship intended to cater to casual devotees or the merely curious. Rather, Irori's faithful tend to seclude themselves in monastic isolation along the fringes of Osirian society, cloistered in dozens of secluded communities off of major trade routes and nestled in isolated valleys among the sparsely populated mountains of the Barrier Range and Brazen Peaks. The most noted of these temple communities include the Temple of An-Alak in the Salt Hills, a dozen miles inland of Osirion's Scorpion Coast; the Stepped Tower of Djedefar at the tip of the Alamein Peninsula; and the ritual center of their faith, the Monastery (and



mountaintop pilgrim city) of Tar Kuata in the nation's remote southwest, beyond the Footprints of Rovagug.

Built upon a wide cliff jutting off of the eponymous mountain, and from there carved directly into the peak itself, the Monastery was founded in 1490 AR by Narmek Tar Kuata, a Sothan priest of Irori now venerated as a saint by modern adherents of Irori's faith. Narmek's bones have since been slowly dispersed as relics across the face of northern Garund, but the cleric's skull and several vertebrae remain at the monastery, clad in gold and housed in a small shrine atop an impossibly tall spire of rock near the mountain's summit. Suffice to say, the spire has neither steps nor handholds, and so only the most skilled and fervent of Irori's worshippers possess the aptitude to reach the reliquary. In the past century, three attempts to pilfer the bones and their golden settings have failed horribly, with the thieves falling to their deaths—though it is significant that the thieves did not fall during their ascent or descent of the spire, but appeared to have been hurled to their doom only once they'd reached the unguarded shrine itself.

Pyramid of An-Hepsu XI

All of Osirion's pharaohs were obsessed with their own existence after death, believing that their status in the Great Beyond would mirror that of their mortal lives only via specific inscriptions within their resting places, the ritual sequestration of actual wealth and possessions, or the representation of those things in glorified form. While many of those grandiose tombs have long since been lost to time, they did exist, and records attest to their vanished grandeur. Of the greatest pharaohs, the greatest numbers of records and legends exist, and virtually no hyperbole can be considered too far from the realm of truth. Yet there is one pharaoh, one of the most powerful, for whom all records describing the tomb have been lost or hidden.

The Pharaoh of No Rain, An-Hepsu XI, otherwise known to history as the Incorruptible Pharaoh, ruled Osirion with unquestioned might for nearly four centuries. Likely sterile, unable to father children and already the last of his dynastic line, the pharaoh turned his potent mastery of the arcane to first extending his life, and later to ensuring that he would never die by mummifying his still-living flesh. A powerful and respected ruler prior to his embracing of undeath,

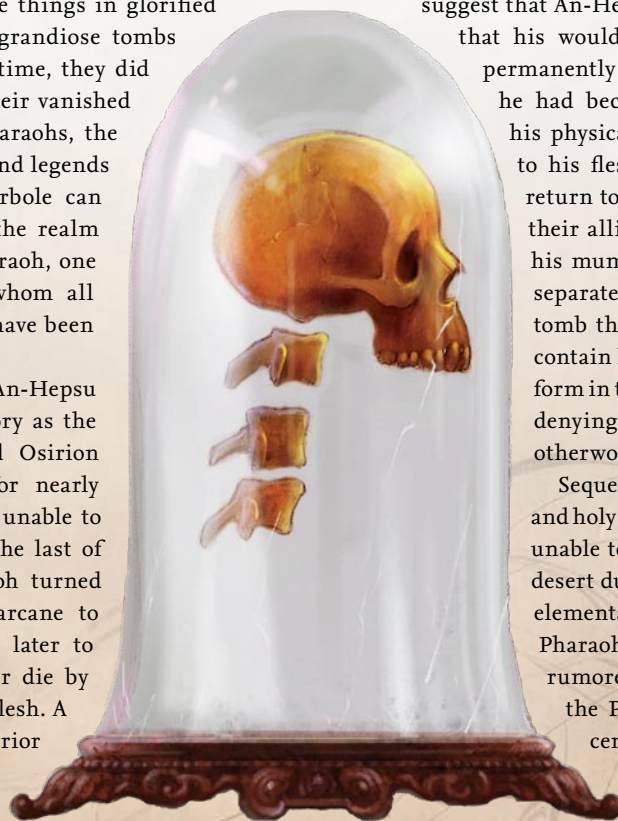
few of his subjects would have resented his status, as it assured them of stability and continuity in their lives, but given the anti-undead dogma of the Church of Pharamasma, the pharaoh simply never mentioned it, and it would be another 80 years before it was even suspected. When a freak roof collapse buried him under a ton of rock, the nation prepared to mourn for their dead leader, but when dug free 5 days later the god-king rose unharmed and continued with his duties. This and the mummification wounds visible on his body after the accident made all of his subjects aware of his true nature, though by then the common folk were powerless to stop him.

Such was An-Hepsu's arcane power that his legacy may have inspired the undead sorcerer-king Geb, but many records of his unnatural rule seem to have been purposefully destroyed or hoarded in secret by the clergy of Pharamasma and Nethys. What is known is that, over time, the pharaoh's ambitions knew no limits, and his sanity grew tenuously thin even as his knowledge and power grew ever greater. Filled with tremendous hubris, the pharaoh expanded Osirion's power while conducting experiments of dire nature and dealing with terrible beings from the planes.

While the exact trigger remains unknown, eventually the clergy rebelled and the pharaoh's reign came to an abrupt end, signaling another long descent in Osirian influence and power. No mention exists of the Incorruptible Pharaoh's tomb, though dire legends suggest that An-Hepsu XI was never destroyed,

that his would-be killers were unable to permanently disperse the monster that he had become. Even as they divided his physical remains, his spirit clung to his flesh and willed the pieces to return to each other. The priests and their allies imprisoned him, sealing his mummified organs and body in separate containers. The prison-tomb they fashioned for him would contain his unholy spirit and broken form in the mortal realm for eternity, denying him earthly freedom or otherworldly release.

Sequestered away from the royal and holy necropoli, with any followers unable to bury the body parts in the desert due to the risk of invoking the elementals' rage, the Incorruptible Pharaoh's tomb has always been rumored to exist somewhere within the Pillars of the Sun, Osirion's central mountain range. Potentially located within



a hidden valley or carved into one of the formidable granite peaks, another legend says that a true pyramid was built and then carefully and magically obscured to resemble a normal mountain in the remote and unpopulated range's interior.

If true, then the phylactery remains to this day, warded to prevent the banished pharaoh's regeneration or its own destruction by future generations that might prove capable of the act, forever denying him a true death and the potential for whatever afterlife awaits him in the Great Beyond. The prison-tomb might also contain, not wealth or the contents of any other royal sepulcher, but the most dangerous and potent of the Incorruptible Pharaoh's creations and whatever artifacts he had gathered in the long twilight of his rule, hidden away lest any others attempt to retread his footsteps.

The River Sphinx

Civilization would never have risen beyond the scope of wandering tribes and small communities sheltered around the rare desert oases if not for the mighty River Sphinx. The greatest of Osirion's cities rise up along its banks, with only a few others beyond the river owing their existence to the waters of desert aquifers and oases, and none of those as large as the urban children of the Sphinx or its twin sources in the nation's south and west, the Crook and the Asp. The majority of Osirion's population lives on or near its banks, using it as a source of drinking water and a system of transit as well as relying on its seasonal flooding to enrich the soil of their fields.

Long-stemmed papyrus reeds line the banks in most regions, while brilliant white lotus flowers are common as well, though in heavily traveled sections both are usually cleared so as not to foul the rudders and oars of passing ships. Various species of edible fish swim its length, and a dozen types of large waterfowl populate the shallows, all providing splashes of color and supplementary meat for many of Osirion's poor. But the river provides its own defenses as well—upstream along the Crook and Asp, rapids dot the river's length, and elsewhere there is always the lurking danger of hetkoshu—a type of native crocodile—and the rare cluster of hippopotami, though the latter have been largely hunted into extinction.

The Ruins of Tumen

Rising from the sands 75 miles from Sothis, Tumen once stood as Osirion's largest city, and for a single shining moment it also served as its capital. But that time was fitfully brief, and Tumen was swallowed up by the desert within a century of the passing of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension, though its demise began earlier, during the twilight of their earthly reign.

Built in the heart of the eastern deserts, far from the glittering ribbon of the Sphinx and its surrounding

floodplain, Tumen owed its existence to a particularly unconventional source of water. While few records from the period shed any light on this particular facet of the old capital, the residents of Tumen had ready access to unnaturally pure water, drawn forth "by the grace of the Opaline Satrap whom the Radiant Pharaoh favored, and in turn was favored by." Many Osiriontologists agree that the text likely refers to a massive desert aquifer deep below the sands, divined and accessed by magic now lost and waiting rediscovery. However, a minority suggest that the city's water arrived by way of a permanent portal to the elemental planes via some manner of bargain with one of that realm's rulers or an agreement with one of the desert's elemental tribes.

Regardless, at some point shortly prior to the deaths of the Four Pharaohs, the water supply began to ebb, and over the next century failed to match the city's needs, eventually necessitating its abandonment, especially after the founding of Sothis further to the west. If the source is a failed natural aquifer, the city will forever remain locked in a cycle of burial and discovery with the shifting whimsy of the khamsin season; if the source were more magical in nature, it remains a distinct possibility that Tumen might be restored to glory in the future. This fact has not been lost on the Forthbringers and the Ruby Prince, especially given their own magical talents in binding extraplanar—especially elemental—beings.

The Seven Stelae

Located midway between Shiman-Sekh and the port city of Totra, the collection of massive pillars known as the Seven Stelae rise above the surface of the surrounding dunes. Partially subsumed by the windblown desert tides, the red granite pillars bear the sigil of An-Hepsu I, the Pharaoh of Seven Faces. The upper portion of each stele is carved with a likeness of the pharaoh in a different pose, though one is broken off 30 feet above the sand level, its top presumably buried nearby. Largely immune to the desert's erosion due to the type of stone used for their construction, each of the pillars bears inscriptions detailing one of An-Hepsu's achievements. Unfortunately, two of the pillars' inscriptions are defaced, and the missing top of the broken one surely contains additional stories now lost.

Due to its remote location in the central desert, little exploration of the site has occurred, and beyond any aesthetic appreciation of the monuments themselves, or a historian's interest in the carvings, there has traditionally been little to draw the attention of the typical treasure hunter. This latter point has changed, however, with the recent discovery of a recessed, hidden opening into one of the stelae, obscured within the pharaoh's cartouche and leading into a small chamber decorated with intricate





murals and a translucent alabaster plate set into the floor above a set of stairs. The explorers who discovered the entrance were immediately set upon by what they described as a pair of spectral, winged guardians. Badly wounded and down two of their party, they barely managed the return trip to Totra, but their story has set off a flurry of subsequent attempts.

To date, three more doors have been found, though two of them remain sealed by magic, with the open one leading to a descending stairwell choked with sand. Of the original entrance, the spectral guardians, whatever they might be, have thus far stymied any further penetration.

Exploration around the stelae themselves has led to the discovery of a number of lesser finds, including the intact roof of a buried temple and the carved tops of a plaza of lesser columns. Given this data, the seven stelae might only be the tip of a much larger ruin complex—potentially an entire city—still hidden by centuries of desert accretion.

Shiman-Sekh

While most of Osirion's great cities owe their success to one of the nation's rivers or ready access to mountain streams and springs, Shiman-Sekh owes its water supply to the Golden Oasis, far and away the largest freshwater desert spring across the face of north Garund.

While the precise history of the city's founding is unclear, legend holds that the city was constructed by the Song Pharaoh in the early days of pharaonic Osirion, making it one of the nation's oldest. It has prospered ever since, surrounded on all sides by the harsh and forbidding sands of the western deserts. Such is the water supply of the Golden Oasis—presumed to rise up from a massive underground river—that the city's boundaries actually encompass a series of slender, shallow lakes sculpted by dikes into the loose shapes of unfolding lotus petals. Each petal lake stretches out over several square miles and serves as home to thousands of colorful waterfowl dwelling in the reeds and a small population of hetkosu introduced centuries earlier.

Valued as the waters are, the city proper sits on their western edge, ceding access to the lakes to vast swaths of surrounding farmland that dwarf the area of urban Shiman-Sekh itself. The most prominent landmarks in the city include several ancient obelisks erected in later periods to the Song Pharaoh, the largest Osirian temple to Sarenrae outside of Sothis, and a large slave market on the southern end of the city that caters both to foreign buyers and the labor needs of the city's fields.

Artistic in its layout and resembling the body and roots of a great lotus plant, the arrangement of the city's streets and major buildings is the same as in the oldest periods of antiquity. Shiman-Sekh's extreme age and adherence to that original pattern also means that virtually the entire modern city is built upon the foundations of earlier structures, and those upon even older ones. Occasionally new construction work uncovers intact buildings sunk down into the silt, the remains of archaic cellars and passages of uncertain origin, and recently even stranger things.

Slave Trenches of Hakotep

Between the Barrier Mountains and the headwaters of the Crook stands a network of massive, heavily eroded earthworks constructed by the otherwise unknown Pharaoh Hakotep I. The so-called slave trenches themselves are just as mysterious as their namesake builder, running in odd geometric arrangements of mounds and furrows across 17 square miles of rocky desert. Broken obelisks dot the mounds between the trenches at irregular intervals like withered fingers reaching up from the meandering earthworks, while the sand-choked trenches lie filled with the bleached, broken, and pockmarked bones of tens of thousands of slave laborers.

The obelisks themselves have suffered harshly from an untold period of erosion by the sands carried on the mountain winds from the peaks looming on the distant horizon, and few legible markings remain to give clues to their builders and their purpose. Previous attempts at investigation have to date yielded only the pharaonic cartouche of Hakotep I and the fact that each and every one of the thousand-odd stones contains the bound spirit of a sand or earth elemental.

It remains unknown just what the earthworks were intended for, but based on the remaining profile, it might have been intended as some kind of magical and mundane defense of the Kho-Rarme Pass, or some sort of titanic glyph to channel or augment the waters of the nearby Crook. Yet it appears unfinished,

despite the monstrous effort put forth in its construction, the staggering magical resources that must have gone into binding its elemental host, and the sheer death toll as evidenced by the bones in the open graves. Further excavation might tell more of its history and intended purpose, but the area has claimed many more lives than just those of the ancient laborers.

The bound elementals cause minor seasonal earthquakes across the region and, more notably for curious adventurers, appear responsible for the bizarre animation of many of the skeletal remains. Unlike true undead, the skeletal creatures that prowl the trenches are possessed by elemental spirits, much like golems, and during their active periods they seem compelled to excavate the ruins, either looking for something lost and buried or magically forced to finish the job they were bound to complete millennia ago. Whether due to devotion to their tasks or madness from long periods of magical enslavement, the elemental-possessed skeletons of the ancient dead and the desiccated corpses of more recent victims violently attack any intruders who encroach upon the earthworks. Their work seems doomed to failure, though, as after each period of frenzied activity the khamsin winds end up burying and destroying whatever progress is made.

The Sphinx Head

Situated between Shiman-Sekh and the Junira, Osirion's largest extant sphinx is also the most spectacular, and one of the nation's most recognizable landmarks. Carved from a dark, almost black granite and set against the bleached desert sands, the so-called Black Sphinx, or simply the Sphinx Head, has been buried to its chin in the sands of the western deserts. The carving's beauty and prominence proved a curse during Osirion's long period of foreign rule, however, and the face was damaged, then chiseled away entirely, and at times even used as a target for mages and soldiers in the employ of the ruling Keleshite satraps.

Restored by the order of Khemet I, the Black Sphinx's facial features have since been determined to be those of the Sky Pharaoh Menedes I, the first ruler of Osirion's last native dynasty prior to the Qadiran invasion of 1532 AR. Even linked to the Sky Pharaoh, scholarly speculation has always been rife with regard to the monument's origin and purpose, positing it as a boundary marker for the border with Thuvia, a place of ritual pilgrimage, or the only visible remnant of an ancient city.





However, there has never been a city in the remote northwestern deserts, and during the period of Menedes I's reign there would have been no need for such a grand demarcation of a provincial boundary. The recent discovery of a door atop the Sphinx's head has led to a suggestion that it might be the entrance to Osirion's most unconventional royal tomb. Until recently there was no information to confirm this speculation, as all three known excursions into the head never returned, but the chance that it might contain a royal tomb has made the head one of the most attractive targets for exploration now that Khemet III has opened it and many other portions of the desert to foreign exploration.

While it was previously assumed that earlier expeditions failed due to foul and toxic air within the Sphinx, the truth is actually the opposite—beyond the initial chamber the tomb's interior contains no air at all. Unwilling to entrust his eternal safety to magic he deemed likely to fail over time, the Sky Pharaoh instead

left the task to a group of guardians from the Elemental Plane of Air (pledged to him by one of the genie princes of that otherworldly realm) who removed all air from the tomb. Not only was this effective in preventing decay, it also dissuaded tomb robbers.

The artificial vacuum remains to the current day, sustained by the elemental spirits bound to the tombs of the pharaoh, three queens, and several of his children. The vacuum also possesses the unnerving quality of causing a constant, gentle influx of air, whistling against the stone to create a sound not unlike a beguiling whisper, as if the Sphinx were calling out to those in its proximity. Sadly, anyone answering its call finds only death.

Inside the tombs, virtually untouched by the ravenous passage of millennia, the glory of the Mendes Dynasty shines like new, potentially one of Osirion's greatest undiscovered treasures. Prowled by its leonine breath-drinking genie guardians, the tomb's interior contains not only the intact sarcophagi of the royal family but

dozens of chambers piled high with earthly riches and a great gallery wrought in crystal holding copies of hundreds of rare and lost volumes of history, religious lore, astronomy, and elemental magic. The chambers also contain the bodies of a dozen of the Pharaoh's personal guards, animated by elemental essence. These shambling guardians (accompanied by the dead of the three previous attempted expeditions) are preserved in a lifelike state by a mild aura of positive energy that permeates the tomb.

Tephu, City of the Reed People

Named for the sea of reeds that grows in the shallow inundated marshlands where the Crook and Asp join together, Tephu has long supplied Osirion with much of its supply of papyrus. The city's major industry is the harvest and processing of its one abundant natural resource, and they have a near-monopoly on the process of making and selling papyrus. Befitting this focus, Tephu houses the largest academy of scribes in Osirion, which trains many of Osirion's initiate clerics and novice wizards, as well as the secular record-keepers of the government and mercantile classes.

Long overlooked by foreign invaders and internal conflicts alike, Tephu's scribes have preserved a massive (if poorly cataloged) trove of records from the time of its founding in -1605 AR by Djederet II, pharaoh and cleric of Nethys. The current governor, **Deka An-Keret** (LN female human cleric of Nethys 10) is extremely protective of this literary and historical treasure, and in recent years has worked to preserve and copy the oldest works by both mundane and magical means. Suddenly valued not only by scholars but by explorers and adventures alike, this same trove of documents now finds itself in great demand by those hoping to pinpoint the location of many places otherwise lost to time and sand.

Totra

Founded in -2587 AR by the Conquering Pharaoh An-Hepsu II, the city of Totra is the largest of Osirion's ports outside of Sothis itself. Totra is often seen as a symbol of the heights of Osirion's power, given its association with the nation's greatest period of expansion, yet at the same time, as the ancient port of the Great Atoqua, it also stands out as a symbol of its imperial excesses. When the fleets of the An Dynasty subjugated what would become Thuvia and Rahadoun, Totra saw an influx of many of the slaves who—along with their descendants—would build many of Osirion's pyramids and monuments for centuries to come.

Because of its association with native Osirian power, Totra was a major target of the cultural suppression that the nation endured under the yoke of foreign rule following the death of the Fallen Pharaoh and the subsequent Qadiran

invasion. Many of Totra's monuments were toppled, its statues defaced and smashed, and the legacy of its glory under the An Dynasty buried. This only created an enduring wellspring of nationalism in Totra among both the underclasses and the nobility, both of whom remain almost exclusively Garundi in ethnic composition.

Since the fall of the last Keleshite sultan, Totra's nobility has sought to reconstruct their city as it was prior to the Qadiran invasions, spending vast sums of their own money along with wealth gleaned from foreign trade. Original monuments were restored, statues were recovered from where they had been hurled into the harbor, and dozens of sphinxes once buried in the desert were set to line the city's largest roads.

The greatest statement of Osirian resurgence now stands at the center of Totra's harbor, looking out over the waters of the Inner Sea. Carved in red granite, a great statue of An-Hepsu II sits upon a throne of white limestone, its arms raised to the sun, grasping a carved alabaster scarab that glows golden in the light. It is important for the city's character to note that the island did not exist more than 30 years ago, and was in fact constructed in a pointed reversal of historical events from blocks of stone cut from the toppled statues of dozens of Qadiran satraps.

Since the rise of Khemet I and continuing with his son and grandson, the nobles of Totra have eagerly pledged their support to the new rulers of Osirion, oftentimes with extreme public fervor, despite private concerns about the heavy state of taxation upon their waxing maritime wealth. While the Ruby Prince appreciates their public displays of loyalty, and has rewarded the city with a wealth of seats upon the Council of Sun and Sky, it remains unlikely that he shares their prejudicial views against the nation's Keleshite minority. While Totra welcomes foreign merchants with open arms, the populace is distinctly hostile to citizens of Keleshite ancestry, viewing them as the unwanted remains of 7 centuries of foreign subjugation and abuse.

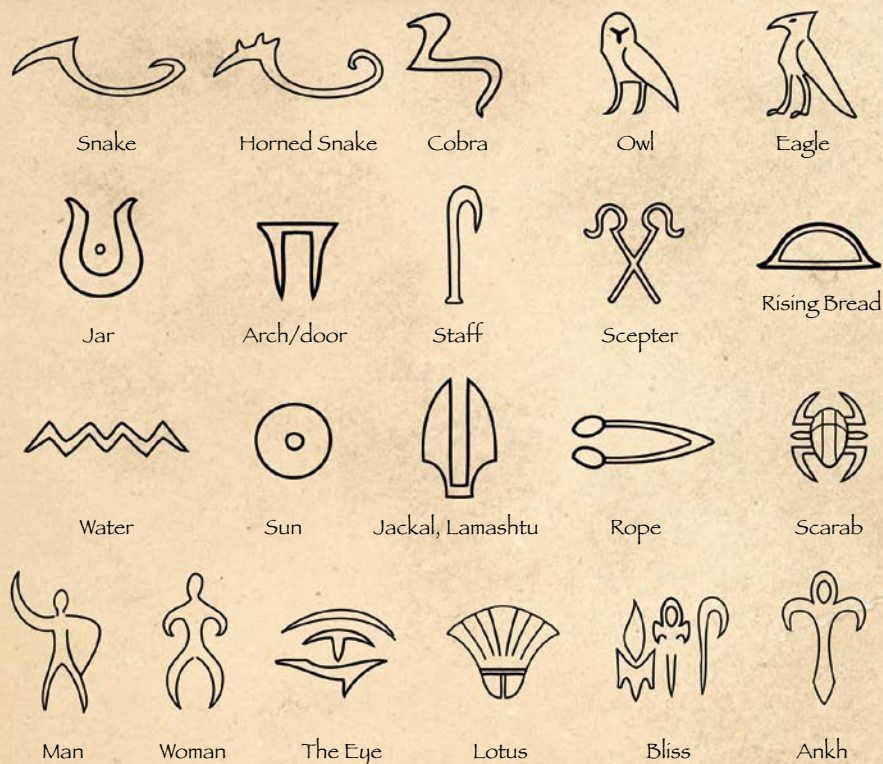
Valley of the Pyramids

While the Khamsin storms seasonally wreak havoc across the face of Osirion's deserts, occasionally devouring small towns or revealing ruins long lost from the face of Golarion, in the past year they struck especially hard. To some it seemed as if the elemental tribes had gone berserk, competing and warring with ferocity unseen in recent history, for reasons unknown outside of the secretive world of their own immortal Byzantine politics. While the storms likely uncovered dozens of ruins across the Osirian deserts, one discovery only 50 miles southeast of Sothis was nothing short of phenomenal.

Long known as a nexus of elemental conflict, the deserts southeast of the capital possess a character all their own after each khamsin season. In the wake of their actions,

OSIRIAN HIEROGLYPHS

Osiriontologists have identified more than 10,000 hieroglyphs from all ages of the country's history. The specific meanings of most of these pictographs have shifted over time and vary by region, and in some cases the meanings were forcibly changed to eradicate the mention of a hated pharaoh. Confounding the issue is the fact that some carvings use a coded form of the language in order to confuse would-be tomb robbers and keep them from finding secret treasure chambers in pyramids, and such explorers must regularly determine if a given symbol should be interpreted literally or deciphered as part of a puzzle. Finally, at least one era saw the symbols used to represent sounds rather than words or ideas.



the desert sands lie sculpted into a surreal landscape unseen elsewhere in Osirion—a place of massive, baroque, and twisting canyons cut between towering walls and plateaus of compacted sand. Not all of the walls are as solid, however, and especially as the seasons progress, the happenstance khamsin constructions gradually collapse in monstrous and lethal sandslides.

Amid these so-called underdunes, the past year unveiled a valley not fully seen since the reign of Osirion's fabled Four Pharaohs of Ascension. According to the stories and artifacts now filtering into Sothis's antiquities bazaars, the valley contains nothing less than four pyramids and some manner of magical portal, rumored to allow access to the extraplanar tomb of those four legendary rulers. Even now, adventurers from across Osirion are busily outfitting themselves in Sothis, preparing to descend on the potentially untouched ruins. (For more information on this recent discovery, see *Pathfinder Module J1: Entombed with the Pharaohs*.)

Wati, the Half-City

Now the smallest of the southern trio of cities, Wati was the largest until its population was ravaged by the Plague

of Madness in 2499 AR conjured and spread by the cult of Lamashtu, taking advantage of the religious conflict raging across Garund during that period. The city never fully recovered, and in the wake of its loss—said to have been upward of 60 percent of the population—Wati was slowly abandoned by the surviving population and given up to the desert. Much of its stigma, however, was removed in 2953 AR when the priesthood of Pharasma established a major temple and consecrated the city in the memory of the murdered dead, setting aside the abandoned sections of Wati in their honor. In much the same way that the Necropolis of the Faithful in Sothis serves as a mirror of the living capital, the abandoned half of Wati remains a ruined but oddly serene counterpart to a resurgent city. In the past thousand years the living section of the city has expanded and the abandoned part is now less than a fourth of its overall area. Unlike the graveyards in Sothis, the walled-off sections of Wati are only partially accessible, and given that their contents remain largely untouched due to local stigma and subsequent desert encroachment, the treasures of the deceased quarter are targets for adventurers who gain the blessing of Pharasma's clergy.



Sothis

Sothis stands as a glimmering jewel of Garundi success over the elements, foreign domination, and even the civilization-wrecking fall of the *Starstone*. As Osirion's first major city, ancient capital of the legendary Pharaoh Azghaad, and current capital of a resurgent nation and people, Sothis displays the legacy of its nearly mythical past alongside its current wonders as a seamless and astounding whole. Presented below are several of the most significant and infamous locations within the city.

Azghaad's Spire

Situated opposite the High Temple of Pharamasma on Sothis's skyline stands the grand temple of Nethys and Azghaad's Spire. The complex is constructed as a series of concentric, circular temples granting access to devoted adherents of Pharaoh Azghaad the All-Seeing, with the inner circles restricted to Nethys's priesthood alone.

From within the temple's innermost sanctum, a great veinstone obelisk rises up to the sky, equal to but not above the height of its sister temple of Pharamasma.

Though named for the first of Osirion's dynastic pharaohs, the massive spire is a relatively recent construction, or rather, reconstruction. The original obelisk, an ancient monument to the city's legendary founding, was defaced and eventually demolished following the Qadiran invasion in 1532 AR, as the conquerors disliked its ties to the legacy of Osirion's first pharaoh and his dynastic successors. In 4620 AR it was rebuilt by **High Theurgist Malika Azdari** (N female human wizard 5/cleric of Pharamasma 6/mystic theurge 6) to an even greater height, with the very top of its spire crowned by a capstone of curious, amber-colored desert glass. According to rumor, the capstone is nothing less than the top of Azghaad's royal tomb, the rest of that

building supposedly since lost to time and the devouring desert sands. If true, it would suggest that the priests of Nethys have or recently had knowledge of the actual location of the first pharaoh's pyramid.

With the opening of the deserts to foreign exploration and excavation, the priests have faced a flood of questions about the spire and its capstone. To date they have remained silent, continuing their policy of allowing access to the spire only to their priests, but it is rumored that the clergy may seek to sponsor expeditions to the lost tomb, so long as they remain firmly in control of what they consider one of their religion's most holy locations.

The Black Dome

Dominating the profile of Sothis's skyline, and housing both the royal palace and the fabulous estates of many of its noble elite, the Black Dome is the oldest and certainly most unique structure in the city. Often a shock to visitors, the Dome is nothing less than the glittering, iridescent black carapace of a singularly titanic scarab beetle.

The origin and nature of the hollow shell are a mix of history and legend, but the shell that would come to be referred to as the Black Dome certainly predates the existence of Sothis. Prior to the city's founding and the rise of pharaonic Osirion, the carapace was used by local tribes for shelter against the seasonal khamsin winds, the people returning to their villages nearer to the River Sphinx after the storms subsided.

According to legend and backed by the lore of the church of Nethys, the origin of the Black Dome began not in Osirion, but in central Casmaron at the Pit of Gormuz. When the god of fury, Rovagug, unleashed his spawn upon the face of Golarion, one of the greatest of his monstrous children was the gigantic scarab beetle Ulunat. Laying waste to much of northeastern Garund, the beast was eventually brought low by the magic of a then-mortal Nethys—one of his final acts before attaining omniscience and godhood. The death of Ulunat caused the earth to flower at the touch of the creature's blood, bringing life to the desert in the form of dozens of natural springs and oases. These oases (and others conjured forth by magic since that ancient time) have never lagged in their output of water, remaining constant even when others across the deserts have died or shifted.

Early Sothis formed around Ulunat's hollow shell, gradually attracting a larger settled population around its oases even as the Dome served the same purpose it had for centuries prior. As the population grew larger and Osirian society evolved to become more and more stratified by social rank and hierarchy, the interior of the Black Dome became the exclusive domain of the Pharaoh, the non-royal nobility, and (at times) the representatives

of foreign governments. Over the centuries as the wealthy and powerful inhabited the Dome almost exclusively, the iridescent shell was magecrafted with artificial constellations of magical flame and faerie fire, like the cosmos in miniature whirling overhead in pace with the changes in the actual sky above Sothis.

Many of the other wonders of Sothis are encapsulated by the glittering dome, the most magnificent of them including the Palace of the Forthbringer, the chambers of the Council of Sun and Sky, the Sothis Exhibitory, Menetnashté's Orrery, and the Shepeskan Grove (populated by saplings granted by the druidic wardens of its namesake garden in Osirion's remote northeast).

Council of Sun and Sky

Constructed 50 years ago during the latter days of Khemet I's reign, this wide, glass-domed building sits within an open, paved plaza inside the Black Dome, between the Palace of the Forthbringer and one of the dome's major entrance gates. Named for its collective occupants, the Council of Sun and Sky comprises representatives from each of Osirion's major cities, appointed—rather than elected—by the regional governors or the Ruby Prince. While the appointments are perhaps open to nepotism, in practice the group's composition has been remarkably representative of the various cities, ethnicities, and power groups that coexist within Osirion's borders.

While the Ruby Prince stands as Osirion's undisputed ruler, the Council of Sun and Sky acts as a functional government for their nation's day-to-day operations, policies, and logistical concerns. Officially, the council debates among itself, hears the concerns of citizens in a semi-public forum, and then acts in an advisory capacity to the Forthbringer. The Ruby Prince gives them enough delegated authority to alleviate the burden of many lesser concerns of governing, allowing him to concentrate on foreign affairs and whatever secret concerns now occupy much of his time within the palace—the same practice as his grandfather.

The members of the Council know their place, however, and do their best to cater to their own interests and those of their constituents (whatever city or group that might be) within the boundaries of their granted authority, knowing that at a moment's notice it or their place on the Council might be revoked. This later action has occurred more than once in the past for members of the nobility who sought to enrich themselves too much at the nation's expense, or whose actions went against the wishes of the pharaoh.

Currently led by the outspoken and populist **First Speaker Dahnakrist Phi** (NG male human bard 3/ commoner 6), the Council of Sun and Sky has been flooded by an influx of foreign representatives jockeying

for an audience with the Ruby Prince, presumably relating to the recent opening of the nation's deserts to foreign exploration and, to a larger extent, Osirion's waxing power and the ripples now felt across Garund and the Inner Sea. Recently, the most shouting in the council chambers has been between representatives of such nations as Cheliah, Andoran, Qadira, and Taldor, as of late the Prince has been increasingly preoccupied, and the only foreign petitioners granted audience have been those of Cheliah and Andoran, plus a vampiric representative from Osirion's former colony of Geb.

The Crimson Canal

While the presence of its many oases allowed Sothis to support the population of a city on the edge of the Osirian desert, the people would have been dependant upon overland trade and importation of food from the farmlands along the length of the Sphinx, a dozen miles away. Ultimately this would have limited the city's growth, and likely precluded its status as both Osirion's capital and largest population center, were it not for the Crimson Canal.

Legend commonly attributes the Crimson Canal's construction to Azghaad the First Pharaoh in the years following Sothis's founding, though alternate stories give credit to one of his successors, the Naga Pharaoh, roughly a century later. Regardless of its builder's identity, the Crimson Canal allows the movement of ships and maritime trade directly into Sothis's heart. This planning allows the banks of the Sphinx proper to be devoted almost entirely to cultivation, and avoids the intrusion of that vital but banal activity into the glittering, cosmopolitan capital.

Visitors to Sothis often find the canal bustling with incoming and outgoing ships, ferrying mercantile trade and people alike yet somehow avoiding the lines and utter congestion that might be expected in comparable ports like Absalom or even its fellow Osirian port of Totra. The credit for this success falls squarely upon the use of multiple locks branching away from the canal proper, and the observation and regulation of traffic from the canal's only island, the Eye of Sothis.

This ovoid island is dominated by the presence of the fortress headquarters of the city watch on its northern end, though two other, smaller garrisons are placed elsewhere in the city near the public bazaar and slave market and close to the Black Dome. South of the fortress, the island's center features a public plaza stretching fully across the island, with steps leading up to great masonry embankments that provide access to bridges across the canal, tall enough to allow the passage of ships. Centered around a reconstructed obelisk dedicated to Azghaad, the plaza caters to citizens moving from one side of the city to

the other, a plethora of public speakers seeking attention, food vendors, and other smaller-scale merchants.

Less accommodating to the public at large, the southern end of the Eye is mostly filled with the island's commercial docks and the warehouses used in the sale and transfer of ship cargo. Amid the pursuit of goods and profit, the island's southern end holds less savory occupants, perhaps giving another reason for the presence of the northern bank's fortress. While the secretive faith of Norgorber maintains a small temple adjacent to the southern end of the Malhitu Bazaar—and likely other smaller ones dedicated to the Reaper of Reputation's aspects—rumors abound that somewhere among the island's warehouses there exists a much grander temple operating away from the eyes of rival faiths and secular review alike. Known simply as “The Mote,” a dot of corruption in Sothis's Eye, it serves as the cult's center in Osirion, as well as a location more fit to cater to worshipers from the nobility and merchant classes.

Malhitu Bazaar

Sprawling across much of southeastern Sothis, the Malhitu Bazaar is at once a shining example of a resurgent Osirion's wealth, its legendary past, and humanity's collective greed and vice. While the land is not walled in (and the bazaar's tents and stalls oftentimes spread beyond the land officially granted for its operation), its entrance is symbolically gained through a series of three gates, with a fourth gate reserved exclusively for the slave trade. Each of the three primary gates is flanked by a pair of limestone obelisks inscribed with the names of the current ruling dynasty, as well as a carved proclamation granting the bazaar's use to foreign merchants and any free Osirian without charge. Lining the roads for a quarter mile leading up to the gates are nine carved white sphinx statues, impressing upon citizen and foreign traders alike the return to power of a royal dynasty, as for centuries prior to the resumption of native rule many of Sothis's public monuments and statues sat defaced, toppled, and neglected by foreign rulers eager to put aside the pharaonic past.

Once inside, gawking visitors and local shoppers find an open-air bazaar filled to the seams with the tents and stalls of every manner of merchant and craftsman, bringing together goods and services from across Osirion and lands beyond. Local residents buy their food here on a daily basis, spices and textiles change hands, the sound of haggling fills the air like the buzzing of desert sandflies, and the auction blocks of the antiquities and slave markets are flush with profit and merchandise. Locals find the bazaar a combination of business and entertainment, though foreigners often find themselves perplexed by the merchants who refuse to sell for a set price, especially

those who find it disrespectful for buyers to refuse to haggle, even if the seller's minimal price is lower than what a fixed price would be.

The many merchants change location from day to day, but the massive tents of the primary auction houses and the stockades of the slave market are permanent fixtures on opposite ends of the bazaar. The auction houses are often filled with the traffic of the antiques gray market—a business technically illegal on its face, but tolerated by the authorities so long as taxes are paid at a higher rate and the best objects are first offered for sale to the royal family or agents of the state acting on their behalf.

The slave stockades are kept out of the way as much as possible, but are still a major business and an accepted way of life for native Osirians. Foreign visitors may protest all they like, but the slave markets are set aside not to avoid their moralizing notice, but to keep the rest of the bazaar isolated from the occasionally deadly and always failed attempts at revolt and escape by those being sold into bondage due to debt, hereditary status, or legal punishment for crimes. It is for this reason that one of Sothis's major outposts of the city watch is located adjacent to the slave market gate on the south end of the bazaar.

Necropolis of the Faithful

Situated on the western bank of the Crimson Canal, a sprawling necropolis of limestone and granite rises up like a shadow of the living city of Sothis. Far from being a stoic and sterile expanse of names and stone, or the archetypal haunted and terrible tomb-city, the Necropolis of the Faithful is a place for those still living to pay respects to the honored dead.

One of Garund's largest and oldest burial places, the necropolis began on and subsequently expanded from the original grounds of the High Temple of Pharasma, both as a sign of devotion to one of Osirion's prominent gods and as a practical measure to allow the tombs and their associated funerary temples to expand as needed without impacting the growth of the living city of Sothis.

By day the gates are open and welcoming, and Pharasma's clergy walk the avenues of graves and monuments,

whispering prayers, keeping them free of sand, and offering guidance to visitors who come to tour the brightly decorated tombs or to leave some manner of offering to the dead. For families making donations to the church, Pharasma's clergy offer a number of ritual services on behalf of living relatives who seek to speed the progress of the dead to and through Pharasma's courts in the Great Beyond. Those seeking more expensive and magical services ultimately find themselves in consultation with the temple's high priest, **Inebni Andabar** (NG male human cleric of Pharasma 14).

As bright and welcoming as the city of the dead may be while the sun shines down overhead, as night draws in, the clergy see to it that the living give way to the solemn period of the evening hours when the tombs succumb to the quiet desert darkness. At dusk the gates of the temple close, sealing off access to the necropolis as the priests of Pharasma cede the tombs and avenues to a group of secretive, shrouded figures. Potentially a mystery cult within Pharasma's priesthood, or even priests of Groetus,



the silent figures minister to the wandering spectres of the unquiet dead who remain earthbound due to unresolved tasks, walking the streets till dawn breaks over the city and the cycle repeats again.

The Palace of the Forthbringer

Easily the largest structure within the Black Dome, the brilliant white walls and towers of the Palace of the Forthbringer enclose the city's largest oasis and play host to dozens of separate structures that comprise the domain of the Ruby Prince and his family. Inside its walls and past the carnelian-mosaic-domed towers—looking like candle flames cast in stone—the palace grounds contain gardens unlike those seen anywhere else in Garund, which seem to grow without any obvious tending or maintenance. Neither is there an apparent source to the gentle breeze that blows across the grounds. The individual buildings that rise out of the secluded paradise contain the massive palace that guests of the Forthbringer see, with everything a visitor would expect of a king. But those visiting nobles and ambassadors never see the private dwellings of the Ruby Prince himself—a great marble enclosure adjacent to the main palace—nor those of his queen and their oft-absent children. The internal details of these structures are regularly speculated about by the jealous members of Sothis's nobility, providing delicious mystery for the rumor mill of the idle rich.

The most amazing portions of the Forthbringer's palatial estate are never seen by the public, nor even by all members of the royal family. Directly adjoining the Ruby Prince's private complex stands a windowless building of red sandstone, constructed by the original Forthbringer, Khemet I. The structure serves as the heavily warded sanctum in which the Ruby Prince and his predecessors summoned and bargained with the elemental beings whose knowledge, services, and royal bloodline allowed them to rise to power and retain it against all rivals. Multiple *magic circles* inscribed upon the chamber's floor allow the prince to call upon dozens of elemental beings who serve him willingly, or whose services he is owed or able to forcibly obtain. Minor elementals in the Forthbringer's service tend to the gardens, enriching the soil, watering the roots, and creating the permanent breeze across the boundaries of the palace grounds.

Each of the known elemental tribes (and two others unknown in the world at large) provide the Ruby Prince with counsel and offer him their aid either to spite their immortal rivals or to gain his favor in the unseen wars that rage seasonally across Osirion's deserts. Besides the representatives of Osirion's elemental clans, the Ruby Prince has called upon and negotiated the services of other elemental beings from the Great Beyond, including genies of air, water, and flame, and the angelic and

fiendish servitors of nearly a half-dozen gods. Khemet III's extraplanar pacts are both extensive and baroque in their depth and detail, and the majority of them have yet to be called upon, suggesting that whatever future the young prince has in mind for his nation, he has yet to begin seeing that destiny play itself out.

The one being with knowledge of the Ruby Prince's designs for Garund and beyond is his oft-felt but never seen elemental companion, the fire elemental Janhelia. Unlike the other elemental spirits who seek to gain the prince's ear, Janhelia came to him unbidden and unbound, and willingly entered his service after protracted negotiations and what appeared to be a sense of concern from the would-be pharaoh's preexisting elemental servants. By Janhelia's own description, her clan has remained outside of the conflicts underlying the desert's khamsin storms for millennia.

While only a mysterious, invisible presence to the world outside of the Forthbringer himself, the elemental has privately told the Ruby Prince that she was once a servitor to one of his ancestors during the Age of Destiny, and it is through loyalty and favors owed back to his now-dead forefathers that she grants him her aid and advice. Assuming truth on her part, Khemet III finds himself in possession of a literal window into the past, able to point him toward the greatest of the wonders of the Osirian god-kings of old, and possibly a return to their ways in Osirion's future. As for Janhelia's seemingly vanished clan, the Illuminates of Sokar, none of the other clans appear to know much about them—or will speak of them to mortals—and thus the Prince has been forced to take her at her word.

Temple of the Eternal Sun

Sothis's temple of Sarenrae often strikes foreign visitors—and non-Sothan Osirians alike—as a bastard child of foreign and native architecture. In fact, the brilliant white and gold temple was constructed around and within the palace of Osirion's last Qadiran governor, mixing the original Keleshite styling with native Garundi symbols and religious iconography.

While it was the burgeoning cult of the Dawnflower that first inspired imperial Qadira to invade and conquer a then-stagnant Osirion, the church has always been loyal to its goddess rather than to the secular hierarchy of any state. Far from being a puppet of foreign rulers, the church's true loyalties were made apparent with their assassination of the last Qadiri satrap and their clergy's return from exile in Thuvia where Osirion's Keleshite satraps had sent them, fearful of the Dawnflower's rise among the underclasses. Their actions might have been seen as simply revenge for their exile, and it would be centuries more before Osirion returned to native rule,



but the faithful of Sarenrae would eventually prove themselves to the new lords of Osirion.

With the eventual emergence of Khemet I as the native ruler of a newborn and once-again culturally assertive nation, the originally Keleshite church of Sarenrae was keenly aware that it was still seen as the product of foreign occupation and religious imposition. While there remained a significant minority of Keleshite people within Osirion's borders, the church's long-term success depended on spreading its gospel independent of nationalistic loyalty, though history had already shown that it would cooperate with such feelings in order to advance its own causes. Though the Dawnflower's church is loyal only to the Dawnflower, it was keen to demonstrate that loyalty and Sarenrae's benevolence to the people of Osirion. As such, shortly after Khemet I claimed power, the church seized the palace of Irfan Arikan II, removing

all symbols of Qadiran power, and over the next month remade the former symbol of foreign rule into one of its own faith, associating the people's newfound feelings of freedom with its own iconography.

The move was hardly spontaneous, however, and most of the palace contents—and the last sultan's fortune—were handed over to Khemet I in a public ceremony days later to sponsor the building of the Palace of the Forthbringer and the restoration of many of the monuments defaced or destroyed during the long, dark period of foreign rule. Only decades later was it revealed that the church hierarchy had struck a deal with the first modern pharaoh a year in advance of his official proclamation of power.

Currently the twin priests **Mkhai** and **Nebt-Sheni** (CG male and female human cleric of Sarenrae 10) lead the church in Sothis, always trying to insert tendrils of faith into the minds of the local population.

PRESTIGE CLASS: LIVING MONOLITH

The land of Osirion is rife with stony sentinels, mountain-hard guardians of bygone days whose implacable gaze can still the heart of the miscreant, comfort a soul in trouble, or scare off a would-be tomb robber. The ancient race of sphinxes, divinely appointed guardians of Osirion and judges of the gods, are said to have endowed the first living

monoliths with their powers, imbuing mortal warriors with the patience and eternal strength of the stones themselves. Legends speak of the first living monoliths as statues raised to a semblance of life, but today most of the desert's paragons of justice are mortals who willingly take up the mantle of immortal warriors through ritual and devotion.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a living monolith, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Feats: Endurance, Iron Will.

Skills: Knowledge (architecture and engineering) 2 ranks, Knowledge (history) 2 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 2 ranks, Speak Language (Sphinx).

Special: Must have a handcrafted stone scarab worth at least 1000 gp created and bound to his forehead in a sacred ritual with at least one sphinx or living monolith present.

CLASS FEATURES

The following are class features of the Living Monolith prestige class. The caster level for powers that duplicate spell effects is equal to 5 + class level.

Ka Stone (Su): During his induction into this prestige class, a living monolith has an engraved scarab stone embedded in his forehead, often inlaid with gems or precious metals. This stone is inscribed on its inner side with the monolith's true name and his oaths to the gods and pharaohs. It cannot be removed without his permission, cannot be dispelled (though it does not function in areas where magic does not work), and does not use a magic item slot.

The ka stone tightly binds the living monolith's mind and spirit to his body, providing him with a +2 bonus to saves against negative levels, death effects, and mind-affecting effects.

A living monolith can invoke the power of his ka stone 3 times per day as a swift action, enabling him to grow in size as if using *enlarge person* (even if he is not a humanoid).

Stone Blood (Ex): At 2nd level, the vital fluids and tissues of a living monolith are infused with the power of ancient stone and can selectively petrify in response to injury. A living monolith automatically stabilizes when at negative hit points and is immune to continuous damage or ability damage from blood loss or blood drain attacks (including weapons with the *wounding* quality).

Fortified Flesh (Ex): At 3rd level, the flesh of a living monolith takes on the hardness of stone, enabling him to shrug off blows. A living monolith gains DR 1/adamantine and 10% immunity to critical hits (as if he were wearing *fortification* armor). This DR increases by 1 and immunity to criticals increases by 10% at levels



LIVING MONOLITH

Hit Die: D8

Level	Base	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
	Attack Bonus				
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Ka stone
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Stone blood
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Fortified flesh (DR 1/—, 10%)
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Stability, tomsight
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Greater ka stone, fortified flesh (DR 2/—, 20%)
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Attunement to stone
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Summon sphinx
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Communion with stone, fortified flesh (DR 3/—, 30%)
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Assumption of stone
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Master ka stone, judgment of the monolith

Class Skills (2 + Int bonus per level): Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (architecture and engineering) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis).

5 and 8. When a living monolith uses his ka stone to increase his size, these defenses temporarily increase by 1 and 10%.

Stability (Ex): At 4th level, a living monolith becomes exceptionally stable on his feet, gaining a +4 bonus to avoid being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. This stacks with a dwarf's stability trait and other similar abilities.

Tombsight (Su): A living monolith of 4th level can perceive the balance of life and death within those they see, as if using *deathwatch* and *detect undead* simultaneously. This power can be used at will and lasts as long as the living monolith concentrates. Using this ability is not an evil action.

Greater Ka Stone (Sp): At 5th level, a living monolith must undergo a ritual replacing his initial stone with one worth at least 5000 gp (he cannot gain any more levels in this prestige class until he does so). This takes 8 hours, destroys the previous stone, and transfers its power to the new one. He becomes immune to natural and supernatural diseases. When he invokes his ka stone's power to increase his size, he gains the benefit of *righteous might* rather than *enlarge person*.

Attunement to Stone (Sp): At 6th level, a living monolith becomes attuned to stone and earth, enabling him to *meld into stone* at will.

Summon Sphinx (Sp): At 7th level, a living monolith gains the power to call upon the aid of the sphinxes, ancient allies of the first immortal tomb guardians of Osirion. Once per day he may call a sphinx to his presence and bargain for its services as if using *planar ally* to call upon an outsider. He gains a +4 bonus to Diplomacy checks to influence sphinxes.

Communion with Stone (Su): At 8th level, a living monolith achieves a unique communion with the living rock, gaining tremorsense in a 30-foot radius as long as he is in contact with the ground. Once per day he can communicate with rock and stone as if using *stone tell*. He understands Terran, the language of earth elementals.

Assumption of Stone (Sp): At 9th level, a living monolith may use *statue* as a spell-like ability on himself at will. He also becomes immune to petrification.

Master Ka Stone (Su): At 10th level, a living monolith must undergo a final ka stone ritual, replacing his current stone with one worth at least 10,000 gp. Upon completing this ritual, the living monolith becomes immortal. He ceases aging (though any aging effects already accrued remain in place) and becomes immune to energy drain and death effects, though he can still be killed by other means. When he invokes his ka stone's power to increase his size, he gains the benefits of *righteous might* and regains lost hit points as if he had rested for a night (though this healing does not restore temporary ability damage or provide other benefits of resting, and changing back does not heal him further).

Judgment of the Monolith (Sp): A living monolith of 10th level has the divine authority to demand truthful answers in order to mete out justice in the name of the ruler of Osirion. Once per day, a living monolith can conduct a ritual of inquisition. If performed on a dead body, this functions as *speak with dead*. Upon a living creature, it functions as a *mark of justice* that activates if the target lies to the living monolith. Finally, a living monolith can use this power to entreat the spirits of the living and the dead to answer questions as if using *contact other plane* (treat as contacting a lesser deity).



CULTS OF OSIRION

Osirion is a land of many faiths, where the priesthood is held in high honor, and even the Ruby Prince himself is a priest of Abadar. Osirian priests, male and female alike, typically shave their heads and wear white robes with fringed kirtles or stoles to indicate their divine patrons, sometimes embellished with a bejeweled graven pectoral. Many wear headscarves along with veils or masks of metal or leather as symbols of the ineffable mysteries of the gods and their interlocutory role as the speakers for divine will.

Osirion is also a crossroads nation, having been ground under the heel of foreign oppressors and the transient faiths that have accompanied them.

Most notable of these is the worship of Sarenrae the Dawnflower, whose cultists were banished to Thuvia but nonetheless managed to have a strong hand in the overthrowing of the satrapy and sultanate that arose in its wake, helping the ethnically Garundi Osirians to once more rule their own land. Osirion's erstwhile Keleshite overlords went to great efforts to extirpate the ancient cultic religions of Osirion during their reign, but in many secret places the ancient rites continue, as beast-headed entities both malevolent and benign are venerated or placated with wealth and blood.

Two ancient serpent cults with deep roots in Osirion's river culture and its endless cycle of life and death, spawned by the floods of the great River Sphinx and its tributaries, are the benevolent Wadjet and the deceiver and destroyer Apep. Wadjet is said to dwell in the great papyrus marshes at the river's delta and is seen as a teacher and giver of wisdom. She is the mother of the uraeuses, a legendary race of winged serpents with two heads reminiscent of hooded cobras, and as a result the uraeus has both an affinity for water and the ability to spit blinding venom into the eyes of its enemies. The uraeuses are Wadjet's emissaries, spirits of wisdom, caution, guidance, and protection, and the priesthood and the pharaohs have long looked to them for insight and advice.

In terrible contrast to Wadjet is the malevolent, world-encircling Apep, denizen of the Tenth Region of Night and Devourer of the Dawn. Apep represents the hidden dangers that lurk just beneath the surface, the deadly whorls and eddies that drown and swallow, and the prowling crocodile and river serpents that prey on those who venture too near the water's edge. Apep is the raging rapids, the boundless flood that inundates and sweeps away all that mortals seek to build. He is the darkness in the water's depths that swallows light and life, devouring the sun and plunging the world into ecliptic night. That the sun rises and returns is but a temporary victory, as



the jaws of the great serpent Apep wait always to seize and consume it again and again, until one day the sun shall rise no more and all shall be ended.

Not all Osirian cults are so apocalyptic in their outlook. One far more prosaic faith, popular among the common folk, is that of Khepri the dung beetle. Khepri is the embodiment of the peasants, those who labor in squalor and tedium but are never beaten down or destroyed. They struggle and survive, no matter the conditions that surround them. Khepri turns what was meant to be his own indignity upon those around him. He is a trickster and a prankster, relishing the upset that his appearance, his aroma, and all that he represents cause in those who think themselves refined and perfect.

In these secret cults as well as in the more open, “modern” religions of Osirion, the place of geometry, numerology, and astrology are common concerns, particularly in relation to the dead and the afterlife. Much Osirian architecture and artwork reflects this predilection, especially those pieces dating from the days of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension. Even modern priests in Osirion sometimes turn to these esoteric studies rather than the more traditional domains of their divine patrons.

The faiths of Wadjet, Apep, and Khepri are less common than those of Abadar, Nethys, Pharasma, and the other major gods of Osirion. As a result, magic items relating to these faiths are scarcer than they were in past ages, as crafters turn to other deities and existing relics are entombed with the faithful. Still, from time to time certain items representing the river serpent, the flying snake, and the lowly dung beetle turn up in markets. Now that treasure-hunters are flocking to explore Osirion’s newly opened tombs, these items are starting to become more common—and perhaps rekindling the old faiths as well.

ROD OF THE RIVER SERPENT

Aura moderate illusion and transmutation; **CL** 10th

Slot hand; **Price** 20,000 gp; **Weight** 10 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This heavy rod is carved to look like the fanged head of the river serpent Apep, the primordial snake-being who was the deceiver, devourer, and destroyer of the sun, light, and life. You can use the rod as a +1 *heavy mace*. If you are chaotic, you can activate the other abilities of the rod.

You gain darkvision at a range of 30 feet when you hold the rod. Once per day, you can use the rod to create an eerie pattern of shadows that acts as a *hypnotic pattern* (Will DC 13 negates); this pattern also acts as a *dispel magic* to any spells with the light descriptor within its area of effect.

When you confirm a critical hit with the rod, it automatically attempts a grapple (+5 bonus) against the target as a free action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the

grapple check succeeds, the snake head on the rod unhinges its jaw to swallow the target whole into a flesh-walled extradimensional space. The swallowed target suffers 1d8 points of bludgeoning damage per round on its turn and is considered grappled. It can escape with a DC 20 Escape Artist check or by damaging the fleshy walls of the extradimensional prison (AC 12, 24 hit points); either means of escape causes the rod’s mouth to expand and disgorge the trapped creature into a random adjacent square (as does the death of a swallowed creature). The prison can hold 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, or 32 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, *darkvision*, *dispel magic*, *hypnotic pattern*, *secret chest*; **Cost** 10,000 gp, 788 XP

ROD OF THE URAEUS

Aura moderate conjuration, divination, and necromancy; **CL** 8th

Slot hand; **Price** 12,400 gp; **Weight** 5 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This rod is fashioned in the form of a uraeus, the legendary winged, two-headed spitting cobra that is the ancient symbol of the god Wadjet, nurturer of the River Sphinx and the personification of spirits guiding and guarding the ruler of Osirion. You can use the rod as a +1 *light mace*. If you are lawful, you can activate the other abilities of the rod as well.

When holding the rod, you gain a +2 resistance bonus to Reflex saves and a +5 competence bonus to Sense Motive checks. Once per day it can create a spray of stinging poison equivalent to *color spray*, except it is a conjuration (creation) effect rather than an illusion (Fortitude DC 13 negates).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, *poison*, *resistance*, creator must have 5 ranks in Sense Motive; **Cost** 6,200 gp, 484 XP

SCARAB OF KHEPRI

Aura moderate conjuration, divination, and transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot none; **Price** 7,800 gp; **Weight** — lb.

DESCRIPTION

This small golden statuette is fashioned in the likeness of Khepri, the winged scarab beetle. When carrying the scarab, once per day you can speak with vermin as if using *speak with animals*, though the information you can obtain is very limited. If you have wild empathy, you may use it on vermin. Once per day you may cast *summon swarm* to summon a swarm of dung beetles (treat as a spider swarm, but rather than being poisonous they inflict filth fever if a DC 11 Fortitude save is failed).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *speak with animals*, *summon swarm*, creator must have wild empathy; **Cost** 3,900 gp, 312 XP

SPELLS OF THE DEAD

The ancient land of Osirion has been the home of magical practitioners for time out of mind, and many spells now common across the face of Golarion had their origins with the astrologers, court-wizards, and the dynastic priest-counselors of generations of pharaohs. A desert land, much of Osirion's ancient magic focused upon the sun and its powers, with reverence as well for the moon, stars, and planets with their mystical influences. The most infamous brand of magic practiced in Osirion, however, is that of necromancy, in particular the legendary papyrus scrolls known as *Aleh Almaktoum*,

the Book of the Dead. Some say the first copy of this work was penned by the hand of the necromancer Geb, but in truth the work may have been as much Geb's collection of more ancient magical writings as the product of his own research. Rare copies of this libram are often found in the collections of Osirian highmages, and the following spells and metamagic feats are uncommon but familiar in Osirian magical circles.

BONESHATTER

School necromancy; **Level** cleric 5, sorcerer/wizard 4

CASTING

Components V, S, M (a broken bone)

Casting Time 1 standard action

EFFECT

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one corporeal creature or object

Duration instantaneous and 1 minute/level (see text)

Saving Throw Fortitude partial (see text)

Spell Resistance yes

DESCRIPTION

The target's bones or exoskeleton shiver and splinter, dealing 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 15d6) to the target, who is also exhausted for 1 minute per caster level from the pain and exertion of the transformation.

If the target makes its save, it takes half damage and is fatigued rather than exhausted. Objects made of bone, chitin, or similar material take half again as much (+50%) damage from this spell. This spell has no effect on creatures that lack both skeletons and hard carapaces.

CANOPIC CONVERSION

School necromancy [death, evil]; **Level** cleric 9, sorcerer/wizard 9

CASTING

Components V, S, F (four alabaster canopic jars worth 100 gp each), M (black onyx worth 100 gp per hit die of the target)

Casting Time 1 round

EFFECT

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Fortitude half; **Spell Resistance** yes

DESCRIPTION

This spell eviscerates the target, drawing forth his life essence as well as his internal organs. The target takes 1d6 hit points of damage per caster level (maximum 20d6). If this damage kills the target, the spell pulls his organs into a set of 4 canopic jars and seals them; 1d4 rounds later, the corpse revives as an undead with the Osirion mummy template (see J1: *Entombed with the Pharaohs*, or as a standard mummy or mummy lord if that book is unavailable).

The mummy is not under your control, but the canopic jars give the bearer certain powers over it. Anyone holding one of



the jars can communicate with the mummy as if they share a common language. The bearer gains the benefits of *protection from evil* and *sanctuary*, but only against that mummy.

Unsealing or breaking a jar is a standard action, which dissipates its power (and protection) but lets the bearer issue a short command to the mummy, similar to a *suggestion* spell (Will DC 23 negates). You (and only you) may unseal all 4 jars in a 10-minute ritual to control the mummy with an effect similar to *geas* (Will DC 23 negates); most casters typically include a restriction that the mummy will not harm them, as unsealing the jars leaves them vulnerable.

SANDS OF TIME

School necromancy; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3

CASTING

Components V, S

Casting Time 1 standard action

EFFECT

Range touch

Target one creature or object

Duration 10 minutes/level or instantaneous (see text)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** yes

DESCRIPTION

This spell accelerates a creature's aging, rendering them temporarily withered and haggard, applying a 1d6 penalty to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. This penalty can't reduce any of these scores below 1. This penalty lasts for 10 minutes per level. When the spell ends, the target returns to its normal age and vigor. Immortal creatures (including most elementals, fey, outsiders, and incorporeal creatures) are immune to this spell.

If you cast this on an object, construct, or undead creature, the spell weathers and corrodes it, inflicting 3d6 points of damage +1 per caster level (maximum +15). This version of the spell has an instantaneous duration.

SPECTRAL SALUQI

School necromancy; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6

CASTING

Components V, S, F (precious metal canine statue worth 100 gp).

Casting Time 1 round

EFFECT

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one ghost dog

Duration 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

This spell creates a spectral *saluqi*, an undead canine resembling an oversized hound with black fur, gray ruff and tail, and milky gray eyes. The hound has the same alignment as you. It can converse telepathically with you and can see and attack ethereal creatures. It otherwise has the same statistics as a yeth hound. It usually leaves no tracks because it prefers to fly an inch above the ground. You are immune to the hound's bay ability.

THANATOPIC SPELL (METAMAGIC)

Your spells can pierce wards against negative energy or even affect undead targets.

Prerequisites: Spell Focus (necromancy), Knowledge (religion) 10 ranks

Benefit: A thanatopic spell pierces defenses that protect against death effects, negative levels, and energy drain, affecting the target as if the protective barrier did not exist. For example, you could cast a thanatopic *vampiric touch* or *enervation* on a target under the effects of *death ward* and they would suffer the normal effect of the spell. Saving throws and SR (if any) still apply.

Undead are susceptible to spells augmented by this feat, as it retunes the negative energy to be harmful to them. A thanatopic spell that would kill a living creature (such as by giving it negative levels equal to its hit dice) destroys an undead (ghosts, liches, and vampires may reform as normal), though they automatically make their saving throws to recover negative levels after 24 hours.

A thanatopic spell uses up a spell slot 2 levels higher than the spell's actual level.

Normal: Defenses such as *death ward* negate death effects, negative levels, and energy drain. Undead are immune to these attacks.

THRENODIC SPELL (METAMAGIC)

You can convert mind-affecting magic to necromantic power capable of controlling undead.

Prerequisites: Spell Focus (necromancy), Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks

Benefit: This feat only works on mind-affecting spells. A threnodic spell affects undead creatures (even mindless undead) as if they weren't immune to mind-affecting effects, but has no effect on living creatures. A threnodic spell uses up a spell slot 1 level higher than the spell's actual level.

Normal: Undead are immune to mind-affecting effects.

TOMB LEGION

School necromancy [evil]; **Level** cleric 8, sorcerer/wizard 8

CASTING

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

EFFECT

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect 3 or more mummies, no 2 of which can be more than 30 ft. apart; see text

Duration 7 days or 7 months (D); see text

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

DESCRIPTION

This spell functions like *shambler*, except that it calls into existence 1d4+2 mummies rather than shambling mounds.

DARK DEALINGS

Osirion is a truly ancient land, a place of secrets and mysteries with deep currents that run below the surface. Some of these secrets have been forgotten by all but the wisest of scholars, others viciously suppressed by tyrants until they become no more than the whispered rumors, and some are intentionally buried beneath layers of subtext, tradition, and nuance by members of secret cabals, cults, and societies, from the smallest village to the beating heart of great Sothis itself.



Between these thin layers of disinformation and misinformation are many who seek to take advantage of the confusion. By controlling the flow of information or piercing rings and cells of secrets, one might learn to navigate the dangerous waters of society, and to prepare for possible stealthy retribution by those aware of the surreptitious probing. Those who wish to survive and prosper in Osirion's seedy underbelly without brute strength, raw power, or political clout must learn to live by their wits. The canniest and cleverest can succeed here, some few striving for positions of eminence but many happier to let fame slide past while fortune fills their coffers. Some adventurous souls stay far from the cities, happier to seek hidden knowledge among the creeping dangers of the ruins, oases, and even the deep desert rather than risk the treacherous embrace of civilized society.

Presented below are several feats that might come in handy for characters seeking lost knowledge through Osirion's many illicit channels.

Black Marketeer

You have many contacts and a keen eye for hidden opportunities in the marketplace.

Prerequisites: Appraise 4 ranks, Gather Information 4 ranks, Knowledge (local) 4 ranks.

Benefit: By utilizing your black market connections, you acquire a resource pool worth 100 gp. This functions like the resource pool gained by the Profits of Kalistrade feat (see *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* page 73) except it can only be used on illegal or illicit items or services (note that something may be illegal or illicit in one area but perfectly acceptable in another) and is centered on Osirion rather than Druma. Typical illegal or illicit items are drugs, poisons, evil magic items, slaves, or dead bodies, though intangibles such as secret information may also qualify (and for these items, a secret of equal value—at the GM's discretion—must be contributed to the pool).

Conceal Scent

You have learned the essential tricks of disguising your odor and keeping creatures from locating you by your scent.

Prerequisites: Hide 3 ranks, Survival 3 ranks.

Benefit: Creatures cannot use the scent ability to track you (though they can still track you through standard means such as footprints). Creatures with scent can detect your presence by smell at half the normal distance, but cannot pinpoint your location with scent.

Heightened Trap Sense

You are acutely attentive to the subtleties of traps and how they are hidden.

Prerequisites: Search 6 ranks, trap sense +1.

Benefit: When you pass within 5 feet of a trap, you are entitled to an automatic Search check to notice the trap. This check is made at a -10 penalty, or -5 if you are moving at half speed and taking no actions other than moving.

Normal: You must take an action to actively search.

Lost in the Crowd

You are used to dealing with the teeming masses in the markets, and are capable of disappearing into them at a moment's notice.

Benefit: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in urban areas; this bonus increases to +4 in crowds. You gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC when threatened by 2 or more enemies.

Osiriontologist

You are well schooled in the traditions, culture, and history of Osirion, especially the broad expanse of its long history and ancient relics.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (history) 4 ranks, Knowledge (local) 4 ranks, Speak Language (Osiriani, Ancient Osiriani).

Benefit: When in Osirion, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, and Perform checks. You gain a +5 bonus when using Appraise, Decipher Script, Knowledge (all skills), and Search to learn about a person, place, or item of ancient Osirion.

Religious Pilgrim

You are a religious pilgrim who often journeys great distances to holy sites of your faith. You take solace in fulfilling your religious purpose and vows, and those you meet respect your dedication and faithfulness.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (geography) 2 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to Will saves, Diplomacy checks, and Survival checks. If you are good, this is a sacred bonus; if you are evil, it's profane. Neutral characters must choose when taking this feat whether the bonus is sacred or profane (if you channel positive or negative energy you must choose the same type as your channeling type). These bonuses increase to +2 if you are

on ground that is consecrated to your faith (under the effects of *consecrate*, *desecrate*, *hallow*, or *unhallow* cast by someone of your religion).

You may purchase non-magical religious items (including holy water) at a 20% discount.

Serpent Lash

You are skilled at using rapid lashes of your whip to snatch at targets and draw them to you.

Prerequisites: Weapon Finesse, proficient in whip.

Benefit: When you successfully trip a creature with your whip, you get an immediate extra attack with the whip against another opponent. You cannot take a 5-foot step before making this extra attack. The extra attack is at the same bonus as the attack that tripped the previous creature. You can use this ability once per round.

You may use a whip to pull an opponent closer to you. Make a trip attack as normal. If you win, you pull the target 5 feet closer to you; as a move action you can pull the target even closer (an additional 5 feet for each 5 points by which your check result exceeds the target's check result). The moving defender provokes attacks of opportunity. If you lose, the defender may immediately react and make a Strength check opposed by your Dexterity or Strength check to try to trip you; you may drop the whip to avoid being tripped.

You can use this ability to attempt to snatch an object with your whip and pull it toward yourself. If the object is in the possession of another creature, make a disarm check. If successful, the item is on the ground in the target's square (the normal result). If you beat their check by 5 or more, the item is on the ground in your square. If you beat their check by 10 or more and you have a free hand, you may automatically catch the item when it enters your square before it lands on the ground.

Special: A fighter may take Serpent Lash as one of his bonus feats.

Swarm Dodger

You have learned tricks to avoid being engulfed by the swarms of crawling horrors that frequently inhabit Osirion's lost tombs and desolate wastes.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, evasion.

Benefit: When a swarm attacks you by ending its turn in your space, you may attempt a Reflex save to avoid damage (DC equal to the swarm's distraction save DC + 10). If the save succeeds, you also avoid any poison, blood drain, or similar effects that normally result from damage by the swarm. If you have improved evasion, it also applies to swarm damage.

Note: You must still make a Fortitude save to avoid distraction if you begin your turn in a space occupied by a swarm.

RUBY PRINCE KHEMET III, THE FORTHBRINGER

Khemet III is by right of blood and certified thaumaturgic prowess the ruler of one of Golarion's most ancient realms. Still relatively young for his post, Khemet is just shy of his middle years, with rich brown eyes in a surprisingly boyish face—some say a product of his secret consumption of multiple draughts of the fabled *sun orchid elixir* of Thuvia. With his scalp ritually shorn beneath his circlet and headpiece and skin oiled to a shine, Khemet's slight figure and youthful features

cause many to see him as soft, weak, and malleable—a façade he cultivates to his advantage, surprising those who would seek to use him with his active mind and penetrating insight. Khemet is well advised by Nazmi, a golden-winged celestial gynosphinx servitor of Abadar, and while he scrupulously fulfills the obligatory duties of his position, he is happy to allow the Council of Liberated Slaves to manage most of the mundane tasks of rulership while he seeks to discern the will of Abadar for Osirion and manage the summoned, called, and pact-bound servitors and allies that make it a reality.

As rightful heir to the Dynasty of the Forthbringers, Khemet is entitled to bear two unique magical items: the *Crook of the Ancient Serpent* as his rod of office and the *Ruby Circlet* worn beneath his pharaonic headpiece. Besides its magical powers, this circlet represents the pact forged by his ancestors with a mystical elemental entity known as Janhelia. This fire spirit is naturally invisible, and is known to pass through the halls of the Palace of the Forthbringer (and some say even into the streets of Sothis itself at times) in utter silence, a brief surge of unnatural heat the only sign marking her presence. Khemet is well aware of the unease the thought of Janhelia's looming presence causes those who come before him; even when she is not there, any faint gust of warm air can cause the strongest general or mightiest merchant to break into a cold sweat as he stands before the throne.

KHEMET III

Male human cleric of Abadar 8/thaumaturgist 5/hierophant 2
LN medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 22

hp 117 (8d8+5d4+2d8+60)

Fort +19, **Ref** +12, **Will** +25

Defensive Abilities contingent conjuration, evasion

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *Crook of the Ancient Serpent* (+9/+4 melee touch, 1d4 Str and 1d4 Con damage, Fort DC 17 negates/ability drain) plus stored spell, usually *bestow curse* or *blindness*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

2/day—*flame strike* (DC 20), *summon monster VII*; may empower any of these up to 3/day

Spells Prepared (CL 15th; Spell Penetration):

7th—*greater teleport*^D, *repulsion* (DC 24)

6th—*greater dispel magic*, *heal*, *stoneskin*^D, *summon monster VI*

5th—*greater command* (DC 22), *insect plague*, *true seeing*, *wall of stone*^D

4th—*dimension door*^D, *death ward*, *discern lies* (DC 21),





dismissal (DC 22), *summon monster IV*, *tongues*
 3rd—*daylight*, *fly*^D, *magic circle against chaos*, *meld into stone*,
prayer, *searing light* (2)
 2nd—*aid*, *calm emotions* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *locate*
object^D, *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*, *status*, *zone of*
truth (DC 19)
 1st—*comprehend languages*, *detect chaos*, *divine favor*, *endure*
elements, *longstrider*^D, *remove fear*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*
 o—*create water*, *detect poison* (2), *guidance*, *light*, *purify food*
and drink

D domain spell; **Domains** Earth, Travel

TACTICS

Before Combat Few see Khemet without his being aware of them, but he is a cautious man who freely uses *discern lies*, *detect chaos*, *zone of truth*, and *true seeing* as well as the *Crook of the Ancient Serpent* to avoid being deceived. If faced with unexpected danger, he uses *meld into stone* to prepare an array of defensive spells while telepathically commanding Janhelia to muster his guards.

During Combat Khemet prefers to use *fly* and *repulsion* to keep enemies at bay while relying on his royal guards (including Janhelia and Nazmi) and waves of summoned monsters interspersed with an occasional *searing light* or empowered *flame strike* to crush any who would threaten him.

Morale The Ruby Prince is no fool, and if faced with serious danger uses his *wand of dimension door* to escape and summon other guardians.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **Gp** +8

Feats Augment Summoning^B, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell-like Ability (*flame strike*), Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration

Skills Concentration +22, Diplomacy +20, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +17, Profession (scribe) +10, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +15

Languages Common, Abyssal, Aquan, Auran, Azlanti, Celestial, Ignan, Infernal, Kelish, Osiriani, Sphinx, Terran

Combat Gear *Ruby Circlet*; *Crook of the Ancient Serpent*; *wand of dimension door* (9 charges); *wand of fly* (24 charges); *scrolls of atonement*, *commune*, *break enchantment*, *dispel chaos*, *greater teleport*, *earthquake*, *ethereal jaunt*, *control weather*, *neutralize poison*, *regenerate*, *resurrection*, *greater restoration*, *sending*, and *speak with dead*; **Other Gear** +5 glamerd mithral chain shirt (usually appears as jeweled pectoral inscribed with the winged scarab of Osirion), *ring of evasion*, +3 *ring of protection*, +6 *vest of health*, +4 *gloves of Dexterity*, +5 *cloak of resistance*, *ring of scrutiny* (+5 on Sense Motive checks, slotless item)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Turn Undead (Su) 5/day; turning check 1d20+2, turning damage 2d6+10.

CROOK OF THE ANCIENT SERPENT

Aura strong divination, evocation, and necromancy; **CL** 13th
Slot hand; **Price** 70,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This curved and striped staff of office has all the powers of a *rod of withering* and a *rod of enemy detection*. It can also store one offensive spell as if it were a weapon with the spell storing property.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *contagion*, *true seeing*, creator must be at least 12th level; **Cost** 35,000 gp, 3,000 XP

RUBY CIRCLET

Aura moderate conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 11th
Slot hand; **Price** 94,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This golden circlet is set with rubies and is small enough to fit under the standard head regalia of a reigning pharaoh. It functions as a +6 *periapt of Wisdom* and a *circlet of persuasion*. If you are the rightful ruler of Osirion, you can use the *Ruby Circlet* to telepathically communicate with Janhelia, agent of the elemental lords of the desert; this ability functions as long as you and she are on the same plane.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor*, *owl's wisdom*, *planar ally*, *telepathic bond*; **Cost** 47,000 gp, 3,760 XP

Turn Earth (Su) 5/day; Khemet can turn or destroy air elementals as if they were undead, as well as rebuke, command, or bolster earth elementals as if they were undead.

Spontaneous Casting (Su) Khemet can substitute *cure* spells for prepared spells of the same level.

Improved Ally (Su) When Khemet uses *planar ally* spells to call creatures that share at least one alignment category with him, a Diplomacy check adjusting the creature's attitude to helpful halves the monetary cost of the task.

Extended Summoning (Su) All summoning spells Khemet casts have their duration doubled.

Contingent Conjuration (Su) Khemet has a contingent *summon monster VII* spell that triggers automatically whenever he is attacked. He typically summons a bone devil, djinni, or 1d4+1 achaierai, though he occasionally calls elementals to his aid.

Planar Cohort Janhelia, a Medium invisible fire elemental of unknown powers.

Hierophant Abilities (Sp) Khemet has sacrificed a 5th-level spell slot in order to use *flame strike* and a 7th-level spell slot to use *summon monster VII* twice per day each as spell-like abilities.



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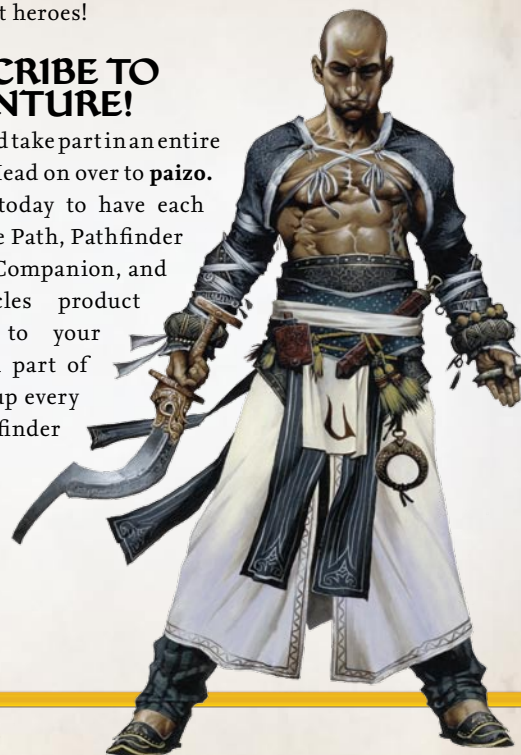
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THE PYRAMIDS AWAIT

Covered by shifting desert sands and ruled by a pharaoh who binds the very elements to his will, Osirion is a land of ancient mystery. Inside its weathered pyramids and ruined temples, mummies, curses, and worse horrors guard the opulent tombs of long-dead god-kings against thieves of all sorts. Now, with the Ruby Prince opening some of the nation's most famous and deadly locations to exploration, adventurers and scholars from across the world are converging on Osirion to make their fortunes or die trying. Do you have what it takes to master the secrets of the past?

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