

# VILLAIN SPOTLIGHT

# ESHAQ

## The Zealotous

**T**HIS POTENT MUMMY LORD IS A step above other embalmed undead with a rich backstory, adventure hooks, a unique lair, and the zealotous template available for use by other reanimated magic users.

### THE LORD OF THE DELTA

Along the banks of a lush and verdant river delta rests the tomb of an oppressive evil force, a reminder of an earlier age when the river was much larger and more powerful: the lair of Eshaq the Zealotous. For thousands of years an elven civilization called this region home, dedicating themselves to agriculture and self-enlightenment. Maintaining the land on which they thrived bred a pure way of life, their physical labor and the rewards of their work enough to prosper—before Eshaq’s corruptive influence bent them to his will.



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Born to noble blood, quick of wit, highly charismatic, and equipped with a sharp tongue, Eshaq forged relationships and built influence within the community. None suspected that the likable cleric was the prophet of the God of the Eclipsed Sun as he rose through the ranks of society's elite and ultimately he convinced the delta elves that they should no longer be content to work the land themselves—he and his followers sought the labor of short-lived races, forcing them into servitude for the nearly immortal slender folk. Meanwhile this left his peoples to the finer things in life such as discussing esoteric concepts in salons while sipping wine. Gnomes, humans, dwarves, and a variety of other creatures worked the fields in the elves' stead while Eshaq and his disciples revelled in the spoils of their slaves' hard work.

After centuries of oppressive rule the serfs revolted and murdered Eshaq in his sleep. While many of the elves were killed in the uprising a handful escaped, yet with their leader gone and their culture in shambles all seemed lost. His remaining disciples set about embalming the cleric's corpse—their highest honor, a reward fit for a man that spent his lifetime in faithful servitude to the God of the Eclipsed Sun—and to act as his consorts in the life after death, two priests of each gender were also interned in Eshaq's eternal paradise along with the corpses of lesser followers killed during the revolt buried in a mass grave in nearby to continue on as his servants beyond the veil. Centuries have passed since his last disciples died out and his tyrannical rule of the delta region slipped into obscurity, joining the God of the Eclipsed Sun with the forgotten memories of an

uncaring world—until now. The potent spellcaster has been pressed into service by his deity once more, banished to walk the mortal realm.

Enraged by the betrayals that allowed for a slave revolt, Eshaq is filled with a loathing and contempt so profound it exceeds anything that he ever felt in life. The mummy lord decimates any elves he can find. No longer content to proselytize for the God of the Eclipsed Sun, he takes perverse pleasure in slaughtering his former kin to prevent them from worshipping his deity. The only living humanoids that Eshaq won't kill on sight are humans: not because he has any love for the common man—he has only contempt for them—but because they are one of the shortest-lived of the races, enduring primitive squalor and unworthy of death (a release from the pathetic misery of their empty and meaningless lives).

## Hooks

- Folklore has made a powerful lord aware of the river delta region's history and she is eager to see if the area can be resettled, hiring the party to thoroughly investigate the matter.
- The PCs have been commissioned by a respected sage to research the disappearance of adventuring parties that were last seen on their way into the river delta.
- A small settlement has been established as an outpost for a major trading hub but it's been beleaguered by bands of attacking undead. Wealthy merchants have hired the party to locate the source of these assaults and bring them to a close.
- All the residents of a newly constructed village have gone missing—the nobles and traders with interests in the settlement have tasked the adventurers with finding out where they have gone and why.
- A small city in the delta region has been nearly razed to the ground and the few survivors that escaped tell wild stories about monstrosities wrapped in bandages, the powerful magic they wield sucking the very life out of their victims.

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## Eshaq the Zealotous

Medium undead (zealotous), lawful evil

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 128 (15d8+60)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** CON +10, INT +6, WIS +10, CHA +9

**Skills** History +6, Religion +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** radiant

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 14

**Languages** Common, Elven

**Challenge** 17 (18,000 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** Eshaq has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Rejuvenation.** Once destroyed Eshaq gains a new body in 24 hours if his heart is intact, regaining all of his hit points and becoming active again. His new body appears within 5 feet of his heart.

**Spellcasting.** Eshaq is a 13th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 19, +10 to hit with spell attacks). Eshaq has the following cleric spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

**1st level (4 slots):** *command, guiding bolt, shield of faith*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *hold person, silence, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**4th level (3 slots):** *divination, guardian of faith*

**5th level (2 slots):** *contagion, geas*

**6th level (1 slot):** *harm*

**7th level (1 slot):** *symbol*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Eshaq can use his Dreadful Glare and make one attack with his rotting fist.

**Rotting Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6+4) bludgeoning damage plus 24 (7d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with mummy rot. The cursed target can't regain hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases

by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse. If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies, and its body turns to dust. The curse lasts until removed by the remove curse spell or other magic.

**Dreadful Glare.** Eshaq targets one creature he can see within 60 feet. If the target can see Eshaq, it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or become frightened until the end of Eshaq's next turn. If the target fails the saving throw by 5 or more, it is also paralyzed for the same duration. A target that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to the Dreadful Glare of all mummies, mummy lords, and Eshaq for the next 24 hours.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Eshaq can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Eshaq regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

- ♦ **Attack.** Eshaq makes one attack with his rotting fist or uses his Dreadful Glare.
- ♦ **Blinding Dust.** Blinding dust and sand swirls magically around Eshaq. Each creature within 5 feet of Eshaq must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of the creature's next turn.
- ♦ **Swarm of Locusts.** Eshaq exhales a swarm of locusts. The swarm spreads around corners. Creatures within 60 feet of Eshaq take a -1 penalty to AC until the end of Eshaq's next turn.
- ♦ **Blasphemous Word (Costs 2 Actions).** Eshaq utters a blasphemous word. Each non-undead creature within 10 feet of Eshaq that can hear the magical utterance must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Eshaq's next turn.
- ♦ **Channel Negative Energy (Costs 2 Actions).** Eshaq magically unleashes negative energy. Creatures within 60 feet of Eshaq, including ones behind barriers and around corners, can't regain hit points until the end of Eshaq's next turn.
- ♦ **Whirlwind of Sand (Costs 2 Actions).** Eshaq magically transforms into a whirlwind of sand, moves up to 60 feet, and reverts to his normal form. While in whirlwind form, Eshaq is immune to all damage, and cannot be grappled, petrified, knocked prone, restrained, or stunned. Equipment worn or carried by Eshaq remains in his possession.



## LAIR

Carved into the side of a sheer pink sandstone cliff awaits Eshaq's lair. The GM should include whatever traps the adventurers may not be expecting in the passages leading inside (collapsing roof, falling net, fire-breathing statues, pits, poison darts, rolling boulders, and possibly even a *sphere of annihilation*), increasing the DCs accordingly (minimum DC 18 to notice, disable, or avoid) and when appropriate increasing the damage a trap deals (minimum 20).

Deep within the cavernous structure rests an antechamber that once served as the altar for the God of the Eclipsed Sun, now the dais for Eshaq's sarcophagus. His stone coffin is covered with minerals so dark they pull the light out of the air—it's only visible because it is the blackest spot in any room. When inspected closely it's clear that care was taken to carve his likeness into the lid of his final resting place, markedly different from the four sarcophagi (one in each corner of the chamber containing Eshaq's quartet of consorts). One of the largest areas in the lair is a cavern located towards the entrance that contains the mass grave for the serfs killed during the revolt. A successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the sarcophagus reveals a hidden compartment containing Eshaq's heart.

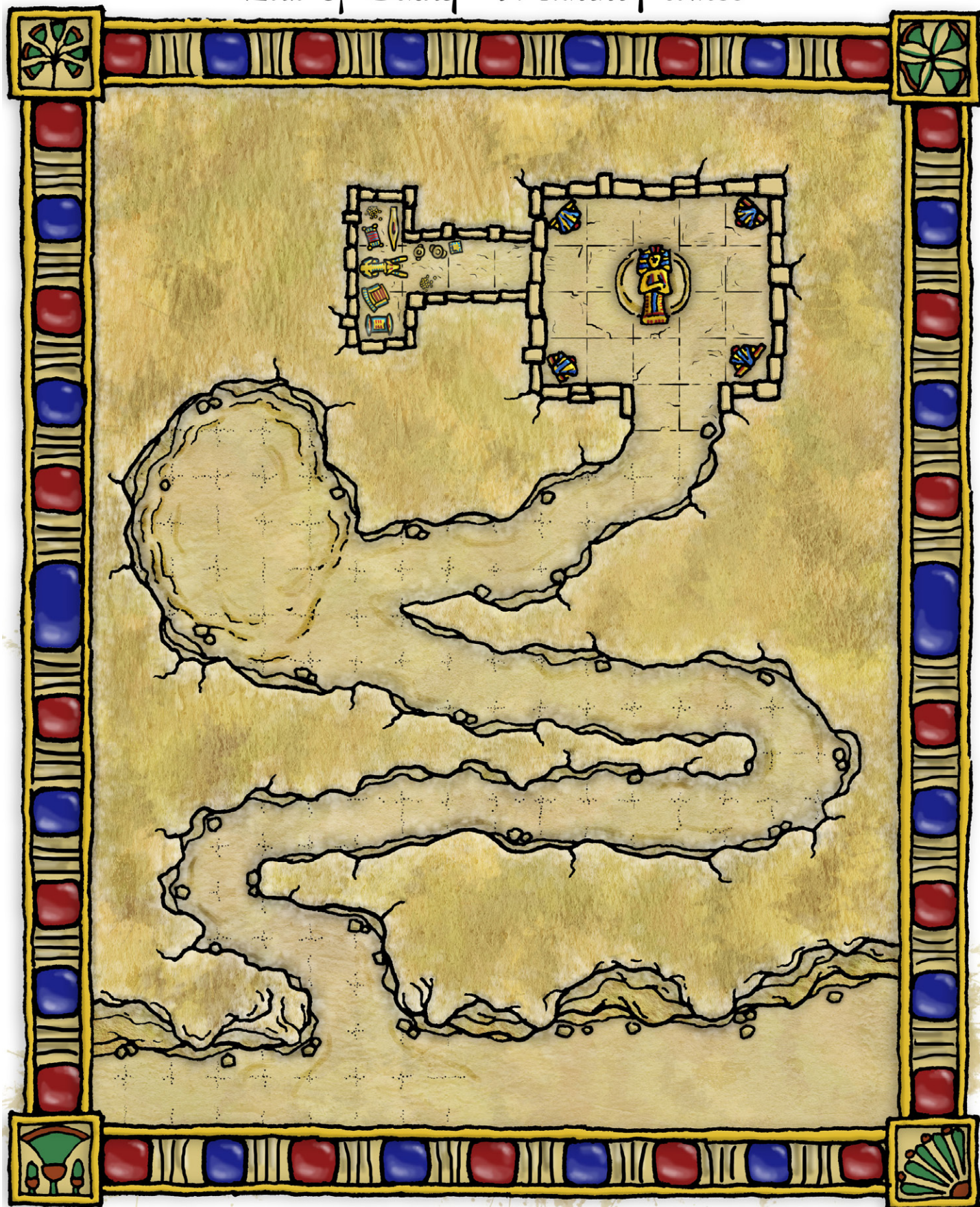
Eshaq has a Challenge Rating of 18 when encountered in his lair.

## LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing all initiative ties), Eshaq can use one of his lair action options. He can't do so while incapacitated or otherwise unable to take actions. If surprised, Eshaq can't use one until after his first turn in the combat, and cannot repeat the use of a lair action the round after it has been used.

- ♦ Rocks fall from a 10-foot-by-10-foot section of the roof chosen by Eshaq. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 3 (1d6) damage and be knocked prone.
- ♦ A noxious gas fills a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point of Eshaq's choice. When the cloud appears, each creature within its area must make DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is poisoned for 1d4 rounds.
- ♦ A 10-foot-by-10-foot section of floor chosen by Eshaq turns into a pit of quicksand 3-feet deep. When the quicksand appears, each creature within its area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and are restrained for 1d4 rounds on a failed save.
- ♦ A cloud of scarabs swarm in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point of Eshaq's choice. When the scarabs appear, each creature within its area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. A creature takes 10 (3d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

# Lair of Eshaq - Mummy Prince



## Zealous Undead

Zealous undead originate from all walks of life—deacons, shamans, monks—and the only common thread between them is their faith. Life after death has made them even more religiously fanatical, some so maddened by their zeal that their piety transforms into blasphemy and sacrilege.

### Zealous Template

Any undead capable of casting spells can become a zealous undead. It keeps its statistics, except as follows.

**Challenge & Proficiency Bonus.** Recalculate the creature's challenge rating and proficiency bonus after you apply the template.

**Armor Class.** The zealous undead's AC increases by 1.

**Hit Dice.** The zealous undead gains 2 hit dice and increases its hit points by an amount equal to two hit dice plus double its Constitution modifier (minimum 0).

**Ability Score Increase.** The zealous undead's Strength increases by 2 and its Constitution increases by 1.

**Damage Resistances.** The zealous undead gains resistance to radiant damage. If the base creature has vulnerability to radiant damage, it loses vulnerability to radiant damage instead.

**Damage Immunities.** The zealous undead gains immunity to necrotic damage.

**Condition Immunities.** The zealous undead gains immunity to the charmed condition.

**Spells.** The zealous undead gains one spell slot of a level higher than their highest spell slot (maximum 9th level). This spell slot must be used on a cleric spell. In addition, the zealous undead's spell save DC increases by 1.

**Zealous Attacks.** The zealous undead's melee weapon attacks deal an extra 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

**New Action: Swarm of Vermin.** The zealous undead exhales a swarm of vermin (locusts, flies, or whatever insects are most appropriate). The swarm spreads around corners. Creatures within 60 feet of the zealous undead take a -1 penalty to AC until the end of the zealous undead's next turn. 