

# WEIRD WARS ROME



The Half-Set Sun





# UNDER THE HALF SET SUN

**Eastern  
Desert**

**Castellum  
Corvus**

**Abu**

**Castellum  
Aquila**

**Satet**

**To  
Svenett  
and the Nile →**

**Novo  
Capua**

**Scorpion  
Temple**

**Anks  
Muth**

**Castellum  
Accipiter**





# THE HALF-SET SUN

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# CALL OF DUTY

- **Date:** Augustus, 132 AD
- **Location:** The southern border of Aegyptus
- **Unit:** Legio XII Deiotariana
- **Composition:** The characters are members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cohort, with one player's character serving as the century's centurion.

## SUMMARY

Aegyptus, a land of mystery and antiquity to the rest of the known world. A place of ancient gods and goddesses, mysterious temples and tombs, and extreme environments.

The heroes are members of the Third Century of the Fifth Cohort of Legio XII Deiotariana, one of three legions garrisoning Aegyptus to protect the breadbasket of the Empire. Stationed outside Alexandria, the characters enjoy a cushy posting in this cosmopolitan city. Unfortunately, this easy assignment is about to come to an end.

As the annual Nile floods begin to recede, the Roman governor in Alexandria receives word the Nubians have attacked the province from the south, quickly overwhelming the border posts and laying siege to the key frontier city of Swenett and its fortress at Elephantine.

Unfortunately for the Romans, the Nubians chose a perfect time to attack this critical province. Much of the province's military power is in Judea, helping suppress the Second Jewish Revolt. The Nile floods greatly hinder movement upriver, the quickest and easiest way to move large forces long distances. Despite these challenges, Legio XII hurriedly mobilizes its available troops and marches south along the Nile with elements of Legio II Traiana and Legio III Cyrenaica to confront the invaders.

## MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

The trip southward up the Nile (the Nile flows from south to north) is fairly uneventful, but the commander of the Roman forces pushes his troops hard as they march through the countryside. It takes the legions 22 days to cover the 670 miles from Alexandria to the fort near Swenett. Due to the punishing pace, characters must make a Vigor roll for the entire march. Those who succeed with a raise suffer no penalties. Those who succeed are Fatigued, and those who fail are Exhausted. Each level of Fatigue fades only after an entire day of rest.

Eventually the heroes arrive at the staging area downriver from the city of Swenett. Once



there, the centurion is summoned to attend the legatus' planning meeting. When all the senior officers from the assembled Roman forces are settled in the temple appropriated as a command center, the Legatus Augusti pro Praetore gets down to business.

*"Now that you've all seen fit to grace us with your presence we can start this campaign to evict these barbarians from the Emperor's lands and assure Rome a steady grain supply for the next year. As it stands, the situation is grim. A large force of Nubians swept across the border and quickly overwhelmed the frontier posts as well as a number of villages and settlements. They thrust down the Nile as far as Swenett and its crucial fortress of Elephantine.*

*The garrison there is holding out for the time being, but they're badly under strength, what with the troubles in Judea. If Swenett falls the Nile is navigable all the way to the Mare Nostrum. This could be a major disaster that echoes across the Empire if we don't stop them cold. Worse yet, the governor's son has disappeared. He was serving as a tribune with Legio III, and vanished in the confusion of the initial attack.*

*When the Nubians came across the border, they overwhelmed not only the forts along the southern border but also rolled up the outposts along the desert on each side of the Nile. How they did this we've got no idea. The Nubians aren't known for their siegecraft, but then again the forts were manned by legionaries who had grown fat and complacent with the easy life of Aegyptian garrison duty. That doesn't describe your lot, now, does it?"*

At this point the legatus steps back. Staff officers then come forward, calling out to the various leaders in attendance and presenting them with assignments for the upcoming campaign. Tribune Antony Aelius takes the hero playing the centurion and any of his soldiers in

attendance to the side for their briefing. The staff officer hands a map to the centurion (see page 6) and relates the following:

*We don't want a horde of barbarians descending on the legions' flanks while they lift the siege, so your century will clear this area of Nubians. How you do it is up to you, but all the legions are short of men, so don't expect reinforcements if you squander your troops' lives."*

Aelius is willing to answer any questions the centurion has, but the Romans only know that the Nubians are garrisoning the forts in unknown strength, along with the villages in the area. The locals don't love their Roman masters, so support from the natives shouldn't be assumed.

As he turns to go, the tribune turns back to the heroes.

*"One more thing. As the legatus mentioned, the governor's son, Gaius Claudius Appolonius has gone missing. The damn fool is a tribune with Legio III and saw himself as a modern Julius Caesar, always gallivanting around the eastern desert frontier and beyond with an ala of Numidian horse auxiliaries.*

*He probably led his men into a suicidal charge against the Nubians and is fodder for the crows. Since he was last seen in your area of operations though, if you find him, the governor would be most grateful for his return, one way or the other. He can be identified by the signet ring he wears, which is identical to the governor's symbol you should know so well from your time in Alexandria."*

## DON'T EXPECT REINFORCEMENTS

—Tribunus Aelius,  
5th Cohort



**Eastern  
Desert**

**Castellum  
Corvus**

**Abu**

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**Satet**

To  
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**Novo  
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**Anks  
Muth**

**Castellum  
Accipiter**





## AREA OF OPERATIONS

The characters are free to develop their campaign plan as they see fit. Basically, they need to clear their assigned district of Nubian troops in order to protect the right flank of the Roman forces attempting to lift the siege of Swenett to the east.

The century's assigned area sits at the edge of the arable belt on the eastern side of the Nile. They begin 10 miles to the north of the map at left, but can march to approach from any angle they choose (with the Nile a few miles to the east).

The district has three frontier forts (Corvus, Aquila, Accipiter) that originally held a century of auxiliaries assigned to Legio III, as well as four villages that need to be cleared and returned to Roman control (Abu, Satet, Novo Capua, and Anks Muth).

Since the heroes' century is expected to capture fortifications, the legatus provides a complement of scaling ladders, as well as two more scorpiones to add to the century's own.

A detachment of ten Syrian horse archers are also attached to the century as scouts and outriders (treat them as Auxilia (Missile Cavalry) with Riding d8 and armed with composite bows from *Weird Wars: Rome*).

The locations of importance are described below. While the Nubians control the area, they basically adopt a static defense posture, with their soldiers based in the forts and villages. Not being horsemen, any patrols encountered in the area consist of 21-30 infantry (use Barbarian warriors armed with shields, bows, and axes from *Weird Wars: Rome*).

**Note:** No matter what order they decide to clear the fortifications or villages in, *And He Rode a Pale Horse* occurs just as they move against the last area.

## MASS BATTLES

In *The Half-Set Sun*, track the heroes' force in Mass Battles as the player characters, all 80 legionaries, 10 scouts, and four scorpiones as 10 tokens.

Track this number throughout the adventure, and when a token is lost, roll a die to determine the specific casualties:

### d6 Loss

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | 4 legionaries and one scorpion          |
| 3-5 | 6 legionaries                           |
| 6   | 2 auxilia cavalry scouts, 3 legionaries |

The math won't add up exactly, but it should serve for a solid narrative approach throughout this specific adventure. Ideally, this will encourage the player characters to think carefully about how best to use their force as casualties are sustained.

## THE FOES

Each Nubian settlement or captured fort lists its strength in tokens as well. In general, each Nubian token equals 8 warriors or 10 archers.



SILENT ENIM LEGES INTER ARMA"  
(LAWS ARE SILENT IN TIMES OF WAR)

—Cicero





## THE FORTS

The frontier forts found in this district are a standard design used throughout the Empire. The heroes are familiar with the layout both inside and out. Having only occupied them for a few weeks, the Nubians have not made any major changes to them. (The Frontier Fort poster map available from Pinnacle is perfect for these forts.)

### CASTELLUM CORVUS

- **Mass Battles:** 5 tokens, +2 Siege Bonus

This fort is manned by a detachment of 40 Nubians and their wily leader.

A gully outside the fort contains the bodies of the garrison, burned in a funeral pyre, leaving few remains. A Knowledge (Medicine) roll, or a Healing roll at -2 notes that none of the bodies show signs of violence—there are no sword, axe, spear, or arrow wounds. The bodies are

burned too badly to determine any other obvious cause of death.

A Notice roll reveals no signs of recent fighting inside or outside the castellum. The gates are intact and the doors and shutters have no damage beyond normal wear and tear. It's as if the Nubians walked right into the fort and took it over.

If questioned by someone who can speak their language, the Nubians claim their gods wiped the Romans out. They burned the bodies as offerings and took it as their own. They didn't see what actually happened so they can't provide any further details.

If the Romans are victorious, Spoils rolls are made at -2.

✂ **Nubian Leader:** See page 22.

• **Nubian Infantry (40):** See page 22.



## CASTELLUM AQUILA

- **Mass Battles:** 0 tokens, +2 Siege Bonus

This castellum stands at the edge of the eastern desert, closed and silent. There are no visible sentries and sand has drifted up against the eastern wall, partially covering a pile of bloated and sun-blackened Roman corpses have been unceremoniously dumped over the wall.

Investigation of the Roman dead reveals a lack of violence, but a successful Healing or Knowledge (Medicine) roll at -2 (due to their decayed state) reveals hundreds of tiny welts on each body. A raise on the roll notes them as spider bites or scorpion stings.

Upon gaining entry, the heroes find that the Nubian garrison of fifty men lie scattered around the fort. The dead men show signs of violent death by bladed weapons, and all died with a look of terror on their faces.

### THERE'S ALWAYS ONE

As the Romans search the fort, they come across a lone survivor hiding in piles of ruined grain. The Nubian has suffered from several deep cuts (from a blade) and says only "All dead. All dead. The desert...it rises!" over and over in his native tongue.

If untreated, the man perishes an hour or so after he's found. Otherwise he survives but is completely mad and says nothing of any additional use.

### THE DESERT ATTACKS

Once the Romans have had a chance to talk to the Nubian, the desert does indeed rise.

*A dry desert wind blows out of the east. It moans mournfully, slowly rising to a howl. Stinging bits of sand wash over the walls. The sirocco picks up in intensity and sand begins to swirl all around you. Just for a moment, you could swear you see the ghostly image of a dead legionary in storm. Suddenly, one of your men screams!*

Sand specters are the remnants of the dead Roman garrison, unceremoniously dumped in the desert and imbued with a hatred of the living. They now rise to slake their unnatural thirst for vengeance.

Dozens of the spirits attack the fort's new occupiers. The things are made of nothing but sand and therefore immune to normal weapons—except for their skulls. If these are targeted and shattered, the specter is vanquished and its spirit laid to rest. Of course the heroes must figure this out for themselves.

The fight likely takes place in the courtyard. Assume the heroes must

## ESCALATING WEIRDNESS

If your party heads straight to Castellum Aquila or Accipiter, they'll very quickly run into strange and clearly supernatural events. If you want to spread this out or delay it a bit, you might want to have them encounter a Nubian patrol, a caravan, or even wild animals first.

You might also change the descriptions so that the events of Castellum Corvus occur at whichever fort they attack first, Accipiter happens next, and Aquila (the most undeniably supernatural encounter) is last.





battle two specters each while the rest of the force handles additional spirits. After the third round of battle, 1d4 legionaries are lost to the others. This continues until the spirits battling the heroes are defeated.

Once the sand specters are destroyed, Spoils rolls can be made at -2.

- **Sand Specters (2 per hero):** See below.

## SAND SPECTER

Sand specters are murdered souls left in the deep and lonely deserts without proper burial. They return to unlife with a thirst for vengeance, but no longer distinguish friend from foe. Their bodies are made up of swirling sand that takes the vague form of their mortal body. A gleaming skull, polished white and smooth by the scouring action of the sand, forms their head.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

**Gear:** Gladius (Str+d6).

## Special Abilities

- **Fearless:** Sand specters are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fear (-2):** The terrifying appearance of these creatures causes Fear checks at -2.
- **Immunity:** Sand specters may only be wounded by attacks to the skull. Other attacks may Shake them, but do not cause wounds.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no additional damage (except to the skull).
- **Weakness (Skull):** A wounding blow to the skull (-4 to hit) destroys the creature permanently.

## CASTELLUM ACCIPITER

- **Mass Battles:** 4 tokens, +1 Siege Bonus (due to burned gatehouse)

This castellum's gatehouse is partially burned and collapsed and Nubian sentries are visible on the walls. The fort is garrisoned by a force of 30 warriors led



by a fierce champion called "The Rhino" for his violent rages.

✂ **Nubian Leader:** See page 22.

• **Nubian Infantry (40):** See page 22.

Once the Nubians are defeated and the fort secured, the century discovers a pair of Roman prisoners shackled in the stables. They are dirty, hungry, and happy to be back in Roman hands. If questioned about the Nubian attack, they relate the following:

*"It was dusk a week or more ago that they came. Titus had just started the cooking fires in the gatehouse for the evening meal when his fool servant stumbled and spilled an amphora of oil. Within seconds the tower was ablaze. The garrison turned out to fight the fire, but despite our best efforts the gatehouse collapsed several hours later.*

*That's when they came. No, not the Nubians. Scorpions, by the thousand. They swarmed over the walls, came out of every crack and started attacking everyone in a frenzy. Appius and I jumped onto an unburned section of the tower, and the hot coals kept the little buggers away from us. Then the Nubians appeared, and just as quickly as they came the scorpions vanished back into the desert. Maybe they didn't like their smell or something. The barbarians fished us out of the smoking wreckage and took us prisoner. They didn't seem to care about intelligence from us. Just shackled us and left us in the stable to rot."*

Other than the prisoners there is nothing of interest in the castellum, though a Spoils roll may be made at -2.

## HEARTS AND MINDS AND GLADI

The villages in the area are typical of Aegyptian settlements found up and down the Nile. They are surrounded by fields fed by irrigation canals, palm trees, and other vegetation. Each family

lives in a mud structure that houses two to six individuals, their belongings, and dried food stores. None of the villages are walled.

Heroes wishing to conduct reconnaissance of the settlements find the desert scrub and irrigated fields of wheat provide a decent amount of concealment to within 50 yards or so of most villages.

## ABU

• **Mass Battles:** 4 tokens

This small village is garrisoned by a small force of 30 Nubians. Surveillance with a successful Notice roll shows the inhabitants seem to be in fear of their occupiers. If the century makes contact with the villagers before attacking, they find them to be too fearful of the Nubians to provide support of any kind.

Once freed of the Nubian yoke and returned to the protection of Rome, the villagers fearfully tell of swarms of scorpions attacking a Roman force that was in the village just before the Nubians arrived. The few survivors of the patrol fell easily to the invaders.

✂ **Nubian Leader:** See page 22.

• **Nubian Infantry (30):** See page 22.

## SATET

• **Mass Battles:** 6 tokens

Surrounded by lush date palm groves heavy with a bountiful crop of fruits, this village features a prominent temple in the Aegyptian style. Reconnaissance shows a Nubian garrison is present, headquartered at a temple in the town center.

Any villagers who talk to the Romans before an attack reveal the invaders have desecrated the temple of Anuket, an Aegyptian goddess of fertility whose favor provides the village with such bountiful crops.

Villagers contacted before any battle may join the Romans' attack. The natives are angry at the desecration of their





temple and promise to help out the Romans in any way possible.

If this occurs, 3d6 villagers join any impending fight. In a Mass Battle, the Romans add +2 to their Knowledge (Battle) and ignore the first token lost—at which point they lose the bonus.

The enemy garrison consists of 50 Nubians led by an experienced chieftain.

Successfully liberating the village provides the Romans with valuable allies. The villagers can serve as spies for them in the neighboring villages, providing a situation report on enemy strength and dispositions (+1 to Knowledge (Battle) rolls).

Protecting the temple also has an effect—whether real or imagined by the superstitious legionaries. If the next fight is handled on the table-top, add +1 to all Vigor rolls made to determine the Aftermath. If the next fight is a Mass Battle, tokens are recovered on a roll of 3-6, rather than 4-6 as usual.

✠ **Nubian War Chief:** See page 22.

• **Nubian Infantry (50):** See page 22.

• **Villagers (40):** Use Peasants with Fighting d4, from *Weird Wars: Rome*. They're armed with light clubs (Str+d4).

## NOVO CAPUA

• **Mass Battles:** 10 tokens, +1 Siege Bonus

Judging by the name on the map and the style of the buildings, this village is a Roman colonia, settled by discharged veterans in an attempt to Romanize the surrounding area.

A Common Knowledge roll reveals this is indeed the case, having been settled by members of the heroes' own legion roughly sixty years ago. The village consists of a number of stout buildings constructed in a style more suited to Italia than Aegyptus. While no wall surrounds the colonia, the homes are designed to withstand attack.

If the century scouts out the village, they notice a number of Nubian soldiers scattered about, as well as livestock and untended fields. A successful Notice roll discovers a disused, weed-choked irrigation canal filled with the bodies of the settlement's inhabitants, massacred when the Nubians invaded.

Hundreds of fat, ragged crows feast on the bodies. Disturbing them is ill-advised—these are a swarm of corpse ravens (see *Weird Wars: Rome*).



Novo Capua serves as the Nubians' base of supply for this flank, and is garrisoned by 100 troops led by a powerful chieftain. About twenty are on active guard duty around the perimeter of the town. The rest are sorting through the murdered citizens' belonging and arguing over loot.

If the Nubians are defeated, every legionary may roll for a Spoil.

✧ **Nubian War Chief:** See page 22.

• **Nubian Infantry (100):** See page 22.

• **Corpse Ravens (1 Swarm):** See *Weird Wars: Rome*.

## ANKS MUTH

• **Mass Battles:** 5 tokens

This village lies alongside large irrigation canals obscured by an extensive growth of reeds. At first glance Anks Muth seems peaceful, with the natives going about their business, animals in the fields, and smoke rising from cooking fires. No Nubians can be seen.

If approached, the villagers, led by a man named Nebkheperure, warmly greet the Romans, inviting them into their town. They offer good food and drink and deny any encounters with the Nubian invaders.

The Egyptians seem somewhat strange to the Romans, perhaps of a different ancestral background than others they've encountered. Some of the villagers' eyes are set too far apart, some have patches of dry, scaly skin, and others have long faces with severe overbites. Most Romans will assume this is due to the "backwoods" inbreeding of rural Egyptians and nothing more.

The reality, however, is more horrifying. Long ago, these villagers took up a debased worship of Sobek, the crocodile god. Now, hundreds of years later, their children have begun to transform into crocodile hybrids. The villagers sacrifice outsiders to the fat crocodiles that live in the nearby canal.

This is what happened to the Nubian garrison.

The elders do their best to entice the century to bed down in the village that night, plying the gallant legionaries with food, beer, and women. During this time, anyone who makes a Notice roll at -4 might notice a few stray signs the Nubians were here—a stray quiver, arrow, or sash hidden under some bed or within a native's belongings. If questioned, the villager smiles and says the artifact was acquired from traders or a raid many years ago.

If the Romans stay (even if they set up a marching camp outside the village) the Sobeki reveal themselves at midnight, attacking with their crocodile brethren. There are 40 villagers and 24 crocodiles. If the outsiders made their own camp, the crocodiles attack first from one direction, then the villagers swarm in from the other to flank.

If the Romans accepted the Anks Muth's hospitality and stayed within the village, the Sobekis gain surprise for the first round of combat and half the legionaries are too drunk or entwined with the village's women to act for the first three rounds. After that, they rally and fight normally.

**Mass Battle:** If using the Mass Battle rules, the villagers add +4 to their first Knowledge (Battle) roll if the Romans are inside their village, and +2 in the second round. If the Romans made their own camp outside the village, they receive +2 in the first round only (for surprise and the flanking maneuver).

✧ **Sobeki Cult Leader:** Use the Sobeki profile below but add Spirit d10, Spellcasting d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, and 20 Power Points. He has the *armor*, *blast*, *blind*, *entangle*, *fear*, and *stun* powers.

• **Sobekis (30):** See profile below.

• **Crocodiles (5):** See below.

✧ **Avatar of Sobek:** One of the crocodiles is larger and meaner than the others.



## THE HALF SET SUN

Add Size +1, increasing Toughness to 10(2).

### SOBEKI

Those who have given themselves to Sobek body and soul eventually begin to resemble the creatures that serve their violent god.

When spurred to action to defend or sacrifice for Sobek, the change becomes even more noticeable. The cultist's already scaly skin becomes leathery and tough, his pupils narrow to slits, and his teeth prolong to grant a terrible and powerful bite.

#### AVATAR OF SOBEK

Should anyone be foolish enough to go into the irrigation canal itself, they find a particularly large crocodile there that is the living avatar of Sobek. This monster has alabaster skin, blood-red eyes, and jet black teeth. The children call their pet "Kilquato."

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d10(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

**Skills:** Fighting d12, Notice d10, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 16(4)

#### Special Abilities

- **Armor (+4):** Thick scaly skin.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 5.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Rollover:** With a raise, add 2d4 to its Bite damage (instead of +d6).
- **Size +4:** The croc is 30' long.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6(1)

**Gear:** Spear (Str+d6, Reach 1).

#### Special Abilities

- **Armor (+1):** The cultist's scaly skin gives them one point of Armor.
- **Bite:** Str+d4. The cultists prefer to attack with weapons but have a ferocious bite if caught unarmed.

### CROCODILES

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d6, Swimming d8

**Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9(2)

#### Special Abilities

- **Armor (+2):** Thick skin.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 5.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Rollover:** If a crocodile hits with a raise, it plants its teeth firmly in its victim and rolls over—causing horrendous ripping. Add 2d4 to its Bite damage instead of the usual d6.

### CROCODILE SMILES

If the village is searched after the battle, the legionaries discover more evidence of the Nubians' demise. Unfortunately, the cult sacrifices the many treasures they obtain from their victims to Sobek's avatar in the canal, but enough remains scattered throughout the village to allow a roll on the Spoils table at -2.

In the canal, the Spoils roll is made at +4—but searchers must contend with the Avatar of Sobek (see sidebar).





## AND HE RODE A PALE HORSE

Note: This encounter takes place just before the last castellum or village is dealt with.

As the surviving century progresses to the last Nubian stronghold, one of the Syrian scouts (or a local friendly Aegyptian if all the scouts are dead) gallops up to the command group.

*"Sir," he says, throwing a quick salute to the centurion. "We've spotted a group of Numidians coming this way out of the east, headed to the fort (or village). They look like auxiliaries such as used by Legio III, but they've got a Nubian with them. Your orders?"*

This is actually the leader of the Nubian invasion force, riding from the lost temple deep in the Eastern Desert. He's accompanied by a Numidian bodyguard of 10 riders. Their horses are spent from their time in the desert, and quick action by the attached horsemen (and any characters who wish to accompany them) might result in their capture or destruction.

The heroes can attempt an ambush, or pursue on horseback (commandeering the Syrians' horses or sending the riders after them on their own). The latter case is a Chase. Since the Numidians' horses are spent, they roll at -2. If at the end of five rounds the Romans haven't killed the Nubian leader or his horse, he links up with any Nubian forces at the site the Romans were heading to. If no Nubians are present, he runs afoul of whatever is at that location.

✧ **Juma, Nubian War Chief:** See page 22.

• **Numidian Horsemen (10):** See page 22.

### JUMA'S CAPTURE

If Juma is killed or captured, he is found to be carrying a leather scroll case containing a map of the Roman border defenses of Aegyptus, troop dispositions prior to the invasion, a map to a temple in the Eastern

Desert, a large emerald, and a letter. The letter, written in Latin, reads:

*My dearest Claudia,*

*I have finally found what I have been seeking! All these months of searching the burning desert sands and poring over dusty fragmented texts in search of clues has led me to the ultimate source of power. Yesterday I found a temple of Serket deep in the desert. It appears a living god once reigned from this place, but some group or other sealed it in and marked it with a half-set sun.*

*If I can excavate the temple and find the source of this being's power, I can finally give you the life you deserve and take you away from the monster who birthed us. I ride now to seek the support of the Nubians in my quest to unearth the temple and its treasures. I do not know what deal I will be forced to make with the barbarians, but it is better to rule in Avernus than serve in Olympus.*

*Especially if you are by my side, dear sister.*

*Your loving brother,*

*Claudius*

**Note:** A prop for this letter can be found on page 16.

### TRIFLING WITH GODS

If captured alive, Juma (or one of his men) confirms Claudius' treachery. If the Nubians aren't captured, the Romans must confront him at the last objective. In the latter case, Juma meets up with reinforcements of 50 Nubian warriors (5 tokens total in a Mass Battle).

Assuming he is captured, Juma brags that Claudius came to him and offered up the local Roman defenses in exchange for help excavating an ancient temple to the west. The long lost temple was dedicated to the scorpion goddess, Serket, and was said to be the home for her champion.



My dear sister Claudia,

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If I can excavate the temple and find the source of this being's power, I can finally give you the life you deserve and take you away from the monster who birthed us. I ride now to seek the support of the Nubians in my quest to unearth the temple and its treasures. I do not know what deal I will be forced to make with the barbarians, but it is better to rule in Avernus than serve in Olympus.

Especially if you are by my side, dear sister.

Your loving brother,

Claudius

## CLAUDIUS' LETTER



A Common Knowledge roll at  $-4$ , or a Knowledge (Aegypt) roll, remembers that Serket is actually a *healer* of poisons—such as scorpion stings. Her “champion,” however, might not be so beneficent.

All legionaries who have been in Aegypt for a while also know that most modern Aegyptians have foregone their belief in certain older gods—like Serket. Nubian tribesman, however, still follow the old Aegyptian gods and are more likely to believe in such “fanciful” tales.

Juma spits after relaying Claudius’ treachery—a great insult in the desert—and says there’s nothing the Romans can do now. Claudius has become an immortal avatar of Serket and is sending his scorpion hordes to rid Aegypt of the foreign plague.

Juma’s story is true, of course. Claudius and his Nubian allies dug a path into the sand-submerged temple nearly a month ago. Inside, the young zealot found a gold crown and foolishly placed it on his head. Claudius immediately transformed into the temple’s guardian and Serket’s vengeful champion. Juma swore allegiance to the avatar, rallied

the tribes, and marched on the hated Romans.

Claudius is tied to the temple and cannot leave, but can summon the guardians of the desert—scorpions, sand specters, and other horrors—to do his bidding. Juma serves as his eyes and ears, communicating with his forces via a green emerald the war chief carries. Destroying the emerald is a good notion, but there are many others within the temple and a new champion will rise as long as the temple stands.

It should also occur to the legionaries that slaying the scorpion god may likely quell the Nubian’s fervor for war as well.





THE HALF SET SUN



# SCORPION TEMPLE



## RAIDERS OF THE LOST SCORPION

All of the Nubian war chiefs know the location of the temple, so whether it is revealed by Juma himself or one of his subordinates, the heroes should find the path. The ruins lie two days away by foot into the Eastern Desert, or a single day by horseback. The heat is intense, as usual, so Vigor rolls are likely in order along the way.

Before the march begins, the centurion must make a difficult choice. He can take the remaining century with him to the temple to expunge its evil once and for all, but it will leave the flank of the main Roman force to the east unguarded. He might also leave most of the century behind and take a strike force to the temple, but that will dilute his strength should it be guarded or this “scorpion king” prove truly powerful. There is no right answer—such are the challenges of command.

### THE TEMPLE

Once the legionaries arrive at the temple, they find a colossal ruin built in a style unfamiliar to them and mostly buried in heaping dunes. Obvious excavations have been conducted to open a small passageway into the ruins.

To the century’s surprise, there are no guards or camps of Nubian warriors present. The half-submerged temple simply sits ominous and alone in the harsh desert.

Within the excavated tunnel, the temple’s stones shift and creak ominously. Shattered stone doors lay beside the opening, showing a broken, golden seal depicting a half-set sun.

A short, 30 foot passageway opens into a large chamber ending in a massive scorpion-shaped throne. The moment someone sets foot inside, the doors behind them close and four massive braziers in each corner burst into flame—

### DERELICTION OF DUTY

If no guard is left behind as the heroes traipse off to the temple, there is a good chance the Roman forces to the east will be flanked by the Nubians.

Roll a d6 and add +1 each day. If the result is 6 or higher, the Nubians attack the Roman flank. They aren’t likely to succeed, but their appearance certainly causes dozens if not hundreds of casualties to the main force.

If this occurs, the player character centurion faces severe punishment. The exact punishment depends on the circumstances—how much of the century was left, was a sizable force left to hold the flank while they went to this “ridiculous temple,” etc, but could range anywhere from all loss of rank to slavery to summary execution.

dazzling everyone as the bright light glints off the many treasures heaped within.

As the legionaries’ eyes adjust, they see a massive figure staring at them from the throne—Claudius, the scorpion king.

### I, CLAUDIUS

Claudius rises from his throne and attacks the characters while scorpions swarm over any of their accompanying troops (inside or out). Claudius knows “heroes” for what they are and wants to deal with them personally as potential rivals to his power.





During the fight, tell-tale sand drifts down from the unstable ceiling above. The pillars are unstable, so if the champions don't believe they can kill Claudius in single combat they can attempt to topple the ceiling onto him.

This is a three-round Dramatic Task requiring a Smarts roll at -2 on the first action to find the pillar's keystones, then two Strength rolls at -2 to collapse them onto Claudius. This kills the avatar in dramatic fashion, but the heroes must make Agility rolls at -4 to avoid crushing stones (3d6 damage) as well.

If Claudius is defeated, what remains of the temple can be searched. Add +4 to the Spoils roll if he was slain by the Romans in hand-to-hand combat; but only +2 if the roof was partially collapsed.

Claudius' crown is a cursed thing and should not be touched or removed from the temple. If worn, it transforms the wearer into another avatar of the Scorpion God unless a Spirit roll at -6 is made.

### CHAMPION OF SERKET

The being once known as Gaius Claudius Appollonius appears as a monstrous fusion of man and scorpion. Standing nearly 20 feet tall, he has the lower body of a giant scorpion, the torso and head of a man, and arms that end in deadly pincers. His tails drips caustic venom and a maniacal glint fills his distant eyes. On his head, a golden crown is fused into his carapace, wrought in the shape of a scorpion with emerald eyes.

Claudius no longer speaks, but can understand the human tongue. He's not likely to be bargained with, however. As Serket's champion, the creature is entirely bent on throwing the invaders back to the sea and re-establishing his deities' following, something it knows can only happen with Egyptians—not Romans.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14(4)



**Special Abilities**

- **Armor (+4):** Chitinous skin.
- **Claws:** Str+d12.
- **Fearless:** Claudius is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fear:** The terrifying appearance of the scorpion lord causes Fear checks at -4.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Claudius can make two Fighting attacks each action with no penalty.
- **Little Brothers:** Every other round the scorpion champion can summon a Medium Burst Template swarm of scorpions that deal 2d6 damage (see *Savage Worlds*).
- **Size +3:** Claudius stands over 15' tall and is 20 feet long from thorax to stinger.
- **Stinger (-4):** The champion can attack with his stinger as a multi-action. It has a Reach of 2 and deals lethal poison (see *Savage Worlds Deluxe*).
- **Sweep:** Claudius may sweep with his pincers instead of using his Frenzy ability. This uses the outside of the claw and causes only Strength damage.
- **Weakness (Crown):** The champion's crown is fused into Claudius' skull, but if it can somehow be removed with a Strength roll of 20+, the champion collapses instantly.

**THE HALF-SET SUN**

If the heroes fail, the scorpion hordes and Nubian champions sweep over north Africa and eventually catch the attention of multiple sects of the Sons of Solomon. They form new expeditions to destroy the temple, though from this point forward it's guarded by an army of Nubian warriors, scorpion swarms, and sand specters.

If the heroes are successful, Serket's champion lies dead and the temple slowly sinks into the earth. It will not rise again this millennium. Without the champion, the Nubian army loses its fervor and fades back into Nubia. Rome's bread basket and client state in Aegypt are preserved.

Exactly what the centurion tells his legatus, of course, is up to him. If he took any surviving legionaries with his main party (likely the player characters) to the temple, word eventually gets out of the horrific being they encountered. Soon after, the heroes are summoned to the Temple of Mithras at the fortress on Elephantine Island, where they are questioned by the legatus and several other officials. Depending on their story, success, and level of competence, they may be drummed out of legion—or invited to join the Twilight Legion. If the latter, their initiation trial might involve returning to a certain temple in the Eastern Desert to ensure it is destroyed forever and no new followers are furiously digging through the desert sands for the crown.

ALL STRANGE AND TERRIBLE EVENTS  
ARE WELCOME. COMFORTS WE DESPISE.

—Cleopatra



## APPENDIX: NUBIAN FORCES

The Nubians are a semi-nomadic people from who live along the lower Nile, from Aegypt to the Sudan. At the time of this adventure, they are nominally under the control of the Aegyptians, but the various, fiercely independent tribes rarely pay heed to such things.

### ⚔ WAR CHIEF

Nubians tend to select the most cunning of their warriors to lead their warbands.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d8, Riding d6, Stealth d8, Shooting d8

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Loyal

**Edges:** Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Level Headed, Natural Leader

**Gear:** Short bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), axe (Str+d6).

• **Great Chief:** Spirit d10, Strength d8, Fighting d10 (Parry 8), Knowledge (Battle) d8, Block, Hold the Line, Frenzy.

### WARRIORS

Unlike most armies, Nubians tend not to divide their forces into archers and infantry. Each warrior carries an axe for melee, and a bow for war and for hunting. Archery skills are especially prized among the Nubians.

Nubians wear no armor to speak of (though individuals may sometime wear captured Roman or Aegyptian gear) as it interferes with their movement and

stealth. The latter is particularly important for hunting as war parties have no baggage trains or supplies—warriors are expected to forage and fend for themselves.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Shooting d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Illiterate

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Short bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6), axe (Str+d6).

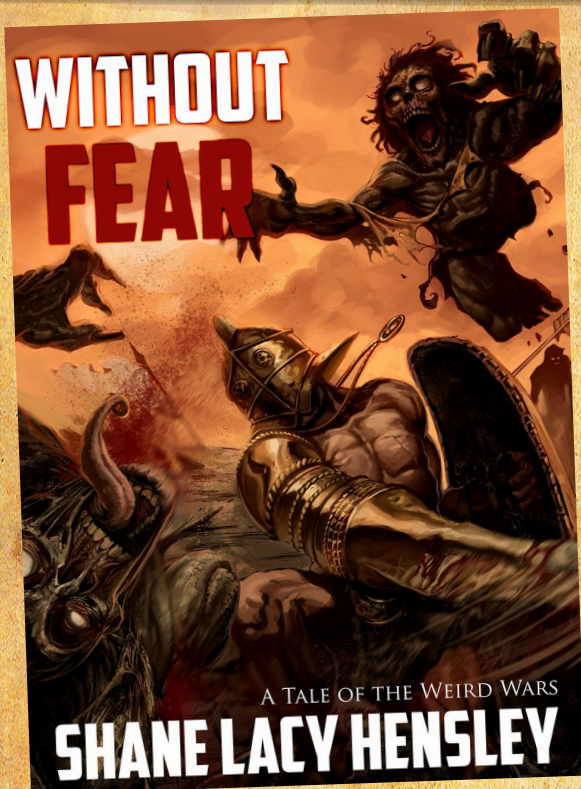
**Experienced:** Fighting d8, Shooting d8

**Veteran:** Strength d8





# TALES OF THE WEIRD WARS



## WITH UTMOST DISPATCH

Legionary Titus Aetius is tasked with hunting down a deserter, his best friend of a decade and fellow soldier. But Titus isn't the only hunter stalking the dark forests of Gaul. The deserter's trail disappears in a blood-soaked and empty village. Torn between honor and loyalty, Titus must find some way to outwit his officers, save his friend, and survive whatever horror has ravaged the countryside...with utmost dispatch.



Want more tales of military horror against the backdrop of the greatest empire the world has ever known?

Look for *Without Fear* and *With Utmost Dispatch* from Wendigo Tales, available at [www.peginc.com!](http://www.peginc.com!)

## WITHOUT FEAR

Gladiator Magnus Bos remembers little before the fight with the strange gray beast of Aegyptus. Some say that battle left him addled, simple...even dumb. But it also left the Thracian without fear. Perhaps this is why the slave is purchased by a strange cabal and taken to a cursed village on a distant isle--and the strangest arena of his life.

