

HELLFROST LAND OF FIRE

• REALM GUIDE #1 •

HEKATA

Introduction

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Once a rich and mighty empire, Hekata was brought to ruin by the pride and fear of its mightiest ruler. Had it not succumbed to corruption, it might have gone on to conquer the entire continent. But that was not its fate. Cursed by the gods and shunned by the living, Hekata is now a realm of death and damnation, a place where the wise do not tread. This supplement expands on material in the *Hellfrost: Land of Fire* supplement.

IS THE LICHE-PRIEST FROM HEKATA?

Although separated by culture and geography, Rassilon and Al-Shirkuh do not exist in isolation. *Region Guide #2: The Liche Lands* reflects upon the origins of the Liche-Priest, the most powerful undead to haunt the northern continent. It is also the first *Hellfrost* product to mention Hekata. With *Land of Fire* now available, it is time to look once more at the possible origins of that dreaded fiend, for there are tantalizing clues supporting the claim the Liche-Priest hails from Hekata.

First, the surge in necromantic energy that washed over Hekata in -302 coincides exactly with Hela's madness. The first mention of the Liche-Priest occurs a mere 36 years later, time enough for a creature already practised in the dark arts to have undertaken a study of the northern lands, made the journey to Rassilon, and set up a base of operations.

Second, the title Liche-Priest may be a mistranslation of liche-wizir.

Third, Sethikhopshjef, a liche-wizir, is currently visiting the Withered Lands in a bid to forge an alliance (*Region Guide #6: The Withered Lands*). He speaks of the Liche-Priest as if he knew him personally, despite never having been to Rassilon before.

Fourth, can it really be coincidence that the approach of Apophis' awakening matches the weakening of wards on the Liche-Priest's tomb?

These "facts" raise two interesting questions—why did the Liche-Priest attack the northern lands, and what is his true relationship with Hela?

One possibility is he attacked the north on his own recognizance, perhaps seeking to carve his own kingdom of the damned far from his undead master's reach. This would be unlikely if he was originally a liche-wizir, but entirely plausible if he was a withered pharaoh. It is possible he was ordered there to create a new realm in preparation for when Apophis next awakened, but if that is the case then why does Hekata seek an alliance with the liches of the Withered Lands when it has a more powerful ally already in place and to whom the Dark Triumvirate is already beholden? Could it be that Apophis intends to destroy the Liche-Priest for his failure, or is there a more sinister reason?

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RULES OF THE REALM

These setting rules apply in Hekata.

* **Abhorrent to Life:** The necromantic energy infused in the land is anathema to life. All *healing*, *greater healing*, *regeneration*, and *succor* spells incur a -2 penalty, as do natural Healing rolls and rolls to create any form of healing herbal brew. No healing herbs grow here.

* **Cold Nights:** Once the sun sets the temperature drops quickly. Nighttime temperatures are always Freezing, regardless of the season.

* **Fearful Realm:** All citizens of Al-Shirkuh know and fear the name of Hekata. Spirit rolls to resist Fear are at -1. Even clerics of Tammuz suffer this, though given the horrors they must face they are likely to possess higher die ratings than others.

* **Hunted:** The energy fields linking the black obelisks alert the liches to the presence of living intruders. Each day, the GM should draw a card from the action deck. A black Jack through Ace means a patrol of 2d6 skeletons (Club suit) or 1d6 skeleton warriors (Spade suit), both led by a skeleton commander, has stumbled across them in their search for the intruders.

* **No Firewood:** There is no firewood or dung in Hekata.

* **No Food or Water:** Most plants that grow here are inedible, the water is largely tainted with necromantic energy, and many creatures are undead. Survival rolls to find food or water are made at -6.

* **Necromantic Energy:** The entire realm counts as a graveyard for the purposes of khem-hekau magic.

* **Undead Realm:** Mundane creatures like camels and jackals can be found here, but all have the Undead special ability.

If the Liche-Priest is from Hekata, then it is extremely unlikely he is a cleric of Hela. Unfortunately, there are no records detailing his arcane abilities, only wild speculation and ancient stories. Indeed, there are no records attributing the Liche-Priest as ever declaring himself a cleric of Hela. If it transpires that he is a servant of Apophis, then it is more likely he is a khem-hekau mage.

But all this is speculation, at least for now. With Apophis soon to awaken, the truth of the Liche-Priest's origins and the demigod's plans for two continents may soon be revealed.

Atmosphere

Hellfrost: *Land of Fire* presents a brief overview of the major geographic features of Hekata, but it says little of the atmosphere within this lifeless realm.

Although most of Al-Shirkuh is desert, it has a sense of vibrant life and energy. While it may appear lifeless

and still, the experienced traveler knows it teems with life and movement. Even when no life is visible, clouds drift across the sky and dunes creep inexorably forward grain by grain, reminding the observer that he is alive. A traveler may walk alone, but he never feels truly isolated from the rest of the desert. Not so in Hekata.

Here a traveler truly feels as if he is the last living creature in existence. No wind stirs the clouds or dunes, no sounds carry across the vast expanse, no living creature disturbs the sand or flits through the air. Beneath the clear sky and burning sun, amid the desolate, silent ruins of yesteryear, an explorer truly comprehends what it feels to be utterly alone.

Many kingdoms have risen to glory and fallen to ruin across Al-Shirkuh. While the crumbling stone testaments to their former glory may make a viewer feel melancholy, Hekata's towering temples, toppled columns, defaced tomb facades, colossal pyramids, and headless statues are brooding and menacing. They speak not of Hekata's former power and wealth, nor the life of its long-dead inhabitants, but of death, for all that remains are funerary complexes emblazoned with symbols of death and a lust for eternal life.

The stones themselves, erected by unknown generations of whip-driven slaves, feel cold to the touch. Prolonged exposure numbs the flesh, leaving one with the impression they are feasting on the explorer's life.

Though the ruins offer travelers the only respite from the unrelenting sun, the crumbling remains, majestic in size, are oppressive and claustrophobic; the darkness within is too deep, the shadows they cast are too long, the smell of funerary spices a little too fresh despite the passage of countless centuries. Entering them leaves one feeling as if one is trespassing in a home where the occupants are asleep.

Hekata does not accommodate the living. Animals do not tarry long in this damned land, the scant vegetation is inedible, and what little water exists is quickly tainted by residual necromantic energy. Lack of water is the greatest natural danger, for the sun beats down mercilessly, as if Shamash is trying to burn the taint of Hekata from Al-Shirkuh. Nights are no less miserable, for once Shamash descends below the horizon the temperature rapidly drops below freezing. Those who seek the warmth of a fire must bring their own firewood or dung, a further burden to those already encumbered by provisions, for the few trees refuse to burn.

While the lack of food and water and the constant heat weaken the body, and the sense of total isolation gnaws at the spirit, the constant reminder that Hekata was a land fixated on death wears at the soul.

Religion

Before the advent of necromancy, the citizens of Hekata worshipped many gods. The names of those ancient deities are long obliterated from Hekata's vast archives

and many monuments, replaced with the name and image of the undead's new deity, Apophis, the undying pharaoh. It is possible that some statue or engraving exists in a long-forgotten tomb beneath the shiftless sands, but the denizens of Hekata do not dwell on such matters anymore.

Following the removal of the gods, each pharaoh became a divine ruler, head of his own religious cult, a living god lording over Hekata. Many withered pharaohs still believe they are gods incarnate, immortal and indestructible. That they were forced to bow before Apophis grates their ego, for a god bows before no-one. Wary of the liche-wizards, Apophis' spies, they plot against their sleeping master, patiently waiting for the time to strike. Among their peers they profess undying loyalty, of course. Unsure who to trust, each machinates alone, building his power at the expense of his rivals.

Although Apophis is regarded as a "living" god by his followers and has powers far in excess of any mortal, he is not a true deity. He grants his followers no powers, nor does he demand religious worship or the erection of temples in his name. All he demands is total obedience.

Military

The exact strength and disposition of Hekata's undead legions is a mystery. The first wave of necromantic energy gave birth to countless undead, while the later surge awoke yet more. The civil war that wracked the empire and the abortive expansion attempt in -302 claimed tens of thousands of skeletons, but centuries have passed since then, and the rulers of Hekata are potent necromancers. Estimates of the number of undead in Hekata range from a few thousand to many millions.

Hekata does not boast a single, unified army, nor is it ever likely to until Apophis awakens. Each withered pharaoh commands his own legion and acts as its supreme general on the battlefield. Despite being loyal to Apophis and sharing a common goal in preparing for his return and the expansion of their empire, the old rivalries that led to the undead civil war remain deeply entrenched.

Each pharaoh has a company or two of royal guards, professional soldiers rewarded in death with the ritual of mummification. Clad in black and silver armor, Hekata's royal colors, and carrying the pharaoh's banner into battle, they are the elite units of Hekata.

The main fighting forces comprise companies of skeletons. These are led either by a royal guard or, more often, a skeleton commander. In the event a royal guard leads, he has a skeleton as his second-in-command. A typical legion comprises 12 infantry companies, 4 archery companies, 2 cavalry companies, 1 artillery company, and 1 chariot company. Companies are usually made up of 100 skeletons.

The bulk of the legions comprise the skeletons of ordinary citizens, drafted in death to serve their mummified leaders. Poorly trained and ill-equipped, they

make up for their lack of prowess by weight of numbers. Marching alongside them are companies of skeleton warriors, the bony remains of former soldiers. Equipped with the armor and weapons they carried in life, they are the backbone of each pharaoh's army.

Even with the power of necromancy at their disposal, the liche-wizards and withered pharaohs cannot stop the natural decay of their skeletal legions. Never preserved through mummification, their bones of animated skeletons eventually crumble to dust. In order to keep the armies as fresh as possible, the great bulk is entombed beneath the sand or in ancient burial complexes, ready to rise and march to war at a moment's notice.

Major Locales

While *Land of Fire* describes a handful of adventuring locales in Hekata, countless others exist. This section delves into some of the other sites in and related to the dread realm.

THE BLACK LIBRARY

Many scholars, sages, tomb-robbers, and clerics of Tammuz believe that somewhere in Hekata there exists a blasphemous collection of khem-hekau lore and relics. This has been dubbed the Black Library. Those who claim the site exists are convinced it is guarded by fearsome sentries and lethal traps, for the knowledge contained within is priceless. They hold to this belief despite centuries of exploration failing to turn up a single scrap of evidence to support their claims.

The reason no evidence has been found is quite simply because the Black Library does not exist, at least not as a unique location.

Suspicious of their rivals and extremely covetous in all matters of arcane knowledge, the withered pharaohs and liche-wizards each maintain a private stash of khem-hekau scrolls and relics, a miniature Black Library. Concealed in secret tomb complexes or deep inside pyramids, these precious collections are tended by mummified librarians, priests of Qedeshet in life, servants of the undead nobility in death.

The smallest consists of a few papyrus scrolls concerning the black art, while the largest fills many rooms and contains many dozens of tomes of learning, plus spirit relics inhabited by fell spirits. What the believers in the Black Library have right is that each collection is extremely well-protected against robbers.

FIELD OF SORROW

After liberation from the jinn and the return of the old faith, the cult of Tammuz set out to avenge the murder of its priests centuries ago by the corrupt pharaohs of Hekata. Righteous in their cause, they marched into the black desert. The size of the army varies between a few

CLERICS OF TAMMUZ

The Faithful chapter in *Land of Fire* details the core aspects of the greater gods, and provides a information on the clergy's duties. This entry is an expansion for the cult of Tammuz, providing facts useful to both players and GMs.

Training: Regardless of which branch of the clergy he later chooses, a novitiate must be versed in matters of local law and funeral rites.

The first year is spent in scholastic pursuits. Codices of laws and chanting prayers for the dead are read and repeated until they are memorized. Practical training begins the second year. Novitiates attend mock trials, acting as defense and prosecution. The trials are not merely tests of knowledge, but all of the understanding of balance and the difference between justice and revenge. The third year is spent in the mortuary. For the first half he acts as an assistant in the mummification of animals (rich citizens often mummify beloved pets), moving onto to performing the ritual in the second half of the year. He is also expected to lead funeral rites for animals.

If judged suitable, he must then decide whether to become a priest or a paladin. Priests serve for a year as a court clerk, a year as a fully fledged advocate, and a year as an assistant judge. Paladins receive three years of combat training, interposed with studies of common undead. Final tests involve being sole judge in a complex legal case for priests and slaying a number of undead for paladins.

Prayers: As preservers of cosmic balance, clerics use this symbolism a lot. Prayers begin with phrases like, "I stand between light and shadow," "I stand between life and death," and "I have weighed my options."

Adventures: Priests may be called upon to judge legal cases, track down criminals, investigate crimes, or provide legal counsel. Paladins are more likely to be involved in cases concerning grave robbers, and in adventures concerning the slaying of undead and khem-hekau mages. As guardians of tombs, they must avoid despoiling and ransacking burial places, a common pastime for adventurers.

Character Guidelines: As judges, priests need a decent Smarts and Persuasion. Knowledge (Law) is not essential, as Common Knowledge covers one's homeland. However, an adventuring cleric might be called upon to judge a trial in any Faithful community, so a few dice will be beneficial.

Paladins need to invest in Combat Edges and martial Traits, as well as Spirit for resisting Fear. Favored Foe (Undead) is essential when you get the chance, since the walking dead are his sworn enemies.

All clergy may be called upon to investigate crimes. Investigation and Notice are very useful for this, as is the Investigator Edge.

hundred and many thousands, depending on who tells the story, but all storytellers agree that just one survivor staggered from the haunted realm a month later.

He revealed that the army met little resistance at first, and the hearts of the men were joyous. The army made camp in the ruins of an old temple, complacency and the justness of their cause causing them to post just a handful of sentries. That night the undead rose from the sand and fell upon the living.

But the gods, it seemed, demanded the story of the massacre be known, for Shamash lit up the night like day, his fiery rays incinerating the fell undead. By the time the battle ended, there were just five survivors. Fearing their fallen comrades might be awakened as undead, they severed their hands, feet, and skulls, then fled toward civilization. Four succumbed to thirst and madness.

With little wind to drive the sand, the desiccated corpses of the fallen clerics are still visible in the temple ruins. Each year, small numbers of clergy brave the many perils to visit the Field of Sorrow, returning with as many remains as they can carry so the dead might finally receive proper burial rites in hallowed ground. Clerics of Tammuz seeking atonement for mortal sins are often given the task of recovering a set of remains as penance.

OASIS OF TAMMUZ

Population: 350 (100% Bedu)

Ruler: Sheikh Ifran of the Tammishiel tribe

Religion: Faithful (Tammuz)

Imports: Various goods

Exports: Grave goods, papyrus

On Hekata's northeast border, close to where the River Ankh sinks beneath the sands, lies a small oasis. The last watering hole before entering Hekata, it is a popular stopping point for explorers and clerics of Tammuz.

In days of yore the ancestors of the Tammishiel tribe were members of the Saou, an elite part of the pharaoh's guard, charged with watching over the final resting places of the mummified kings and guarding the temples. Followers of Tammuz, they were exiled for their part in the ill-fated rebellion against the pharaohs. The tribe has lived at the oasis since the end of the jinn occupation, defending it against other tribes and undead alike.

The Tammishiel tribe comprises just two clans, both of which live at the oasis. Historically, one clan's ancestors were guardians of the royal tombs, and the other the great temples. Two and a half millennia have passed since their exile, yet the Bedu remain fanatical followers of Tammuz, forsaking all other gods, even Duamutef, the traditional god of nomads. Any person who wishes to marry into the tribe must take Tammuz as his patron. Tribe members who wish to marry a follower of another deity who will not convert must leave the tribe, becoming outcasts.

The Tammishiel are no longer concerned with guarding Hekata's known buildings, for they are desecrated beyond hope of salvation. Instead, they devote their time to robbing the tombs and temples their ancestors once

guarded. They have little interest in treasure for the sake of accruing wealth. Their main interests are the preservation of Hekatic culture before the empire became corrupt and the destruction of necromantic artifacts. Corpses untouched by necromancy are brought back to the oasis, blessed, and reburied in the desert with their grave goods. Any coins or small items of value are used to buy goods necessary to survival.

Clerics of Tammuz are always welcomed here as honored guests. Those who have dealt openly and honestly with the sheikh on matters concerning plundered treasure are welcomed guests. All others are accorded hospitality using the normal rules.

Regardless of the hospitality offered, all guests are invited to dine with the sheikh on the first night of their stay. Over dinner, the quality of which varies for guests based on their welcome, the sheikh politely requests that he be given first refusal to purchase any objects taken from tombs. He is well known for his generosity when it comes to purchasing Hekatan artifacts—he automatically pays 75% of an item's value, if it is of interest to him.

Scholarly by nature, Sheikh Ifran is a keen student of Hekata's early days, when it was a proud and vibrant empire. He speaks fluent Hekatic, and enjoys conversing in his ancestral tongue with fellow speakers.

The Black Tent: Close to the oasis stands a black tent. This serves as the tribe's temple. It is divided into two halves, each with its own entrance. Facing the oasis is the court, where the sheikh settles disputes. The opposite side is a mortuary, where the dead smuggled out of Hekata are blessed before being reburied with grave goods. Located next to the temple is a smaller tent, opulent living quarters reserved for visiting clerics of Tammuz.

POOL OF LIFE

There are many stories concerning a magical oasis deep in the heart of Hekata. Here the water is fresh and cool, and the dates plump and succulent. Such tales are often put down to hallucinations, for everyone knows Hekata is lifeless. Various versions of the story place the oasis in different parts of the old empire, only adding to the belief it is a fictional place. The Pool of Life, as it is commonly known, is very real. It is also a sacred place (see *Region Guide #0: Of Men & Gods* for details).

Its earthly location is marked by a single limestone obelisk engraved with palm trees with jade leaves on two sides and swarms of bees inlaid with gold and jet on the others. A character who studies the obelisk closely notices the bees wiggle slightly. If a living, sentient creature touches the cold stone with a bare hand, the bees move to form words in the character's native tongue. These reveal how to awaken the spirit (see sacrifice below).

When the guardian spirit is awakened, a small oasis materializes in the mortal realm. Tall palms rise up from the sands, their wide leaves providing welcoming shade, while crystal clear water flows from the pillar in a steady stream, rapidly forming a pool around the base that does

not drain into the sand. All told, the verdant oasis encompasses a circle a mere 30 yards in diameter.

The placing of the oasis in different parts of Hekata is quite true, for the obelisk moves of its own accord each dawn and dusk, appearing at random in the desert sands.

Spirit Name: Furat ("Sweet Water").

Ambience: Touching the pillar brings instant feelings of revitalized life to those wearied by the constant signs of death that make up Hekata. Within the oasis proper, the necromantic energy of Hekata ceases to exist, a sanctuary of life within a realm of death.

Deity: Ashtart. Devoted see Furat as a greater marid.

Senses: None while dormant. When awakened, she has Notice d10 within the areas marked by the oasis.

Communication: Furat can communicate only when awakened. Her voice is like a swarm of buzzing bees. She rarely deigns to communicate, except to converse with clerics of Ashtart.

Powers: Once Furat awakens, the oasis becomes awash with feeling of vibrant life. Within its confines the Abhorrent to Life, Fearful Realm, and Necromantic Energy rules are negated. Day or night, the temperature is always comfortable. Treat it as being Warm.

Food (dates and fish) and water is plentiful, no matter how much the party consumes, as is firewood. Taken outside the oasis, the food spoils, the water becomes polluted, and the firewood crumbles to dust instantly.

Furat has no control over her movement. All those in the oasis at dawn or dusk are transported with her to a new location within Hekata. This movement cannot be discerned, even with magic. Anyone who has stepped outside the borders when the pillar teleports has little hope of finding it again.

Furat can cast the following spells with Faith d10: *armor*, *deflection*, *fly*, *healing*, *smite*, and *wilderness step*. Each casting requires two quarts of water to be sacrificed to her. Maintainable spells remain active until the obelisk next teleports. Furat's Faith die is not reduced by maintaining spells, and there is no limit to the number of spells she can Maintain.

Sacrifice: Awakening Furat requires a gallon of water brought from outside Hekata to be poured over the obelisk. This brings the Pool into being for 24 hours. For each 24 hours after that, another gallon must be sacrificed. Water from the oasis cannot be used for this purpose. At the end of the allotted time, the pool vanishes, leaving only the obelisk.

Furat is a double-edged sword. Since the oasis water spoils outside the oasis borders and visitors must use their own reserves to keep the oasis materialized, they slowly use up their available water. Those who remain too long find themselves stranded in an inhospitable desert with little or no water.

PYRAMID OF DECAY

A crumbling edifice, the Pyramid of Decay has lost its smooth limestone casing, leaving its rough stone tiers

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exposed to the power of the elements. Whose tomb it served as is unknown, for the loss of the casing has taken with it any hieroglyphs. Given its foul powers, many explorers suspect it was the tomb of Sekhemra, the Despoiler.

The chambers and corridors of the upper pyramid are crumbling. Corridors are lined with a thick carpet of dust and ground stone, making it impossible for intruders to conceal their presence from the shambling sentries. Tomb-robbers must proceed with care, for the dust is easily kicked up into choking clouds. Worse, the inner structure is very unstable—any loud noise, such as an explosion from a *blast* spell, risks bringing down huge stone blocks that form the ceiling. Stone stairs and sloping corridors are brittle, prone to collapse at a moment's notice, plunging the unwary into deep voids eaten into the structure. Deep within the bowels of the earth, concealed behind a secret door that leads to a deep shaft, extends a labyrinth of burial chambers and annexes. Black, stagnant water coats the floor to ankle depth, while slimy mold lines the walls, obscuring hieroglyphs and the triggers of the many traps.

The undead who stalk the upper levels are rotten, their bones powdery due to the corrupting power of the pyramid. In the necropolis, mold has eaten away the wrappings of mummies and stained the bones of skeletons. Blows from these creatures are especially deadly, for the mold that smears their weapons and limbs turns the blood of the living toxic.

The unearthly aura of the pyramid spoils food and water at an alarming rate. For every hour spent inside the structure, one pound of food and one quart of water carried by each character is tainted. Herbal remedies age at the rate of one day per hour, rapidly reducing their potency. Due to the dust and mold, non-magical Healing rolls suffer a –2 penalty within the pyramid.

PYRAMID OF GHOSTS

Standing at the end of a wide, desolate valley on the edge of the Tomb Hills is a colossal pyramid, its unmarked limestone casing a drab, dead-flesh gray. No matter the season or time of day, the valley is permanently swathed in dank, swirling mist. Strange noises emanate from its gloomy depths, and flighty shadows flicker at the edge of vision. Explorers may feel a cold hand on their shoulder, only to see nothing when they turn to investigate.

Unusually, the pyramid's entrance stands at ground level, its dark maw lying at the end of an avenue of towering, unmarked obelisks that loom out of the fog like skeletal fingers stretching toward the burning sun. Mist hangs heavy in the doorway, seeming to flow in from the valley. Careful observation reveals something far more disturbing—the mist that fills the long, winding valley flows *out* of the pyramid.

The interior of the pyramid is filled with mists from floor to ceiling. Although the external mist appears quite normal, the interior fog refuses to be dispelled by light.

Magic or mundane, any form of illumination provides

Dim (–1) lighting conditions in its base radius. Beyond this, the darkness prevails. This constant blanket of gray not only conceals the approach of the fell guardians, who seem unaffected by the murky conditions, it masks the presence of traps.

While some corporeal undead lurk here, the greatest perils are spectral creatures—dread wraiths, ghosts, shadow wights, and wraiths (all detailed in the *Hellfrost Rassilon Expansion*). Filled with rage and hatred, they lust after the souls of the living.

The origins of the mists are unknown, for no explorer has penetrated the heart of the pyramid. Common tales center around a powerful relic, but others claim the mist is in fact a mass of spirits, those who died in Hekata's final war, their souls unable to escape beyond the mortal realm due to the necromantic energy that permeates the land to its very core.

PYRAMID OF TRAPS

Three thousand years have passed since Pharaoh Amensobek V was buried, but his name lives on. He suffered from the twin sins of excessive pride and greed. No sooner had he ascended the Scarab Throne than he began the construction of his tomb, a pyramid so vast that it would remain unchallenged for its size until the reign of Apophis, many centuries later.

Fearful of thieves, for the goods he would take with him to the grave would accompany him to the Afterlife, the pharaoh ordered the construction of myriad magical and mundane traps, secret doors, and sliding walls, sparing no expense in hiring the finest trapsmiths and masons in Al-Shirkuh.

Once each worker had completed his appointed task he was executed, taking the knowledge of his work to the grave. As security against *gravespeak* spells the remains were burned to ash and scattered in the deep desert. According to one story, their executioners were then entombed within the pyramid in case their victims had spoken to them.

Such was the extravagance of the pyramid and the grave goods, the pharaoh brought the empire to its knees, having both drained the coffers and raised excessive taxes to sate his desires. Had his successors not waged war on their neighbors in a bid to capture their resources and treasuries, Hekata may well have fallen to dust centuries earlier, avoiding its dark destiny.

As he felt the shadow of death fall across him, Amensobek spoke to his people. Despite his greed and growing paranoia, his pride was larger still. He proclaimed that whoever could penetrate his tomb was welcome to his grave goods. Thousands of years have passed, and still the pyramid remains intact, such is the deadly plethora of wards and guardians. (Since Amensobek ruled before the advent of necromancy, the withered pharaohs have seen no need to loot his tomb.)

It is said Amensobek went to the grave laughing, but it was the gods who were to have the last laugh. Following the liche-wizards' terrible spell, Amensobek's soul was

returned to his mummified corpse. Since his awakening, the withered pharaoh has been a prisoner in his tomb, for in life he did not know the placement or extent of the wards that protected him in death. What state his mind is in is yet to be revealed.

VALLEY OF THE PHARAOHS

Located in the Tomb Hills is a long, arrow-straight, steep-sided valley. Since the first pharaoh ascended the Scarab Throne, the rulers of Hekata had titanic effigies of their likeness carved from the living rock. Those nearest the valley entrance depict the earliest pharaohs, those deeper in carved to show the last power-hungry, immortality-seeking rulers of a dying empire.

Except for the statue of Apophis, their features are badly defaced, smashed by rivals during the undead pharaohs' bitter war or worn away by millennia of sand-laden winds. Although the visages are obliterated, many of the hieroglyphs carved around the bases remain legible due to being covered in a protective layer of sand. Perhaps by translating these, those opposed to the withered dynasty will discover the identities of the undead pharaohs and, with a little luck and further detective work, maybe their weaknesses as well.

WELL OF SOULS

Unimaginable numbers of skeletons were destroyed during the civil war as the rival factions fought for control of the Hills of the Damned. Yet the mighty struggles that ravaged this region were not fought for territorial gain or the wealth stored within the numerous tombs. Concealed within the barren hills lies the Well of Souls, a direct portal to the Bottomless Pit.

According to texts written long ago by unknown hands, the Well of Souls was discovered by the unnamed magician who promised Pharaoh Apophis eternal life. That it existed before him is evident in the remaining fragments, but who, or what, constructed this terrible portal remains a mystery.

The few surviving accounts describe the Well as literally that—a wide shaft descending so deep into the bowels of the earth that it transcends the mortal realm. The walls of the shaft are lined with countless skulls, each screaming as if in a constant state of torment. Only the damned can stand its presence for long, and even they would be forced to retreat eventually before it tore the last shred of sanity from their desiccated corpses.

The Well was attributed many powers by the necromancers of Hekata. Most common was that fell spirits could be called from the bottomless depths and made to obey their summoner's will. It was this belief that led to the constant battles for the hills, for whoever controlled the Well could call upon an army of the truly damned.

Apophis' awakening ended the civil war and the search for the Well. Wary that those who bent on creaking joints and swore fealty to him would use the power of the Well to overthrow him, Apophis forbade any further investiga-

FESTIVAL TO TAMMUZ

EXILE DAY

Amt Yaus al-Maat Alak Neteru

The decree ordering the death of all clerics of the old gods in Hekata may have been over 2000 years ago, but it is not forgotten. Exile Day commemorates the escape of the clerics after their civil war against the pharaohs, an event the cult believes led directly to the eventual demise of Hekata, for cosmic balance was replaced by all-consuming darkness.

Starting at dawn, clerics abandon their normal duties until the next sunrise, symbolizing the loss of their services to the doomed citizens of Hekata. The courts are closed, tombs unguarded, the recently deceased left untended, criminals unmolested, and undead left in peace.

During these 24 hours clerics are incapable of offending their god by breaking their usual taboos. Instead, acting like a cleric of Tammuz becomes a major sin for this day. Thus, if a cleric sees a murderer strike down a victim, he must turn the other cheek and walk away. If an undead crosses his path, he must refrain from harming it.

Throughout the day the common citizens, regardless of which god they follow, spend much time moaning at the lack of justice in the world, and begging the clerics to return to their duties. This too is symbolic of the exile, for while the commoners of Hekata wished to worship the gods, their rulers denied them access to the old temples.

Instead of a day of celebration, Exile Day is a day of despair and grief for the living relatives of those dead for three days, for without the clerics' prayers the soul may be lost come the morrow.

By not performing their duties, the clerics also remind the citizens of the importance of Tammuz in their lives and deaths. Donations to temples rise dramatically on this day.

The next day, at the instant the sun breaks the horizon, the clergy return to work with a vengeance, tracking down perpetrators who took advantage of their absence and bringing them to justice.

tion into the accursed site, ordering the liche-wizards to report any transgressions to him immediately.

Unbeknownst to the surviving pharaohs, the vast amounts of necromantic energy unleashed in -302 drew countless fell spirits from the Bottomless Pit. Released from their torment, they quickly entered the bodies of those buried in the Hills, animating their mummified and skeletal remains. Not beholden to Apophis or his servants, they still haunt the desolate peaks and secluded valleys, an enemy to the living and to the undead of Hekata alike.

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FELL DENIZENS

Hekata may be lifeless, but it is not uninhabited. Dark and terrible things stalk its barren landscape, musty tombs, decaying tomb complexes, and ruined cities. The monsters listed below are all suitable for use as adversaries in Hekata.

In addition, by using the rules for Flesh & Bone in the *Hellfrost Bestiary* and *Animal Mummies* in *Land of Fire*, almost any archetype and monster can be encountered in Hekata in undead form.

Land of Fire: Carrion vulture, headless hunter, husk, khem-hekau mage, liche-wizir, mummy (all varieties), priest and paladin of Iblis, withered pharaoh.

Hellfrost Bestiary: Dragon (undead), ghost, golem (bone), skeleton, skeleton warrior, zombie, zombie glyph variant.

Hellfrost Rassilon Expansion: Bloodborn, dread wraith, golem (corpse), shadow wight, skeleton (ballfire, brittlebone, commander, war horse), wraith, zombie, zombie lord.

shatter miraculous enchantments, as well as cause the faith of clerics to falter.

NETJERKHAU, THE WHITE PHARAOH

Of the pharaohs who craved immortality, most sought eternal life in a bid to hold onto power, for they were greedy and corrupt, tyrants who wished to rule as living gods until the end of time. A small handful were of pure intent, wise and noble, dedicated to peace and prosperity. Their continued existence may have benefited Hekata and led it away from the darkness gnawing at its core, but it was not to be. Those of good heart who rose during the first awakening spoke out against the evil that had befallen their realm, but their cries were cut short by the greater number of evil undead. One benevolent mummy who survived the slaughter is Netjerkhau, named the White Pharaoh by the cult of Tammuz. The followers of the god of death are unsure how to deal with him. On the one hand he has lived past his allotted time, and is thus an affront to their god. On the other, hand he has provided holy slayers with invaluable information. Prayers for guidance have been met with silence.

Some clerics argue the pharaoh was given burial rites against his will, and that in the last days of his life he sought not the fell immortality of the liches who served as his priests but the burial of a commoner. Thus, while he is undead, Netjerkhau is an unwilling one. Perhaps, they argue, his existence is down to Tammuz, in which case destroying him would surely be a grievous sin.

Netjerkhau wages a one-man war against the undead of Hekata, though he never takes action directly. Instead, he approaches living explorers, revealing the location of rich tombs in return for acts of aggression against the withered pharaohs and liche-wizirs and the destruction of khem-hekau lore and relics.

PERSONS OF NOTE

While Apophis will be the greatest threat in Hekata one day, for now he slumbers. Ruling over the realm are the withered pharaohs, terrible in their majesty yet pale imitations of their undying lord.

Hekata boasted hundreds of pharaohs and nobles, for its rule was long. Of those awakened by the twin necromantic surges, many fell during the civil war or were crushed by Apophis. This section details some of the awakened dead who still walk the fell realm.

AKHENRE, THE BLASPHEMER

Supposedly the pharaoh who ordered the massacre of the clerics of the old gods around -1750, Akhenre's name is still reviled to this day. Many stories tell how he watched impassively as clerics were mummified alive, fed to ravenous hyenas, force fed cobras, or devoured by flesh-eating beetles. One vile tale recounts that he had living clerics bound together and laid flat, to be used as a road for his royal chariot.

On his death, which some savants claim was premature and brought about by the gods' anger, Akhenre was wrapped in black bandages, to which were attached silver scarabs engraved with vile blasphemies against all the gods. His black gold and silver sarcophagus was similarly inscribed.

The cult of Tammuz suspects Akhenre is awakened. His powers are unknown, but many believe his blasphemous charms provide him with immunity to miracles, as well as sicken clerics in his presence. His voice is said to

SEKHEMRA, THE DESPOILER

In life Sekhemra was a tyrant. In order to better control his people he poisoned the distant oases, forcing the locals to migrate to the banks of the life-giving Ankh, where his grip was strongest. It is also told that he numbered among the pharaohs who craved and eventually gained immortality, thus making him one of the first generation of living mummies, but beyond this little is known for sure. Sekhemra's mummified form is almost skeletal. Despised by his people, he was mummified in haste and with little care. As a result, grave mold took root on the bandages. Over time they grew, devouring the wrappings and the pharaoh's dried flesh. It is possible the bandages were deliberately impregnated with mold in the hope the pharaoh's body would rot, for it is said even the priests of his pharaonic cult had little love for him. The Despoiler is aptly named. His very presence is a blight, for where he walks plants wither and die, water turns foul, and living flesh rots.

SETEPENRA, DECAYING SERPENT

According to legend, Pharaoh Setepenra was gifted with the power to command serpents. What few images of him survive clearly show him handling serpents, and often he walks on a sea of writhing snakes. One ancient legend claims that he forsook the traditional gods of his people and instigated worship of a snake-headed deity, though there is no evidence to back this. Some storytellers say it was his desire to rule all serpents that led to the invasion of the Snakelands, for Setepenra saw himself as their rightful ruler by divine appointment.

Regardless, the pharaoh did lead the second, and successful, war against the ophidae. Alas, he never saw his armies victorious march into Jafar, for he succumbed to the deadly venom of a magical snake sent by his enemies. He died in agony, his skin transformed into glittering black scales as his blood burned. As his last breath escaped his lips, he vowed he would one day avenge his death. Prophetic words indeed.

A monstrosity even among the undead pharaohs, Setepenra used the most blasphemous khem-hekau magic to graft his mummified upper body onto the serpentine body of a gigantic mummified snake. Beneath the abomination's decaying bandages glint black scales as hard as iron. In his eye sockets are the yellow orbs of a snake. Some sages go as far to say that he has a forked tongue and fangs, while the most fanciful stories claim he had his arms removed and venomous snakes grafted in their place.

WAHKARE II, SCOURGE OF LIFE

Wahkare ascended the Scarab Throne at the age of 12. A spoiled brat, he demanded his slaves cater to his every whim, even after death. A powerful khem-hekau mage, those who died in his service would never find rest, for his fell magic bound their soul to their corpse, which he then animated.

His reputation is legendary, undiminished by the passage of time. Stories abound how he had executed those who refused his orders and then animated them, making them publicly bow to his will. During feasts he would have courses brought to tables inside the hollowed out remains of their animated corpses, squealing with delight at his guests' revulsion. While he feasted, zombie dancing girls would entertain him. It is also said he entertained himself with an undead harem.

Wahkare died at the age of 14, poisoned by a courtier still loyal to the old gods. Although duly mummified and prepared for eternal life as necromantic lore proscribed, the young king did not awaken as a withered pharaoh, but as a bandage-wrapped zombie lord.

He demands to be treated as an equal by his peers, but his powerbase is extremely weak. With no ability to create any undead save for zombies, he must rely on capturing the living to extend his undead court.

To stand in the presence of Wahkare is to invite death, for he is surrounded by a deadly aura. Those who fall to

his fell power quickly rise again, obedient slaves to his every whim. Treat him as a mummy lord, but with Khem-Hekau instead of Faith and a necromantic aura. Due to his royal status, he retains the Amulets of Power, Canopic Jars, and Ruler special abilities of a withered pharaoh, though the latter applies only to zombies.

Why Come Here?

Hekata comprises tens of thousands of square miles of utterly lifeless desert hostile to life and populated by countless undead whose sole purpose is the extermination of the living. Its reputation is widely known and greatly feared, so what can convince a party to come here in search of adventure?

* **Glory.** For those in search of fame, a visit to Hekata can bring rich rewards. But stories are easily fabricated, and citizens will demand firm evidence before they praise a hero for his deeds.

* **No Choice.** Fate can be a cruel mistress, and the will of the gods is often unfathomable. The characters may be forced to enter Hekata as part of their current adventure.

For instance, the heroes are hired to locate a powerful sheikh's missing son. During their investigation, the characters encounter nomads who gave the boy hospitality not a week past. Over dinner he told them he planned to prove his worth by venturing into Hekata and returning with treasure. Although it was never their intention, the heroes have no choice but to load up with provisions, make peace with their maker, and step into the most forbidding realm in Al-Shirkuh.

* **Orders.** Characters with the Orders Hindrance are sworn to obey their superiors and undertake tasks as required. Forcing the heroes to go where you want them isn't a tool you should overuse, but the occasional tug on the reins reminds the characters the world does not revolve around them. Sooner or later a cleric of Tammuz is going to be dispatched here.

* **Treasure.** Hekata boasts many hundreds of ruins. Even the newest dates back almost a millennium, and the oldest have stood for five times as long. Although tomb-raiders have plied their trade here down the ages, the presence of undead and devious traps mean many ruins have never been explored since Hekata fell to ruin.

Once inside Hekata, adventuring options are limited to slaying undead and raiding ruins (as well as just surviving). In order to stop adventures becoming repetitive dungeon-crawls, ensure that each location has a unique history and purpose. Remember, although the citizens of Hekata turned to necromancy, their empire had stood for 800 years before it grew corrupt. During this time the citizens worshipped at temples of the gods, studied many forms of magic, and built fortresses and towns. Give each location a vibrant backstory, a purpose for its construction, and you'll breath life into what might appear to be just another crumbling edifice full of monsters.

FESTIVAL TO TAMMUZ

REBIRTH DAY

Varies

When the mortal flesh fails, every soul is judged according to its deeds. A life of good deeds by the standards of their patron deity means a place in the Afterlife, while a bad one leads to eternal damnation in the Bottomless Pit. One way to ensure an untimely death doesn't blow one's chances at enjoying paradise is to regularly partake in the rebirth ceremony.

Citizens may pay for a rebirth ceremony to be carried out only on their birthday. Because the ritual takes place on every day of the year, it is a high holy day for clergy only if they are asked to carry out the ritual. Otherwise, it has no special significance.

The ritual takes its name from the symbolic death and rebirth of the participant. After stripping naked and washing thoroughly, bandages are loosely wrapped around his entire body, leaving only the mouth and nose uncovered.

While the attending cleric performs this duty, the participant vocally lists and recants all sins he committed since his last birthday. Missing a rebirth ceremony can have severe consequences, for the ritual cleanses only sins committed in the last year. Any committed and not cleansed before that cannot be atoned for in life—Tammuz will judge him for his actions after his death.

Attending clerics are forbidden from acting on any crimes admitted during the confession or from speaking of them to others—what the sinner reveals is between him and his deity, the cleric merely acting as a portal between the mortal and divine realms.

Once symbolically mummified, the participant is placed in a sarcophagus and the heavy lid slid into place. Here he lies in utter darkness and complete silence for a period determined by the number and severity of his sins, alone with his thoughts, his god, and the sound of his heartbeat and breathing. Stories of sinners suffocating or going mad are commonplace but unproven.

When the allotted time is up, the lid is removed and the mummy unwrapped. The bandages are then incinerated, the smoke carrying away his sins.

Adventure Seeds

In addition to the potential adventure seeds buried in the text, here are a few extra seeds to sow in your fertile imagination.

* A rich and influential citizen has contracted a wasting disease beyond the ability of Marqod's clergy to heal.

He believes he has tracked down a herbal cure. Unfortunately, the recipe lies in the tomb of a Hekatic pharaoh. The dangers are many, but aiding the patron could earn the heroes more rewards than mere coin and jewels.

* The characters unearth an ancient papyrus scroll written in Hekatic. It reveals the location of a long-lost tomb supposedly filled with great treasures. Unfortunately, it lies in the Hills of the Damned. Given the wars that raged there, the tomb may already be despoiled.

* A cleric of Qedeset is planning on mapping the major structures of the necropolis of Hekaterna, a task that will take many months. While he has all the scholastic abilities necessary to complete his task, he seeks capable warriors and survival experts to accompany him. He is offering no payment, but promises any grave goods his helpers find are theirs to keep.

Gods & Monsters

Detailed below are two new minor deities, three hazards unique to Hekata, and guidelines for creating unique mummies.

DUMUZID

Titles: Lord of the Second Death, Restorer of Balance, He Who Stands Before the Darkness.

Aspects: Undead slaying.

Affiliations: Shamash, Tammuz.

Symbol: Sword shaped like an ankh.

Priesthood: Reverend Hunters (priests); Reverend Slayers (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: Every Yaus al-Maat. During Alak Paret these are high holy days.

Duties: To slay undead and restore balance.

Sins: (Minor) refusing to destroy an Extra undead or khem-hekau mage, engaging in conversation with an undead or khem-hekau mage (except to Intimidate or Taunt it); (Major) refusing to destroy a Wild Card undead or khem-hekau mage; (Mortal) knowingly aiding an undead or khem-hekau mage.

Signature Power: *Champion of the faith*.*

Powers: *Aura**, *bolt**, *boost/lower** (Spirit, Strength, Vigor, Fighting, Khem-Hekau (*lower* only)), *deflection**, *detect undead* (no *conceal*), *light*, *smite**, *weaken undead*.

Trappings: All trappings must be light or fire.

Special: Spells marked "*" only function against undead. The spell has no effect against other foes, although it remains Maintained. Although Dumuzid's sins are largely the same as Tammuz's, there is no increased penalty for committing them.

Following his murder and subsequent rebirth (see below), Tammuz set out to slay Iblis and his fell legions. Unwilling to reveal he had conquered death, Tammuz took the name Dumuzid, which translates as "Restorer

of Balance.” Tammuz, in his role as god of both cosmic balance and death, saw Iblis latest creation, the undead, as an abomination, for they defied the natural order of the universe.

After men discovered khem-hekau magic, Tammuz appeared to his followers in dreams disguised as Dumuzid. He warned them that unless the undead were slain, the cosmic balance would shift in favor of evil, plunging the universe into eternal darkness.

The cult of Shamash, to whom Dumuzid is affiliated, holds that the undead slayer was a servant of Tammuz given divine favor by the god of order, who led the gods in their struggle against the darkness.

Dumuzid has no temples and very few shrines. His clergy’s work is solitary, often taking them far from civilized lands. Their grisly work is veneration enough, and anywhere a cleric kneels to pray is considered suitable. When Dumuzid is portrayed visually, it is as the sword at Tammuz’s side.

Priests primarily serve as investigators. They follow up rumors of undead and khem-hekau mage activity and track the fiends back to their lairs. Once the lair is identified, paladins are summoned to cleanse it of its fell inhabitants. Both clergy are permitted to plunder tombs whose occupants have been turned into undead, for the souls are damned to the Bottomless Pit, where they have no need of grave goods. Valuables plundered from such tombs are essential to supporting the small cult.

Ceremonies revolve around death, but they are not morbid—the cult does holy work, and those who die in the name of balancing the cosmic scales are assured a place in the Afterlife. Fallen slayers are remembered in stories, often humorous ones.

Character Guidelines: Priests should invest in Investigation, Notice, and Streetwise, as well as the Investigator Edge, for these are core to tracking down undead, necromantic cults, and khem-hekau mages. Paladins are charged with facing the undead in battle. Decent Spirit and martial skills are important, as are offensive and defensive Combat Edges. Favored Foe (Undead) is essential. Lockpicking and Notice are useful unless the paladin as a thief in his employ, for the undead are fearful of the second and final death, and protect their tombs with cunning traps.

INPU

Titles: Caretaker of the Dead, Guardian of the Dead.

Aspects: Protection of cemeteries and tombs.

Affiliations: Marqod, Tammuz.

Symbol: An obelisk.

Priesthood: Holy Watchers (priests); Royal Watchers (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: First Yaus Al-Maat at every month. Remembrance Day is a high holy day.

Duties: To protect tombs from robbers.

Sins: (Minor) desecrating a corpse (undead don’t count), breaking the seal on a tomb, a tomb you are

guarding is robbed while you are on duty; (Major) allowing a tomb to be robbed; (Mortal) robbing a tomb.

Signature Power: *Sentry*.

Powers: *Altered senses, barrier, glyph, lock (no unlock), wandering senses, warding*

Trappings: Any except necromantic and darkness. Given they are guardians, trappings tend to be low key, so as not to reveal the presence of the cleric to would-be thieves.

It is said by those wise in such matters that Tammuz, then god only of balance and justice, was the first deity to ever die, struck down by Iblis, so starting the God War. The god of chaos hacked Tammuz’s corpse into 14 parts and scattered them across the universe. As Iblis had foresaw, Marqod, Tammuz’s wife, spent the entire God War searching for the dismembered limbs, thus denying the allies her protection and healing magic.

Marqod’s quest was long but ultimately successful. After recovering each part, she placed it in a tomb, over which Inpu, Tammuz’s faithful hound sat watch. When Tammuz was reborn as the god of death, he elevated his hound to status of minor deity, charging it with protecting the earthly remains of the dead.

Faithful humans depict Inpu as either a dog-headed human or an actual dog. Among Faithful cakali he is shown as a mummified jackal. His imagery is found carved into tomb doors and on grave markers, as well as on amulets placed on corpses.

Inpu has no temples, though he is always granted a shrine in Tammuz’s mortuary temples. Shrines, typically an obelisk engraved with prayers to protect the dead and curses designed to deter tomb robbers, stand in most cemeteries. The families of rich citizens often purchase a miniature shrine, placing it in the deceased’s tomb for extra protection.

Priests and paladins are both protectors of the dead. Before the jinn, priests protected the graves of the clergy, while paladins watched over those of the nobles. Today, their duties are less defined, and militancy is the same differentiation. Although undead may be encountered wherever the dead lie, the cult’s first duty is to deter tomb robbers seeking to plunder grave goods.

Despite its best intentions, the cult cannot watch over every tomb within a cemetery. Rich families pay clerics to protect the resting places of their ancestors with alchemical devices (usually *glyph barrier* or *warding charms*) or regular castings of *lock*. Most of these tombs are already protected by traps, but one can never have enough security.

Ceremonies are simple affairs, usually consisting of prayer—the cult has no time for lengthy rituals that distract members from their sacred duty.

Character Guidelines: Clerics are first and foremost sentries and guardians. Notice is essential, as is a good Vigor, so as to be able to stay awake on duty. Stealth can be useful, since it allows the cleric to creep up on thieves and catch them in the act. The Alertness Edge boosts what should already be a decent Notice die, and should be taken during character generation.

SETHEK

Titles: Lord of the Undead, Father of Apophis, Enemy of the Living.

Aspects: Undead.

Affiliations: Iblis.

Symbol: A skeletal hand clutching an eyeball.

Priesthood: Grave Lords (priests); Grave Knights (paladins).

Herald: None.

Holy Days: The first night of the new moon of each season.

Duties: To raise and serve undead.

Sins: (Minor) failure to create an undead at least once a month, harming an Extra undead; (Major) harming or disobeying an intelligent Wild Card undead; (Mortal) slaying an undead.

Signature Power: *Zombie*.

Powers: *Corpse senses, enhance undead, fear, greater zombie, strength of the undead.*

Trappings: Necromantic only.

At the beginning of time the gods decreed that all mortal things would be allotted a finite time of physical existence, a blink of an immortal's eye in which to prove themselves worthy of living alongside the gods in the hereafter. Iblis long railed against this law, for it was his nature to upset the cosmic balance that kept the universe in harmony.

Iblis ordered his minions to explore the far flung corners of the universe, for here he believed existed a means to upset the balance, an ancient secret the gods kept locked away out of fear. One, Sethek, a sly creature of seductive form and smooth words, traveled only as far as Qedeshet's home, for he knew the god of knowledge was wise in all things. Through subtle manipulation, Qedeshet was tricked into revealing the secret of necromancy. As reward, Iblis elevated Sethek to divine status, giving him mastery over the black art.

The cult of Qedeshet naturally denies this, for their patron is also master of divination and prophecy, and would thus would see the end of all plans in his mind's eye. They claim Iblis stole the secret of necromancy from Qedeshet while their god was away seeking new wisdom.

To the Devoted, whose faith has no concept of an evil deity, the art of khem-hekau was made manifest by the Creator as a trap for the impure, for it promises a quick but corrupt road to temporal power and a means of cheating death. The pure know that death is not to be feared, so long as one has led a worthy life.

The clergy of Sethek is utterly misguided. They believe that through loyal service they will be granted the gift of undeath. While it is true most are transformed into undead eventually, it is usually as skeletons and zombies. Only the most worthy are granted status as ever-living mummies or liches.

Priests serve to bolster the ranks of the undead by creating new servants. They favor grave-robbing as means of acquiring suitable materials. Paladins, on the other hand,

lean toward murder. The latter also serve as champions and commanders to powerful undead.

Although the withered pharaohs worship Apophis as a god, many clerics of Sethek actually serve the undead kings, for they are the mightiest of the undead. The pharaohs tolerate the living clerics, but only because they have need of agents beyond Hekata's borders.

Rituals center around human sacrifice and the animation of undead, often in the same ceremony.

Character Guidelines: As servants of death, clerics need a high Spirit score. Leadership Edges can prove very beneficial, for all clergy know *zombie*. Given a little time and sufficient resources, a small army of mindless slaves can be quickly raised.

HAZARDS

Traps and undead are constant dangers, but Hekata has other hazards fatal to living trespassers.

BLACK SAND

Black sand, named for its distinctive color, is highly necromantic. No creature of flesh and blood standing in an area of black sand can spend bennies to Soak or reroll Traits on the Incapacitation Table.

LEECH SAND

Imbued with necromantic energy, leech sand literally sucks the life from living creatures moving through it. Victims feel lethargic, but can find no obvious cause for their weakness. Living creatures must make a Vigor roll each hour while in an area of leech sand or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Death. One level of Fatigue is removed for each hour spent outside the leech sand.

TOMB SAND

Despite the name, tomb sand is rarely found in tombs, at least not in sufficient quantities to be harmful. Tomb sand appears like normal sand, even to spells like *detect arcana*. It is named because it serves as a tomb for skeletons buried beneath the surface.

For each wound a living creature takes while in an area of tomb sand, 1d4 skeletons or skeleton warriors (GM's choice) rise from the desert at the start of the next round and attack. They begin anywhere the GM wishes within 12" of whoever's blood awakened them.

MUMMIES

Mummies are the third most powerful undead servants of Apophis, after the withered pharaohs and liche-wizards. The oldest mummies were awakened by the dread spell of the liche-wizards that laid waste to Hekata. These are known as first generation mummies. These monsters retain their original soul, for the dark ritual used to mummify them bound their spirit to their withered husk.

The second generation awoke in -302, when necromantic energy unexpectedly washed over Hekata. Although powerful, they date from an age before khem-hekau, when mummification was an act of burial, not an attempt at immortality. The souls that animate them are drawn from the Bottomless Pit.

Third generation are those created through the *greater zombie* power. Their bandaged corpses are also inhabited by a dark soul.

MUMMY, FIRST GENERATION

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

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

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Treasure: Rich (under bandages), king's ransom (tomb)

Special Abilities:

- * **Fear:** Seeing a mummy require a Spirit roll.
- * **Shuffling Gait:** Mummies roll a d4 running die.
- * **Slam:** Str.
- * **Susceptible (Fire):** The chemicals used in the preservation process mean mummies take +4 damage from fire.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.

MUMMY, SECOND GENERATION

As above, except for changes noted below.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Treasure: Worthwhile, under bandages

MUMMY, THIRD GENERATION

As above, except for changes noted below.

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

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

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Treasure: Meager, under bandages

OTHER SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities listed in the stats above are common powers to virtually all mummies of their generation. However, not all mummies are created equally.

Most were powerful nobles in life, pharaohs, princes, and lesser nobility. Others were senior military commanders, powerful khem-hekau mages, priests who served before the gods were forsaken, wealthy merchants, and even beloved courtiers. Some retain abilities they had in

FESTIVAL TO TAMMUZ

RELEASE DAY

Varies

Tammuz may be an infallible god of justice, but his clergy are mortals, and thus prone to error. Sometimes the innocent are punished and the guilty allowed to walk free. In order to rectify the cosmic balance, every settlement in which Tammuz receives worshipped holds a Release Day.

The date is set by the local potentate. Usually it coincides with his birthday or the annual celebration of his ascension. Since the ruler chooses the day and all criminals are under his care, Release Day is also seen as a sign of his benevolence.

Suspects currently awaiting trial are hauled into the main public square and paraded before the crowd as their alleged crimes are read out. Once the parade is complete, the citizens call out the name of the prisoner they want freed. Whoever receives the most vocal support is publicly pardoned by the ruler and immediately released.

It is not unusual for fights to break out in the crowd, especially when two prisoners have strong support. If the local ruler is considered unjust, support might go toward a political rival or an assassin accused of plotting against him. Through this simple act, the people show open contempt toward the noble.

life. Others have been bestowed with strange powers by the necromantic energy that washed over Hekata.

To create a mummy, use the template above as a base. Then draw a number of cards to determine the creature's other special abilities. Draw two for a Wild Card mummy, plus one extra card per average Rank of the party the mummy is opposing. For instance, a Wild Card mummy designed to combat a Veteran party would draw a total of five cards. Unless otherwise stated, redraw duplicate entries. Do not shuffle the deck between draws.

Numbered cards, regardless of suit, grant generic special abilities. Royal cards (Jack through Ace) grant abilities determined by their suit. A Joker means the GM can choose any special ability he desires, assign the mummy an Edge (ignoring *all* requirements), give the fiend a Monstrous Ability from the *Savage Worlds* rules, or create a totally unique power.

Note that this system does not allow for the creation of creatures as powerful as the withered pharaohs. Creatures of such power should be individually crafted by the GM, not determined randomly.

NUMBERED

Card	Special Ability
2-3	Mage: The mummy was a magician in life or

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- has learned the art since its awakening. It knows 1d4+1 spells of the GM's choosing, has one Power Edge and d8 arcane skill. If this ability is drawn again, add two spells, one Power Edge, and increase the arcane skill die one step (max. d12+2).
- 4-5 **Better than Normal:** The mummy has an increased attribute. Check the suit. Club: +1 die Smarts; Diamond: +1 die Spirit; Heart: +1 die Strength; and Spade: +1 die Vigor. All attributes are max. d12+2.
- 6 **Aggressive:** +1 die Fighting (max. d12).
- 7-8 **Combat Edge:** The mummy knows one Combat Edge. It ignores all requirements, except when other Edges are required. For instance, a mummy cannot take Improved Sweep unless it already has Sweep.
- 9-10 **Leadership Edge:** The mummy knows one Leadership Edge. It ignores all requirements, except when other Edges are required. For instance, a mummy cannot take Fervor unless it already has Command.

CLUB: PHYSICAL CONDITION

Card	Special Ability
Jack	Skeletal: All that remains of the mummy are bones, scraps of withered flesh, and remnants of its wrappings. Unencumbered by stiff flesh, it has Agility d6, Pace 6, and loses the Shuffling Gait special ability.
Queen	Gooey: The flesh of the mummy, while rotten, remains moist. It loses the Susceptible (Fire) special ability.
King	Dusty: If wounded, the mummy releases a choking cloud of bone and dust. All adjacent air-breathing creatures must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken.
Ace	Rotten: Anyone touched by the mummy, whether he takes damage or not, must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the character has contracted "mummy rot." While infected, wounds can only be cured through natural Healing. A <i>healing</i> spell applied within 10 minutes cures the rot. Victims may make a Vigor roll every week to rid themselves of the rot.

DIAMOND: NATURE

Card	Special Ability
Jack	Burrow (4"): The mummy can burrow through sand. It can make a surprise attack at +2 to attack and damage (+4 with a raise) by making an opposed Stealth vs. Notice roll.
Queen	Children of the Desert: Some mummies have the ability to summon and control creatures. This requires an action and a

- Spirit roll at -2. If successful, 1d4 swarms of scorpions, insects, or spiders come from the surrounding wilds in 1d6+2 rounds. The swarms are Extras and remain until destroyed. They will not attack the mummy.
- King **Darkness:** The mummy can summon an area of darkness. This works as the *obscure* power, save the mummy uses its Spirit as its arcane skill.
- Ace **Sandstorm:** With a successful Spirit roll, the mummy summons a terrible sandstorm, typified by dark skies and howling wind. The storm reduces visibility (treat as Dark for lighting penalties), extinguishes most normal fires within 1d10 rounds, and only volatile materials have a random chance of igniting from fire-based attacks. Storm conditions inflict a -1 penalty to most actions, due to blindness, difficulty hearing, strong winds, and so on. The GM must decide if other actions are affected.

HEART: MENTAL DOMINATION

Card	Special Ability
Jack	Create Undead: Anyone slain by the mummy has a 50% chance of rising as a zombie in 1d4 rounds.
Queen	Summon Undead: Within Hekata, the mummy may make a Spirit roll at -2 as an action. With success 1d4 skeletons rise from the sands at the start of the next round. A raise summons 2d4 skeletons or 1d4 skeleton warriors (GM's choice) instead.
King	Fear (-2): Anyone seeing the mummy must make a Spirit roll at -2. This replaces the usual Fear special ability.
Ace	Dominate: The mummy can use the <i>puppet</i> power using its Spirit as its arcane skill. It can cast and maintain the power indefinitely and without penalties, but may only affect one target at a time.

SPADE: DEFENSIVE

Card	Special Ability
Jack	Armor (+2): Rock-hard bandages.
Queen	Arcane Resistance: +2 to Trait rolls to resist magic and +2 Armor against damage-causing arcane effects.
King	Regeneration: Most have Slow Regeneration, but a powerful one may have Fast Regeneration. Alternately, the mummy might benefit from Regeneration only while in its sarcophagus. If the mummy has a Susceptibility or Weakness to a certain substance, such as fire or silver, wounds caused by the substance must heal naturally.
Ace	Invulnerability: The mummy is immune to

damage except from a single source, such as fire, gold, star metal, or wood. They can be Shaken by other attacks, but never suffer a wound. The mummy *automatically* has an appropriate Weakness (Specific Substance). See below for details.

WEAKNESSES

Although they are susceptible to fire, are clumsy, and have a shuffling gait that means they are easily outrun, mummies have no other regular flaws one can exploit. However, because each mummy is unique, it has a unique weakness.

Most mummies should have a single Weakness in addition to their flammable nature and slow gait. Shuffle the deck, draw a card, and check the results below.

Card	Weakness
2	Brittle: If the mummy rolls a 1 on a Trait roll, regardless of any Wild Die, while performing a physical action, it is automatically Shaken as a part of it falls off. This occurs after the Wild Die result is handled. Agility Tricks against it that cause a Shaken result are treated as a physical attack.
3	Herbs: The mummy is repelled by medicinal herbs. It suffers a -2 penalty to all actions against a character displaying any herbal remedy. This requires the use of one hand.
4	Highly Flammable: The mummy has Weakness (Fire) instead of Susceptible (Fire).
5	Holy Symbol: A character with a holy symbol (other than Iblis') may keep a mummy at bay by prominently displaying the symbol. This requires the use of one hand. A mummy who wants to attack the victim in melee must beat her in an opposed test of Faith or Spirit (use the highest). A symbol of Tammuz grants a +2 bonus to the bearer.
6	Mirrors: The mummy cannot stand its own reflection. It suffers a -2 penalty to all actions against a character displaying a mirror. This requires the use of one hand.
7	Sunlight: The mummy is burned by Shamash's cleansing rays. It catches fire if any part of their skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that it suffers 2d10 damage per round until it is dust. Armor does not protect.
8	Cats: The mummy is deathly afraid of cats, animals sacred to Tamarni, the discoverer of secrets. It must make a Spirit roll on seeing a cat or be Panicked. Seeing multiple cats may incur a penalty.
9	Specific Substance: Certain mummies are more susceptible (or only susceptible) to magic, fire, silver, cold iron, Maerathril,

FESTIVAL TO TAMMUZ

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Baot Yaus al-Maat Alak Neteru

Remembering the dead is an important part of life. The Faithful hold that while a soul may reach the Afterlife and enter paradise, it requires regular supplication to remain healthy. The cult of Tammuz teaches that if offerings are not made and the deceased's name not spoken, the soul will eventually fade, ceasing to exist altogether.

Remembrance Day is a day of feasting for the dead. The living speak the name of an ancestor, then recite a prayer bestowing their ancestors sides of beef, barrels of beer, loaves of bread, and so on. Each ancestor to receive these gifts must be named and the gifts given him listed individually.

It is also expected the living use the name of as many as ancestors as possible in daily conversation. Thus, instead of saying, "I like this lamp," one might say, "My grandfather, Ahmed ibn-Sallah, life, prosperity, health unto him, would have liked this lamp."

The phrase "life, prosperity, health unto him/her" is the equivalent of saying "may he rest in peace."

	wood, or some other specific substance. Weapons made of these substances inflict +4 damage. Against Invulnerable mummies, such substances inflict wounds as normal without the +4 damage bonus.
10	Magic: The mummy is susceptible to magical attacks. -2 to Trait rolls to resist magic and takes +2 damage from damage-causing arcane effects. Redraw if the mummy has Arcane Resistance.
Jack	Healing Potions: <i>Healing</i> potions thrown at or poured over a mummy inflict 2d6 damage. <i>Greater healing</i> potions cause 2d10 damage. In both cases, the mummy has a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire.
Queen	Immersion: A mummy totally immersed in running water suffers an automatic wound each round.
King	Specific Trapping: The mummy takes double damage from spells with a trapping chosen by the GM (with the exception of necromantic).
Ace	Salt: Salt has long been seen as capable of harming evil creatures. A mummy with this weakness must make a Spirit roll to cross a line of salt. A pound of salt thrown over a mummy causes 2d6 damage and the mummy has a chance of catching fire.
Joker	None: The mummy is blessed—it has no specific Weakness.