

He Who Watches



An Old School adventure for characters of 1st to 3rd level

by Karel M.

Crocodilopolis is famous as the home of the Shrine of Sobek the Crocodile God, “He Who Watches”. Thousands of pilgrims come to the city each year bearing costly gifts worth millions of drachmae to the shrine and its priests.

But now the sacred “Son of Sobek” has been found dead in his pen with mysterious internal wounds, and many pilgrims who perform the traditional ritual of sleeping or “incubating” in the shrine’s catacombs have disappeared.

He Who Watches is displeased.

This could get very bad for business!



DM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE:

- **Experience points** are awarded by **gold pieces won**, rather than by monsters slaughtered (to reward cleverly successful solutions, not only violent ones, by PCs)
- Traps, secret doors and treasure are usually found by players looking at appropriate parts of the **PICTURE APPENDIX**, rather than making skill rolls
- Dangerous consumable items can afford a low-level PC a chance for a legendary, heroic death (and memorable famous last words) unless the party is very clever and evasive vs. high-level foes like **The Pale Corruption**.
- Alternatively, the party might get paid for **information** about foes, but leave the slaying to others.
- DM: Don't be a Harvey Weinstein loser-creep! Elements of this adventure should probably be fun and mildly weird and funny for most adult players if you run them in a PG-13 way. Making your players feel like crap by pushing them into a rated-X description means you have failed as a DM. As with any adventure, **read ahead** and **modify** what you deem right for the individuals in your group.

The party might try to do stealthy tomb-robbing, which presents problems in extracting and selling the goods. Or they might follow the Sacred Way and incubate along with the pilgrims. Or...? Creativity and out-of-the-box problem-solving should be encouraged, with appropriate logical consequences for characters.

The DM must know, and the PCs *may* find out:

- **Neferhera**, Priestess of the Chapel of Bastet, who Sobek's cult considers an outsider and a rival for pilgrimage income, recently donned a disguise and fed a lethal spell item to the late incarnation of the Son of Sobek sacred crocodile. She is innocent of the next item...
- A cowed not-quite-human agent of *someone* broke a jug in the Trinclinum Funebrae (Catacomb Room 6) and a slimy seed slithered into the complex, grew into the **Pale Corruption** (Room 15), and started abducting and assimilating pilgrims.
- Just about everyone in town wants the abductions issue **quietly resolved** without panicking the pilgrims/tourists/cash cows

START:

As the party approaches the pilgrim city of Crocodilopolis, the brutally dry landscape around the road gives way to greenery, farms, even ponds and swamps. The city gate towers bear monumental bas reliefs of an idealized crocodile-headed man. Show players **Figure 1** in the PICTURE APPENDIX.

The Festival of Sobek/Pilgrimage season is in full swing. Flowers, banners and other decorations festoon most of the buildings, trees and people. The gate guards admit groups at intervals. The party enters the city along with a sizeable crowd of pilgrims playing simple percussion instruments and singing. Many of the townspeople lining the sides of the street sing with the pilgrims, play instruments, shower flower petals on the incomers or put garlands around their necks.

The song they sing is catchy. Everyone in the crowd and all the pilgrims seem to know it. The song sounds like an ancient desert version of "Louie Louie" and is sung in surprisingly harmonious simultaneous Demotic & Greek versions.

Recommended: a no-fuss lyric read-aloud or summary. Tried successfully once with very indulgent players: A sheet with the lyrics printed in Papyrus font, which one player read aloud to the other players

The lyrics are:

*Now is the great Festival of Holy Sobek,
who precedes the Sun Boat in the Swamps of Night.
He Who Watches!
He Who Watches!
We give our precious gifts in thanks.
Now we shed our second skins.
Now we burrow into the Tomb and incubate all night,
naked.
With our own eyes and bodies we will meet...
He Who Watches!
He Who Watches!*

INITIAL EYE CONTACT GAUNTLET

As party walks into the city, roll a d30 to determine which faces in the crowd the party make eye contact with, and can interact with further if they choose to do so. Roll as many times as the DM and the party are interested in doing so.

#	INITIAL EYE-LOCK INTERACTION	IF MORE INTERACTION IS PURSUED
1	Bald-headed man with friendly demeanor: "Welcome, pilgrims! Everywhere else is full, but the House of the Papyri has some last minute open accommodations!"	"Come with me- the House of the Papyri is not far!" The man, Sebni , works for this inn. Lodging the entire party in a large private room will cost 10-40 gp per night.
2	Thin, tall man with deep-set eyes, arching eyebrows and low, resonant voice: "Are you seeking... accommodation?"	Harkhebi is the owner of the House of the Hawk inn. He can take the party to his clean, well-kept inn. There is one large private room left for the party – 10-40 gp per night. This inn also has a tavern.
3	Short man in a chiton, part of a large minority of foreigners from overseas who have settled and ruled this area: "Pilgrims! Welcome! Stay in my inn - the House of the Hippo – Let my servants massage your feet with scented oil..."	The House of the Hippo innkeeper is Paphnutios . Private rooms cost 10-40gp per night. Scented oil foot massages by servants are on the house if party follows Paphnutios.
4	Middle-aged couple: "Accommodation for pilgrims on a budget! 2 gold pieces per night to stay in our clean home!"	The man and woman are Sesotris and Menhet , who take the party to the flat roof of their simple mud-brick home & serve porridge, beer, friendly conversation.
5	Young male pilgrim with a backpack: "Why pay <i>anything</i> for accommodation? A bunch of us pilgrims are sleeping under the porticos of the agora for free. You're welcome to come along, too."	He is Shoshenq , very friendly, treats Sobek pilgrimage like a Phish fan looking to party with other young fans, but knows rituals well & will perform them
6.-8.	Young boy and girl: "Votive supplies! Incense! Thuribles! Gongs! Sacred dust! Banners! Pilgrims' maps!"	Thutmose and Henutawy are brother & sister, will lead party to family's shop to the west of the Agora and NE of the Transmarine United Merchants guildhall
9.-13.	Tall, aloof, elegant amidst the dust, noise, Sobek-frenzy and commercialism, a woman with high cheekbones in traditional local dress stands far back from the townspeople lining the street. She is standing in front of a simple, cramped-looking chapel painted with an image of Bastet, the cat goddess. Her face barely conceals an annoyance bordering on contempt for the excited pilgrims and shopkeepers. Her green-eyed gaze catches yours. A smile flickers over her features, then she breaks eye contact. Show Fig. 2 in PICTURE APPENDIX.	Will not respond to shouting or attempts to talk in public. May whisper something to servants. Might hold finger discretely up to lips in a shush gesture, disappear inside chapel. (This is Neferhera , priestess of Bastet, who will seek out the party later when she or her servants have seen their accommodation, which tavern they visit, or another way of finding them)

INITIAL EYE CONTACT D30 GAUNTLET (continued)

14.- 17.	Smiling, cute elderly women who have similar features and sport creative snake head-dresses: “Welcome, Pilgrims! Paint your own banners for Sobek in our workshop!”	Iset and Nebet will take you to their streetside open-walled workshop, charge 1 gp per person to paint on linen banners stretched across flat stones rising up from the beaten dirt floor. DM can choose to have NPCs from this list, or in general, paint alongside PCs and discuss rumors, etc.
18.- 22.	Singing, smiling young women with enough kohl around their eyes to look like an Edward Gorey or Doonesbury cartoon, huge sparkling earrings, cones of perfume cakes melting on their heads. The overt religious fervor they express has an undercurrent of flirtatiousness. Makeup conceals premature lines	Sesheshet and Menwi exchange their favors for money semi-overtly, esp. for pilgrims incubating in Sobek’s Tomb. They might also guide visitors to accommodation, taverns, etc.
23.- 30.	Plump, balding, middle-aged man in a toga with an unctuous smile: “Walk the sacred path! See the sacred sites! See the body of a king drowned in spiced honey! I will guide you!”	Bassus the Mystagogue is a long-time expat from Herculaneum who guides pilgrims/tourists for a living. He earns kickbacks leading people to: the expensive inns mentioned above; to Merkarei of Meroe’s shop (see FLAME PILLAR section below) and her “ Mummy Dust ”; to religious goods shop of Thutmose et. al. ; to Sesheshet’s male and female competitors. For 1gp, shows visitors the alleged body of a foreign king immersed in congealed honey and beeswax at the Temple of Hermanubis. Will also do as much of the Sobek pilgrimage and incubation with clients as they are willing to pay for. Bassus on retainer: 4-16 gp/day of guiding. Bassus downplays pilgrim disappearances.



Frederick Arthur Bridgman - Navigium Isidis - Public Domain – en.wikipedia.org

PEOPLE **WILL** TALK...

Whether the party finds accommodation in inns (10-40gp per night), in private homes (1-4gp), camps out on the Agora (free) or chooses NOT to find accommodation and just walks down a street, day or night nobody is alone in Pilgrimage Season. Plenty of chances to overhear rumors or even be sought out for conversation. Roll d12 or d30 on the following table when DM deems appropriate, e.g. every 2 turns, 20 minutes, or walking 200 feet on the city map. 1-12 are said by anyone. 13-30 are uttered by specific people, who may approach the party on the street, in taverns, in shops, or even knocking on their inn door.

RUMORS AND CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTERS

1. The Sons of Sobek are fat, tame crocodiles. For a donation to the temple, you can feed the reigning Sacred Crocodile choice meats in his pen. The Son of Sobek sleeps on/plays with/wears valuable jewelry, gems and coins people have donated.
2. The most recently incumbent Son of Sobek died a few days ago of mysterious wounds. It looked like he had been scratched by the claws of a huge panther or lion, but from *inside* his skin. The jewelry and other offerings on or near his person were not taken.
3. The amount of treasure brought to the temple and to local merchants by the pilgrims is staggering.
4. Deceased Sons of Sobek are mummified and entombed in catacombs in the temple complex. They are ritually “fed” gems and coins periodically.
5. A magic ring carved in the shape of a crocodile was lost near the temple about a few days ago
6. “Incubating” or sleeping in rooms dug out of the stone of Sobek’s tomb has always been a popular activity for pilgrims; they are said to gain prophetic dreams and see the Crocodile God. You have to do it nude. Crocodile pattern body paint and sacred dust is optional. All year, as a very ordinary non-pilgrimage-related activity, some people toast the dead in the catacombs near Sobek’s Tomb.
7. This season, some of the pilgrims who incubate have been disappearing without a trace. Many

of those who didn’t disappear are having terrible visions. All the temples and merchants in town are terrified word will get around and cause a panic: Pilgrims will get spooked, leave town, stop spending money, etc.

8. Bastet, She Who Scratches, is NOTHING compared to the true greatness of Sobek.
9. The beer and wine in town is excellent, cheap. Someone with the chutzpah to masquerade as famous travel writer Pausanias could get free food and drink from innkeepers hoping for good reviews in his books.
10. The priests of Sobek have squirreled away thousands of arcane papyri in a library in the catacombs (DM: This is actually a false rumor).
11. Crocodilopolitan artists who paint portraits of the deceased on wooden boards for mummies during the off-season, and who, during Pilgrimage Season, do speed-portraits of pilgrims in front of the incubation tunnels, have recently seen their work painting-bombed with an ominous hooded figure in the background, which they didn’t expect or intend.
12. Local Greek expat astrologers like **Orestes**, **Selene** and **Melpomene** have been terrified for past month by the arrival of an ill-omened comet which “brings something from outside, inside”. Could this be connected to the disappearances among the incubating pilgrims?

13-15. **Thutmose** and **Henutawy**- young brother and sister with backpacks on, weaving among the people, hawking items from family’s shop west of Agora: “Votive supplies! Sacred candles! Incense! Thuribles! Gongs! City maps!”

16.– 17. **Pnepheros** – suave, but sincere rep from the **United Merchants of Crocodilopolis**, Transmarine and Crocodilopolitan:

“I see you are formidable and well-armed newcomers in town. Can we talk discreetly? Our merchants’ guild will reward you with gold, incense, beer and wine if you ferret out whoever killed the Son of Sobek as well as solve and stop the mysterious disappearances of pilgrims.”

- Returning to the Merchants with a **poor guess** earns PCs a small quantity of goods worth 100 gp.
- Returning with a tale of a **plausible culprit** gets a medium quantity of goods worth 100-400gp.
- The **Pale Corruption** didn't kill the Son of Sobek, but **blaming** the creature would earn a medium quantity of goods 100-400gp.
- **Killing the Pale Corruption** earns goods worth 1000-8000 gp and a camel or boat.
- Pointing to **Neferhera** and the Chapel of Bastet (the actual culprits) would play on the underlying animosities of the townsfolk, and inspire them and the United Merchants to make an **ugly mob scene** vs. the Chapel with torches. Reward: Looted treasure from the Chapel, worth 2000-12000 gp along with orig. promised goods, plus a donkey, camel or boat.

18.-20. **Antipater** the "Procurer of Antiquities" (tomb-robber): "Pardon me, I need to talk to you...over here, where it's quieter. You're from out of town, but you're not pilgrims who have memorized the usual drill. You've got that cash-hungry look in your eyes, am I right or am I right? I need help obtaining some items for a client who is sort of an 'antique collector'. I split the take with you for the items 60/40 and any collateral fish sauce accrues to you and your friends."

Antipater, a Level 3 Thief (STR 12 INT 16 WIS 10 DEX 16 CON 9 CHA 14, hp 12), wants to case catacombs using the excuse of visiting the Triclinum Funebre and hoisting a cup to the dear departed. Once in the catacombs, he will pocket items and encourage party members to follow his example. Wears an eclectic collection of amulets he thinks protect him from the angry dead. Usual thief toolkit.

21. Tall, formal - Archpriest **Ta-Hat Sobek**: "Can we talk... discreetly? I am the First Servant of the Servants of Sobek. You are obviously not people to trifle with. The Temple will pay you well to find out who is blaspheming against Sobek and making away with his worshippers. Especially in Pilgrimage Season and when a new Son of Sobek is to be crowned, the Priesthood absolutely can NOT afford

to be absent from the rites and to draw attention by investigating it ourselves."

This priest will discreetly arrange for appropriate supplies to be left for the party where they enter the catacombs. He will also pronounce a spell over them which **deactivates door curses** in the complex for 24 hours. He will also give them keys for the door locks between catacomb areas 7. and 8.

After they return from the catacombs with information about the **Pale Corruption**, Ta-Hat Sobek, a 6th level cleric, hp 35, will pay the party 1000 gp + 500 gp if they bring back the crocodile ring. He will offer to pay them **The Tears of the Crocodile** – a heavy and beautifully-crafted necklace made of gold and aquamarine worth 5000 gp if they kill the creature. Blaming the Chapel of Bastet for assassinating the Son of Sobek will bring protests of disbelief and no reward, but the next night a mob will have been stirred up to attack and burn down the Chapel.

22.-23. From **Phahsobek**, guard captain of Sobek's Temple- "I need to find a large number of formidable guards for the Coronation ceremony of the new Son of Sobek. Nothing like what befell his predecessor can be allowed to happen to him."

If PCs accept, they will make arrangements to meet Phahsobek at dawn at the Son of Sobek's Temple, joining a crowd of assembled bravos. They will be fitted with matching temple guard leather breastplates, bronze helmets, spears, unless they choose to be plainclothes security. The Coronation will be at midday and last three ceremony-heavy hours. There will be time to talk and dice with other hired bravos while waiting for the ceremony-roll d12 a few times on this RUMORS chart, discarding any results which don't fit in this context. If all goes well, Phahsobek will pay 50gp to each and will introduce the PCs to **Ta-Hat Sobek**, who will offer the job mentioned above at 21. PCs gain extended loan of the guard uniforms and weapons.

24.-27. **Neferhera**, elegant, priestess/agent of Bastet: "Let's talk. Out of earshot of the unwashed. I have the feeling you're not avid worshippers of Sobek like everyone else out there. For various reasons, Sobek's priests know me and everyone

associated with me, and we would be recognized and ejected from the train of pilgrims. But YOU are a different story. I want to know what's happening in there. I will pay you to take the final leg of the pilgrimage and report back." Show **Fig. 2** in PICTURE APPENDIX if appropriate.

After returning and making their report, Neferhera will be horrified to hear of the extradimensional evil in the catacombs, but will be loath to tell Sobek's priests anything. She will pay the party 500 gp for the report and then send them back in to kill the creature. She will tell the party: "People call Sobek 'He Who Watches' but they call Bastet 'She Who Scratches'!" She might send them to the desert to kill a lioness in single combat at a disadvantage (such as being naked), then do an expedited build of a **Paw of Sekhmet** for them to use in killing the **Pale Corruption**. Or, needing haste, she will just give them such a weapon. 3000gp reward for proof of killing **Pale Corruption**.

28.-30. From **Maxentius the Neapolitan**, a book-procurer – "I will pay you to take the pilgrimage and tell me about the **rumored vault full of papyri** that the Temple of Sobek is hiding underground. I will pay you much more if you actually bring back some select titles for me. I have taken the pilgrimage before and found nothing. Sobek's priests are suspicious of me, I think."

After doing this quest, Maxentius will pay the party 250gp for a true report, 1000gp for a false report that **fulfils his wishes**, and 100-400gp extra for each scroll they hand over. There is really no vast underground library.

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CITY DESCRIPTION AND POINTS OF INTEREST

Palm trees, flat roofs, walled gardens, beaten dirt streets. Wide lake and verdant marshes to the east of town. Farms and ponds to the west of town give way to a dry landscape. Marsh Gate to the East. Desert Gate to the West.

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CITY FEATURES/AMENITIES

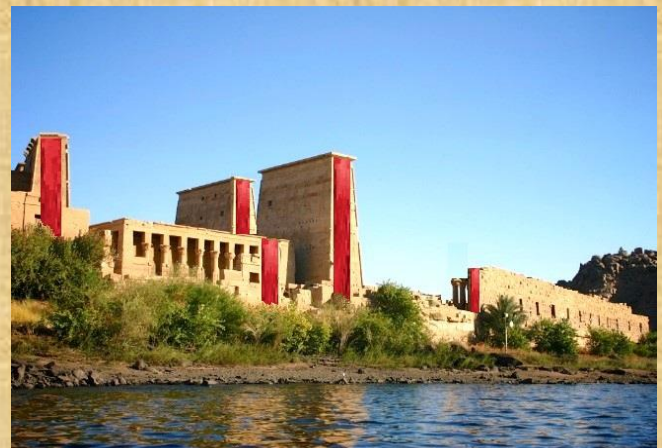
Taverns, wine-sellers, brewers, journey outfitters (items for desert, dungeon, river and marsh expeditions), weaponers, pawn brokers, book sellers (more papyrus scrolls than vellum codices), scribes, many astrologers, livery stables for horses and camels, Chapel of Bastet, Chapel of Hermanubis, Temple of Sobek (larger building and living areas for priests- show Fig. 3 in PICTURE APPENDIX if players want or need to see it), several shops selling religious supplies – banners, incense, ribbons, sacred dust, body paint; Iset and Nebet's DIY-for-a-fee banner-painting workshop; a torch-maker's tower shop set apart from other buildings at the edge of the lakes and swamps to the east of town, and an old pyramid repurposed as a flammable items shop in a farm field outside of the western walls (see **Merkarei of Meroë** under FLAME PILLAR AND INCENSE CLOUD in CITY ENCOUNTERS/EVENTS section below).

See chart ITEMS AVAILABLE AT VARIOUS CROCODILOPOLITAN STORES as needed.

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THE AGORA

Many of the pilgrims who unfurl their bedrolls on the public square are teens and twenty-somethings. The atmosphere is a mix of religious fervor, youthful sociability, incense smoke, noise. Some people are praying, applying unguents, preparing banners for Sobek and the new Son of Sobek. Many other people are becoming intoxicated, playing musical instruments, hitting on other pilgrims and townspeople. Uber-traditional retro-chic perfumed cones of butter melt pungently atop some young women's heads.



People are selling or giving away **foul-tasting “Mummy Dust”** supposedly made of a fungus that grows inside mummies- price: 0-5gp.

MUMMY DUST EFFECTS – Roll percentile dice

00-70 - DM shows player a random part of the PICTURE APPENDIX. Roll d30 for Fig. #

71-99 – UPSETTING VISIONS. Cross each vision out as they are seen. Once all visions are seen by a PC, stomach pain and -2 to all die rolls for the next 24 turns/4 hours.

Visions:

1. **The Pale Corruption** (See Catacomb Map Area 15) enveloping victims;
2. A hooded, misshapen figure **smashing an amphora** in an underground room from which something small, slimy and luminous skitters;
3. Veiled woman **feeding** a jewelry-festooned **crocodile** a bundle of meat;
4. **Tomb doors** thumping and shaking;
5. **Screaming**, decayed face of a **mummy** lying in a tomb- after a moment, it chokes, **vomits** up a **white goo**
6. PC feels like he or she has just awoken, wrists crossed, **inside a mummy case**

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THE INCUBATION TUNNEL ENTRANCES

West of the Temple of Sobek, north west of the Temple of the Son of Sobek, a limestone block pyramid squats atop a mound of earth. The Tomb of Sobek and catacombs are beneath it. Over hundreds of pilgrimage seasons, enthusiastic pilgrims have hollowed out caves and tunnels in the NW flank of the mound.

Every night of each pilgrimage season, dozens of devotees descend on the tunnels to “incubate” and have contact with the Deity.

Pious, but also mercantile, carnivalesque atmosphere.

Shops, temporary stalls, and wandering peddlers sell food, wine, drug-laced wine, beer, gongs, pious banners, ribbons, body perfumes and unguents, body paint, various vivid colors of sacred dust, incense, thuribles, censers.

Speed portraitists who, as everyone knows, in the off-season make portraits of dead people for their mummy cases, offer for a fee to paint pilgrims’ likeness in minutes on wood panels or papyrus as a souvenir.

Musicians play loud, fast, intoxicating rhythms.

Seshehet and **Menwi** and many other professionals weave among the crowds, as do sellers of the **“Mummy Dust”** described with the Agora.

The pilgrim crowds are various ages, nationalities and genders. **Shoshenq** and his young pilgrim friends will certainly be there.

At a certain point in the evening, a special flute trill cuts through all the hubbub. All pilgrims (**Seshehet’s** male and female professional colleagues among them) remove their clothes very publicly, chant, don body paint and unguent, shake to the beat of gongs. Bystanders dust them with sacred dust, douse them with perfume water, cense them with incense smoke.

Each pilgrim enters his or her own cave or tunnel with bedrolls and bags. Pilgrims are **forbidden** to offend Sobek by the use of torches or any other **light sources**.

Many of the caves and tunnels are discreetly connected to each other, but no one will say they are supposed to be cut through to the actual tombs.

PCs are definitely welcome and encouraged to **incubate** for the Crocodile Deity. The happy crowds will turn into **angry mobs** if PCs obviously enter the tunnels wearing armor, clothes, using light sources, or not alone. Those on a mission for the Temple of Sobek or another entity should be able to surreptitiously stow or **smuggle** needed items inside.

The Temple and most other mission-givers want to **conceal the pilgrim disappearances**, prevent panic, prevent visitors from breaking off their pilgrimages and fleeing Crocodilopolis.

At least two of the pilgrims met by the PCs will enter the caves and tunnels and never return.

PCs can hear receding screams coming from rough tunnels burrowed into the incubation tunnels. Following these sandy tunnels reveals **Fig. 14a** (and maybe **14b**) and brings people to Room 14 on the Tombs of Sobek/Sons map.

FLAME PILLAR AND INCENSE CLOUD – In the middle of the 1st night the party spends in Crocodilopolis, a loud boom sounds and a gout of flame shoots into the sky east of the city. Locals who awaken will look at it and say: “That’s Narses the Persian’s warehouse tower, on the end of the little peninsula in the lake. I hope nobody was hurt. At least **Merkarei of Meroë’s** pyramid and shop still stands.” Narses’ tower held torches, lantern oil, lanterns, pitch, charcoal, and vast quantities of Himyarite frankincense. Will PCs pick through the smoking ruins? Nothing useable left, but the flame pillar event emphasizes Merkarei’s surviving shop as a potential resource for players’ problem-solving schemes.

Merkarei’s shop has a similar flammable inventory to what Narses’ had and stands in a small repurposed pyramid in a field outside town. PCs might try to purchase or plunder Merkarei’s goods for use in fighting the **Pale Corruption**. Over the early morning hours, an incense cloud will begin to drift over Crocodilopolis but then dissipate slowly, depending on the wind.

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MERKAREI of MEROË’S SHOP

West of town, by law outside the city walls, in a farm field, in an old, compact pyramid - Merkarei’s shop of torches, beeswax candles, lanterns, incense, pitch, charcoal, flammable oils. Merkarei holds no title, but she is rich, a sharp businesswoman from beyond the southern deserts, and dresses like a queen. She sells the **foul-tasting “Mummy Dust”** under the counter – see the description in the Agora section above.

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DEALER IN ANTIQUITIES

SE corner of City Map. Shop is a front for agents of Sobek’s Temple and Hermanubis’s Chapel to sting tomb robbers. A tough, furtive woman, **Tefnut** (Level 3 thief, 5 daggers hidden about her person, hp 12), hangs around the outside of the shop and will try to discreetly divert potential tomb item sellers. She will tell them the shop is a cheat and offer to buy their wares in a nearby alley. She also has **“Mummy Dust”** (described in the Agora section) for sale.

The false fence sting operation is run by a Greek named **Xenophon**. Xenophon and the 7 **“shop assistants”**, who can attend him at a moment’s notice from rooms around the building, are all level 1 fighters, hp 4-8 each, armed with clubs, spears, nets, and short swords hidden around the shop as well as daggers on their persons.

For items **stolen from worshippers of Bastet** or their tombs, Xenophon will buy honestly without qualms. However, Xenophon usually tries to get sellers of **other tomb items** to descend a short staircase to the basement to do their selling of looted grave goods “because it affords more privacy for our transaction, and because it’s cooler there.” He and his assistants will either try to officially capture the perpetrators and hand them over to Sobek’s priests to be fed to wild crocodiles (not the tame Sons of Sobek) unless the priests can be persuaded to do otherwise, or Xenophon and company will just try to kill and rob the would-be grave goods sellers.

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THE NEW SON OF SOBEK’S CORONATION

Starting at midday on the day after the PCs arrive in town, five hours of spectacle and majestic ritual take place in the Temple of the Son of Sobek. It starts as something beautiful and becomes something excruciatingly boring. See Phahsobek’s section in the RUMORS AND CONVERSATIONAL ENCOUNTERS chart.

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ORACLE IN THE DESERT

A well-outfitted two-day journey to the western desert hills can reach the huge ancient stone bust half-submerged in the sand. Paying the priests 10-100gp, food and water gets their interpretation. Paying them cash or items worth 100-1000gp gives the privilege of directly putting one’s ears up to the massive stone lips and hearing the whispered oracle. Message: THE SEPULCHRE OF SOBEK IS DEFILED AND DANGEROUS. FIRE WILL CLEANSE AND KILL.



AREAS IN AND NEAR CATACOMBS

Temple authorities and average citizens will react angrily to PCs exiting catacombs with visible loot or grave goods.

There is an increasingly powerful stench of putrescine in the tunnels the closer the PCs get to Room 15. Each incident of making a lot of **noise** underground in Room 8 and beyond- fighting, searching, breaking open doors, for example- adds +5%/+1 to the cumulative chance of an encounter on the WANDERERS IN THE CATACOMBS TABLE on the HANDY DM TABLES AND INFO page at the end of this adventure.

Roll d20 or percentile die every noise incident, consult WANDERERS TABLE if indicated. Initial chance is 00-05 on d% or a roll of 1 on a d20. Howling sounds getting closer and an overpowering stench precede **corrupted corpse** encounters.

TOMB OF SOBEK AND SONS MAP AREAS

1. Aboveground: **Route** beaten by countless pilgrims' feet between Temple of Sobek and Son of Sobek's Temple and pen.
2. Aboveground: **Merchants' stalls** selling items for use in the nearby religious complex. For visitors to the Temple of the Son of Sobek: sacrificial meat for sale to feed to the Son of Sobek, crocodile-sized jewelry; For visits to the Trinclinium Funebre: jugs of wine, subterranean picnic dinners, cushions, blankets; Offerings for the entombed Sobek and/or his late Sons: mummified baby crocodiles; various mummy-wrapped animals or animal parts; votive plaques in Greek, Demotic, or Latin; statuettes.
3. Mostly aboveground: **Temple of The Son of Sobek**- winding stone stairs blocked by a gate spiral down to Son of Sobek's pen, hugging walls of pen. Visible down in pen: bulrushes, mud, feces, scattered coins worth d20 x 10 gp, 5d20 gems and jewelry pieces worth 1-100 gp each, partially eaten meat, a water basin and a 4' diameter tunnel leading into catacomb pens. 0-5 **priests of Sobek/his Sons** and 1-12 of their **acolytes, guards** and/or **servants** at any time, numbers reduced when rites are happening elsewhere.

The **Son of Sobek** is a crocodile wearing gold bracelets around his legs and tail and painted with decorative stripes of gold paint. Like all the Sons of Sobek, he has been raised by human priests and acts quite tame. Magic can reveal evil scenes occurred here: a disguised **Neferhera** feeding the late Son of Sobek his fatal **Paw of Sekhmet** patty, and a hooded figure descending into Area 4.

4. Light shaft and **stairs** leading into catacombs. Stairs circle around central pit; do not extend into pit. Water, mud, feces and sand in crocodile pen at bottom of pit. 3' diameter slimy tunnel opens in west wall at pit level and slopes upward to connect with the Son of Sobek's Temple crocodile pen. D20 x 100 is value of coins, gems and jewelry thrown into the pit.
5. **Rotunda/Well** – Everywhere cluttered with votive offerings, mummy-wrapped baby crocodiles, mummy-wrapped animal parts, clay votive statues of human body parts. Sheer-walled well is not connected to crocodile pens; lightless, it goes much deeper, has no stairs for access. Sturdy marble upright post – suitable for rapelling rope- beside well. Show **Fig. 3d**.

In well: **Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c**. 3a: Verdigrised but well-crafted legionary-style **belt** with motto "Vtere Felix" – "Use with luck!" +1 or +5% to luck-related rolls when worn. **3b: Silver armband**, saves wearer's life vs. poison three times, then becomes inert. **3c. Gold serpent ring** – 10 gp value

Hidden in niches along wall among votive bric-a-brac: **Fig. 3f. cure disease scroll**; **Fig. 3g. human-headed crocodile protection +1 amulet**; **Fig. 3h. Fireball scroll**; **Fig. 3i. Crystal skull-shaped bottle** contains a **potion** that smells like nauseatingly strong alcohol, gives **18 dexterity, 18/00 strength** for next 10 minutes/1 turn, then makes imbiber extremely tired, take 2-12 dmg, and have to rest for 2-12 hours (if they survived the damage). While it lasts: +6 to hit, -4 from enemy attack rolls, +6 damage

6. **Triclinium Funebre** – Three large stone couches where visitors (expected to bring own cushions, food and wine) have periodic ritual meals (and drink toasts) with the spirits of the nearby interred dead, then break the containers they brought with them. Each corner of the room has deep shard piles from smashed amphorae. Searching reveals a faintly luminescent, foul-smelling **slime trail** about the width of a human eyeball, leading from the shards of one of the smashed wine jugs towards a crack in the northeast wall. Powerful magic or visions, or just a 5% cumulative chance for every turn (10 minutes) spent in the room, will replay the past “**scene of worst evil**”- a hooded figure smashing an amphora and releasing something luminous that scuttles, slithers to the crack in the NW wall. An hour of **chipping away at the wall** around the crack will enlarge it enough to permit adult humans to pass to Room 19.

7. **Statue of Sobek**

Show players **Fig. 4** in PICTURE APPENDIX. Statue bears and inscription in Demotic, Greek, Latin: THIS IS THE KINGDOM OF NIGHT AND SILENCE. SHOW THE RESPECT DUE TO ME, MY SONS, AND MY PRIESTS OR SUFFER MY CURSE. There is a pile of coins placed around the statue (10-200 gp), as well as 3-36 mummies of animals, wrapped animal body parts, and things associated with particular animals, like birds’ nest material. **Leaving an offering** worth 50gp or more earns +1 to hit and +2 to saves vs. poison for those entering the catacombs for the duration of their visit. **Not leaving an offering** or **stealing** the offerings earns an equivalent curse. Very modern imported Roman locks in several sets of double doors leading to Room 8.

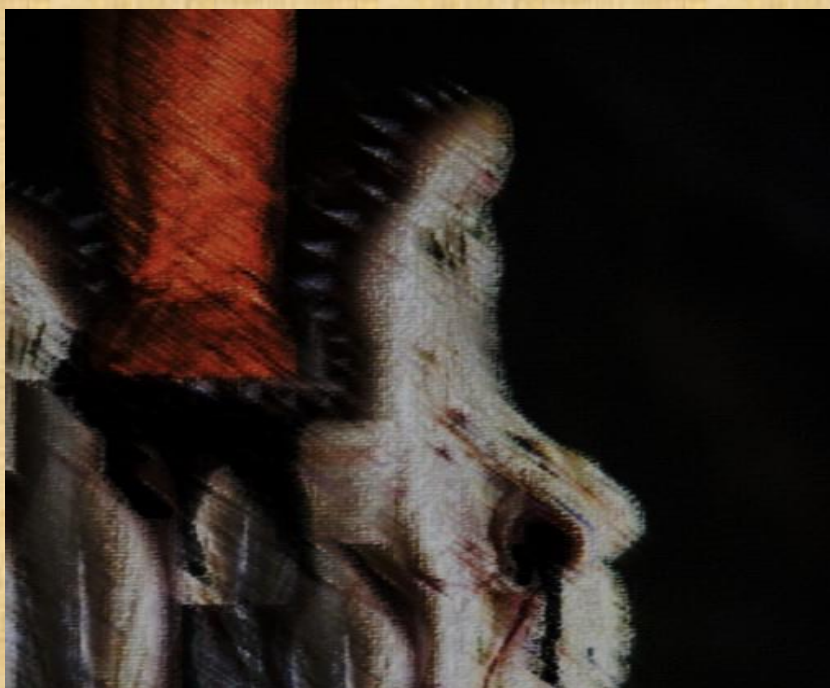
8. **Crocodile mummies.** PICTURE APPENDIX **Fig. 4a** shows foyer. Seal and lock on door. Breaking seal gives curse -1 to all rolls unless first defused. Inside: 217 crocodile mummies in various states of decay- the late Sons of Sobek-wrapped, mummified, leathery, the accumulation of centuries. The newest resident wears a tiny 1 gp value gold foil crown. Some still stand up against the wall, others have fallen down. Others are stacked like cordwood.

Jewels and metal glint inside the mouths and gullets of some. The resin, wrappings and hide have made the mummies very difficult to rip open. Probing down mouth and throat is probably easier option. Roll for the mouth of each mummy first, then gullet (unless PCs decline to reach further in). Each roll takes 1 minute/round. Show **Fig. 5, 6, and 7** when appropriate.

From here on, in the catacombs, every incident of making **noise** earns adds +5%/+1 to the cumulative chance the WANDERERS TABLE must be consulted.



PROBING IN CROCODILE MUMMIES – Roll D12 for each depth of probing, for each mummy	
Mouth	Gullet
1.-6. Mouth contains a silver Death's Head Obolus (see Fig. 6) PCs might have an inkling about this: Hardly any merchants in the civilized world will accept these as payment. Barbarians might, and the coins could be melted down. But deadly bad luck will supposedly still follow the thieves.	1. Contains a jewel worth 1-100 gp
7. Fallen apart/falls apart	2. 1-6 finger-sized, dormant carriion beetles revive, bite the probing hand or object (MV 12", AC 9, HD 1/2, AT #1, dmg 1-4)
8. Empty, dry	3. Bursts, releases noxious gas for 1-4 dmg.
9. Artificial wooden crocodile tongue	4. Black goo, spores- save vs. poison or 1-6 dmg.
10. Dry rot with a bit of wet rot – feels nasty!	5. 50% chance: Empty, dry; 50% chance: filled with wrapped, mummified animal bodies or animal parts
11. Stuffed with papyri to honor that particular Son: 80% chance of panegyric poetry – 10% chance of a legible Clerical scroll: e.g. <i>Bless</i> , <i>Cure Disease</i> , <i>Flame Strike</i> , <i>Earthquake</i> , or <i>Speak with Plants</i> - 10% chance of 1 legible Magic User scroll: <i>Fireball</i> , <i>Remove Curse</i> , or <i>Slow</i>	6.-11. Stuffed with papyri to bolster shape of the mummified crocodile; papyri are letters, receipts, scraps. Ideas to be gained from the Demotic texts: Pilgrims donate a LOT of money to Sobek and his Son's Temples; Greek-speaking astrologers have come to town in numbers, but they are not depriving Sobek of pilgrims and are no threat to business; Very few people visit Bastet's local shrine - the letter author, a Priest of Sobek, thinks Bastet's local organization is monetarily insolvent – he writes insults about the "weak" deity and its priestesses
12. Empty, dry	12. Stuffed with sacred desiccated pufferfish, which died inside the crocodile corpse, in inflated fear-mode; razor fins cause 1-4 damage vs. unprotected skin; leather gloves reduce dmg -2



9. **U-shaped hall** with tombs (loculi) of **priests of Sobek and his sons**. Noise- opening loculi, combat, smashing doors, etc.- adds +5% or +1 to chance of needing to consult WANDERERS TABLE. Cross out after each roll.

OPENING PRIESTS' TOMBS	
d20	Result:
1	Empty
2	Empty except for marble hieroglyphic-inscribed tablet: RESERVED
3	Mummy case, mummy, ushabti figures (show Fig. 8), 1-4 alabaster animal-headed-deity canopic jars are worth 10-100 gp each when sold to unscrupulous or foreign merchants. Sorcerers might like the organs inside the jars; others, not so much.
4	Mummy case, thin gold foil mask worth 1 gp, mummy, Death's Head Obolus (show Fig. 6) in mouth, ushabti figures (small resale value to dealers who feel no qualms about 'recycled' ushabti), wax animal-headed figures next to certain organs left in the body (no resale value to anyone, except certain sorcerers who <i>like</i> that they are used)
5	Mummy case, mummy, mummified animals (50% chance) or 1-10 gems worth 10-100 gp wrapped up with mummy (50% chance), ushabti figures, 1-4 alabaster canopic jars worth 10-200 gp each when sold to appropriate merchants and the organs inside sold to sorcerers or removed, 1-20 gold household & dining utensils worth 1-10 gp each
6	All contents of #4, plus 2-12 awakened, aggressive, finger-length carrion beetles (MV 12", AC 9, HD 1/2, AT #1, dmg 1-4)
7	Contents of #5 plus spores puff out of black goo-slimed mummy, save vs. poison or 1-6 dmg; save vs. poison again or vomit black blood and take another 2-12 dmg each round until disease is cured
8	All contents of #3, but mummy is cobwebbed with wet, white, foul-smelling strings of fungal-looking material. Ushabti figures are crowded into the farthest edges of the loculus, as if they are afraid or were pushed. Mummy has a 25% chance to jerk unnaturally every minute the loculus is unsealed. Characters who touch sticky strings or strike the mummy will be splashed by droplets of semi-animate white slime and must save vs. poison successfully each round for 2 rounds/minutes, until the 2 round/minute period of danger has passed. If 2 saves are unsuccessful, the character will rage violently under the control of the utterly alien Pale Corruption (see Room 15), slime pouring out of body orifices.
9	Mummy case, mummy, wax figures, and a scroll of <i>cure disease</i> , which can be carefully peeled off undamaged from the cartonnage
10	Mummy case, mummy, ushabti, and weird black-purple mushrooms twisting out of the mummy's gaping eyesockets and mouth. These have the effects of mummy dust , described in the town's AGORA section
11	Mummy case, thin gold foil mask (very fragile, worth 5 gp), ushabti, brittle and severely rotten mummy
12	Contents of #4, plus alabaster jar shaped like a hippo – inside is a dark desiccated piece of meat (a human liver) – "Drink Me with Wine" is scrawled in Greek in black ink. Mixing with water and eating this will make a map of wounds (Fig. 22a) arise from the inside on the skin of the consumer's back, inflicting 1-4 damage. Mixing with wine will inflict only 1 damage. Map shows Sobek's Tomb complex. Pale Corruption of Room 15 is depicted with a weird, weeping white skin lesion and slime spoor.
13	Inscription on loculus seal in Hieroglyphics: CURSED BE HE WHO DISTURBS ME! Inside is a very decayed mummy and similar contents to #5. As soon as the seal is broken, unseen, icy, irresistible hands will pull the nearest PC away at great speed down the floor of the hallway. If PC clutches flagstones with fingers, he or she can gasp a memorable line to his/her comrades, then will be yanked away into the darkness. The PC returns to the party after 30 minutes unable to remember anything after being dragged away, and with no visible injuries except minor scrapes and bruises from being dragged. Changeling? Sleeper spy?
14	Inscription on loculus seal in Demotic and Greek: WE ARE ALIKE. Contents are similar to #4. On breaking the seal, Death's Head Obolus coins (show Fig. 6) will materialize in each party member's mouth , taste awful.

15	Inscription on loculus seal in Hieratic: BY THE GRACE OF LORD SOBEK, HAVE EMPATHY. Breaking the seal causes the nearest PC to disappear with a thunderclap and reappear inside the body chamber , lying in the grave garments and cartonnage mummy case of a long-dead priest of Sobek. Breaking through the papier-maché-like case will give the PC more air, otherwise she or he will suffocate in 1 minute/round. A <i>cure disease</i> scroll is plastered to the inside of the cartonnage. 75% chance of ripping this in breaking out. The thunderclap will bring the corrupted corpses (see Room 15) in 6-12 minutes.
16	Inscription on loculus seal in Hieroglyphics surrounded by warding symbols: BEWARE! SOMETIMES THE ABYSS STARES BACK! Very heavy stone loculus cover which can swing smoothly and easily open on a pivot. Inside the loculus is a limitless black gulf; staring down into it will cause huge eyes to blink open . A powerful wind will suck anything within 30 feet not nailed down toward the loculus in 1 round/minute unless resisted. The loculus cover creaks and looks like it could be slammed shut easily on its pivot. Roll d20 for each character vs. Strength; rolling over their strength score means they have been overpowered and sucked toward the loculus in 1 round. Any character who thinks of shutting the loculus cover will be able to succeed in closing it and stopping the suction, even after failing the strength roll. Failing the roll and failing to think to shut the cover dooms character and carried personal effects to annihilation. Just enough time available to grab a fingerhold, shout dramatic last words, e.g.: "Save yourSELVES! Aaaaah!"
17	Empty except for a pile of 23 Death's Head Obolus coins (show Fig. 6) and a bronze jar etched in Greek: DRINK ME WITH WINE. Inside is a dark, desiccated piece of meat (a human liver). Consuming with something other than wine will make a map of wounds (Fig. 22a) arise from the inside on the skin of the consumer's back, inflicting 1-4 damage. Mixing with wine will inflict only 1 damage. Map shows Sobek's Tomb complex. Pale Corruption of Room 15 is depicted with a weird, weeping white skin lesion and slime spoor.
18	Empty, except for the stone die (see Room 13) – PCs encounter it here or elsewhere only once.
19	Empty
20	Must <i>definitely</i> only be encountered once. Mummy case and usual accoutrements, but angry priest's spirit will suddenly animate bony mummified arms with unholy strength and pull nearest character's face irresistibly close to mummy's rotting, reeking jaws whence a sepulchral voice shouts: "I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE OR WHAT YOU TAKE, ONLY DESTROY WITH FIRE AND SWORD THE WHITE CORRUPTION THAT DEFILES LORD SOBEK'S CATACOMBS!" Then it will collapse and puff into foul-smelling dust. A map of wounds (Fig. 22a) arises through the skin of the addressed character's back, inflicting 1-4 damage. Map shows Sobek's Tomb complex. The Pale Corruption of Room 15 is shown as a weird, weeping white skin lesion and slime spoor.



10. **Antechamber to Tomb of Sobek**- Intact seals, warnings, curses inscribed and painted on inner and outer doors in Hieroglyphics, Hieratic, Demotic. Flagstones immediately in front of the double doors on each end of the room are a little higher than the rest of the floor. Show players **Fig. 9**. Stepping on them sends the raised flagstones and anyone on them down a chute into a 20-foot deep **pit**, incurring 2-12 damage. Smart PCs will be suspicious of the picture and/or description and test the raised and sunken floor areas for safety with poles, hirelings, etc.
11. **Hall** – sealed, locked double doors on each side; the NW set of doors is inscribed with bas reliefs of Sobek and hieroglyphic warnings not to disturb him. On the floor directly in front of the NW double doors is a red-brown dusty smudge. Heaps of dead bugs and other small vermin around the edges of the smudge. Lines etched in the ceiling have a red-brown dust clinging to them in the grooves closest to the NW doors. Show **Fig. 10**. Opening these doors either way tips a tray concealed in the ceiling, which dumps **poison dust** through the nearest grooves on the person or persons standing immediately in front of the door – save vs. poison or take 2-12 hp in damage. Different ways to unlock or open the doors remotely or trip the trap ahead of time will avoid a lot of danger to PCs.
12. **Army of ushabti** – Behind a curse-inscribed door (-1 on all rolls in catacombs unless door-openers have sacrificed at Sobek statue in Room 7 or have obtained blessing of archpriest **Ta-Hat Sobek**) are lined up on the stone floor 100 very fine quality **ushabti** in human, crocodilian and crocodile-headed human forms- all have stamps on them with devotional messages to Sobek. **Show Fig. 11**. Bas reliefs on the walls depict service to, and worship of, Sobek. These ushabti would be worth between 10-100 gp each to a dealer far, far away from Crocodilopolis. A spell painted in tiny Demotic script into the wall very close to the floor says that after it is read aloud, “Speak

the Name of He Who Watches and we will take your instructions in furthering his aims”. The ushabtis will awaken and march uncannily after the PCs, following them from place to place until combat occurs. As soon as a hostile act from either side occurs, all 100 ushabtis will launch themselves through the air to impale or strike the enemy. Roll a d100 or percentile dice to see how many actually cause damage versus the foe. Each successful ushabti causes 1 hp of damage. After this dramatic act, all the ushabtis, whether porcupining the enemy or broken on the floor, stop moving and resemble normal, non-animated ushabti figures. The spell and Sobek’s name will never again awaken them.

13. **Mummified Baboon** – A shrunken, carefully-wrapped baboon-shaped mummy sits cross-legged surrounded by 4 alabaster canopic jars and 3 walls of bas-reliefs. If not encountered earlier, a 20-sided stone **gaming die** is on the floor in front of it. “Speak! I can answer one question per century!” This **Grand Vizier mummy** can answer PCs, but in florid poetry and in an eldritch high-pitched voice. The canopic jars are worth 100 gp each to unscrupulous, impious or foreign dealers.

Show players **Fig. 11a** and **Fig. 11b**.

The **stone die** is very old, is 20-sided, and radiates magic and evil. It has nothing to do with the Grand Vizier.



STONE DIE ROLLING EFFECTS

Players should roll a real d20 for these results:

- 1) A pebble appears in the PC's mouth. It can **stave off the need to drink** liquids for 1 week, but feels very unpleasant vs. drinking normally. Causes irritability, bad breath, and -2 reduction to Charisma.
- 2) PC surrounded by a permanent, mobile **darkness** spell in a 5-foot radius. PC can see normally, but there is no way to turn the spell off, short of e.g. *remove curse*
- 3) PC immediately becomes the center of a permanent, mobile 15-foot-radius **silence** spell. PC will not be able to cast spells with auditory components, will need to find a way to communicate with others.
- 4) PC can **smell gold** from 50 feet away. This isn't bloodhound-like pinpointing, but more like the way a human can come home and immediately smell his roommate's excrement-encrusted work boots, but can't figure out exactly where in the room the odor is coming from.
- 5) PC suddenly sees the lines of a tiny secret panel that can be opened in the wall. Inside is a fragile crystal canopic-jar-shaped container with a close-fitting lid. Inside that is a liquid which looks like water but sounds like nails in ice water when it sloshes. It is **magically "sharp"** and would do 3-18 hp of damage to anyone drinking it, or it can be thrown like a missile up to 50 feet to cause 2-12 hp of damage to the target it hits. The resulting puddle or splash drops cause 1-4 damage if stepped in or touched.
- 6) **Meteoric iron dagger** materializes, crackling, hovers in the air above the PC for a moment. Unless PC or a nearby person announces their intention to grab it or bat it away immediately, it will fall on the PC's head and cause 1-6 damage. It functions as a +1 dagger that damages opponents like a short sword. Crocodilopolitans will recognize the "**Sky Iron Dagger**" as property of one of their ancient kings; will ask hard questions.

Show players **Fig. 12**:



- 7) The die will slowly levitate and then **abruptly launch** at the PC's face, causing 1-2 damage.
- 8) A **message** in Demotic will appear in blood on the walls: "One of you is an imposter!", and the die disappears
- 9) A **message** in Demotic will appear in blood on the walls: "One of you will betray all others but one!", then the die disappears
- 10) A **message** in Greek will appear scrawled from the inside of the PC's facial skin for 1-4 weeks: "This one hides a heinous crime!" The die then melts suddenly into a puddle of blood.
- 11) Twenty-three silver **Death's Head Oboli** will materialize in the air above the PCs head and shower down painfully. Near-impossible to find locals who accept these ill-omened coins as pay; PCs will seem very suspicious. Show PCs **Fig. 6** in the PICTURE APPENDIX if needed.



- 12) A small pile of sand materializes quickly, grain-by-grain, in front of PCs on the floor. PCs can dig a **box** out of the pile. Show **Fig. 13**. Lifting the lid of the box and looking down into it provides a view of a square of starry sky. When box is unlidded it crackles and emits cosmic rays in a 20-foot hemisphere, harmless to surface creatures habituated to them, but deadly to certain extra-planar or underworld things, such as the **Pale Corruption** (see Room 15).
- 13) A huge ring of **keys** of various ages and types falls noisily at the PCs' feet. 50% chance one of them will open any given door in the complex. Wearing the supernaturally loud, jangly keys prevents surprise, attracts Room 15's **corrupted corpses** or other monsters unless countermeasures taken.
- 14) A Fire Spirit arises from the floor. Show **Fig. 14**. She thinks the PCs summoned her: "What do you want of me?" She is challenging but not necessarily angry – the attitude of someone answering her office desk phone while she's doing her daily TPS report duties. She does not cause smoke, nor does she set her surroundings

on fire automatically. She will not accompany the PCs but can answer a question in return for a flammable offering (which WILL smoke). She will excuse herself and dematerialize as soon as she can. **Behira the Fire Spirit:** MV: AC 2, HD 10, AT #1, DMG 3-24, can produce pyrotechnics or flame as much as desired, immune to all fire-based attacks, can shrink or enlarge from S to L as desired.



15) Every surface in the room **bursts into flame**, even those which don't seem immediately flammable. Everyone present must leave the room, drop & roll, pat out their clothes and belongings, etc. or suffer 1-6 damage in the next minute. After two minutes of extinguishing efforts or not being observed, all flames go out.

16) The stone die rolls to a stop but keeps audibly vibrating. The vibrations intensify and get louder. Within 1 minute it will **implode** and slurp everything around it in a 20-foot radius into another dimension

17) A bright **halo** radiates from nearby PC's head permanently. People and monsters will act accordingly in terms of lack of surprise or irritation.

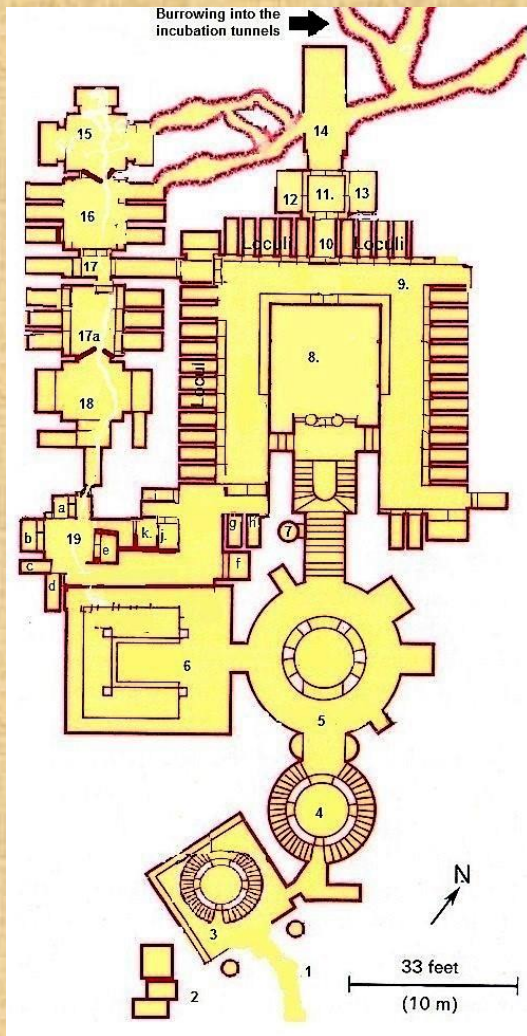
18) PC, if able to cast magical spells, will instantly learn the **"So Heavy This Axe" spell** and be able to inscribe it in a spell-book for permanent use or just use it immediately and once. Level 1-able to be cast once per day/until spell recovery, duration: 10 minutes/1 turn. The caster touches a weapon, thinks heavy thoughts, sings in a low voice. The weapon wielder will feel the weapon is heavier than usual and will have only ½ of the usual number of attacks for the next 10 minutes, but will inflict twice the usual weapon damage. Lead shavings and spell research could improve and strengthen this spell.

19) A voice booms out of nowhere: **"HOW MUCH WILL YOU WAGER? 1-10?"** This turns out to have nothing to do with gambling money. Any players who answered out loud with numbers from 1-10 roll d20s. DM rolls a d20. If a player's roll is a higher number than what the DM rolled, the PC gains the wagered number of hit points permanently, even if it is beyond level and class maximums. If the player has made a die roll with a lower number than the DM, his or her PC loses the number wagered, which could be deadly.

20) An eldritch rain of large glistening cuts of black **meat** and black **blood** shower down out of nowhere for 5 full minutes on whichever 20 x 20-foot area the PCs find themselves in – outdoors, indoors, underground. The meat and blood smell delicious/irresistible to most animals and monsters, but humans who eat it will become violently sick for 24 hours.

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See larger TOMB OF SOBEK & SONS MAP as needed; EVERY set of catacomb double doors is locked, **cursed** (cumulative -1/5% per set) unless defused or otherwise stated.

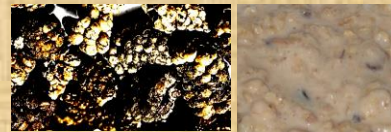
14. **Sobek's Tomb** – defiled; debris strewn on floor; tunnels have been dug, rough holes breaking through bas relief-covered walls; mutilated giant crocodile mummy facing NW; white ichor oozes out from wrappings on various parts; mummy thrashes with uncanny movements. Treat as AC 4, HD 15 mindlessly reanimated giant crocodile, hp 42. 1-20 gems worth 10-100 gp are wrapped up with the mummy, along with flattened mummified animals. Unless they can think of a creative move the DM allows, characters should roll under their dexterity to run to the other side of the room without being rolled over on (3-18) or thrashed by the tail (2-12) –50% chance for either attack.

Twisty, sandy burrowed tunnels burst through the NE and SW walls, leading in NE to the pilgrims' incubation tunnels. White slime and ichor stain some of the rough tunnels; some bear recent bloodstains, drag marks on the sandy floor from bodies.

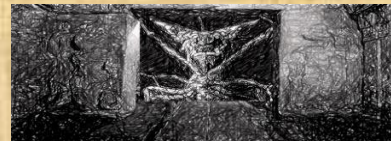
On the sandy, uneven floor of the burrowed tunnels, a look at **Fig. 14a** might reveal to the players **The Crocodile Ring** (**Fig. 14b**). Once per year, wearer can call 3-24 crocodiles, who can reach any place in Crocodilopolis in 3-24 minutes/rounds to do his or her bidding (MV 6" land/12" water, HD 3, #AT 2, Dmg 2-8/1-12, Size: 8-15 feet long). Crocs slither away after an hour. Demotic inscription on the ring: SING 'HE WHO WATCHES' PER ANNUM TO BRING CROCODILES

15- Lair of the Pale Corruption-

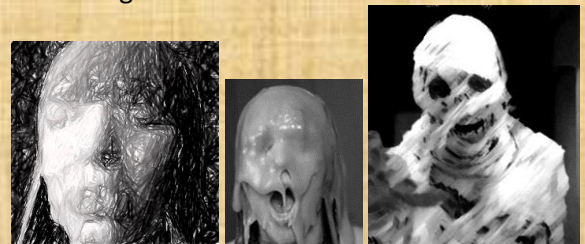
THIS is oozing out of broken tombs and loculi ↓



THAT has been growing and feeding and adjusting to our dimension ↓



THESE are wandering, gurgling, hissing, screaming:



Figures 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and **20** from the PICTURE APPENDIX should be shown to players. The whitish, glistening slime trail on the floor leading from Room 6 through the wall crack, through Rooms 19, 18, 17, 16 ends in a mess on the floor of Room 15. All the loculi have been bashed open and contain only smashed grave goods.

As characters approach this room they smell a stronger and stronger putrescine stench and hear more and more of the thrashing, sobbing, hissing and screaming.

The **Pale Corruption**, which PCs can find out through divination or other means, is an extradimensional life-form which grew from a “seed” in an amphora a shadowy figure smuggled a few months ago into the catacombs’ Room 6: **Trinclinium Funebre**. It slithered through a crack in the wall and through various catacombs. It has been growing in Room 15, gaining strength by infesting and animating the mummies in the tombs around it. Recently it has been digging tunnels toward the incubation chambers, to burst through the walls and drag living people to forcibly assimilate with it. It is not evil, but has utterly alien thoughts. It can be killed by the **cosmic rays** which strike the surface of planets in our dimension, and the chemical process of **fire** is new to it and very damaging.

It has an appendage which looks vaguely like a slime-covered horned head and multiple other appendages which can ooze out of it at will. Its body looks like gnarled white roots, fungus puffballs, and dirty spaghetti.

Four nude, slime-covered pilgrims are currently engulfed in or tethered to its body and either walk or are dragged wherever the Pale Corruption wills. The minds of two have been merged inextricably with the creature’s ineffably strange consciousness and they only gurgle. The two others are almost continually screaming, weeping or moaning. They can be as per DM choice- **Shoshenq, Seshehet, Iset, Menwi** or anyone appropriate who might have entered the incubation chambers.

Only if the Pale Corruption is killed will it relinquish its hold on the victims. They will not be able to think clearly until a *remove curse* or *cure disease* spell is applied. This will free the latter two, but the first pair of victims is too far

gone and will vegetate, wordlessly die less than an hour after their liberation.

Roll a d6 whenever the creature is attacked; 1-4 is a hit on one of the attached or engulfed victims and will do damage to them first before doing damage to the creature itself. Victims 1, 2, 3, and 4 will involuntarily shield the creature until their 1-4 hp each are depleted.

The **Pale Corruption**:

MV 12”, AC 9, HD 8, hp 64 + hp of 4 victims, #AT 3, Dmg 2-8, Special Attack and Defense:

Any time the creature hits or is hit in melee, or is otherwise touched, opponent must **save vs. poison** or be splashed with animated white slime. Victim must then roll a **save vs. poison** a second time. Slime which succeeds in wriggling into body orifices, obvious wounds or invisible micro-injuries on the skin will take over victim’s nervous system, making the victim collapse in convulsions, and arise screaming in 1-4 minutes/rounds as a flailing zombie-like **corrupted corpse** (see below).

Rolling the save successfully means the slime has been neutralized or shaken off. Breaking off combat, movement or spellcasting to focus full attention to shaking or scraping off the slime adds +3 to saving throw.

The Pale Corruption will telepathically call on **corrupted corpses** to arise and attack when it encounters the PCs. If not eliminated earlier, 3 of these enter Room 15 from Room 16 one minute/round after PCs encounter Pale Corruption there. They will also rush to attack the PCs if a lot of noise is made in the rooms near Room 15 or 16. They look like (and are) mummies filmed in off-white slime. Treat as **zombies** which have the same Special Attack and Defense as their alien, extra-planar master. They cannot be turned by clerics, since they are not animated by the same forces as the undead. **MV 6”, AC 8, HD 2, hp 12, 10, and 6 for these individuals, Dmg 1-6, SA and SD as described above.** See **Figure 20** in the PICTURE APPENDIX.

16. Chaotic Catacomb- Slime trail down center of room from Room 17 to 15. Doors to 15 are partly ajar. Doors to 17 stand closed but unlocked. If PCs have not already encountered them elsewhere, they will encounter the 3 **corrupted corpses** from the Room 15 description. Shards of grave goods such as ushabti scattered around. **Antique ring** lies



amidst the debris. Show players **Fig. 21**. Ring gives +3 saves vs. poison. Only one loculus is still sealed. Inside is a very damaged white-slimed mummy, which is convulsively kicking. Its mummy case, and nearly everything in it, is smashed and splintered. Handling the mummy, slimed Death's Head Obolus or 7 gilded scarabs found with this mummy will incur the SA/SD described in Room 15 with the **Pale Corruption** and **corrupted corpses** descriptions.

17. Narrow Connecting Corridor with Loculus – Sealed doors as shown on map. Slime trail leading between Room 17a and Room 16 is on the floor. The slime looks like whatever made it slithered under locked or sealed doors. If appropriate, PCs will hear commotion from nearby areas. Noise here adds +10%/+2 to the cumulative chance of attracting WANDERER TABLE/Room 15's occupants. Mummy in sealed loculus has an

encaustic-painted wooden board, exquisite portrait of an aristocratic-looking young man wearing a toga. Buried with a gladius short sword and desiccated garlic bulbs tangled in mummy wrappings. Also an unused-looking gladiator's masked helmet.



Show PCs **Fig. 22**:

17a. Tidier Catacomb – Cleaner than 15 or 16, but faint slime trail is still on the floor. A whiff of putrescine. Even before PCs enter the room, it is possible to hear muffled agitated thumping behind each loculus seal. Behind each of the seals is a **mummy** covered in strings of white slime which is thrashing its grave goods into a worthless mess. Still recognizable: 1-20 gold household & dining utensils worth 10-40 gp each. Touching or being touched by the mummy or grave goods necessitates save vs. poison like with the **Pale Corruption** described in Room 15.

18. Catacomb – faint slime trail on floor. All unsealed loculi are empty. For sealed ones, roll d6 on the CATAcomb LOCULI table, cross out as needed. Making noise, unsealing adds +5%/+1 to chance of encounter. If yes, roll on WANDERER TABLE

UNSEALING ROOM 18 CATAcomb LOCULI	
#	Result:
1	Multiple mummies jammed together in one space
2	Mummy wrapped in linen scraps and resin with no case, semi-dried dark ooze beneath it
3	Mummy, Death's Head Obolus in mouth (see Fig. 6), dried black beans, lead sheet cursing a commercial rival in a mix of Greek and formulaic magical mumbo-jumbo
4	Wooden mummy case, gold foil mask (worth 10gp if undamaged, 1gp if damaged), papyrus/linen/glue cartonnage, single ushabti figure (see Fig. 8)
5	All contents of #3, plus 2-12 awakened, finger-length carrion beetles (MV 12", AC 9, HD 1/2, #AT 1, dmg 1-4)
6	Contents of #4 plus a delicate alabaster jar shaped like a hippo – inside is a dark desiccated piece of meat (a human liver) –EAT WITH WINE is scrawled in Greek in black ink. Mixing with water and eating this will make a map of wounds (Fig. 22a) arise from the inside on the skin of the consumer's back, inflicting 1-4 damage. Mixing with wine will inflict only 1 damage. Map shows Sobek's Tomb complex. Pale Corruption of Room 15 is depicted with a weird, weeping white skin lesion and slime spoor.

19. Area with Irregular Design – very faint slime trail on floor leading to crack in East wall. Crack can be expanded to admit human adults from here to Room 6, the Trinclinium Funebrae, with an hour of effort. Noise adds +5%/+1 chance of WANDERERS TABLE encounter. There are 11 loculi or medium-sized chambers labelled with letters on the map.

a. Hieroglyphic inscription outside doors: **TOMB OF THE EXILED PRINCE OF NAPATA. Fig. 22b** – seal bears hieroglyphic curse: MAY HE WHO BREAKS THIS SEAL BURST INTO FLAME AT HIS FIRST SPARK OF ANGER THEREAFTER. Inside double doors are finely-crafted grave items: gilded multi-layered sarcophagus, 4 marble canopic jars, 50 ushabti. Show players bas-reliefs on the far wall – **Fig. 22c** – Sobek is defaced, black goo oozes out of a hole under Horus’s hand, visible door-like crack, but door will not budge unless PC reaches into the hole and **turns a lever**. Bare skin touching goo must save vs. poison or take 1-6 damage. Heavy stone door panel slides inwards to reveal hidden chamber. Papyrus **scroll** inside, titled: I NEVER GOT MY REVENGE, MAY YOU HAVE YOURS! This scroll makes a 6d6 **sphere of fire** radiate in all directions from the reader, setting everything ablaze in its path (subject to save vs. magic). Reader must save vs. magic her- or himself, or suffer 3d6 damage. Air breathers in confined room take 1-6 damage/round in next 3 rounds after use of scroll.

b. **Empty.**

c. No mummy. Stuffed into far end: heavy, gilded **mask** with intricate designs, made out of a human pelvic bone. Looking through mask shows **most horrific past event** that happened in the area. Use more than 3x per day causes dizziness, nausea; +25% cumulative chance per use > 3 times/day of later flashbacks.

d. Mummy, ushabti, 4 canopic jars worth 50 gp each to the right buyers, 2 jars of oily **unguent** which smells/tastes like overpowering wintergreen and causes painful vomiting if drunk, but makes a magical alcohol flame halo around the user if rubbed on the skin. The flames provide +2 protection, protect the

wearer 100 % vs. contact poisons, rot grubs. Effects last 10 minutes/1 turn after application. A small amount can be tested.

e. Mummy case and mummy of foreigner, wrapped, according to the customs of his people, with linen strips soaked in extremely **flammable resins** (Conflagration if ignited; Dmg: 2d6 per round/minute for 2-4 rounds, 10-foot radius). Overpowering spicy, resinous scent coming from loculus when opened.

f. Wooden mummy case with gilded face. Mummy has, between legs, metal **box** with images of Sobek and priests. Show **Fig. 23**. Inscription in Demotic: **FILLED AND SEALED FOR THE GLORY OF SOBEK THE DEFENDER, AND FOR THE PROTECTION OF HIS PEOPLE**. Scratching and very faint eerie howling seem to come from inside the box, sounding forceful but somehow from a great distance away. When opened, the box will release **Reseti, (Fig. 24)** who is the **spirit of a sandstorm** and coalesces in 1 round/minute. He roars with rage, attacks everyone within a 50-foot radius for 5 minutes/rounds, then dissipates into nothing (MV 36”, AC 2, HD 8, #AT 2, dmg 2-24, Spec. Attack: can divide attacks between any 2 opponents inside 50-foot radius, Special Defense: magic weapons needed to hit)

g. **Budget mummy.** Organs left in. No canopic jars. Only a single ushabti figurine. 50% chance for d12 **carrion beetles**, which revive to bite the probing hand or object (MV 12”, AC 9, HD 1/2, AT #1, dmg 1-4)

h. **Tomb of the Bastet Worshipper-** Old tomb seal is inscribed with **I SERVED SHE WHO SCRATCHES** in Demotic. Bastet worshippers are buried elsewhere these days. **Fig. 25** is a satirical cartoon peeking out of the mummy wrappings – reverse is **The Paw of Sekhmet** scroll. Cat-headed ushabti figures. **Fig. 26** is another **scroll** in the wrappings. It explains that if its final paragraph is read everyone who hears it will be **banished into another dimension**. A glob of 3-ear-pairs-worth of beeswax is near the scroll; wax wad core is still pliable despite dust bunny crust.

i. Inscription in Demotic and Greek: **TEMPLE ACCOUNTANT: LOYAL UNTO DEATH AND BEYOND.** Wooden mummy case with gilded face. Mummy with Greek-style **Death's Head Obolus** in mouth (see Fig. 6 if needed), but wears **golden seal ring** of Sobek- see **Fig. 27**. Four red-figure Grecian urns perform canopic jar duties – they are worth 100gp each. Golden stylus – worth 50 gp.

j. Mummy interred with 4 very basic alabaster **canopic jars** worth 25 gp each to impious buyers. Small **scroll** depicting a woman worshipping a crocodile – **Fig. 28**.

k. **Eerie.** The body of a beautiful woman richly dressed in the fashions of the 26th Dynasty. She is so **perfectly preserved** that she seems like she's just sleeping, and that taking her home and providing proper care could awaken her- Show **Fig. 29**. Even if PCs or NPCs don't choose to do so on their own, they can become obsessed and end up doing this anyway. Roll their wisdom or below on a d20 as a saving throw. Even if the obsessed character can somehow avoid detection/trouble from comrades, citizens, and authorities in extracting her, bringing her to one's lodgings invites dire peril, the exact nature of which depends on the DM, e.g.: Every night, she makes a *magic jar*-like attack on each sleeper in turn in any aboveground building or tent in which her body is housed, until someone fails the save and she pilots this person's body indefinitely. Her intelligence is 19 and wisdom is 15. Those who

make the save vs. magic awake from horrible nightmares. It is easy to seemingly damage her physical body, but the attacks continue, the body reconstitutes nearby, beautiful as ever, within a week, and whoever is taken over remains under control until *Dispel Evil* or *Holy Word* are used vs. the body. Immersion of her body in holy water or immolation in a sacred fire causes her to sit up from her eternal beauty sleep, shriek, stop *magic jar*-attacking for 1 week, look like a burnt wasp for 1 week.

APPENDIX N: DIRECT and INDIRECT INSPIRATION, THANK-YOUS, and DISCLAIMERS

Gary Gygax, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons books (1977-1979); J. Eric Holmes, Basic Dungeons and Dragons blue book (1977); recedingrules.blogspot.com; tenfootpole.com; Blood from the Mummy's Tomb (1971) film; Vivien Leigh; Gina Torres; Jack Vance; Fritz Leiber; M.R. James; Braun-Hogenberg maps; Tony Perrottet: Route 66 A.D.; antinousgaygod.blogspot.com; Archaeology.org; Papyrology.org; Trismegistos.org; Wikipedia.org; Pixabay.com; Howard Carter; Will and Ariel Durant; Zahi Hawass; Salima Ikram; Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, Cairo; The British Museum, London; Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, San Jose; Mound of Shards Catacombs, Alexandria; MS Word; MS Paint; She Ping the Beekeeper; Yuri Gagarin: [At the Center of All Infinity \(2015\)](http://At the Center of All Infinity (2015)); The Sword: [Gods of the Earth \(2008\)](http://Gods of the Earth (2008)); Natacha Atlas; Egyptian Lover; Lustmord ancientegyptianhorn.bandcamp.com

For the sake of fun and potential for drama, massive liberties have been taken with the depictions of Sobek, Bastet, and their worshippers' behavior as well as Late Ptolemaic Egyptian society in general in this complete work of fiction.



ITEMS AVAILABLE AT VARIOUS CROCODILOPOLITAN STORES (Haggling is OK - 1 gold piece = 10 silver piece drachmae)

Religious and Pilgrim Supplies (Thutmose & Henutawy's parents' shop, etc.) – MANY more items in stock – just ask!

Pilgrims' map 1 sp	Incubation supplies: Body paints, sacred dust, perfume, gongs, bedrolls, etc. 1 sp to 1gp	Sobek banner 1 sp
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Livestock (stores in a corner of the Agora, lesser Agorae around town)

Camel 60 gp	Duck 1 sp	Cow 50 gp	Falcon 20 gp	Desert Hawk 40gp	Guard Dog 25 gp	Tunnel Hound (Basenji) 20gp	Hunting Dog 20 gp	Goose 2 sp	Riding Horse 50 gp	Sheep 2 gp	Ox 60gp
Donkey 8 gp	Mule 20 gp	Goat 1 gp	Pig 3 gp	Piglet 2 sp	Pigeon 1 sp	Tortoise 1 gp					

Journey Outfitters (Various shops around Agorae, and around town)

Leather backpack 2 gp	Belt and large pouch 1 gp	Belt and sm. pouch 15 sp	Small bronze box 10 gp	Roman padlock and key 10 gp	Lg. wooden chest 1 gp	Large sack 1 sp	Bone map or scroll case 3 gp
Leather map/scroll case 1 gp	50 feet of rope 1 gp	Iron grapnel 2 gp	10-foot pole 2 sp	Water/wineskin 15 sp	Metal bullseye oil lamp- 15 gp	Terracotta oil lamp 1 sp	Bronze oil lamp, animal shape- 1 gp
Oil flask (limit of 3 per person) 1 gp	Tinder box, flint, firesteel 1 gp	Set of 5 iron spikes 5 sp	"Locksmith's" tool set 40 gp	Torch, set of 10 (limit of 10/person in most shops) 1 gp	Pint of local beer 1 sp	Pint of good local wine 1 sp	Pint of imported Falernian wine 1 gp
Standard rations – 1 wk. – 3 gp	"Desert Rations"– 1 wk.- 5 gp	Horse's meal – 1 day – 5 gp	Small raft 40 gp	Cart 60 gp	Saddle 12 gp	Saddle bags 4 gp	Bit and bridle 15 sp
Saddle blanket 3 sp	Harness 12 sp	Misc. Clothes 1-10 sp	Boots 8 sp	Sandals 1 sp	"Caracalla" hooded cloak 1 gp	"Desert" headgear 5 sp	

Armors and Weaponers:

Scale armor 100 gp	Leather armor 10 gp	Padded cloth armor 4 gp	Small wood shield 2 gp	Small round iron shield 15 gp	Roman large iron shield 35 gp	Simple helmet 20 gp	Masked helmet 30 gp
Spear 5 gp	Gladius short sword – 8 gp	Short bow 60 gp	Dozen arrows 1 gp	Single silver arrow 1 gp	Sling and 12 bullets – 15 sp	Dagger and scabbard – 3 gp	Khopesh sword 9 gp (Dam. 2-8)
Metal dart 1 sp	Barbed fishing trident 3 gp (D 1-7)	Caltrop 2 sp	Iron hyena trap 30 gp	Iron lion trap 100 gp	Iron hippo (on land) trap – 300 gp		

Incendiary Shops (By law outside town walls) – Narses the Persian is East of town – (until after FLAME PILLAR event on PC's first night in town destroys it and probably him) and Merkarei of Meroe's pyramid is West of town amidst farm fields

Incense, torches, lamps, oil flasks, see costs above, but 50% cheaper, no limit	Fireworks, "firestarters" 1 gp per Pharaonic Pound.	Military mining supplies 100 gp/lb.
Smokepots - 1 gp/lb.	Mummy dust - 5 gp/dose – under the counter – See HANDY DM TABLES	



Foul-tasting “Mummy Dust” supposedly made of a fungus that grows inside mummies- price: 0-5gp. Available: at the Agora, in streets outside the Incubation Tunnels, under-the-counter from Merkarei’s Incendiary Shop in the Pyramid outside the Desert Gate, or from Tefnut

MUMMY DUST EFFECTS – Roll percentile dice

00-70 - DM shows Player a random part of the PICTURE APPENDIX. Roll d30 for Fig. #

71-99 – Upsetting visions. Cross each vision out as they are seen. Once all visions are seen by at least one PC, this roll result means the mummy dust only causes a stomachache and no visions this time, as well as -2 to all die rolls for the next 24 turns/4 hours.

Visions:

1. **The Pale Corruption** (See Catacomb Map Area 15) enveloping victims;
2. A hooded, misshapen figure smashing an amphora in an underground room. Something small, slimy and luminous skitters away.
3. Veiled woman feeding a jewelry-festooned crocodile a bundle;
4. Tomb doors thumping and shaking;
5. Screaming, decayed face of a mummy lying in a tomb- after a moment, it chokes, vomits up a white viscous goo, screams more;
6. PC feels like he or she has just awoken, wrists crossed, inside a mummy case.

WANDERERS IN THE CATACOMBS TABLE

Each time party makes noise in catacombs, add +5%/+1 to the chance on a d20 or d% of encounter. Roll d6, cross out enc., on this table.

1. If not already with party, they encounter thin, goatee-wearing **Antipater**, a Level 3 Thief (STR 12 INT 16 WIS 10 DEX 16 CON 9 CHA 14, hp 12), with thieves’ tools, bags, telescoping 10’ pole, 4 daggers, lantern, leather armor, who discreetly entered through incubation tunnels and is grave-robbing. As appropriate, he will admit this, join forces with the party, or lie about his aims/activities.
2. Preceded by gurgling, moaning sounds coming ever closer, 3 **corrupted corpses** (MV: 6”, AC: 8, HD: 2, #AT: 1, Dmg: 1-6, Spec. Attack/Defense: slime, Hp 12, 10, and 6) attack the party, unless already encountered.
3. If not encountered already, PCs almost step on **stone die** (see Room 13) on floor, as if it were always there, but overlooked.
4. If not already encountered as joined with the Pale Corruption in Room 15, **Shoshenq** (Level Zero, hp 4) is fearfully wandering dark catacombs out of his mind on **mummy dust**, naked, body-painted. He keeps hearing distant screams, thinks they are real. They are.
5. **Chloë of Leptis**, Lvl 2 Fighter, hp 12, wrap made from Sobek banner, club is banner pole. Was incubating, heard screams, is investigating w/ righteous alarm. Desert spirit was father; she can see in pitch dark.
6. **Pale Corruption** shambles to attack (see Room 15); stink precedes.



Corrupted Corpse

MV: 6”, AC: 8, HD: 2, #AT: 1, Dmg: 1-6

Hp 12, 10, and 6 for the 3 individuals found in this adventure, based in Room 16, who will either be encountered there, in Room 15 or when PCs make enough **noise in the catacombs** and encounter them as wandering monsters.

They look like (and are) mummies filmed in off-white slime. Treat as **zombies** which have the same Special Attack and Defense as their alien, extra-planar master. They cannot be turned by clerics, since they are not animated by the same forces as the undead.

Special Attack and Defense: Any time a corrupted corpse hits or is hit in melee, or is otherwise touched, opponent must **save vs. poison** or be splashed with animated white slime. The slime tries to wriggle into body orifices, obvious wounds or invisible micro-injuries on the skin. Victim must roll a **second save vs. poison** successfully or the slime will take over victim’s nervous system, making the victim collapse in convulsions, and arise screaming in 1-4 minutes/rounds as a new **corrupted corpse**. Successful save rolls mean the slime has been neutralized or shaken off that time. Breaking off combat, movement or spellcasting to focus full attention to shaking or scraping off the slime adds +3 to saving throw.

Exposure to **cosmic rays** (which inhabitants of the outdoors/above ground world encounter without harm day and night) or **fire** prevents the SA/SD from occurring. Cosmic ray exposure kills the **Pale Corruption** itself (see Room 15).

DRAMATIS PERSONAE – A summary of NPCs for the DM since there are a LOT of them ✂-----

♂ or ♀	Name	Summary	First appearance/description in bold ; Suggested likely places for further appearances
M	Sebni	House of the Papyri inn tout, normal man; balding, friendly; speaks Demotic, Greek	INITIAL GAUNTLET , House of the Papyri, taverns, streets, taking part in incubation
M	Harkhebi	House of the Hawk innkeeper, Level 2 Fighter; deep-set eyes, tall, thin, quiet, low-pitched voice; speaks Demotic, Greek, Latin	INITIAL GAUNTLET , House of the Hawk inn, H. of Hawk tavern, streets
M	Paphnutios	House of the Hippo innkeeper, normal man; short, wears Greek-style chiton, somewhat unctuous; speaks Greek	INITIAL GAUNTLET , House of the Hippo, agora, streets
M	Sesotris	Middle-aged, lower-middle class town dweller, normal man; friendly, down-to-earth; speaks Demotic, Greek; married to Menhet	INITIAL GAUNTLET , his mud-brick home, agora, new Son of Sobek's coronation
F	Menhet	Middle-aged lower-middle class town dweller, normal woman; friendly, down-to-earth; speaks Demotic, some Greek; good at cooking trad. foods and brewing beer	INITIAL GAUNTLET , her mud-brick home shared with husband Sesotris, agora, religious supplies stores, outside incubation tunnels, taking part in incubation
M	Shoshenq	Young, level 0, wears backpack, friendly, a combination of a Phish fan and World Catholic Youth Day pilgrim; speaks Demotic, Greek	INITIAL GAUNTLET , crowd entering western Desert Gate, agora, streets, incubation, WANDERERS table in catacombs
M & F	Thutmose & Henutawy	Friendly brother & sister, 8 and 9 years old, advertise and do errands for parents' religious goods shop, can sell maps and other small items if carrying	INITIAL GAUNTLET , streets, agora, parents' religious supplies shop
F & F	Iset & Nebet	Smiling, cute, DIY artsy elderly women; level zero; speak Greek and Demotic	INITIAL GAUNTLET , their workshop, streets, outside of incubation tunnels, incubation
F	Neferhera	Level 4 priestess of Bastet; high cheekbones, beautiful, aloof; Crocodilopolitans are hostile to her- they resent her cult as a rival to Sobek's pilgrimage/income; She is suspicious of townfolk; Questgiver: report, then kill Pale Corruption	INITIAL GAUNTLET , Chapel of Bastet; may track party discreetly to accommodation or other places in town to talk with them; RUMOR table rolls 24-27.
F & F	Sesheshet & Menwi	Normal level zero women, heavily made-up kohl-eyed prostitutes, tourist guides, fixers, young but lines under makeup; speak Demotic, Greek, Latin, others	INITIAL GAUNTLET , streets, agora, taverns, knock on doors of inn rooms at midnight, Son of Sobek coronation, outside incubation tunnels, incubation
M	Bassus the Mytagogue	Plump, balding, middle-aged man in a toga with an unctuous smile. Guides pilgrims/tourists, earns kickbacks; Speaks Latin, Greek, Demotic, Aramaic	INITIAL GAUNTLET , streets, agora, taverns, inns, Sacred Way, Temples of Sons of Sobek, Sobek, and Hermanubis, astrologers, religious goods shops, outside incubation tunnels, incubation
M	Pnepheros	Ethnic Greek local merchant, guild official, polite, serious; Questgiver: investigate croc assassination, investigate pilgrim disappearances, kill the cause; speaks Greek	RUMOR table rolls 16-17 , United Merchants guildhall, may track party to accommodation, etc., coronation of Son of Sobek, agora

M	Antipater	“Procurer of Antiquities”, Level 3 thief, tomb robber STR 12 INT 16 WIS 10 DEX 16 CON 9 CHA 14, hp 12, speaks/reads Greek, Demotic, Hieratic, Hieroglyphics	RUMOR table rolls 18-20 , WANDERERS table in catacombs, taverns, streets, inns, agora, likely to want to join party
M	Ta-Hat Sobek	Tall, thin, older, imposing arched eyebrows, shaven- headed; High Priest of Sobek; 6 th level cleric, hp 35; hates Neferhera and Bastet’s cult; will discreetly commit violence vs. them, but not admit involvement; wants to keep pilgrim disappearances quiet; Questgiver: investigate Son of Sobek murder; investigate pilgrim disappearances; then kill cause Languages: Demotic, Hieratic, Hieroglyphic, Greek, Latin, Merotic	RUMOR table roll 21 , may seek out PCs in city, may be introduced by Phahsobek , coronation ceremony
M	Phahsobek	Squat, muscular; Questgiver: Guard new Son of Sobek’s coronation; will introduce PCs who do this well to Ta-Hat Sobek for more assignments; Demotic, Greek	RUMOR table roll 22-23 , may seek out PCs in city, coronation, outside of incubation tunnels
M	Maxentius the Neapolitan	Roman-style toga-wearer; Book-procurer; wants to believe in myth of 1000s of scrolls in catacombs; Questgiver: Wants PCs to incubate, check catacombs for scrolls undercover, report back; Latin, Greek	RUMOR table roll 28-30 , may seek out PCs in city, streets, taverns, agora
F	Merkarei of Meroë	Normal level zero woman; Regal acting and dressing expat from south, owns prosperous incendiaries shop in re-used pyramid west of Desert Gate in farm fields; Merotic, Demotic, Greek, Himyarite	City Encounters/Events: FLAME PILLAR and MERKAREI of MEROË’S SHOP
F	Tefnut	A tough, furtive woman, (Level 3 thief, 5 daggers hidden about her person, hp 12), hangs around the outside of the shop of Xenophon , Dealer in Antiquities, hates him, will try to discreetly divert potential tomb item sellers. She will offer to buy party loot in a nearby alley or sell mummy dust .	City Encounters/Events: DEALER IN ANTIQUITIES , streets, taverns
M	Xenophon	Level 1 fighter + 7 assistants operate shop funded by cult of Anubis/Hermanubis as a sting vs. tomb robbers; will ambush, rob and kill robbers or get them executed by crocs; Exception: Will buy items looted from Bastet followers gladly, pay fair prices; Speaks/reads: Greek, Demotic, Hieratic, Hieroglyphic; Assistants: Greek or Greek & Demotic	City Encounters/Events: DEALER IN ANTIQUITIES , taverns
F	Chloë of Leptis	Fighter 2, hp 12, was incubating, heard screams, wearing only Sobek banner, using pole as club. Can see in pitch dark due to mysterious parentage.	WANDERERS table in catacombs

PICTURE APPENDIX:

Illustrations for the DM to show players at appropriate points, covering the other illustrations with something that serves to keep players from seeing things before their characters encounter them in the game: pieces of black construction paper, paperboard, flat lead sheets, etc.

Fig. 1:



Fig.2:

Fig. 3:



← Fig. 3a: Fig. 3b: →

Fig. 3c: →

Fig. 3d:



Fig. 3e:



Fig. 3h:



Fig. 3f:

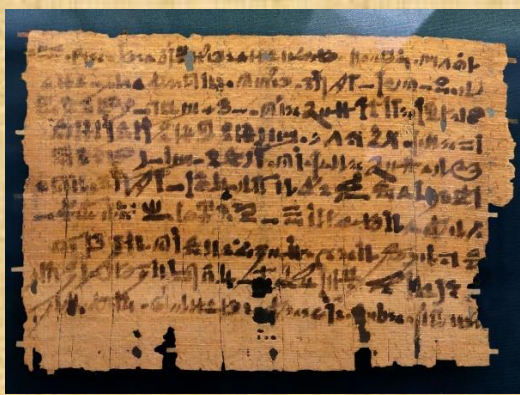


Fig. 3i:



Fig. 3g:



Fig. 3j:



Fig. 4:



Fig. 4a:



Fig. 5:



Fig. 6:



Fig. 7:



Fig. 8:

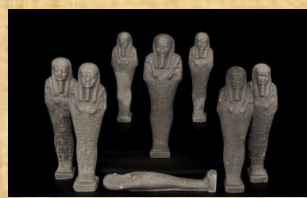


Fig. 9:



Fig. 10:



Fig. 11:

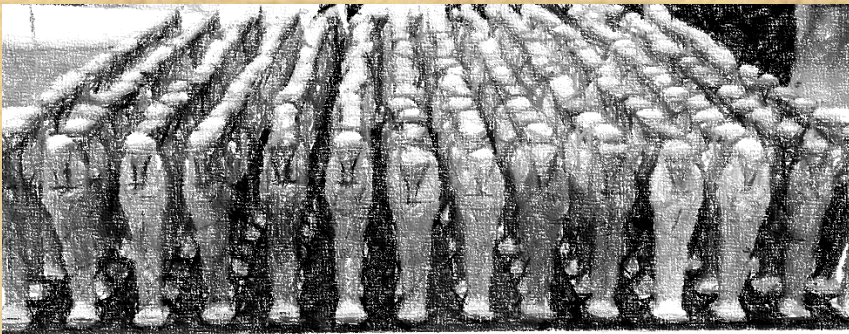


Fig. 11a:

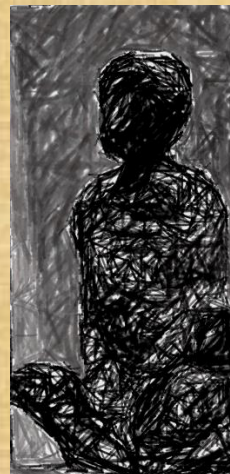


Fig. 11b:



Fig. 12:



Fig. 13:



Fig. 14:



Fig. 14a:

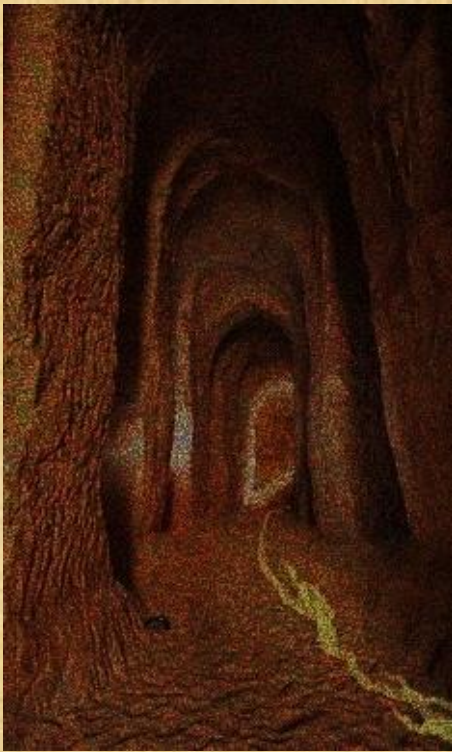


Fig. 14b: ↓



Fig. 15: ↓

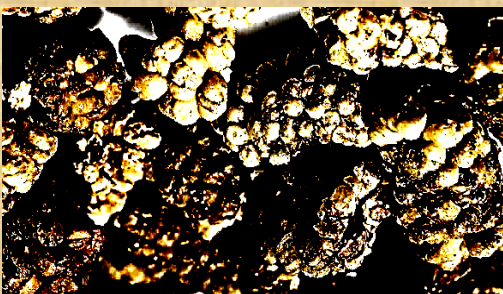


Fig. 16:



Fig. 17:



Fig. 18:

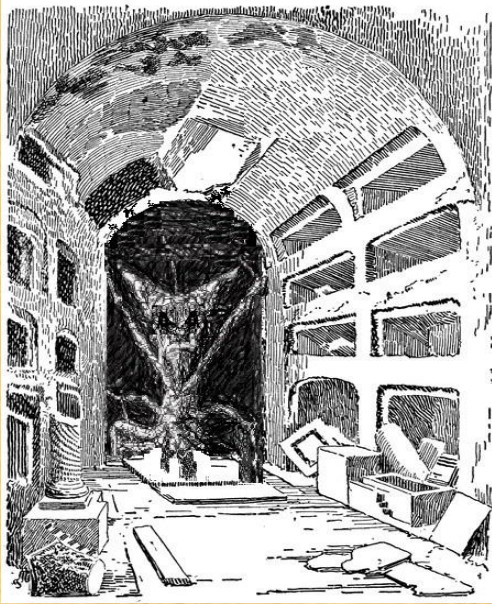


Fig. 19:



Fig. 20:



Fig. 21:



Fig. 22:



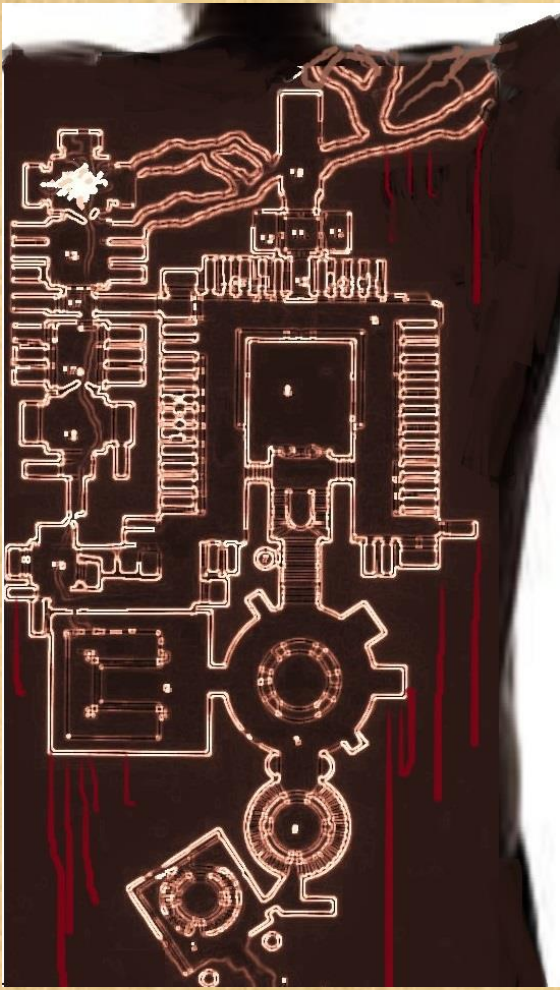


Fig. 22a:



Fig. 22b:



Fig. 22c:



Fig. 23:



Fig. 24: →



Fig. 25: →



Fig. 26:



Fig. 27:

Fig. 28:



Fig. 29:





The Paw of Sekhmet ~

1. Cut off a fully-grown, healthy lioness's paw in combat wherein the opponent is under a disadvantage to the lioness.
2. Cut up into fine hamburger. Grind the claws into dust. Mix dust with the hamburger.
3. Mold into patty.
4. Marinade nine nights in tincture of moly root.
5. Soak mummy wrappings nine nights in tincture of cardamom, mead and blood spilled in anger.
6. Wrap patty in mummy wrappings.
7. Bury nine months 1 pharaonic cubit deep (7 palms deep) undisturbed in the desert sand.
8. Unwrap patty and discard the mummy wrappings.
9. Feed patty to target beast. Although unappetizing looking and smelly to humans, it will be irresistible to carnivorous animals. The lioness's paw will reconstitute itself, complete with muscles, bone, fur and claws, inside the target's stomach and will attempt very violently to scratch and batter its way out. The paw will disintegrate into black and white dust once it emerges.

CHARACTER APPENDIX: RANDOM CHARACTERS FOR PLAYERS WHO CHOOSE NOT TO ROLL THEIR OWN

(DM should encourage players to customize names, gender, history, or other details, as long as game stats and other play-affecting details remain unchanged/reasonable. If outside characters are used, DM's choice what they can speak/read besides default Greek)

	Name	Description	Stats	Equipment	Motivation
1	Fausta	Young woman with healed scars and severe sunburn on face. Ruggedly attractive and powerful personality. Escaped from Garamantes tribes across Libyan Desert.	Str 9, Int 15, Wis 13, Dex 10, Con 7, Cha 13, Level 1 Magic-User, hp 3.	Large backpack, 3 smaller bags inside, money bag at belt, 3 daggers tucked in belt & boots, hooded cloak, well-made boots, 15 gp, 30 sp, 5 cp; spell book contains: <i>light</i> , <i>sleep</i> ; scroll: <i>knock</i>	Escaping her half-siblings and others in desert. Cooling her heels as far away as possible. Can read Latin, Greek, Demotic, Hieratic and Hieroglyphics.
2	Ianto	Young stonemason from Cydanus on the edge of the Western Desert. Hit his head on an architrave. Suffers headaches, sees visions – 1x/day DM can show random PIC APPENDIX image.	Str 13, Int 8, Wis 7, Dex 13, Con 15, Cha 8, Level 1 Fighter, hp 15	Large backpack, money bag at belt, mallet, folding shovel, club, chisel, wedges, spikes, rope, boots, 30 gp, 80 sp, 66 cp	Ianto was profoundly embarrassed that he couldn't work and lost his job after the accident. He wants to start a new and different life elsewhere with a clean slate.
3	Tanit	Young street girl from Tyre; travels, lives by her wits: gambling, street tricks, piping, drumming, singing, snake charming, and thievery	Str 10, Int 13, Wis 9, Dex 12, Con 9, Cha 13, Level 2 Thief, hp 8	Backpack, wooden flute, drum, dice, cards, 5 daggers, quiet but sturdy boots, supple gloves, leather armor, candles, shielded lantern, firesteel, rope, poison that smells delicious to dogs; 7 gp, 60 sp, 20 cp	Wants to survive and thrive, by any means necessary. Can read Greek, Latin, Aramaic, Demotic, Hieratic.
4	Kahya (The Priestess)	Last member of Mazax oasis tribe. Puts on show of devotion to "my people's equivalent to Sobek/Athena/Sol Invictus"; is really devoted to bull-headed sun god Ghizl of her people	Str 10, Int 11, Wis 17, Dex 9, Con 12, Cha 15, Level 3 Cleric, hp 18	Staff, large bag, small bags, belt with several bags, money pouch, various religious items, firesteel, hooded homespun robes, sandals, 5 gp, 30 sp, 5 cp; scroll: <i>cure disease</i> .	After suffering final raid on home oasis, has no surviving friends, family or tribe. Needs to build a new base. Can read Demotic, Hieratic, some Hieroglyphics, Greek.

5	Gemistos	Elderly “scholar” from Syria– discreetly studies magic	Str 6, Int 15, Wis 11, Dex 10, Con 8, Cha 9, Level 2 Magic User, hp 3	Large backpack, long coat with inner pockets, belt, jug, wineskin, +1 silver dagger in boots, 10 gp, 6 sp hidden in purse in boots, ivory tube contains spellbook in the form of a long scroll: <i>dancing lights, sleep, read magic, affect normal fires</i>	Curious about mysteries, but mostly just needs money. Not averse to “acquisition” of items from tombs. Reads Greek, Demotic, Hieratic, Latin
6	Aman-Shekheto of Meroë	Woman with a strong, attractive personality and features. From far Southern kingdom.	Str 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Cha 11, Level 1 fighter, hp 6	Spear, backpack, bedroll, bullseye lantern, 2 water jugs, incense burner and incense, 5 vials of oil in belt, firesteel, sandals, 1 gp, 22 sp	Needs to earn money, buy food & lodging. Seeks adventure once these needs are met. Speaks Merotic, other Cushitic languages, Greek. Can read Demotic, Hieratic.
7	Taharqa	Tall, wild-looking desert tribesman from west of the far-Southern Kingdom. Has the bowlegged gait of someone who would rather be on a horse or camel.	Str 12, Int 10, Wis 7, Dex 14, Con 12, Cha 5, Level 2 Fighter, hp 12	Boots, hood, gaudy necklaces & other jewelry; sword, shield with Gorgon’s face, wood/horn bow, quiver: 16 arrows, leather pants (can go without), firesteel, large purse filled with camel jerky on belt, water jug & wineskin on belt, 0 gp (for now)	Likes riding horses and camels and can shoot arrows backwards while riding them. Smells a little pungent. Can speak Greek, Merotic. Manners are rough. OK with solo desert survival for long periods
8	Syphrax	From desert mountain region; taciturn; living by dubious means	Str 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Dex 14, Con 9, Cha 8, Thief 1, hp 4	Cloak, tunic, pants, boots, sling, seax-style long knife, dice, dagger, bag, belt, 10 sp in boots	Needs money, speaks Greek, Punic, Latin
9	Usire	From eastern border city, trades in “curiosities and antiquities” (tomb-raider for treasures, magic items, mummies’ teeth, etc.)	Str 10, Int 14, Wis 9, Dex 15, Con 8, Cha 11, Level 2 Thief, hp 7	Hooded cloak, tunic, boots, close-fitting gloves, dagger, 10-foot pole, 50’ rope, grapnel, torches, full spectrum of holy symbols, backpack, 10 gp, 24 sp	Interested in legends; in debt; needs a lot of money; reads Greek, Demotic, Hieratic, Hieroglyphics, some Latin

Crocodilopolis κροκοδείλιος πόλις

3 III 2

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