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9451

# Ravenloft<sup>®</sup>

Official Game Accessory



## Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead





# VAN RICHTEN'S GUIDE TO THE ANCIENT DEAD

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# INTRODUCTION

*he long habit of living  
Indisposeth us for dying.*

—Sir Thomas Browne

*When green buds hang in the  
elm like dust,  
And sprinkle the lime like rain,  
Forth I wander, forth I must  
And drink of life again.*

—A.E. Housman

Poets and philosophers of every age and nation have noted that life is an insignificant moment when compared with the enormity of death. It is undeniable that death lasts longer than life. For most, this is not distressing; one life span seems to be sufficient. Many others see death not as the end

of life, but as the beginning of an entirely new state of being, often superior to mortal existence. But some few bemoan their short lives, fearing what lies beyond the grave.

There is no question that some spirits endure beyond death, and that an incomplete or tragic life can bind a spirit to the mortal realm after its body has perished. Vampires, liches, and ghosts stalk this land of Mists. They are twisted creatures, pathetic in their torment, but dangerous nonetheless. I know these creatures well, having made it my business to oppose the undead wherever they lurk.

Not entirely by choice have I taken up this unending quest. Unending it truly is, for the wickedness that permits some dead to mock and torment the living is eternal. Just as the procession of day and night will continue long after I am dust, so will the dead continue to rise from their graves after I am gone.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Dr. Rudolph van Richten, sometime purveyor of herbs and medicines, full-time hunter of the undead. Once, I lived a mundane life as a physician, husband, and father. Had tragedy not

struck, I should have spent all my days in these happy pursuits. But a vampire, abetted by human agents, took from me my son, and then my wife. Ironic, that like the creatures I hunt, I too was transformed—reborn—through violence and tragedy.

This book, in a sense, reflects what separates me from my undead enemies, for I have embraced what is holy. There always will be a corner of my spirit that grieves for my wife and child, but that recess is bright. It is filled with warm memories, recollections of shared triumphs, and all the joys of enduring love.

I do not brood on what I have lost, nor do I begrudge others their happiness. Rather, I strive to preserve those who cannot otherwise prevail in the face of evil. My own grief is less important than the struggle to spare others the pain I have felt. That one lifetime is too short to accomplish the lofty goals I have set for myself troubles me not at all. Others will take up my work when I am gone. Even now, folk I have never met share my quest and carry on the fight. After all, I cannot be everywhere at once.

I have written this book and others like it to share my knowledge, for knowledge is the most potent weapon in any struggle. I have no desire to linger in the world after death. Instead, I leave this volume so that others might benefit from my experience after I am gone; it is all the immortality I require.

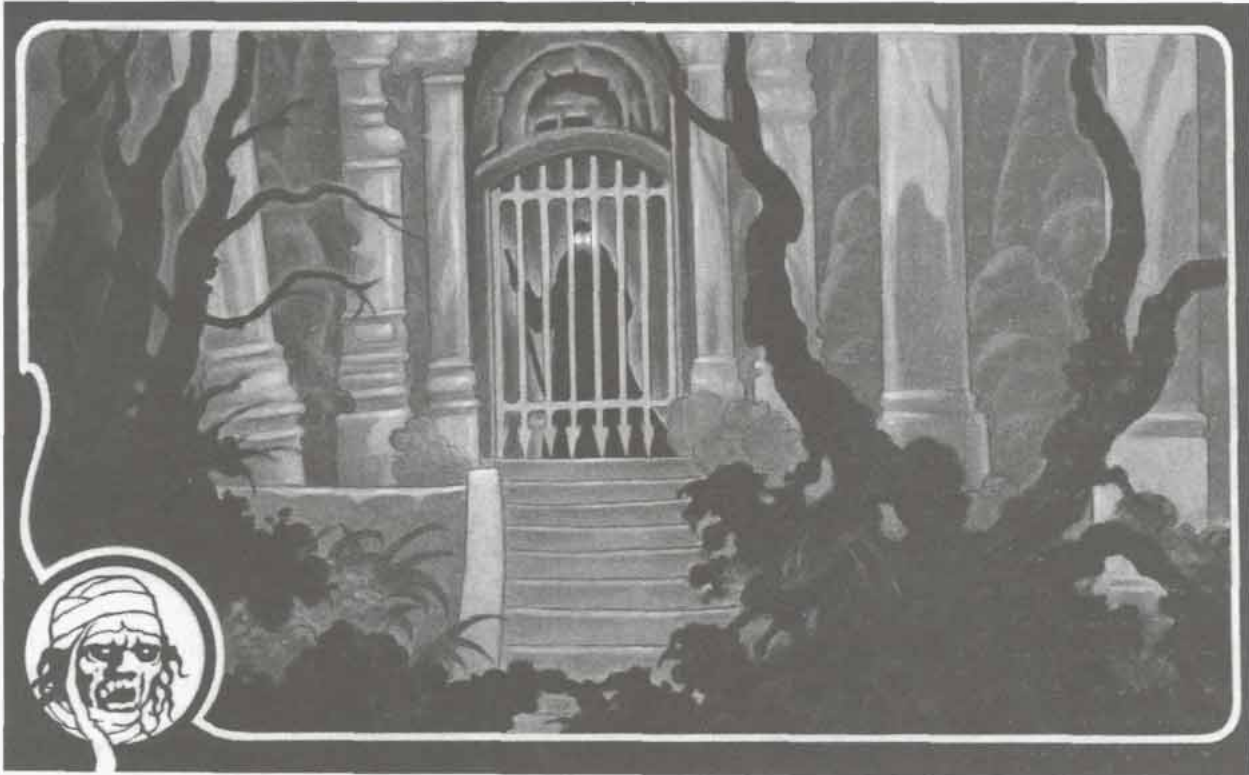
## A Different Kind of Menace

Legends of the living dead abound. This book concerns those corporeal creatures I call the ancient dead, villains more commonly known as mummies. But let me backtrack a moment.

By and large, undead creatures can be neatly divided into two categories: corporeal and incorporeal. The first encompasses dread liches and vampires, creatures whose corrupted spirits dwell within their own dead flesh, as well as their weaker cousins, mindless automatons such as zombies and skeletons. The second includes ghosts, creatures whose force of will grants them



# INTRODUCTION



an existence independent of the body, and a few lesser kin such as spectres. This dual classification is incomplete, but for years the shortcoming escaped my notice.

I was, of course, aware of the lore of mummies before I became an undead hunter. Even after I had taken up my work, however, I regarded mummies as merely a lesser form of corporeal undead. Legends about bandage-wrapped corpses rising from their tombs I could easily dismiss on many grounds: Ignorance of the world's more elaborate burial customs, I reasoned, was the mainspring of mummy legends. Funeral customs in many places include ceremonies that symbolically bestow senses and motion upon the dead, that they may enjoy the afterlife. A simple misunderstanding of these rituals, and an occasional incident involving genuine necromantic magic, would be enough (I thought) to start many tales circulating among superstitious folk. The truth is not so simple.

## The Priest of the Tor

Some years ago, my comrade Shauten the wizard and I heard rumors of undead mañauders in eastern Darkon, and we decided to consult a former companion of ours in Nevuchar Springs about the veracity of the reports. Along the way, we visited several uncharted villages and questioned the locals about the tale. We discovered very little in the way of hard evidence until we entered a picturesque little hamlet not far from the banks of the Vuchar. Tidy cottages lined a dusty main street, which gave way to a track that wound through fields bursting with ripening crops. But there were no people.

Our search of the deserted village revealed signs of violence everywhere, but neither survivors nor bodies. The lack of corpses seemed ominous, and soon our fears were realized. As we studied the tangle of footprints



## INTRODUCTION

left by the hapless villagers and their attackers, a quartet of ragged zombies emerged from the fields and attacked. Two monsters were foul and decrepit, and must have been in a state of undeath for months. The remaining pair, however, were fresh and clad in the tattered remains of farmer's garb. We no longer had any doubts about the villagers' fate.

Shauten quickly dispatched the zombies with a spell, and we had little difficulty tracking them through the trampled grain. We knew we were taking a risk, as the village was large enough to produce a veritable army of zombies. Nevertheless, I desired to rescue the living captives—if there were any—and Shauten too seemed eager to continue our investigation.

The trail through the grain led us to a huge cemetery, ancient beyond belief. A sprawling expanse of headstones skirted mausoleums carved into a rocky hillside. Gaunt figures skulked among the monuments, keeping furtive watch on us. Our attention was immediately drawn to a particularly large hillside tomb with a classical facade and a massive iron gate. When we approached this edifice, the figures, which turned out to be ghouls, attacked. Shauten's spells prevailed once again, and we set about examining the gate.

The portal was shut fast, and I immediately applied myself to opening the lock, in perfect working order despite the tomb's great age. A cry from Shauten cut my efforts short. Several more tombs had opened and a horde of zombies shuffled out. Further, I began to discern motion within the inky blackness that filled the crypt beyond the gate. Shauten and I beat a hasty retreat.

Our flight took us directly to Nevuchar Springs, where we quickly organized a proper expedition to locate and eradicate whatever creature held sway over the undead in the cemetery. Upon our return, we set about a systematic exploration of the hillside and soon came face to face with our adversary.

What some might have taken for luck, but I recognized as adroit maneuvering on our foes'

part, brought wave after wave of zombies, sometimes accompanied by ghouls, to attack us at inconvenient times during our exploration. Clearly, a keen tactical mind had been observing our movements and chose to advance when we were most vulnerable.

Through our own shrewd observations, my companions and I deduced where our unseen opponent must be standing, and we pressed forward to a final confrontation. Our foe proved to be a spellcaster whose skeletal body was adorned with several amulets, and clothed in a flowing robe embroidered with priestly symbols of an unholy nature. We concluded that we faced a clerical lich.

Through sheer force, and Shauten's spells, we won through. We lost no time in entering the tomb, where we found a wealth of treasures and artifacts of great antiquity. We promptly assembled every object we thought could be a lich's phylactery and destroyed them all. Afterward, we kept a strict vigil over the tomb, as we could not be sure we had prevailed.

To our dismay, the "lich" reappeared within a week. Its fury knew no bounds. Only after much fighting and travail did I discern our foe was no lich, but a wholly different creature!

The most valuable clue that led to my discovery was the simple fact that the monster had returned from destruction in exactly the same physical form as we had originally seen it. Clearly, the creature's spirit had not issued from some still-hidden vessel to usurp another body. Yet our foe reappeared to menace us again and again.

If not a lich, what was our foe? It was the creature I had dismissed from my classification system: an *ancient dead*. Not until we had specially crafted a mace, based on the symbols I deciphered from the creature's robe, were we able to inflict a final death upon the monster.

In the years since, I have fought the ancient dead in many guises. I use the term "ancient dead" throughout this work; for all practical purposes, it is interchangeable with "mummy," and I use it to remind the reader that these creatures come in many forms.



# 1: NECROLOGY



*hosts? No! You don't call anything a ghost that you can take in your hands and look at in broad daylight, and that rattles when you shake it. Do you now?*

—F. Marion Crawford

Most of the ancient dead were once living, breathing people who have defied death to walk again among the living—as

mummies. Their tortured spirits remain bound to now-lifeless bodies.

I have infrequently encountered or discovered doomed spirits who have been compelled to become ancient dead through no fault of their own. Most of them, however, are not innocent victims of powers beyond their control.

After years of research and interviews with eyewitnesses who have encountered the unquiet dead (including two interviews conducted magically *with the dead*), I have concluded that some spirits pass into death with a predilection for returning as mummies. The common factor among these cases seems to be a fascination with, and desire for, the trappings of the mortal world. This emphasis makes the ancient dead most closely akin to ghosts, at least in psychological terms.

There is, of course, one explicit difference between ghosts and the ancient dead: The latter are fully corporeal and the former are not. In my work on ghosts, I described one class of spirits that possessed solid form. Are these spirits ancient dead? No. A corporeal ghost creates a body for itself through force of will or

supernatural power. Such is not the case with the ancient dead; their spirits actually re-occupy the bodies they possessed in life. If one searches diligently enough, one often can locate a corporeal ghost's mortal remains, which might prove advantageous in combating the spirit. There is no need for a search in the case of an ancient dead—the creature's mortal shell is immediately present.

Indeed, because the ancient dead are fully corporeal, any discussion of them invites comparisons with the other corporeal undead, namely vampires and liches.

Outwardly, most mummies strongly resemble liches. Both creatures tend to have withered or skeletal bodies, and both share an intense desire to destroy or manipulate the living. If one is unfortunate enough, as my companions and I were, to encounter a mummy that has retained those spellcasting abilities it had in life, it might be next-to-impossible to know what manner of creature one is facing until it is too late. Such was nearly the case with my group.

There are five important distinctions between liches and spell-casting ancient dead:

**1) Transformation:** A lich initiates and completes the process that transforms it from living being to undead. While the prospective lich still lives, it begins an elaborate, dangerous, and expensive ritual in which it is the principal, if not the only, player.

The ancient dead are created through a process in which the subject is only a passive participant. Though some individuals arrange to return from the dead as mummies, they must depend upon others to carry out their wishes. Planned or otherwise, the process can truly begin only after the subject dies. The first step is embalming the corpse. A mummy can be created spontaneously through natural preservation of a body and the spirit's own force of will. Even then, some external event triggers the mummy's return.



**2) Phylactery:** Every lich possesses a phylactery that houses its spirit. The location and destruction of this vessel must be the focus of any effort to destroy a lich.

Some ancient dead creatures possess items similar to phylacteries. These sorts of items do not house the creature's spirit—that resides in the creature's body—but they are the keystone of that creature's existence. Not all ancient dead have key items, however. Some mummies can be physically destroyed by a direct assault on their bodies (though this is never a simple undertaking). Other mummies cannot be destroyed, but can be laid to rest under the right circumstances.

**3) Maintenance:** Liches require periodic rituals of maintenance to sustain their unives.

Most ancient dead can exist indefinitely with no special efforts. A few require small amounts of herbs or other rare substances to maintain their powers; still others require some form of veneration from mortals. No mummy, however, risks destruction if this dependence isn't satisfied; it merely suffers a temporary ability loss.

**4) Increasing power:** Liches continue to accumulate more power and knowledge throughout their existences.

The full extent of a mummy's powers is set when it is created, although a very few mummies receive their powers slowly over time. While the latter type, like a lich, becomes more powerful, it is not gaining new abilities; instead, it is overcoming limitations that keep it from using the widest array of the powers it has.

**5) Departure:** A lich eventually discards its physical form and departs the mortal realm to explore other modes of existence.

Barring outright destruction, the ancient dead are inexorably bound to the mortal world. Surely no creature can exist forever, and there must be some point at which a

mummy's body is forced to succumb to the ravages of time and simply falls apart. I confess that I have no idea how long this process takes. It would seem that human empires can rise, fall, and crumble to windblown dust before a mummy finally disintegrates from age.

The ancient dead are similar to vampires in that both sorts of creatures are destined either to remain in the mortal world or perish. In addition, I have documented several mummies that exhibit powers similar to those of vampires. These powers include: flight, the ability to charm their victims, shapechanging, and animal summoning. This, however, is where the similarities end.

Unlike vampires, the ancient dead have no need to feed upon the living. Often less fearsome in battle than vampires, mummies also have few or none of the typical vampire's weaknesses. Ancient dead are generally unaffected by garlic or mirrors, for example. As with ghosts, however, some mummies have aversions to objects or substances. These articles are linked to the mummy's origins.

The ancient dead share a few characteristics with other undead: They have no need for food, air, or sleep, since their bodies are lifeless, so they are immune to all forms of poison and paralyzation. Likewise, they are immune to enchantments that produce sleep, charm, or hold effects.

## The Planar Connection

**T**he ancient dead are unique among the undead in that they appear to have a positive-energy component. This does not mean the ancient dead are good—far from it. Rather, they have at their disposal an alien power that is disruptive and inimical to life. It is through this positive connection that the ancient dead animate and maintain their corporeal bodies.

Positive energy might also be the source of the ancient dead's most dreaded attack,



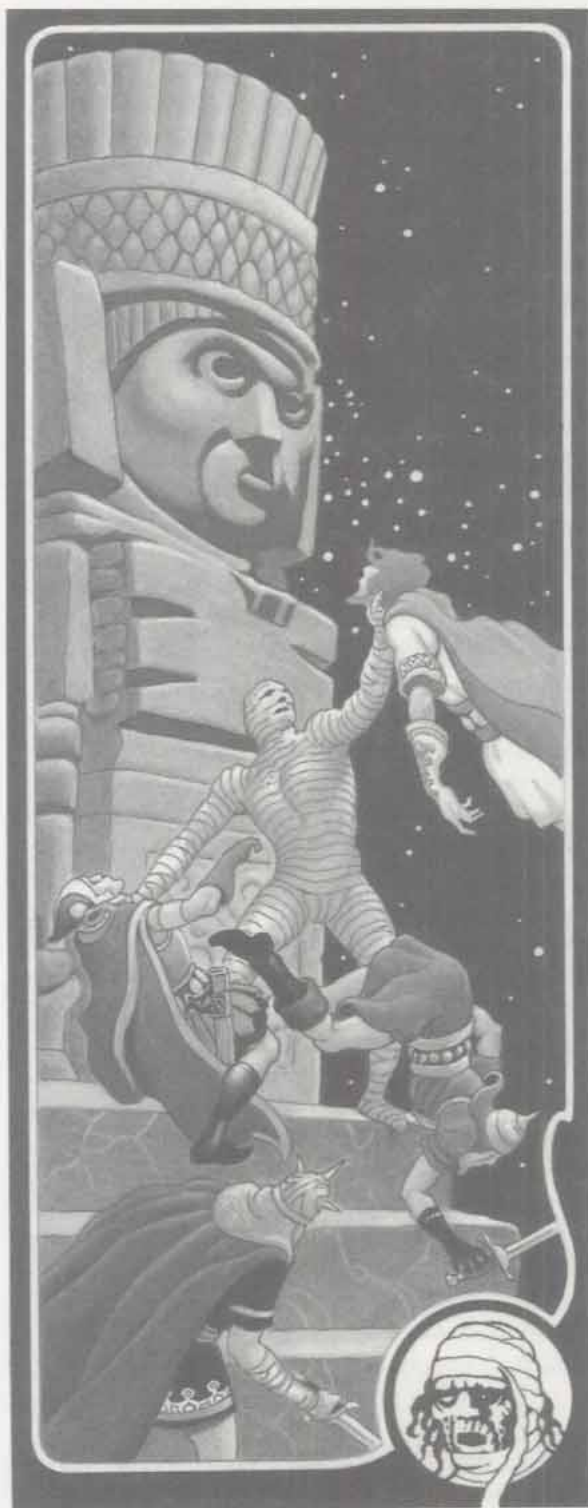
# 1: NECROLOGY

mummy rot. This appalling disease is always fatal, and it defies all mundane efforts to cure it. Only magical intervention can alter its course. Perhaps a mummy, when it strikes, transfers a portion of its positive energy to a victim. It might be a caustic effect of such energy that makes a victim's flesh rot away. The energy's disruptive effects on the body might also explain why a mummy's victims do not heal properly, and why they cannot benefit from healing magic while afflicted with the rot.

The theory of positive energy is also helpful in explaining three other powers every ancient dead creature possesses to some degree: rejuvenation, invulnerability, and fear. As I explained in my work on ghosts, rejuvenation is the power to recreate portions of the body that have been destroyed; its effect is similar to a vampire's regeneration power. Regeneration, however, involves the accelerated healing of wounds, whereas rejuvenation reconstructs the creature's whole body. Clearly, a mummy must draw on a supernatural source of matter and energy to accomplish such a feat.

All mummies are resistant to weapons, to one degree or another. A mummy's strangely preserved tissues are nearly impervious to physical harm, and only enchanted or specially created weapons can affect them. Even then, physical blows are never as effective against a mummy as one might expect. Ancient dead are similarly impervious to some energy attacks. Most often they are unaffected by cold, but some can shrug off other forms of energy as well. Worse, a few can resist several kinds of energy. I suspect this resistance stems from a supernatural reinforcement of the body.

All mummies inspire some form of fear or dread in the mortals who encounter them. This fear can go beyond simply inducing opponents to flee. Victims can be so overcome with dread that they are unable to act. My studies suggest that mummies project an aura of power that overcomes and disables a living person's psyche. This aura is constant and it seems to stem from an inexhaustible source of energy.





Readers should not over-hastily conclude any creature that does not project an aura of palpable fear is not a member of the ancient dead. Many high-ranked mummies have the ability to halt or even delay the effects of their powers, and some mummies inspire fear by their gaze, voice, or gesture. I once encountered a mummy which could inspire fear in an area of its own choosing.

*Belinderissa and I descended the grand stair and entered a narrow vault. Behind us, I heard soft footfalls as the rest of the group followed. I was anxious to decipher a lengthy runic inscription on the walls of the vault, and bade Belinderissa to hold her torch higher as we moved into the chamber.*

*Before I could study the runes, a section of the wall slid open with a stony whisper. A handsome youth clad only in a white linen loincloth and conical headdress stood before us. He smiled and made an elaborate bow, his hand describing circles in the air with a double flourish.*

*"Holy water, Claudia," I called to my assistant as I raised my silver cross to ward off the creature. As I spoke, Belinderissa aimed a vicious swipe at the youth's neck and struck a blow that should have separated the creature's head from his shoulders. Instead, there was a dull thud, as the sword failed to bite. The impact left behind only a dry gash.*

*"Quickly, Claudia," I commanded, but still the holy water was not forthcoming. Turning away from the beast, I beheld the remainder of my party rooted in place on the stairs, motionless except for a communal nervous quiver. My companions looked for all the world like a stand of leafless trees trembling in an autumn wind. "I fear you must distract our young foe a while longer, Belinderissa," I said as I fumbled with Claudia's haversack.*

—from the private journal of Dr. Van Richten

Since that incident I always have carried my own holy water.

## The First Ancient Dead

**H**ow did the ancient dead first come to haunt the world? I have uncovered very little scholarly debate on this subject. It seems that ancient dead are so elusive that they have escaped the notice of scholars who are not as dedicated to cataloguing and defeating undead menaces as I. Indisputably, the fact that most ancient dead easily can be misidentified as other sorts of creatures has contributed to this ignorance.

When confronted with the question of the origins of ancient dead, most sages and mediums are unable to give any credible answer at all. A few priests, adventurers, and delvers into forbidden lore speculate that those rituals and processes used to create an ancient dead were developed after some long-ago theorist witnessed a spontaneous occurrence. One of my colleagues, Deved de Weise of Il Aluk, in Darkon, has offered a succinct explanation of the reasoning behind this theory:

*... as to the probable origins of the creatures you call ancient dead, you [Van Richten] must concede that history is full of incidents involving the return of the dead to the world of the living. Here in Darkon, as you know, the rising of the dead is ingrained in local legend.*

*If, as you seem to have documented, departed spirits can return to their preserved bodies through force of will, then it must have been inevitable that some priest, obsessed with death and hungering for an extended life (or desperate to grant such a "gift" to a demanding liege) must have come upon an account of such an incident, just as you have, or actually witnessed the event.*

*Armed with this knowledge, the priest would need only the proper research materials and sufficient time to recreate the event. . . .*

—from the letters of Dr. Rudolph van Richten

Because I have uncovered conclusive proof that the ancient dead can rise unassisted, I find it



# I: NECROLOGY

hard to contradict de Weise's reasoning and conclusion. There is a more sinister theory about the origins of the ancient dead, however, to which I must attach greater verisimilitude because it is derived from first-hand knowledge. It comes from the journal of De'rah, a wandering priestess and a gifted medium. This fair lady claims to have been only a visitor to this land of Mists, and in any event she has disappeared utterly. Before departing on her final journey away from these lands, she entrusted a copy of her journal to a wandering Vistana, who delivered it to me. The fact that lady De'rah could induce any Vistana to serve as a reliable messenger only increases my admiration for her abilities:

*Once the mummy lay quietly in its coffin again, we sought to discover some method of putting it to rest permanently. While my companions set about trying to decipher the numerous cartouches and hieroglyphs on the tomb's walls, I fingered my enchanted prayer beads and chanted a [divination] spell. Soon, I was conversing with the creature:*

**Q:** *Huseh Kah, why do you walk among the living?*

**A:** *Because of the curse of Anhktepot. . . .*

**Q:** *Who is Anhktepot?*

**A:** *The first of my kind. . . .*

—from the journal of De'rah

De'rah was able to pose no less than half a dozen questions to Huseh Kah, but I have included only the two most pertinent here. De'rah concludes that ancient dead creatures did not walk the land until a being called Anhktepot returned from death.

Unfortunately, De'rah and I parted ways before her encounter with Huseh Kah's mummy, and I could not share what I knew of Anhktepot with her.

I first heard the legend of Anhktepot during a visit to the land of Har'Akir, many years ago. According to Har'Akiri folktales, Anhktepot was

an ancient king or pharaoh. He became so fond of ruling that he could not bear to think of his reign ending, even in death. He bent all his will toward cheating death and returning to his throne. When he finally died (murdered, some say), his burial was accompanied by a lavish ceremony and the ritual deaths of all his most valuable advisors. If Anhktepot does still walk the dunes of his arid country, he has truly gotten his wish.

If Huseh Kah was correct in his belief that Anhktepot is the progenitor for all the ancient dead, then it appears that, in seeking his own immortality, Anhktepot loosed an entirely new evil into the land.

## DM Notes

### The Ancient Dead Defined

As a game term, "ancient dead" refers to a class of corporeal undead creatures; the bandaged-wrapped mummy is a familiar example. To qualify as an ancient dead, a creature must meet the following criteria:

- ❖ The creature must have died.
- ❖ The creature's body must have been preserved in some way.
- ❖ The creature's spirit must now occupy the body that housed it in life.
- ❖ The creature must derive its powers from a connection with the Positive Energy Plane.

True ancient dead creatures possess the following powers to one degree or another: *rejuvenation, fear, invulnerability, and disease*. These powers are derived from the creature's connection to the Positive Energy Plane, and they are fully described in Chapters III and IV.

Corporeal undead such as ghouls and ghosts lack a connection to the Positive Energy Plane, and do not qualify as ancient dead.



## II: TYPES OF MUMMIES



*ut tell  
Why thy canoniz'd bones,  
hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why  
the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly  
interr'd,  
Hath op'd his ponderous and  
marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may  
this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in  
complete steel,  
Revisits thus the glimpses of the  
moon,  
Making night hideous; and we  
fools of nature  
So horribly to shake our  
disposition  
With thoughts beyond the  
reaches of our souls?*

—Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

The ancient dead are enigmatic creatures that often are hard to identify and thus are hard to combat. In many cases, their powers are similar to those of other undead menaces, though their vulnerabilities are vastly different. The hunt for a mummy is often fraught with unexpected perils, seemingly inexplicable mysteries, and a thousand other frustrations—some trivial, some deadly.

In this book I have compiled all I have learned about the ancient dead. Alas, this work is far from complete. My own knowledge is extensive; I have tread where no desk-bound scholar has ventured, and I have devoted myself to studying the walking dead with a devotion no priest or wizard, his head cluttered with rituals and spells, could match. Nevertheless, the supernatural holds more secrets than one man could ever assimilate, even if he had a dozen lifetimes to dedicate to the endeavor. Nor had I the luxury of steadily accumulating immutable truths; all too often new evidence has caused me to revise my findings, and occasionally to abandon even my

most deeply held convictions. Fortunately, I am not prone to despair.

In this chapter I hope to acquaint the reader with certain terms and concepts which are vital to understanding the ancient dead. The material presented here provides a framework for all that follows, and the reader is advised not to treat it lightly.

I have identified five broad categories that I find useful when discussing and classifying the ancient dead. These are *power rank*, *physical origin*, *psychological origin*, *form*, and *state of preservation*.

### Power Rank

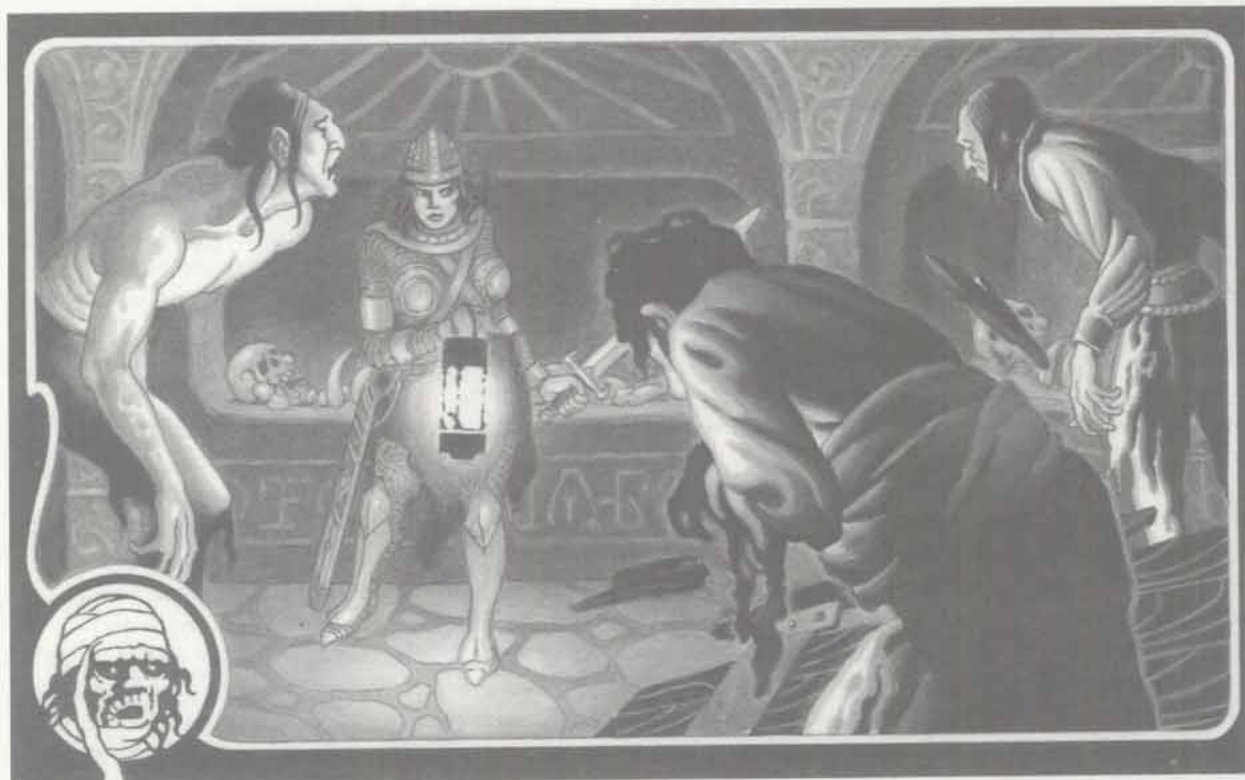
**T**he first and most important category by which I classify the ancient dead is their level of power, which I call their *rank*. Every mummy has a rank, regardless of the other attributes it may display. Readers familiar with my previous works know that I have developed similar systems for describing vampires and ghosts. A mummy's rank is similar to a vampire's age or a ghost's magnitude—the higher the rank, the more powerful the mummy.

I must warn the reader that the values of each rank category are neither absolute nor universal. A mummy of the first rank, for example, might exhibit some abilities of a higher rank, even though its general level of power is relatively weak. Use the guidelines below to your best advantage, but never take anything for granted.

As noted in the previous chapter, a mummy's powers are set, but not necessarily fixed, at the moment of its creation. The chief factors that determine the mummy's rank are the strength of its attachment to the mortal world, the deceased's emotional state at the time of death, the intricacy of the ritual used to create the mummy, and the opulence of the mummy's tomb. In some cases, other factors can increase a mummy's rank. These include the power of the creature or creatures creating the mummy, and the amount of respect, fear, or veneration a



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mummy receives from the living. The legend of the aforementioned Anhktepot of Har'Akir is a case in point.

If the tales are true, a desire to cheat death dominated Anhktepot's thoughts during life. Furthermore, as a pharaoh, Anhktepot could indulge in his obsession to a degree unimaginable for a common man. He had the resources of a nation at his disposal, and he used them. Anhktepot commanded for himself embalming and funeral rites on a grand scale, and an elaborate tomb to match.

Long after his death, this ruler still inspires fear among the people of Har'Akir. Anhktepot is an eternal bogey man that haunts their dreams. If Anhktepot still haunts the sandy deserts of Har'Akir, he must be formidable, indeed. Likewise, any mummy created by the hand of Anhktepot would be a more fearsome creature than it might have been if it had been created under more typical circumstances.

### First Rank

Ancient dead of the first rank are created spontaneously, with little or no pomp and circumstance. Although they possess potentially dangerous powers, they are not particularly formidable. A first-rank mummy usually can be annulled simply by destroying its physical form. This is seldom a daunting task for an experienced undead-hunting group.

I never have knowingly faced an ancient dead creature of this inferior rank. I make this claim not out of arrogance, but to illustrate just how difficult identification of the ancient dead can be; in retrospect, I am certain I must have battled these creatures at least once.

During our quest to defeat the lich known as the *Phantom's Bane*, described elsewhere, my companions and I suffered numerous assaults by livid, shambling creatures which we took to be some form of greater zombie, for they possessed



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a modicum of intelligence and proved to be disturbingly agile in combat. We never did grow accustomed to their gruesome visages, and fear clutched at our hearts whenever they appeared. Gedlan Ironheart, our dwarf fighter, remarked after one battle that the bloodless creatures absorbed more punishment than he expected. Later, we discovered that several wounds the creatures had inflicted on us had begun to fester, and this sepsis proved to be resistant to my herbal remedies. Only a miraculous salve supposedly imported from the Free City of Greyhawk—a metropolis I never have visited—proved at all efficacious.

With the benefit of hindsight, I conclude that these creatures must have been first-rank mummies created by the Phantom's Bane, probably from victims who had succumbed to his paralyzing touch.

Fortunately for my party, these creatures were not so strong as to render our ignorance fatal. Unfortunately for everyone, mummies of the first rank are fairly rare; the majority of the ancient dead are not so weak.

### Second Rank

Ancient dead of the second rank are generally only slightly more dangerous than their lesser kindred. In many cases, second-rank mummies rise spontaneously if the circumstances surrounding their deaths are sufficiently charged with emotion. In most other cases, mummies of this rank are created by evil spellcasters or by other undead. Consequently, they usually function as servants for more powerful beings, and defeating them is often but a single step toward ultimate victory. My first experience with mummies of this rank provides an illustration:

I undertook an extended expedition to gather herbs and found myself wandering among the bleached, dead trunks of trees that litter the base of the Balinoks in eastern Falkovnia. I have often wondered what blight afflicts these trees, which are otherwise so hardy. I had no time, however, to ponder this particular botanical mystery

because a more urgent matter drew my attention.

I came upon a mining camp where some 30 souls labored to wrest treasures from the very bosom of the earth. The camp overseer was a brutish woman of acerbic demeanor and a shovel-like jaw. As with most organizations in Falkovnia, the camp was patterned along military lines. The overseer, Captain Twyla Kahl, also commanded 10 haughty soldiers.

I had intended to pay only a brief courtesy visit to the camp and continue with my herb collecting; however, when the captain learned I was a physician she called upon me to attend a miner who had survived a tunnel collapse.

My patient was dazed and appeared to be suffering from septic wounds that seemed completely impervious to my treatments, and although the patient was in no immediate danger, my instincts told me I was dealing with a terminal case if I could not locate a cure. My suspicions were aroused, and I continued to treat the fellow while the collapsed tunnel was cleared and reinforced.

As the last bit of rubble was removed, the miners discovered an ancient chamber which must have been hewn from the living rock at a time when the mightiest tree in Falkovnia was a mere sapling. Three curving orifices opened near the floor on one side of the chamber. The trapezoidal blocks that framed the openings unpleasantly reminded me of snarling mouths filled with decaying teeth. I thought I detected a charnel stench coming from them as the captain and I surveyed the place.

My worst fears were realized when three hideous creatures emerged from these openings. They were fleshy, but with entirely skeletal heads. The captain and her soldiers had little difficulty hacking them down, but dismemberment seemed merely to inconvenience the creatures, and their sundered bodies kept right on attacking. At my suggestion, the captain bade her troops to fall back into the tunnel; the moment the living had quitted the chamber, I hurled three oil-filled lanterns, all lit, into the cavern. The



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creatures twisted and wailed as the flames consumed them, and soon all was blessedly quiet.

When the smoke and heat from the funeral pyre had dissipated, we made a cautious inspection of the chamber, where we discovered nothing save a few trinkets—and the disturbing fact that the openings in the wall extended back into the mountain for an indeterminate distance. With this discovery, the captain ordered the chamber filled with rubble and directed the miners to seek their ore in another direction. At the time, I felt this was a prudent decision.

For my part, I found myself faced with three more victims of the inexorable rotting disease that the mummies carried. With the captain's reluctant permission, I accompanied the victims to Silbervas in hopes of finding a cure for them. For the soldiers it was an easy task—the military folk in Falkovnia enjoy enough wealth and status to secure for themselves almost any service they need. The hapless miner was not so fortunate, however, and I was forced to accompany him to Mordentshire before finally discovering a sympathetic priest.

Three months later, I was back in the vicinity of the camp, still seeking my herbs. I was dismayed to find the mine tunnel sealed and the camp deserted.

I did not learn anything more about this case until some time later, when I visited a tavern in Lekar and encountered one of the soldiers I had assisted. The tale the soldier related was, of course, secondhand, and many vital details were absent, but it seems the new tunnel dug on Captain Kahl's orders breached a second ancient chamber. This new area was huge, and it contained a colossal bas relief of a face. The figure's eyes, I was told, were rubies the size of a man's fist. The captain immediately posted guards while a gang of miners went to work extracting the gems.

Just as the first chisel bit into the rock, however, the carved mouth sprang open to reveal a fanged maw! A legion of skeletal horrors marched out, directed by a dimly seen creature wielding a staff. The miners fled screaming,

hampering the soldiers, who soon fell under the relentless onslaught. The captain was overcome along with her troops.

The remaining officer, being somewhat quicker of mind, fired the mine as he fled. The conflagration undoubtedly consumed the advancing undead, but also collapsed the shaft. Rallying the terrified miners, this officer ordered the mine entrance to be completely buried, and quit the site.

I have no doubt that the mysterious figure wielding the staff was a mummy of great power. In my subsequent campaigns against ancient dead, I have often found that what first meets one's eye is seldom the whole truth. The ancient dead do not show all their strength at once, and an early victory often is merely an indication that the true battle is still to come.

### Third Rank

Ancient dead of the third rank are powerful enough to pose a threat to even the best-equipped adventurers. Unless one is fortunate enough to discover a weakness quickly, destroying these creatures requires great force or meticulous detective work—or both. It is at this rank that the ancient dead first exhibit salient abilities, such as spellcasting and the creation of other undead. Some third-rank mummies are indeed vulnerable to physical destruction, but it is unwise to depend on such a weakness, as some ancient dead exhibit superior rejuvenation powers at this level.

My own experience leads me to believe that third-rank mummies make up the vast majority of ancient dead. One can expect to encounter weaker mummies only when unusual circumstances prevail, and even then the lesser creatures are often tools of more powerful ones.

Mummies of the third rank do not normally rise spontaneously, though I have no evidence to suggest that they cannot do so. More typically, these types of mummies are created as the result of a powerful ritual or by the hand of a more-powerful ancient dead creature.



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I place the mummy found in desert tombs in this rank. Many of these creatures are vulnerable to mundane fire, but they have a potent array of powers, including paralyzing fear, a virulent form of mummy rot, and immunity to nonmagical weapons. The so-called “greater” mummies (such as ancient dead priests of Har’Akir) are also third-rank; although they are formidable, they usually cease to be a threat once defeated in combat.

### Fourth Rank

Ancient dead of the fourth rank are truly formidable. Most conventional methods serve only to delay or drive off these creatures; mummies of this rank frequently seem to have been defeated only to reappear and menace their opponents once again.

Ancient dead creatures of fourth rank rise only after a powerful ritual has been completed and their bodies have been interred in an elaborate tomb. Usually the deceased has taken an active role in planning his or her funeral rites and burial. Often the deceased fully intends to return to the mortal world as a mummy. Many of these individuals believe themselves to be so powerful that death has no sway over them; others actively embrace death in an attempt to seize greater power or to gain control over the afterlife.

There can be no doubt that to become an undead mummy is to wield power, but such power comes only at the price of the aspirant’s own mortality. Power lies within a mummy’s grasp, but the crucial fact (and, one must imagine, the fact most often ignored by aspirants to such unholy power) is that the flesh which encases an ancient dead’s spirit is truly dead and capable of feeling no joy. A mummy can never be truly happy; the best it can hope for is to reduce its misery.

Likewise, an unclean spirit might escape whatever immediate torments await it beyond the mortal realm, but its heart, burdened with misdeeds, does not grow lighter. Instead, the spirit is shackled to the memory of its iniquities.

In seeking to avoid one torment, the spirit merely dooms itself to another.

Consider the example of the *Lamenting Rake of Paridon*. Most accounts identify this creature as a ghost, a spirit so consumed by excess and debauchery in a famine-plagued land that it was condemned to walk the city streets where it once lived and witness revelries it could no longer share.

The journal of the doomed man, however, reveals a different tale: Timothy Strand squandered a bright future and a family fortune by making his life a continuous frolic. When he felt an early death approaching, he poured all his remaining wealth into an ornate tomb, which also was to serve as a temple to an evil deity. As part of this dark pact, Timothy was guaranteed a continuing life, surrounded by comfort and luxury. To seal the pact, Timothy had himself slain and embalmed. He expected to return from death and did, as a mummy able to appreciate—but never to enjoy—the pleasures of the flesh.

The raw emotional and supernatural power required to create a mummy of the fourth rank invariably leaves its mark on the individual. The lingering spirit develops a single-minded dedication to some purpose or possession; this makes it a relentless foe. Folk who thwart such a creature face the daunting task of preserving themselves long enough to find the mummy’s weakness or to locate some indirect method to restrain or neutralize the mummy. The nature of the rituals used to create these creatures generally provides at least one avenue to defeating a mummy—see Chapter IV for a more complete discussion. Brave hearts and sturdy sword arms are useful in a quest to discover such an avenue, but they alone cannot bring the quest to a successful conclusion.

### Fifth Rank

Ancient dead of this rank are all but unstoppable. Their powers are vast, their minds are diabolical, and their weaknesses are precious few. Fortunately, the wealth and labor of an entire



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nation is required to invest a mummy with this level of power. Few lands that I know possess the necessary means to complete this kind of endeavor, even if the will to do so is present. After many discussions with priests about the collective power of worship, however, I have come to the chilling conclusion that the living can grant power to the dead. Indeed, there are some mist-shrouded corners of our land where devoted cadres of supplicants grant the power of their combined wills to the ancient dead. In these cases the dead welcome the living, not to feed upon them in the manner of a vampire, but to draw sustenance from them in a far more subtle manner.

### Background

**T**he means by which a living being is transformed into an ancient dead creature is often the pivotal factor in determining the creature's appearance, powers, and actions. When dealing with very powerful mummies, learning the creature's history is a vital task because that past often holds the only key to laying the mummy to rest.

Each ancient dead creature has a dual origin. First, a creature's mortal shell must be preserved so that it may house the spirit even after death. Second, the spirit itself must be compelled or induced to return to its body.

The first statement might lead some readers to conclude that destroying all corpses would check the propagation of ancient dead. This is true to some extent. The ancient dead can exist only within those physical bodies which were their own in mortal life. However, burial customs in most communities require that the deceased be interred intact. I have visited some lands (such as Har'Akir) where it is believed that the deceased will be denied an afterlife if the body is not properly embalmed, preserved, and interred. Adventurers who meddle with funerals and graves risk not only the wrath of the local community, but the displeasure of the gods themselves.

Furthermore, the deliberate destruction of a body, no matter how well meaning, can set in motion a *karmic resonance* that creates a ghost. As I explained in some detail in an earlier work, the more charged with emotion a spirit is, the more powerful a ghost it becomes. Imagine the anger of a spirit that believes it has been denied a blissful afterlife because its body has been desecrated! Enraged ghosts are likely more powerful than whatever sort of ancient dead being they might otherwise have become.

Further, as I will explain in Chapter III, the utter destruction of an ancient dead's body is not necessarily sufficient to permanently slay it. I know this seems incredible, since the ancient dead are, after all, corporeal. Nevertheless, many of the ancient dead can reconstruct their bodies when the need arises. Assaulting a mummy with physical weapons and damaging spells is often sufficient to reduce the creature to dust. The immediate result can be satisfying, but do not be lulled into complacency. One can never be sure the creature has been permanently defeated without careful research.

### Physical Origins

**E**very ancient dead creature I know about falls into one of three subcategories: *accidental*, *created*, and *invoked*. The terms refer only to the processes that preserve the creature's body, and not to their motives or psychic traumas. Those I will discuss in a separate section. Be warned, however, that ancient dead creatures whose origins bear no semblance to what I have described here might stalk the land. Undeath is a phenomenon that often confounds mortal understanding.

### Accidental

It seems that the ancient dead can form when a corpse is naturally preserved. The majority of these mummies were suddenly overcome by death. The creatures also suffered; usually their deaths included great pain or emotion. In many



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cases the medium that preserved their bodies was instrumental in bringing about death—perhaps even directly caused it. *The Bog Monster of Hroth* was one of several armed raiders who were lured into a bog, entrapped, and slain by the defenders of the town they would pillage. The raider who later returned as the bog monster must have felt a strange mixture of fear, humiliation, and frustration as death overcame him.

Any environmental condition that prevents a body from decaying can create a natural mummy. The most common conditions include burial in dry sand, freezing, and immersion in swamps or bogs. There also might be other conditions that can naturally embalm a corpse. My colleague George Weathermay, a ranger of some renown, speculates that quicksand, the cool waters of subterranean pools, and tar pits might also preserve the dead.

Ancient dead creatures created unintentionally are extremely rare. They also tend to be among the weakest of mummies, since there is no outside agent to invest them with power. Nevertheless, even the most moderate ancient dead can be dangerous, and a natural mummy can attain substantial levels of power if its motivation is strong enough. The aforementioned *Bog Monster of Hroth* was fairly weak as mummies go, but it posed an unstoppable menace to the poorly equipped woodcutters who first encountered it.

### Created

The vast majority of the ancient dead rise when a preserved corpse is deliberately turned into an undead creature. The typical mummy found in many lands is created from the corpse of a priest, carefully embalmed and wrapped for the ritual that will bind its spirit with its body once again. My observations and research lead me to believe that there are two types of created ancient dead: *subservient* and *usurped*.

When the entity that creates a mummy had control over the creature's mortal form, the

resulting monster becomes its creator's servant. The greater mummies of Har'Akir are examples of this. The nature of this bond varies greatly, but often it provides the key to defeat.

When the entity that creates a mummy did *not* hold sway over the creature's mortal form, the result is a *usurped* mummy. Many powerful mummies (and a few of their lesser brethren) have the ability to create other ancient dead, usually by transforming their slain victims through some ritual or arcane process. These usurped mummies then become the mindless tools of their undead masters.

Sometimes a usurped mummy has a more insidious origin. Even the most reverent and well-intentioned funeral rites can lead to undeath for the deceased if an enemy can subvert those rites and lay a curse on the corpse. Beings who have been thus victimized often lie helpless for centuries, trapped in a state between life and death, denied the afterlife that funeral rites were meant to assure. Ancient dead creatures of this kind are driven by a inhuman rage born of endless disappointment and despair. Even if the victim was good and virtuous in life, its involuntary undead state transforms it into a corrupted monster. Careful research can often reveal a method for putting these types of creatures back into slumber. Sometimes they can be permanently laid to rest, freeing the creature's tortured spirit and ending the mummy's threat forever.

### Invoked

This subcategory includes the most terrible and powerful of all ancient dead. Invoked mummies embraced undeath willingly, laying plans for a corrupted form of immortality while still alive.

Such creatures often lie undisturbed in their tombs for decades—even centuries—before stirring and walking the land. What passes through their unliving minds during their slumbers I do not know; however, all my experience and research leads me to believe that years of unnatural life weigh heavily on the once-



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mortal mind. If slumbering mummies dream, their visions can hardly be pleasant.

Certain archaic scrolls I acquired during an otherwise ill-fated voyage on the Sea of Sorrows indicate that such a creature's spirit might actually depart the mortal realm and go to dwell in a true afterlife for a time. This is not genuine immortality, however, as the spirit can be drawn back to this world in order to fulfill certain duties and conditions.

The chief condition appears to be that the deceased must be remembered and venerated by the living. Without such support, the spirit is forced to return to its mortal body and exist in a state of undeath. These spirits must be preoccupied with assurances that they receive this support, and must be willing to return from death whenever necessary.

In many cases the deceased seems to be interred with the understanding that it will be required to return from death, either to attend to some business so important as to beckon even beyond the grave, or to assist the living.

Invoked mummies are not only very powerful, but they also are often revered by a cult (see Chapter VII). Timothy Strand, the *Lamenting Rake of Paridon*, almost certainly was an invoked mummy. The priests and worshipers who used his tomb as a temple doubtless served as well as his supporting cult.

### Psychological Origins

Once the physical body is transformed into a vessel capable of holding the creature's spirit, some other factor must secure the spirit within that body. Remains that have been merely animated, and thus lack an intrinsic sense of self, become mindless automatons such as skeletons and zombies. The ancient dead, by contrast, possess at least a modicum of intelligence, and often they are empowered with formidable intellects. Even first-rank servitor mummies follow orders with a sense of purpose and the ability to adjust their tactics. When a hapless party has misidentified such foes as

common zombies or skeletons, even the weakest mummy can be deadly.

Unlike the processes that preserve their bodies, the ancient dead's motivations defy easy classification. Often it is the circumstances of a creature's death, or of events that occurred afterward, that determines what motivates the mummy. I have discovered four broad categories that describe a mummy's psychological origins: *servitude, restlessness, recall, and dark pacts*. That I identify only four categories should not lead the reader to believe that ancient dead are simple or predictable creatures—far from it. Rather, the reader should understand that the ancient dead rise only under specific circumstances, and these factors often leave their mark on the resulting creature.

I list psychological factors separately from the processes of preservation to underscore the fact that preservation and motivations can occur in myriad combinations. A mummy's dual origins usually are tightly intertwined. What exists separately in theory is often inseparable in reality. Further, many ancient dead I have documented could fit in more than one category. Even in such cases, however, one factor is dominant and has the greatest influence over the mummy's exact nature.

### Servitude

This creature lies under another's control. The extent of this control ranges from independent service to complete mental domination, in which the servant must act against its own self-interest without resistance if so ordered.

Servitor mummies are most often created by other mummies or by a mummy cult. Such servants are never the only ancient dead associated with the cult. They usually serve as guards and soldiers, front-line troops which delay and wear down an enemy until the main strength arrives.

Most servitor mummies are fairly weak, but there are exceptions, especially if the controlling creature is a powerful one. The lich-priest



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Pythian had at his command a force of third-rank mummies that obeyed him even unto their own destruction. Their final assault also ended the lives of three of my companions.

Not every ancient dead guardian is a servitor. Many restless and invoked mummies stalk the mortal world, seeking of their own volition to protect something.

When facing an undead menace, it is important to keep in mind that a servitor creature might be pursuing its master's goals, which usually are not immediately apparent to an observer. Servitor mummies also may have access to vast resources or be backed up by a horde of other creatures. Fortunate hunters can discover the link between servant and master and sever it. Even if one cannot break the link, one might discover that the terms of a mummy's service restrict its actions in some manner. This knowledge could help in the development of a plan of attack that exploits the mummy's limitations.

Servitor mummies are almost always deliberately created, usually by the creature that controls them. The tomb guardians of Har'Akir, for example, were created for the express purpose of watching over the pharaoh's tomb. An invoked mummy may be a servant, especially if it has returned from the dead in order to render service. Such creatures are rare, but I have no less than three independent accounts that document them. Natural mummies seldom become servants unless they fall under the sway of a more powerful undead creature or an evil priest.

It is important to note that if a mummy is not created specifically to serve, then its servitude is a condition of its existence, rather than a part of its origin. If the control over such a mummy is broken, the creature will immediately begin acting in a manner consistent with its own motivations. One of my own experiences illustrates this point:

My companions and I had been long in pursuit of a vampire into the snowy peaks surrounding Lake Kronov in Tepest, and we were finally

within a few feet of our goal. Yet as we approached the creature's final stronghold, a tiny cave atop an icy slope, a horribly emaciated figure clad in rotting furs rose from behind a boulder and attacked us; the cold and the slippery footing didn't hamper it in the least. For a moment we stood dumbfounded and overcome by pure dread, yet we soon recovered and battled the creature, but it seemed to ignore blows from our weapons.

Finally, Corwin, our priest, raised his holy symbol with a triumphant shout and thrust it toward our assailant—the monster froze in its tracks. Success? No, but it turned and scurried up the slope. When the creature reached the summit, it dove into the cave.

To our amazement, an inhuman screech immediately split the air. A scant few seconds later, the creature reappeared, dragging a plain pine coffin with a vampire still sitting upright in it, into the open air. For a moment our foe looked not unlike an aged matron, indignantly protesting an intrusion into her private bath at an inopportune moment.

As the vampire squirmed in the sunlight, the mummy snatched an object from the coffin and held it aloft. It was a small hand-axe with a weathered haft and a corroded copper head. Hooting with delight, the creature scrambled out of view once again, escaping with its prize while we advanced on our original target.

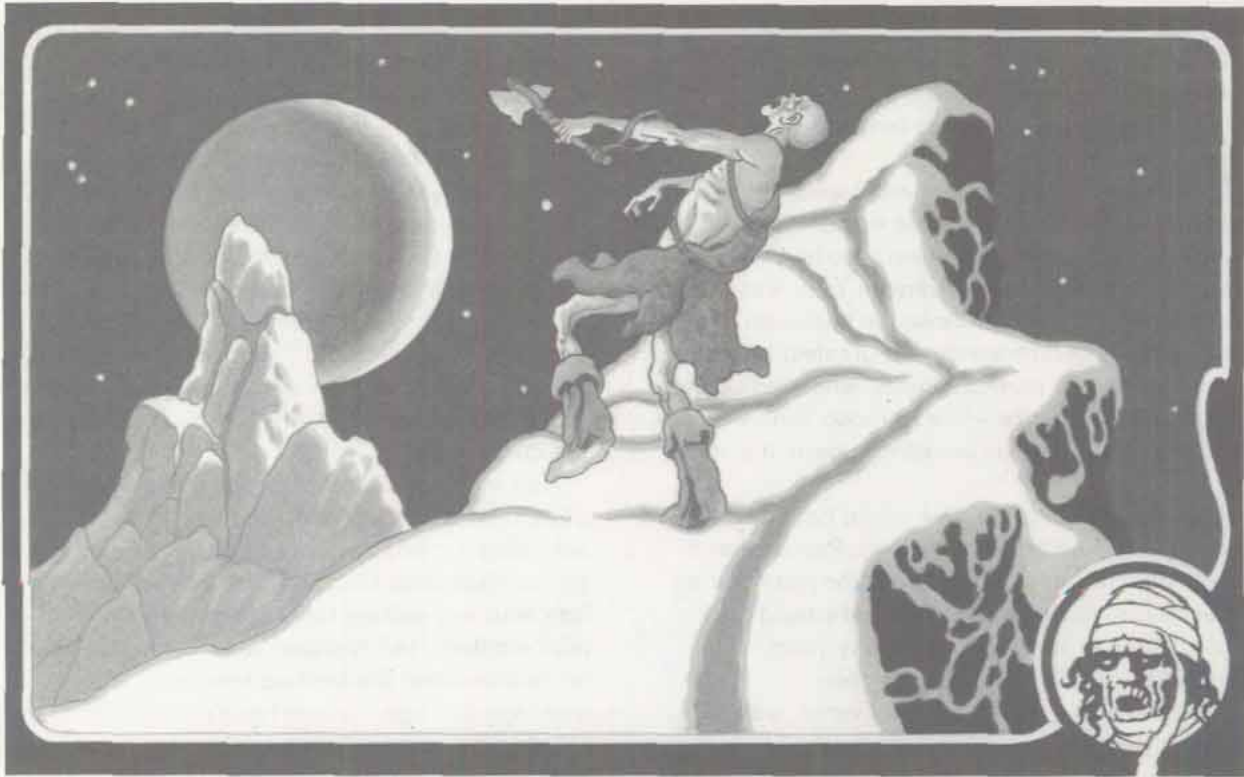
I shudder at might have been if *we* had held that ancient copper axe. As it happened, fate intervened on our side and granted us a swift, if somewhat anticlimactic, victory.

### Restlessness

Readers familiar with my earlier work on ghosts will understand some of the emotional forces which bind the dead to the mortal world. Some ancient dead creatures arise from the same kinds of circumstances that create ghosts. This is particularly true of accidental and invoked mummies; something in the creature's psyche maintains a link between spirit and body that



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outlasts even death. This link can arise without a conscious desire on the dying person's part; sometimes it merely provides a path through which an outside agent can create a mummy. This type of mummy strongly resembles a ghost, but the creature is fully corporeal.

Restless ancient dead often remain quiet unless their tombs are disturbed or allowed to decay, or until some task they could not complete in life suddenly becomes possible. A mummy with an unfinished task might rise periodically to set about trying to achieve it.

I have recorded one such case involving a dedicated collector of fine armor. This wealthy man, one Quinn Roche, ordered the choicest items from his collection to be placed in his tomb along with him. When one of the items was stolen, Roche rose to regain it. A similar account alleges that Roche rose when groundwater seeping into his tomb had caused the valuable armor to rust. The collector came

forth not only to see that this armor was restored, but also to insure that his precious collection would not be so endangered again. Yet another tale maintains that Roche wakened and tirelessly pursued a victim who owned a rare suit of *plate mail of etherealness*, which Roche (spelled *Rotch* in this particular manuscript) sought to add to his collection. After studying all the materials carefully, I have concluded that these stories, which cover a span of 260 years, all refer to the same creature, which rose several times for different but obviously related reasons.

My own experience with restless ancient dead involved a pitiful, though romantic, tale. During my visit to the parched land of Kalidnay, I struck up a friendship with several priests.

One morning, we woke to find the whole community in an uproar, for a young woman was missing. A quick examination of her home led us to believe that she had simply wandered off,



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into the desert, yet the natives remained convinced of foul play. Suspicion immediately fell upon one Iurudef Hamid, a visiting stranger who had shown an uncanny familiarity with the people and customs.

In due course, the priests and I were able to determine that Iurudef Hamid was actually Ahmose Tanit, a warrior priest who had died some 300 years before. Ahmose Tanit was a successful adventurer whose life had been marred by a great tragedy. His greatest love was a young woman named Simbel, who died during a massive pestilence while Ahmose Tanit was pursuing his career as an adventurer in a distant land.

Tanit's powers as a priest might have saved his sweetheart, had he been present. Remorse and guilt seem to have mingled with the passion this adventurer felt, building instead of easing over time. Ahmose Tanit lived for many years thereafter, but died an unhappy man.

The missing woman, we discovered, was an indirect descendant of Simbel's, and was very much like her in every way. Apparently her mere presence was enough to attract the ancient dead. With the "reappearance" of Simbel in the area, Tanit was compelled to seek her out and claim her as his bride.

The tale does not have a happy ending. My friends and I located Ahmose Tanit's tomb, but were unable to save the woman. In the end we were obliged to acknowledge the union that Tanit had consummated with his victim, and we laid the pair to rest together. Should the two bodies ever be separated, I have no doubt that Ahmose Tanit will walk the land again. Perhaps his unliving lover will rise as well. . . .

### Recalled

Sometimes the ancient dead can rise in response to events that occur long after their deaths. After many hours of study and countless interviews with priests and mediums who have had some experience with these matters, I have come to believe that a being can pass fully from the

mortal world, only to be drawn back when certain conditions prevail. Some force or summons compels the spirit to re-enter its mortal body.

Ancient dead of this type are usually invoked, but not always. In one case I have documented, the creature returned in response to an ancient curse it had successfully avoided throughout its life. Strangely enough, when one of her descendants triggered the curse, the blight fell upon the dead ancestor. The curse was worded in such a way that the victim's repose in death was interrupted so that she could waken and feel the curse's effects.

One might be tempted to place the aforementioned Ahmose Tanit into this subcategory; however, it was clear to me that this ancient dead creature had stalked the land for centuries, waiting for his sweetheart to be reincarnated. Had Ahmose Tanit risen only when his reincarnated Simbel had reached marriageable age, I would have placed him in the recalled category. It is lamentable that Tanit walked the land for so many years. If he had slumbered for three centuries, it is likely that his mannerisms would have been several generations out of date; that, in turn, would have marked him as an unusual being and made him a more obvious danger, one that might have been defeated or thwarted before he could claim a victim.

Quinn Roche the armor collector might also fall into the recalled category; however, I have labeled him "restless" due to his continuing fascination with his collection of armor.

I have acquired several accounts of guardian mummies rising to protect ancestral estates, temples, and other areas that were important to them in life. One case involved a dedicated priestess who was interred beneath a temple and returned when the building fell into disrepair. In each of the cases I have labeled "recalled," the individuals appear to have died and departed from the world in the normal way, only to return in response to events that occurred long after their deaths.



## II: TYPES OF MUMMIES

The material I have on the priestess who returned to save her temple from ruin is fragmentary, but she might have been interred with the stipulation that she protect or maintain the temple if necessary. If this is true, as I suspect it is, she is an example of an invoked mummy, recalled by a specific trigger (see Chapter VI).

### Dark Pacts

To many short-sighted individuals, the thought of physical immortality beckons like a sweet, radiant dream. It is true that the mortal world offers many pleasures, but fate has decreed that only mortals may enjoy them. There is no shortage, however, of dark powers all too willing to indulge the misconceptions of the foolish.

I do not know, nor do I care to know, how or through what agency undeath is granted; I can only attest to the results. The victim always superficially gains what is desired. In the case of the ancient dead this is most often continued ownership of material things. I am sure that agents of darkness always take more than they give, however, and the victims never gain any joy from their possessions. Instead, possessions become obsessions.

Often, one or more of the objects associated with a mummy is a key to destroying it (a mummy that can be destroyed in this fashion is said to be *dependent* upon the object—see Chapter IV). Nevertheless, I must warn the reader that mummies are the most single-mindedly possessive creatures that exist. Their passion for the things that gave them joy in life exceeds even that of the legendary dragons. Tampering with the goods kept in a mummy's tomb is almost certain to bring about a curse or some other deadly assault.

Ancient dead that have gained unlife through dark pacts are most often housed in elaborate tombs filled with guardians, traps, and curses, frequently maintained and guarded by a cult. Often, the cult regards the mummy as a direct

representative of their deity, and sometimes they venerate the mummy as their deity.

In many cases a mummy depends on its cult for its powers, even for its continuing existence. Many mummies become powerless unless their names are remembered and celebrated by the living. I do not mean to suggest that my readers should seek to slay every mummy cultist they find. Such extreme—indeed, I must call them vengeful—acts can bring terrible retribution down upon the perpetrators. I cannot condone them. More importantly, some cults actually serve to keep a mummy at rest. If the cult ceases to venerate such a creature, it rises in a rage and seeks to reestablish the interrupted rituals.

### Forms

Since the ancient dead are fully corporeal, a creature's form often is immediately obvious. Further, one can deduce quite a bit about an ancient dead creature's origins and powers just by observing its physical form. Unfortunately, the physical form one sees is not always the creature's true form. Also, forms can be deceptive and one can never be certain if one is dealing with the ancient dead or some other, often lesser, type of undead menace. Disaster awaits those who classify their foes without careful research and observation.

When one thinks of the ancient dead, the most common images that spring to mind are of the classic mummies found in the desert lands of Har'Akir and Kalidnay. These horrifying creatures have desiccated human bodies swathed in yards and yards of musty linen bandages. They move with a shuffling gait that seems ponderous, but their movements can be deceptively quick.

As the subcategories below reveal, the ancient dead vary greatly in corporeal form and physical appearance. I am convinced that familiarity with the full range of aspect a mummy might assume can prevent fatal mistakes. The four types of forms I have identified are *humanoid*, *animal*, *monster*, and *composite*.



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A word of caution: This section and the one that follows present a great deal of information on the physical forms the ancient dead take. But beware! Misidentification is all too easy. To further complicate matters, I have compiled no less than 21 authenticated accounts of ancient dead creatures which have command over their own forms. Readers who value their lives and the lives of their companions should not discard clues that their senses reveal, but neither should they depend on any piece of information that is not backed up by careful research. The undead are complex and deadly foes, and deception is one of their most potent weapons.

### Humanoid

Most of the ancient dead have humanoid form. These creatures were once living, breathing people, and they retain a recognizably human shape. Without careful study, there is no easy way to tell what a humanoid mummy's origins are. Details of dress and ornament, hair style and even facial features may provide clues to the culture or era from which an ancient dead first issued. Sometimes an observant hunter can deduce the pertinent facts by observing a mummy's actions for a short time, but I must re-emphasize that haste and fatal errors can go hand in hand.

### Animal

In some cases, the preserved bodies of common animals can become reanimated as ancient dead creatures. In most cases an animal mummy is deliberately created, as animals have neither the intelligence nor the force of will to return to the mortal world on their own. Thus, most animal mummies serve another mummy or a mummy cult.

Nevertheless, certain extraordinary animals can return on their own, especially if they were carefully interred upon their deaths. The fabled *Hissing Cat of Kantora* was such a creature. In life, this creature was a mage's familiar that

wasted away and died after its mistress, Caron de Annemi, met an untimely death. The slain wizardess's companions carefully laid the animal to rest to commemorate their fallen comrade, whose body could not be recovered. The cat returned a generation later when a foolish young wizard claimed some of de Annemi's research into illusions as his own.

### Monster

Monsters tend to die violent deaths that do not leave behind intact bodies. This makes ancient dead monsters mercifully rare. Likewise, only fully mortal and corporeal creatures can become ancient dead. Though many other types of creatures have physical bodies, not every body remains a suitable vessel for a spirit once death overtakes it. Evil spirits such as the rakshasas of Sri Raji, so-called "extraplanar" creatures such as aerial servants, and created creatures that never were truly alive, such as golems, cannot return as ancient dead. This is a blessing for which we all should be grateful.

Like ancient dead animals, ancient dead monsters are most often created. My collection of documents includes one harrowing account of a visit to a huge, royal tomb in an unspecified land (probably Har'Akir). The intruders found a catacomb infested with creatures collected from widely scattered lands and pressed into service as guardian mummies. The final portion of the narrative is in a different hand, which suggests the original author perished before the venture was complete. This second writer describes many weird creatures, all dead, which attacked out of the darkness. The account is disjointed and the creatures described are so bizarre that I suspect the author is guilty of embellishment.

Perhaps the most improbable example is a trio of tall but wiry creatures with warty green hides, gangly arms ending in wickedly clawed hands, vacant white eyes, and absurdly long noses. I suspect that this final narrator sought solace in the bottle after his escape, and was plagued by



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whole armies of improbable brutes for the remainder of his life.

### Composite

One of the most horrifying and physically imposing types of ancient dead are composite creatures. These mummies are almost certainly created (my years of undead hunting have bred in me a sharp sense of caution that prevents me from saying “always”). They are constructed from bits and pieces of several different creatures, sewn or otherwise joined together in the same manner as a flesh or bone golem is fashioned. Some humanoid parts invariably decorate the mix, and a humanoid spirit animates the mummy. Rarely are such creatures independent, and their presence is a sure sign the area containing them is a vast complex teeming with vileness. (My years as an undead hunter have also taught me that bad news is unfortunately far more reliable than good news.)

### State of Preservation

No discussion of the types and forms that ancient dead take would be complete without considering the body's state of preservation. I must confess that the four subcategories I have identified—*skeletal*, *withered*, *intact*, and *pristine*—are somewhat arbitrary. Nevertheless, I believe that remembering them is important. How well the corpse that houses an ancient dead's spirit has withstood the ravages of time often determines how easily the creature can be identified. Unfortunately, the creature's state of preservation is not a reliable guide to its rank. Further, ancient dead in advanced decay are most easily confused with the lesser forms of mindless undead. Mistaking even an inferior mummy for a common zombie can have grave consequences.

Most, but not all, ancient dead are clad in funerary garments or wrappings. The exact type and appearance of the mummy's raiment

depends on the type of funereal rites that have been performed over the corpse, and these in turn vary with the local culture, religion, and fashion. A lack of garments or wrappings often indicates a relatively weak mummy, but this is not always so. A colleague of mine once recounted a tale of a vengeful mummy who had returned because grave robbers had unwrapped the corpse to strip it of its burial goods.

### Skeletal

A skeletal mummy's physical body has been reduced to bare bones or bones only thinly clad in shards of dried flesh. Such creatures are easily confused with common skeletons. As I related in the introduction to this treatise, I myself once briefly feared I had come face-to-face with a dreaded lich when in fact I faced a skeletal mummy.

I once—reluctantly—employed a Vistani medium to help uncover a particularly difficult mummy's secrets and learned a previous group of invaders had succumbed to a skeletal composite mummy which they had misidentified as a bone golem.

### Withered

This is the typical state of preservation for a mummy; many fully wrapped or clothed mummies have desiccated bodies under their raiment. These creatures have fleshy but emaciated bodies. They often look skeletal, but the bones are fully clothed in leathery skin. Almost all naturally mummified ancient dead survive in this state of preservation.

### Intact

Ancient dead in this state of preservation have bodies that show no decay at all; often they appear to be freshly dead, or even living but very old. This kind of ancient dead can be confused with ghosts or vampires. When facing these creatures, one can often quickly determine that



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the foe is not a ghost because it is fully corporeal and always remains so.

One fairly reliable method for distinguishing the ancient dead from vampires is through the use of a mirror—the ancient dead cast reflections. Unfortunately, the ancient dead do not recoil from mirrors as vampires do. Be warned, however, for herein lies a trap for the over-eager and uninformed. If one approaches an ancient dead creature intending to expose a vampire, seeing the creature's reflection in a mirror could lead him to overlook his true foe. Is your vampire somewhere else, or have you been fighting a mummy all along? Self-inflicted misdirections frequently lead to tragedy.

### Pristine

This is the most insidious type of ancient dead, for their bodies, though long dead, appear to be healthy and alive. It is nearly impossible to identify such creatures as undead until they reveal themselves, usually through the use of their deadly powers. By then, of course, it usually is too late.

### Conclusion

**T**he ancient dead are complex creatures, as any reader who has come to this point in my text has no doubt surmised. The path to an accurate classification and assessment of a mummy is often tortuous and filled with false leads and blind alleys. Do not be tempted to neglect the tools presented here just because the task is difficult—it carries great rewards. Once one understands something a mummy's origins, physical characteristics, and motivations, one has the keys to unlocking the monster's entire trove of secrets.

### DM Notes

#### Fear and Horror Checks

All mummies have a special fear power. This is not a normal fear check, but is a special ability that usually causes paralysis; see Chapter III for more details. Note that a mummy's fear power takes precedence over horror checks (roll the fear saving throw first, then roll any horror checks), and cannot be avoided through role-playing.

Many ancient dead are awful to behold. Composite mummies can cause horror checks when sighted. Skeletal and withered mummies might also induce horror checks on sight. Most mummies can also induce horror checks through their *rejuvenation*, *invulnerability*, and *disease* powers (see Chapter III).

Note that horror checks are not always necessary, even when the PCs encounter something loathsome or alarming. If the players respond in character to the dangers they face, there is no need to roll dice. Do the PCs act suitably horrified when a mummy they thought was slain rejuvenates and appears to menace them again? Do the PCs show consternation and despair when mummy rot causes their wounds to fester? If the answers are yes, there is no need to roll any dice.

#### Natural Mummification

Natural mummies occur only under conditions that prevent or retard decomposition. Generally, a body must be completely sealed off from environmental changes and protected from scavengers. The medium that covers the body must possess some preservative qualities and must not contain oxygen or plants, animals, and microorganisms that cause decay. All of the examples cited by Van Richten and



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Weather may be suitable for creating natural mummies, except subterranean pools. A body immersed in plain water would tend to decay unless the water was very cold, or oxygen depleted, or both. Further, the water would have to be free of living organisms. A submerged body covered with sand or mud is much more likely to be preserved. Note, however, that any body allowed to lie undisturbed might become mummified, including one concealed in a cool, dry attic or hidden in a barrel of wine.

One factor Van Richten has failed to note is the preserved body's age. Mummies cannot be created from fresh corpses; the body must be embalmed before it can house an ancient dead spirit. Natural embalming requires 10 to 100 years or more, depending on how quickly the preserving medium acts on the body. Immersion in a tar pit would transform a body fairly quickly. Preservation through freezing in ice or immersion in a bog takes much longer. Ultimately, the DM must decide.

### Monster Mummies

Monster mummies can be created only from living creatures native to the Prime Material Plane. Extraplanar creatures such as elementals and tanar'ri, or creatures that never were truly alive (such as golems), cannot become mummies. Parts of any creature with a corporeal body, however, can be used to construct a composite mummy.

### Mummy Raiment

Origin*	Raiment**
Aboriginal	Skins, furs, leather, feathers, beads
Central/ South American	Dyed cotton wrappings, feathers
Chinese	White cotton or silk robes
Egyptian/ Mediterranean	White or red linen wrappings
European	Formal black clothing

\* The mummy's original cultural type:

*Aboriginal* includes Native North American and all prehistoric cultures.

*Central/South American* includes the Aztec, Mayan, Inca, and similar cultures.

*Chinese* includes all ancient Asian cultures.

*Egyptian/Mediterranean* includes ancient Egypt, North Africa, and Southern Europe.

*European* includes Medieval Western Europe and most other feudal cultures.

\*\* The type of clothing typically worn by mummies from the culture. Naturally mummified corpses are clad in whatever they were wearing when they died. Usually this is everyday clothing, which is less elaborate than funerary garb. Intact and pristine mummies might shun funerary garments altogether, wearing the same kinds of clothes as the living. A mummy's garments, however, also reflect its mortal station and lifestyle. Further, they may also indicate, by style and embellishment, the fashions that were current the last time the mummy walked among the living.





### III: TYPICAL POWERS



*am the daughter of earth and  
water  
And the nursling of the sky  
I pass through the pores of ocean  
and shores  
I... cannot die.*

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

Anyone with even a casual knowledge of folklore is well aware of the powers traditionally attributed to the undead. This body of knowledge poses its own difficulties for the mummy hunter. The homespun chatter of the fireside, however vivid and compelling, is notoriously undependable in its details. As I have mentioned in my other works, however, folk wisdom

frequently contains hidden truths about the supernatural. For more than three decades I have made it my task to separate these grains of truth from the chaff of speculation, distortion, and ignorance.

Nowhere in the whole spectrum of the lore of undeath is the truth so heavily veiled as it is in the case of the ancient dead. Many self-described “experts” are wholly unaware that the ancient dead exist at all. Such unenlightened individuals either dismiss the ancient dead as minor creatures, akin to mindless skeletons and zombies, or they mistake them for corporeal ghosts. Still others confidently state that mummies are desert dwellers and cannot abide wetter climes.

Do not be fooled. The ancient dead are slightly less rare in arid places than they are elsewhere, but they can rise wherever mortals are foolish enough to scorn the inevitability of death.

Other common suppositions about mummies contain potentially lethal snares for those who would hunt them. Of these, there are perhaps two that are the most dangerous.

❖ **Fire destroys mummies:** Mummies of the first or second rank that are found in deserts can be burned, as can some mummies found in other places. I have long considered fire to be a most useful tool, and have indeed trusted it to stop several otherwise inexorable assaults by ancient dead creatures. Still, I must give this emphatic warning: Never depend on fire as protection against a mummy. Fire can be dangerous to wield—burns from even one miscast flask of flaming oil can sap a party’s strength. Further, I have encountered tombs and crypts whose air is polluted with explosive gases or dust that could cause even a simple torch to burst into a ball of crimson destruction. Finally, there is no guarantee that fire will affect a mummy in the least.

*We entered a chamber fragrant with cedar and jasmine. I wondered how many centuries these scents had lingered.*

*A cry from Alanthir cut short my ruminations; a trio of skeletal horrors clad in the faded plumage of jungle birds were advancing from the chamber’s dusty corners. We gave way and retreated up the stairs as the three mummies converged at our front. Claudia quickly lit and passed flasks of oil forward to Alanthir and Gedlan, who lost no time in hurling fiery destruction at our assailants. The charnel smell of burning feathers as flame engulfed the mummies quickly displaced the suddenly cloying scent of jasmine and cedar, but to our horror the creatures were not discomfited in the least. The nearest mummy merely reached out to enfold Alanthir in a flaming embrace.*

—from the private journal of Dr. Van Richten

❖ **A mummy’s treasure is cursed:** Frequently this is true. Of course, in many accounts I have collected, what is identified as “the mummy’s curse” is actually mummy rot, rather than some mysterious malady. Anyone who engages a mummy in hand-to-hand combat is subject to this scourge, and the only sure way to protect against it is to have a priest or wizard at hand.



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Grave robbing is not an activity I recommend. Simply entering a mummy's tomb, however, or failing to perform specific actions while inside one, can unleash a curse (more about this in Chapter VII). And one cannot avoid the baneful aftereffects of a mummy encounter merely by ignoring its treasure. The ancient dead, as I have said before, are possessive in the extreme. It is not uncommon for one to take offense at the hunters' mere presence in its lair. Finally, in many cases one *must* handle, remove, or even destroy tomb objects to have any hope of returning the mummy's spirit to rest. Only careful investigation and research can reveal if these actions are required; if they are, suffering a curse might be unavoidable.

As I noted in Chapter II, there are certain powers that all mummies share, even if the tales told by common folk don't take them into account. This does not mean that all mummies are alike, or even that all mummies are similar.

The reader would do well to dismiss such a notion without delay. Though one might expect to encounter whole legions of lesser mummies that are more-or-less alike, the high-rank individuals are unique. Many lesser mummies, too, can possess quirks that one might expect to find only in more powerful creatures. These might take the form of more potent versions of the four typical abilities: *invulnerability*, *rejuvenation*, *disease*, and *fear*, or they might be salient abilities that usually are reserved for mummies of higher rank.

But I am getting ahead of myself. First, let me discuss the four typical abilities in more detail.

#### **Invulnerability**

**T**he ancient dead are resistant to normal weapons; ordinary steel is simply not up to the task of cleaving or battering through a



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mummy's embalmed flesh. In my own direct experience, the most reliable weapons are made from enchanted steel. I have accounts, however, of mummies that have been laid low by silver weapons or by weaponry crafted from other unusual materials such as cold-forged iron, flint, copper, and bronze. In any case, the weapon must be fashioned completely from the metal in question (though weapons such as hammers or axes can be hafted in the normal manner). A mere coating of silver, for example, is not sufficient to affect the ancient dead, as it is in the case of lycanthropes.

I can only speculate about why these materials, which are softer and weaker than steel, can damage a mummy's impenetrable flesh when steel cannot. I suspect that some form of supernatural symbolism might be a factor, as is the case with other creatures of the night. The elemental purity of these materials, along with their rarity and extra cost, might help them overcome a mummy's defenses.

For example, silver is widely considered a magical metal. Folklore associates silver with the moon. One particularly intriguing theory I have encountered holds that, just as the moon's light illuminates the night and banishes darkness, silver—the lunar metal—proves baneful to the black spirits of evil creatures. As I have said, folk wisdom often sprouts from a grain of truth.

Some element of symbolism may play upon the monster's personal history as well. For example, a mummy that was a goldsmith in life might well be vulnerable to weapons forged in the valuable substance.

The unnatural hardness of a mummy's flesh not only foils weapons, but also resists some forms of elemental powers. I have encountered or documented mummies that were impervious to fire, electricity, cold, and even to earth.

Finally, the ancient dead share with other undead creatures immunity to enchantments that produce sleep, charm, or hold effects. Being unliving, death magic, poisons, and paralysis of all kinds do not affect the ancient dead in the least.

### Rejuvenation

**M**ummies are constantly supplied with a flow of positive energy, which accounts for most (or all) of their typical powers. The most obvious manifestation of this energy is a mummy's uncanny ability to maintain and rebuild its lifeless body. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, this ability should not be confused with the very similar *regeneration* ability possessed by vampires and by golems. To rejuvenate itself, a mummy generally must be at rest, usually for an hour or so, while it draws in energy and rebuilds its tissues. While rejuvenating, the mummy is powerless. Be warned, however, that a mummy may be able to end the process whenever it wishes, leave its resting state, and attack; my documents contain several accounts of over-eager hunters who have come to grief when a mummy they thought was helpless lashed out at them.

Attacking a rejuvenating mummy can give satisfactory results because destroying its body can break the power link and free the mummy's spirit. Mummies of the first, second, and third rank are often laid permanently to rest if their bodies are destroyed; the weaker the mummy, the more likely this is to be true.

At other times, however, attacking the mummy's body merely delays an inevitable counterassault, because the mummy can rejuvenate even after it has been reduced to dust. In these cases, destroying the body can only grant a respite from the mummy's attacks. However, such a pause is useful for investigating the true key to laying the creature to rest, or even for beating a hasty retreat from the creature's lair.

Though I never have seen it myself, I have several accounts that a sundered mummy's spirit actually took visible form. The forms varied, but the spirit usually assumed the shape of an animal or a semblance of the mummy's living form. In each case, the ghastly image was insubstantial and impervious to harm by spells or weapons, but it could be seen clearly.



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... My companions and I recovered quickly from the mummy's surprise assault. Grey and I swung energetically at the shrunken corpse. We were heartened when we saw how deeply our weapons bit into the dried flesh. Undaunted by wounds that would have crippled a lesser creature, the mummy continued to lash out. The creature's limbs did not fall still until we had reduced it to a dirty heap.

Our first hint of the horrors that lay ahead came when we detected a flutter within the crumbling torso. The leathery chest quivered and burst into a thousand moldy shards as a winged creature no larger than a sparrow leapt skyward, feathery wings beating the air.

Grey dealt it a blow, but the sword passed through the apparition, biting only empty air. As for myself, I recoiled, for I looked directly into the creature's eyes and saw not an avian head, but a human face—a face with features twisted in a sneer of rage. It was a face thirsty for revenge....

—from the journal of Thaddius Salis

### Disease

**M**ummy rot, the curse of the pharaohs, the lingering death—this dreadful weapon of the ancient dead goes by many names. I shall use the rather crude vernacular “mummy rot” in this section. I, of course, have more scientifically apt terms at my disposal, but the exact meaning of mummy rot usually is clear to the layman and produces a not-undesirably vivid image in the mind of the prospective mummy hunter.

The symptoms of classic mummy rot are fairly easy to recognize: The victim generally feels no particular discomfort; in fact, the infected area often seems to be immune to minor aches, pains, and injuries. This might seem to be beneficial, but it is highly dangerous. Speaking as a physician, I can assure the reader that the body's sensitivity to heat, cold, and even pain provides a vital link to the outside world. A victim numbed by mummy rot is deprived of this link and is prone to ignore minor injuries that he

might otherwise attend. This untreated damage frequently leads to serious infection. The lack of feeling in the skin, combined with the insidious power of the mummy's touch, greatly slows the body's natural healing powers. A scratch that might disappear in a day or two instead lingers for 10 days or more.

Even worse, the victim's capacity for self-healing is so disrupted that curative magic from priests and paladins, undeniably a great boon to adventurers, is no longer effective. The victim's tissues simply lose their ability to benefit from such restorative magic. In many victims this inability to heal is the first sign that the disease has set in. A sensible reader might ask how this could be. Surely anyone struck by a mummy would immediately realize the consequences? Alas, things seldom are so simple.

Some very few mummies (those of the first rank) possess a weak disease power that a healthy victim can resist; this has fooled more than one mummy hunter into thinking he is immune to the touch. In other cases, it might not be clear at all that one's opponent is a mummy, especially if one has the misfortune to encounter a well-preserved specimen, or a specimen that can alter its appearance. Furthermore, a few mummies (usually those of the third, fourth and fifth ranks) can cause the effects of their disease to be delayed. Often, the disease seems to erupt spontaneously, and its source can be difficult to identify.

An advanced case of mummy rot is not at all difficult to identify. The victim breaks out in scabrous sores. In very advanced cases the victim's ears, nose, and digits shrivel or even fall off. Once the malady reaches this stage, the victim will be scarred for life even if cured.

Locating a cure can be problematic. Even after more than 30 years of experience as a physician, surgeon, and herbalist, I have yet to discover a scientific cure for this scourge. It is so insidious that outright amputation of an afflicted limb fails to halt the disease. I am forced to conclude, that since the malady has a supernatural origin, only magic halts its effects.



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If my description of this unstoppable disease causes the reader some apprehension or discomfort, I advise steeling oneself before reading the next passage.

The rate at which the malady progresses varies greatly from mummy to mummy. I have seen cases that took months to fully develop—this was the situation at the Falkovnian mining camp, which I recounted earlier. I have witnessed other cases where the disease reached a fatal stage in a single day. The rate at which the disease spreads appears to be a function of the mummy's power. Presumably, the weaker the mummy, the longer the disease takes to scar or kill the victim. I do not, however recommend that anyone use this assumption as a measure of an opposing mummy's potency. Once the affliction is discovered, see that it is cured without delay.

Needless to say, no company of mummy hunters is complete without a priest or paladin with healing powers. A further warning: I have encountered psychics in my travels who could heal wounds and normal maladies as well as any priest. These mental powers, however, always have been defeated by the supernatural diseases inflicted by the ancient dead.

To further complicate the mummy hunter's task, and especially the task of correctly identifying the quarry, not every mummy's touch causes a rotting disease. I personally have encountered three variations: One produced intense pain and internal bleeding, another blindness, and a third convulsions and insanity. I have documented further cases where a mummy's touch has caused immediate death due to heart failure, conversion of tissue into acidic green slime, instantaneous dehydration, and even caustic burns.

In most cases, a magical *cure disease* spell can halt the malevolent affects of the touch, but sometimes other spells such as *neutralize poison* are necessary. The exact spell depends on the mummy's power and the type of malady. In each case, the effect resists all nonmagical cures.

### Fear

The final power which all mummies share in one form or another is the ability to inspire supernatural fear. This land of Mists contains many creatures that can cause the stoutest heart to skip a beat; such fear is a natural reaction every mortal has when confronting a powerful and potentially deadly foe. However, a party can overcome this natural dread if its members are confident that they match or exceed their foe's strength. Such is not the case when a party faces the ancient dead.

The fear a mummy inspires is not a simple manifestation of the victim's own instinct for self-preservation, but a supernatural assault on the victim's will. If the victim cannot summon sufficient force of will to resist the attack, he flees in terror. Even the most hardened adventurers are vulnerable to this attack. We all have our moments of weakness—even I. As mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, the more-powerful mummies can cause a victim to become literally paralyzed with fright, and so utterly helpless for a time.

This interval tends to be short—usually no longer than three or four minutes—but it is often sufficient for the mummy to infect the victim with its disease power, if not slay the victim altogether. I am not sure which destiny is worse. I have been forced into humiliating retreat more than once when abandoned by fearstruck comrades. Since strength and safety often lie in numbers, a party split by fear often faces a fate worse than a hasty retreat.

Paralytic fear by its very nature cannot scatter a party. It still can deal a devastating blow to the party's unity by disabling its members. Also, a comrade fleeing in fear is at least temporarily secure from the immediate danger an approaching mummy may pose. If one is fortunate, one's fleeing companion might halt in a fairly safe location. A victim rooted in place has no such hope of safety. On more than one occasion, I have spent breathless minutes (which seemed like small eternities) attempting to shield



### III: TYPICAL POWERS

a stricken companion from a mummy's lethal grasp. I have not always been successful in these endeavors.

The fear power of the ancient dead comes in many forms. Most often it is a continuous aura that takes effect at the mere sight of a mummy. In the previous chapter I related a case where a mummy could direct its fear power according to its own will. I have documentation of another mummy whose gaze inspired fear. Victims who met this powerful creature's gaze were extremely susceptible to the mummy's fear, and even those who avoided looking in its eyes were not immune.

#### Other Typical Powers

There are several other powers that most of the ancient dead possess. I have reason to believe two of these, *night vision* and *enhanced strength*, are common to all ancient dead in one form or another, but I have no truly credible proof, either through my own experience or collected tales, that these powers are universal.

❖ **Night vision:** It seems that ancient dead can function in complete darkness with as much ease as a man can in daylight. They appear to have the same sort of "heat vision" that elves, dwarves, and other demihumans have. Not being blessed with such vision myself, I have been loath to test my theory while actually face-to-face with a mummy.

❖ **Enhanced strength:** Not being a fighting man, I cannot attest that every mummy I have faced was imbued with supernatural vigor. Nevertheless, I urge the reader to beware of a mummy's physical prowess. My collection of notes includes many accounts of mummies tossing burly warriors about as though they were rag dolls. Some of these tales I can dismiss as exaggerations born of fear and awe; others are more credible. I myself have witnessed mummies performing stupendous feats of strength.

*Our investigations led us to an immense cavern, sealed at one end by a cyclopean wall. We studied the massive stone blocks carefully, as we suspected the wall might hold a secret portal that gave access to the space beyond. That there was a space beyond I was certain; all my research pointed to this cavern as the mouth of the mummy's lair.*

*After some minutes of searching, Gedlan Ironheart announced that one of the smaller blocks (a mere eight feet wide and six feet high) was in fact loose. I gave silent thanks for Gedlan's dwarf knowledge of stonework as we set about trying to shift the block. Gedlan, Belinderissa, and two burly lads from the local constabulary pushed lustily against the massive block. Though they made no visible progress, the quartet believed the task could be done. Shauten, our wizard, assisted by casting a lengthy spell (to enhance strength) upon one of the lads, and all fell to pushing once again.*

*We heard a raspy hiss as the block nudged back. The stone had retreated no more than a foot, however, when our progress not only stopped, but reversed! Looks of consternation spread across the lads' faces as the block slid inexorably toward us; Gedlan and Belinderissa lost no time in stepping aside, weapons at the ready. The lads vainly kept pushing, but the stone burst from the wall like a cork from a bottle, nearly crushing the constables.*

*From behind the block stepped a pale figure clad in a bronze cuirass, scaly with verdigris, and a flowing white robe. The mummy wore a sword at its hip, but left it there, attacking with its shriveled, clawlike hands instead. One hand shot forth as quickly as any asp might and grasped Belinderissa by the throat, lifting her from her feet. Stepping forward, the mummy aimed a blow at me which I could not avoid in spite of my knowledge that it was coming, striking me with a force equal to a kick from an angry mule. . . .*

—from the private journal of Dr. Van Richten



## III: TYPICAL POWERS

### DM Notes

#### Power Ranks

Rank	Hit Dice*	Movement**
First	1-3	6-9
Second	4-6	6-9
Third	7-9	9-12
Fourth	10-12	9-12
Fifth	13+	12-15

\* The range of Hit Dice a mummy of the listed rank usually has. Exceptions to these ranges are not uncommon.

\*\* The range of movement rates a humanoid mummy of the listed rank usually has. An animal mummy's movement rate varies with its rank and species.

#### Invulnerability

Rank	Armor Class	Plus To Hit*
First	7 to 5	special**
Second	5 to 3	+1 or special**
Third	3 to 0	+1
Fourth	0 to -2	+2
Fifth	-2 to -4	+3

\* The typical minimum bonus a weapon must have to harm a mummy that has an invulnerability power of the listed rank. The creature's invulnerability rank usually, but not always, equals the mummy's power rank.

\*\* Special weapons are not enchanted, but made from solid silver or some other unusual material:

❖ Mummies with first-rank invulnerability suffer full damage from silver, enchanted, and special weapons.

❖ Mummies with second-rank invulnerability suffer half damage from silver or special weapons and full damage from enchanted weapons.

❖ Mummies with third-rank invulnerability sustain no damage from nonmagical weapons. Magical weapons inflict one-half their base

damage (round down), plus their full magical bonus. For this purpose, "base damage" includes damage from the weapon and all nonmagical bonuses from Strength and specialization.

❖ Mummies with fourth-rank invulnerability suffer half damage from any weapon that can harm them. Roll damage, add all bonuses, and divide by 2; round fractions up.

❖ Mummies with fifth-rank invulnerability suffer damage only from the weapon's bonus. For example, a *dagger* +3 and a *two-handed sword* +3 both inflict 3 points of damage on a fifth-rank mummy. Bonus damage for Strength and specialization is negated.

#### Energy and Elemental Attacks

All mummies are *immune* to at least one form of energy attack—usually to cold: The mummy suffers *no damage* from such attacks. Mummies *immune* to an element or energy form sustain no damage from attacks based on that form. This includes nonmagical attacks, spells, and attacks by elementals. The DM is free to assign a different immunity in keeping with a mummy's physical origins, however. For example, the waterlogged tissues of a mummy preserved in a salt marsh might be impervious to fire.

If a mummy is *resistant* to an element or energy form, nonmagical attacks inflict no damage and magical attacks have normal affect.

❖ Mummies of at least third-rank immunity are *resistant* to a second form of energy.

❖ Mummies of at least fourth-rank immunity are *immune* to two forms of energy.

❖ Mummies with fifth-rank immunities might be *immune* to two forms of energy and *resistant* to a third form of energy.

All forgoing resistances and immunities are in addition to any immunity the mummy might have as a result of the *elemental command* power (see Chapter IV).



## III: TYPICAL POWERS

### Spells That Are Useless Against All Mummies

#### Wizard Spells

Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*	Blindness
Charm monster	Charm person
Cloudkill	Contagion
Death spell	Emotion
Enervation	Energy drain
Eyebite	Fear
Finger of death	Fire charm
Haste	Hold animal
Hold monster	Hold person
Hypnotic pattern	Hypnotism
Insatiable thirst*	Irritation
Magic jar	Mass charm
Mass suggestion	Otto's irresistible dance
Phantasmal killer	Power word, blind
Power word, kill	Power word, stun
Scare	Sepia snake sigil
Sleep	Slow
Suggestion	Suffocate*
Symbol	Vampiric touch
Wail of the banshee*	

\* Spell described in *Tome of Magic*.

#### Priest Spells

Accelerate healing†	Age creature†/ restore youth*
Animal growth	Anti-animal shell
Breath of life†/ breath of death*	Chaotic sleep†
Cloak of bravery/ Cloak of fear	Command
Creeping doom	Cure blindness/ cause blindness*
Cure deafness/ cause deafness*	Cure disease/ cause disease*
Cure critical wounds/ cause critical wounds*	Cure light wounds/ cause light wounds*
Cure serious wounds/ cause serious wounds*	Charm person or mammal
Heal/harm*	Hold animal

Hold person  
Mindshatter†  
Nap†

Regenerate/wither\*

Resurrection/  
destruction\*

Legal thoughts†  
Modify memory†  
Raise dead/  
slay living\*  
Restoration/  
energy drain\*  
Rigid thinking†

\* The common spell is listed, followed by its reversed form.

† Spell described in the *Tome of Magic*.

#### Special Weapons

##### Origin\*

Aboriginal  
Central/South American  
Chinese  
Egyptian/Mediterranean  
European

##### Weapon\*\*

Flint, copper  
Obsidian, flint  
Bronze, iron  
Copper, bronze  
Iron

\* The mummy's original cultural type—see Chapter II for more detailed descriptions regarding these creatures' origins and the various types of clothing one might expect them to wear.

\*\* The mummy is potentially vulnerable to silver weapons, like all undead creatures, and also to weapons made from one of the listed materials.

#### Rejuvenation

Rank*	Rate**	Rest***
First	5/day	1 week/1 day
Second	6/hour	1 day/1 day
Third	12/hour	1 day/1 hour
Fourth	1/minute	1 hour/1 hour
Fifth	2/minute	1 hour/none

\* Mummies with first- or second-rank rejuvenation usually cannot recover if their hit points have been reduced to 0 or less; these mummies are destroyed when defeated in



### III: TYPICAL POWERS

combat. Mummies with third-rank rejuvenation usually cannot recover if their hit points have been reduced to -10 or less. Mummies with fourth- or fifth-rank rejuvenation usually can recover even if their bodies have been completely destroyed.

\*\* The number before the slash shows the hit points a mummy of the listed rank usually regains during each time period. The entry after the slash shows the minimum interval a mummy of the listed rank usually requires to regain any hit points through rejuvenation. Both numbers can vary.

\*\*\* This shows the interval a mummy of the listed rank must spend completely at rest when rejuvenating. The number before the slash shows the interval of rest required before the mummy begins regaining any hit points. The number after the slash shows the interval of time the mummy must rest after it stops rejuvenating—during the restive stage, the mummy is effectively helpless. Rest times are added to any time actually spent regaining hit points. These numbers can vary according to the DM's needs and designs.

#### Disease

Diseases inflicted by the ancient dead come in a variety of unpleasant forms. The most common of these is mummy rot, whose affects are summarized below:

Rank	Fatality*
First	1d6 months
Second	1d12 weeks
Third	1d8 days
Fourth	1d6 days
Fifth	1d3 days

\* The usual interval that passes before the victim dies from the disease. This number can vary greatly. Nonmagical cures are 100% ineffective against mummy rot. Only a *cure disease* spell or similar magic is effective.

**Other effects:** As Van Richten has noted, untreated mummy rot has several catastrophic effects on the victim.

❖ First-rank mummy rot permanently reduces the victim's Charisma score by 2 points for each month the disease goes untreated. While afflicted, the victim gains no benefits from the various *cure wounds* spells, although a *regenerate* spell can restore lost hit points (it has no effect on the disease). The victim can recover hit points through rest, but at 10% of the normal rate—1 hit point per 10 days of light activity or 3 hit points per 10 days of complete rest. Nonmagical interventions such as care from a character with the healing and herbalism proficiencies are ineffective.

❖ Mummy rot of the second rank permanently reduces the victim's Charisma score by 2 points for each week the disease goes untreated; magical healing and natural hit-point recovery are affected as above.

❖ Third-rank or higher mummy rot permanently reduces the victim's Strength and Constitution scores by 1 point each day and permanently reduces Charisma by 2 points each day. While afflicted, the victim cannot recover lost hit points by any means except a *wish*. After 1d6 hours, the victim is racked by convulsions, which impose a -2 penalty upon all ability checks and make spellcasting or spell memorization impossible. This type of mummy rot can be cured only by a combination of *cure disease* and *regeneration* spells; a *cure disease* spell cast on its own relieves all symptoms, but the victim suffers a relapse 24 hours later if a *regeneration* spell is not also administered.

❖ Victims who die while afflicted with mummy rot decay rapidly unless quickly embalmed; the victim cannot be raised from death unless both a *cure disease* spell and a *raise dead* or *resurrection* spell are cast within one hour. Note that if either of the latter two spells are unsuccessful (the character fails the resurrection survival roll), the victim becomes



## III: TYPICAL POWERS

an undead creature; see the RAVENLOFT® Campaign Setting boxed set for details.

**Alternate Forms of Disease:** As Van Richten points out, the ancient dead's disease powers encompass several types of effects, though mummy rot is the most common. When a disease power takes a different form, it should reflect the mummy's origins and motivations. A mummy that was once a notorious thief or spy, for example, might blind its victims (having once depended on avoiding sight). A mummy who once kept a guilty secret might affect its opponent's heartbeat (having once been false-hearted). The DM should feel free to assign an appropriate game effect.

❖ *Blindness:* Victims might suffer blurred or limited vision, or lose their sight altogether. They could develop sensitivity to bright light. Game penalties for blindness or reduced vision can include attack roll penalties, the inability to read, and similar impediments. Advanced cases can lead to a reduction of the victim's Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom score (due to the infection spreading to the brain). Mummy-induced blindness might be removed by *cure blindness*, *cure disease*, or *heal* spells.

❖ *Cardiac arrest:* Victims might suffer shortness of breath, the inability to fight or run, the loss of hit points, or death. Game penalties can include penalties to attack and damage rolls, penalties to ability checks, and reductions of the character's Strength or Constitution score. The cardiac arrest might be cured by a *slow* spell (to quiet the wildly beating heart) or by *cure disease*, *heal*, or *restoration* spells.

❖ *Poison:* The mummy's touch might simply be toxic. The poison could be deadly, paralytic, or debilitating. Untreated poisons can reduce the victim's ability scores, cause blindness or deafness, or cause portions of the victim's body to wither. The victim might be cured by *neutralize poison*, *cure disease*, *remove curse*, or *heal* spells.

❖ *Spasms:* The portion of the victim's body

touched by a mummy becomes shaky. There is a noncumulative 10% chance each hour that the afflicted area suffers random jerks and fits, affecting the victim as follows (generally, 1d4 plus the value of the power rank in rounds):

**Head:** No spellcasting or attacks are possible during the round when the spasm occurs. Movement is reduced by one third.

**Arm:** No spellcasting is possible during the round the spasm occurs. If the shield arm is afflicted, any shield bonus is lost. If the weapon arm is afflicted, no attacks are possible.

**Leg:** Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class and saving throws are lost during the round in which the spasm occurs. Movement rate is reduced by half and any movement or fighting requires the victim to make a successful Dexterity check or stumble and fall.

**Torso:** No movement, spellcasting, or combat is possible during the round in which the spasm occurs. If the victim is mounted or in an unstable position (such as climbing), the fit prompts an appropriate ability check with a -5 (-25%) penalty to determine whether the character falls.

Some mummies can evoke a spasm in a victim each round, if they have an unobstructed view of that victim. The victim can attempt a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the evoked spasm.

❖ *Multiple effects:* Very powerful mummies might have disease powers that create multiple effects; for example, rot and spasms or blindness and poison.

### Fear

A mummy's fear aura usually takes effect on sight; it applies only at the beginning of each encounter with the mummy. Unlike normal fear checks, mummy-inspired fear is a direct assault on the victim's will. Each victim viewing the mummy must successfully save vs. spell or become paralyzed with fright for a variable number of rounds, as shown in the table below.



## III: TYPICAL POWERS

If a character views a mummy under circumstances that normally would cause a fear check, there is a -1 penalty to the saving throw vs. spell. Mummies with powerful fear auras impose additional penalties upon the save. Numbers, however, can bolster the victims' courage; for every six people in a group, the saving throw improves by +1. All humans enjoy a +2 to the saving throw, and Wisdom bonuses apply as well. As always, the Dungeon Master may apply bonuses and penalties as befit the situation.

Rank	Modifier*	Duration**
First	0	1d4 rounds
Second	-1	1d6 rounds
Third	-2	1d8 rounds
Fourth	-3	1d10 rounds
Fifth	-4	1d12 rounds

\* The penalty to the save vs. spell. This number can vary by 1 or 2 points in either direction.

\*\* The interval that victims who fail their saving throws remain paralyzed with fright.

**Alternate Forms of Fear:** A mummy's fear aura need not take effect on sight. The mummy might have the ability to create fear in a cone, similar to a *fear* spell, or to create fear by gaze. A fear gaze usually affects one creature each round. Targets need not meet the mummy's gaze to be affected. Victims who meet the gaze suffer an additional -2 saving throw penalty.

❖ If a mummy's aura of paralyzing fear does not take effect on sight, its opponents might be subject to normal fear checks when they see the mummy. All the rules governing fear checks (from the *RAVENLOFT® Campaign Setting* boxed set) apply.

❖ *Flight:* A mummy's fear aura might induce panic or flight. This version of fear uses the saving throw rules given above, but the results of failure are the same as a failed fear check, except that the victim is *fearstruck* (see Chapter III of the *RAVENLOFT* boxed set) for the

number of rounds given on the table above.

❖ *Dread:* The mummy's aura causes opponents to lose all hope; they believe that the mummy is invincible. All attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks suffer a negative modifier equal to the fear power's rank. The dread persists for as long as the victims can see the creature.

### Infravision

All mummies can see in the dark, usually having infravision with a 30-foot range. Those that retain demihuman abilities have even better infravision (former range *plus* 30 feet).

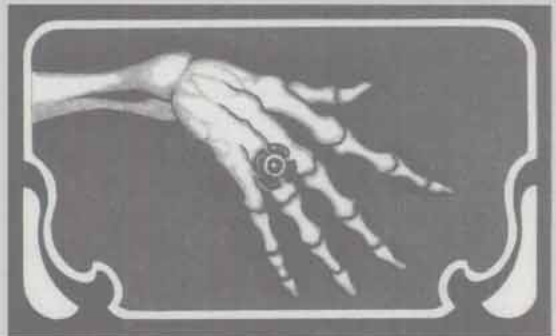
### Enhanced Strength

Mummies are supernaturally strong. Those that have retained warrior abilities or high racial Strength scores might be even stronger.

Rank	Score*	Melee Damage**
First	18/76	1d8
Second	18/91	1d12
Third	18/00	2d8
Fourth	19	3d6
Fifth	20	3d8

\* The mummy's effective Strength ability score.

\*\* The amount of damage a humanoid mummy can inflict with one unarmed physical attack.





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### Animal Mummies

An animal mummy's Armor Class and Hit Dice are determined by its power rank.

Type*	#Att	Base Damage**	Base Move†
Baboon	1	1d6	12
Bull	1	3d6	12
Cat, domestic	2	1d4/1d2	9
Cat, great	3	1d6/1d6/3d4	15
Crocodile	2	2d6/4d4	6, Sw 12
Dog	1	3d4	12
Eagle/hawk	2	1d4/1d4	1, Fl 30(C)
Elephant	5	2d10/2d10 2d8/2d8/2d8	15
Horse/camel	2	1d8/1d8	18
Snake, constrictor	2	1d4/1d8	9
Snake, venomous	1	1d3	12

\* The general type of animal that has been mummified. The sampling here is intended only as an example, and the DM should feel free to create more types as needed.

\*\* The amount of damage an animal mummy of the first rank inflicts. It inflicts +1 damage per attack for each rank beyond the first. For example, an animal mummy of the fifth rank has a +4 damage bonus.

† Animal mummies of the first or second rank move at 2/3 their base rates. Animal mummies of the third or fourth rank move at their base rates. Animal mummies of the fifth rank move at 4/3 their base rate. For example, a bull mummy of the first rank moves at a rate of 9, and a bull mummy of the fifth rank moves at a rate of 15.

Additional attacks, attributed to the natural animals' abilities, should be added to the mummies' skills as well.

◆ *Bull:* A bull mummy charging at least 40 feet inflicts an extra 1d6 damage from its horns, plus

an extra 1d8 trampling damage.

◆ *Cat, domestic:* These mummies impose a -3 penalty upon opponents' surprise rolls. If a cat mummy is successful with both melee attacks, it can rake its opponent with its rear claws for an additional 1d4 damage.

◆ *Cat, great:* These mummies can leap up to 30 feet. If both forepaw attacks are successful, they can rake with their rear claws for an additional 2d6 damage.

◆ *Crocodile:* These mummies impose a -2 penalty upon their opponents' surprise rolls.

◆ *Elephant:* These mummies cannot direct more than two attacks at a single opponent.

◆ *Snake, venomous:* Living creatures bitten by these mummies must successfully save vs. poison with a -1 penalty per power rank of the mummy or die immediately. The recommended strength of the poison is B-F (see the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*), determined by the creature's power rank and the relative strength of the adventuring party.

### Monster and Composite Mummies

A monster mummy uses its normal Hit Dice, plus 1 or 2 additional Hit Dice per power rank. Monster mummies gain a +2 bonus to all damage rolls per power rank. A monster mummy uses its normal Armor Class or one commensurate with its power rank, whichever is better. A monster mummy's movement rate is determined in the same manner as that of an animal mummy.

Composite mummies almost always have a human head or torso, with various monster or animal parts attached. Generally, the Hit Dice and Armor Class are determined by power rank. Movement rate, number of attacks, and damage are figured by the body parts. A specimen of the third rank with a great cat's head, a human torso, a griffin's claws, and a great cat's legs would have 7-9 Hit Dice, attack three times per round (3d4+4/1d4+6/1d4+6), and would have a movement rate of 15.



## IV: SALIENT POWERS



*ear and tremble, you interlopers, unbelievers, and despoilers, for the king will come . . . The eyes of the gods light his face, the might of the gods sustains his limbs. He shall eat your magic for his morning meal, his breath shall wither your flesh, his voice shall stop your hearts, he shall gulp down your spirits. . . .*

—from the private journal of Dr. Van Richten, translated from a Har'Akiri tomb inscription

Having dealt with the paranormal abilities common to most ancient dead, I turn now to powers I have encountered only in specific mummies. On the pages that follow, I present my notes regarding 16 paranormal abilities that mark any mummy possessing them as extraordinary. Mummy hunters who encounter these powers should take them as a warning that their foe is beyond the typical mold.

The reader can take some heart in the knowledge that even the most powerful mummies seldom have more than two or three such abilities, but be wary. Among mummies of the third and higher ranks, individuals which wield three or four of these abilities are not unheard of. The most terrible ancient dead foe I have confronted displayed *seven* salient abilities (and it might very well have possessed one or two additional powers that I did not observe)!

### Alter Form

**M**ummies with this ability have command over their own shapes. In the example with which I am most familiar, the mummy could affect a true and lasting change over its body. Its preference for the guises of a wolf and a bat led my companions and me to mistake it for a vampire. In the end, only the extreme sense of

caution I have developed in my years of undead hunting saved me, and then only because I was prepared to deal with an unusual vampire.

Other mummies are not limited to the forms of animals, and they can assume the forms of living people; sometimes this is the form that was theirs in life, other times it is any form the mummy finds convenient.

### Animate Objects

**A**mummy with this power can imbue inanimate objects with mobility. Unlike a ghost's ability to inhabit objects, the mummy's spirit does not enter an animated object. Instead, the mummy transfers some of its own positive energy into the objects, temporarily giving them the semblance of life.

Mummies with this power can be extremely formidable. Not only can they be misidentified as ghosts or poltergeists, but a mummy's tomb is often filled with a wide variety of statuary and other items which can pose a deadly threat when they gain the semblance of life and move to the attack.

### Charm

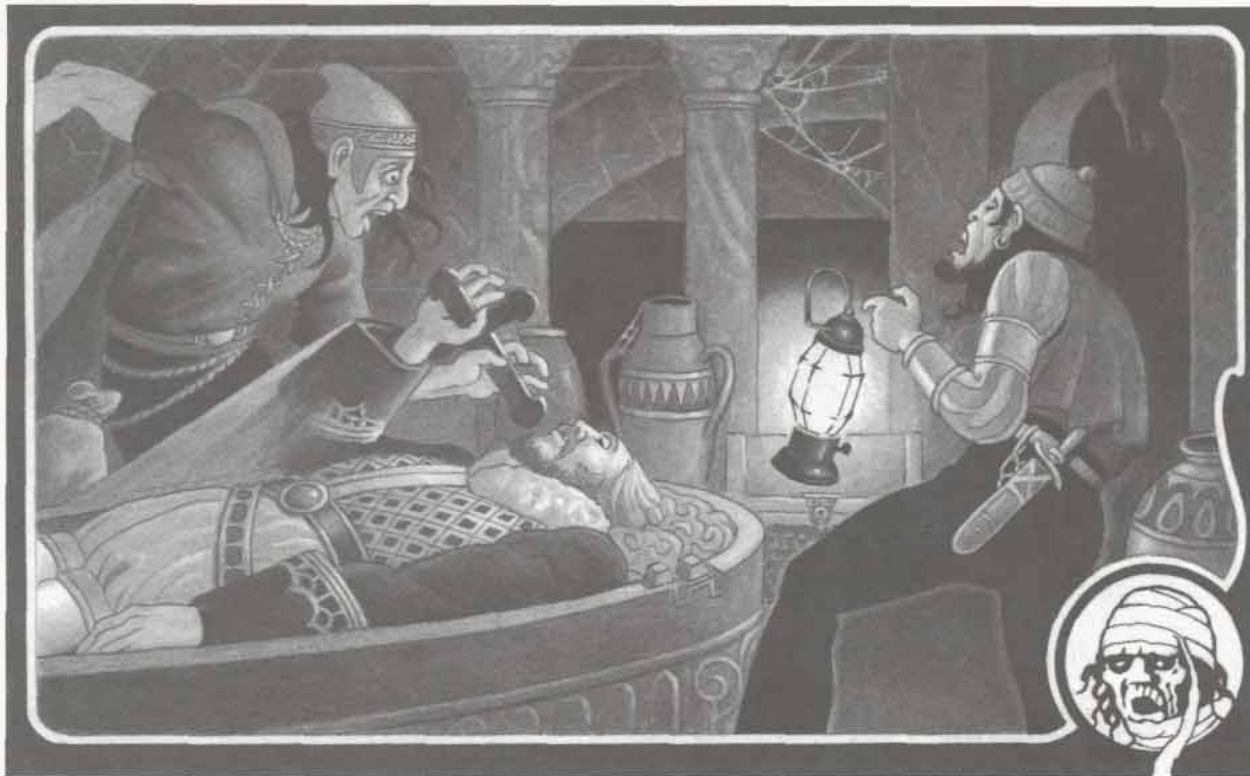
**B**eing creatures with worldly minds, the ancient dead can exert great power over animals, beasts, and sometimes men. A feeble will often provides an unlatched gate through which a foe can enter and usurp control of the victim.

### Curse

**A**mong all the denizens of this land of Mists, only the Vistani are more greatly feared for their power to curse than are the ancient dead. Fortunately for mummy hunters, the ancient dead are much more likely to dwell in places that are protected by curses than they are to lay their own. Nevertheless, mummies are strong-willed and covetous beings, and their potential for vengeance is high.



## IV: SALIENT POWERS



My collection of documents contains several accounts of adventurers who have succumbed to mysterious ailments, strange bouts of ill-luck, and similar misfortunes soon after encounters with mummies. I have no doubt that several of these incidents can be attributed to the ability some of the ancient dead have to delay the worst effects of their powers. Still, I have several accounts where the victims actually witnessed a mummy speak a curse against its attackers. I also have an account of a mummy who committed a curse in writing:

*Our foray into the ancient tomb was not without reward or penalty. Of the former, we had recovered many baubles and the collection of clay tablets which Pikering had deemed so vital to the final conclusion of our quest; we also had sent nearly a score of our foe's undead servants irrevocably into the hereafter. Of the*

*latter, we were burdened with festering wounds, which we soon put right.*

*When at last we gathered supplies, we found a notice written on modern parchment, but recorded in ancient script. It was addressed to "the foes of Ananka-Siphir" [which we knew to mean ourselves], and it read thus:*

*"Those who have raised their hands against me, who have dispatched my slaves, and taken what was mine; let them restore what has been stolen and trouble me no more. Woe to thee if thou heed not this warning, for the snake shall be against thee on land, the crocodile shall be against thee in the water, the hawk shall be against thee in the air, and flame shall be against thee wherever thou goest."*

*After reading the notice, we resolved to show Pikering the tablets without delay and set out for his home, which was some 20 miles distant. When we made camp that night, the broth we set to warm on the fire boiled over in a scalding*



## IV: SALIENT POWERS

spray. The fire, we noted, had not seemed particularly large or hot.

*By the time we entered the next town, the incident with the broth was all but forgotten. Forgotten that is, until we spotted the second notice, worded just like the first. The people on the streets seemed to sense our connection with the notice, and they shied away from us.*

*Later that evening, as we sat poring over the tablets in Piker's parlor, an eagle of monstrous size boldly flew through the open window and attacked us with all the ferocity of a mother defending its nest.*

*When we had slain the bird, and barred the window, Piker surveyed the wreckage of his parlor and warned us to disguise our true mission and to remove any more notices we might find. The curse, he surmised, drew power from every spirit who learned of it.*

—from the memoirs of Edmond Penn

### Command Undead

**A**mong the undead, there always seem to be a few individuals that have the power to bind other members of the walking dead to their service. The ancient dead are no exception, and mummy hunters should be prepared to face a cadre of lesser horrors before facing their true adversary.

This ability is not widespread among the ancient dead, and seems to be limited to those mummies who possessed power over others in life; however, I would not stake my reputation on this idea, and the reader should not stake his life on it, either.

### Create Undead

**M**any of the ancient dead possess the ability to create their own undead minions. Unlike vampires, ghosts, and lesser undead such as ghouls and wights, a mummy must take deliberate steps to create undead minions.

It seems likely that a mummy would be empowered only to create other mummies—like

begets like, even among the ancient dead. Spellcasting mummies, however, might easily have acquired enough dark knowledge to create many different types of undead, and probably have access to necromantic spells that can create minor undead such as skeletons and zombies.

### Delay

**S**ome mummies can withhold—for a time—the worst effects of whatever destructive powers they have. A mummy with this power might choose to delay the onset of its scabrous touch, for example, and when a victim suddenly develops the symptoms of mummy rot hours or even days later, it might be impossible to determine whence the infection came. This is particularly true if the mummy can alter its shape into an innocuous form (the mummy in one written account assumed the form of a brightly colored songbird). An *intact* or *pristine* mummy could also use this power to great effect.

### Elemental Command

**A**mummy's all-but-unbreakable tie to the mortal world can give it power over the earth itself, or the air above it. It might be possible for a mummy to have control over water or fire as well, but I do not know of such a creature.

### Grapple

**S**ome mummies grapple their victims rather than strike with their fists. It is nearly impossible for a mortal to extract himself from such a mummy's grasp, as these creatures are frequently as strong as any golem or vampire. I have heard tales of mummies whose wrappings were covered with a sticky resin that could literally glue an opponent to the mummy's body, but these do not come from what I consider a credible source.



## IV: SALIENT POWERS

### Illusion

**D**eception is a common weapon in the arsenal of the ancient dead. During my forays against mummies, I have encountered many false images. Some are harmless, simple recreations of the life the mummy once knew. Others distract or misdirect foes. Whatever their intention, illusions conceal the truth about a mummy, its plans, and its tomb. Astute hunters can sometimes tell a great deal about an ancient undead creature by the illusions it creates.

Some mummy illusions are mere tricks, shallow images that any careful adventurer can sweep aside. Very powerful mummies, however, can produce intense visions that seem to have mass, texture, and even scent. Only careful research or a spellcaster with an ample stock of divination spells can keep a party safe from these counterfeit sensations.

### Passage

**M**any parties of undead hunters have been dumbfounded by their foe's ability to seemingly pass through solid objects as though they were composed of thin air. Most creatures that possess this ability are non- or semicorporeal ghosts. It is possible, however, for the ancient dead to exercise a similar power. In one case, a mummy could create openings in the solid rock walls of its tomb. In another case, the mummy could literally vanish in one place and almost instantaneously reappear in another. A successful expedition into a tomb containing a mummy with this power requires careful planning and strong defensive tactics.

### Resist Magic

**A**s I have explained earlier in this chapter, a mummy's peculiar state of existence makes it immune to certain types of magical spells. There are some mummies, however, that have an even broader resistance to magic.

This resistance not absolute, and in less-powerful mummies there is a fair chance that any particular spell cast upon a mummy will take effect, though the group opposing the mummy would do well to have a contingency plan in mind should its spells fail. Nevertheless, a powerful mummy might be as impervious to most spells as it is to mundane weapons. If a spellcaster is fortunate, one or two spells might take effect, but most will not. In situations like these, it is best not to rely on one's spellcasters in combat. Of course, spells that have no direct effect upon the mummy are generally as efficient as ever, so wizards and priests remain valuable to their parties regardless of a given creature's magic resistance. There are many spells that can enhance or revivify the caster's companions, and these are generally more reliable than spells that are directed against one's foes.

### Retained Abilities

**B**ecause most ancient dead rise only after an elaborate burial rite, it should not be surprising that a significant portion of mummies are imbued with or have retained the abilities of a priest. In some cases, I believe that mummified priests actually become more powerful. It appears that deities whose portfolios include death, disease, or decay regard the act of mummification as a supreme act of devotion, and they "reward" their priests accordingly.

Mummies that have been formally interred and granted unlife usually retain some or all of their skills. Priest skills, as I mentioned above, are fully retained or even enhanced. If the power rank is high enough, memories and mundane professional skills often remain undiminished. Racial abilities are likely to be fully retained unless the mummy's power rank is very low. Nonpriest adventurer's skills are rare. Mummy fighters and thieves are not common. I have encountered mummy wizards, but these are exceptionally rare. Wizards who seek to live beyond death shun mummification and pursue lichdom instead.



## IV: SALIENT POWERS

### Summon Horde

**T**his power is similar to the ability to *charm animals*, except the mummy can compel large numbers of smaller creatures such as bats, insects, or spiders, to swarm and assail intruders. One of my earliest forays into a mummy tomb ended ignominiously when my companions and I were engulfed in a chattering wave of tiny scorpions. Coherent thought was all but impossible while submerged in that chitinous mass, and the thousands of pinpricks from grasping claws and needle-sharp stings all but drove us mad. It was as though we had been hurled naked into a field of malignant stinging nettles.



### Symbiosis

**W**hether by design or by inscrutable fate, a mummy's preserved body sometimes is home to more than one creature. Usually the mummy's skin or wrapping is infested with a species of deadly mold, which makes physical combat with the creature even more hazardous than it would otherwise be. In one bizarre case, my companions and I encountered a trio of skeletal mummies whose bones were crawling with strange, spectral worms. These loathsome creatures were hungry for living flesh, and did their best to leap from their hosts onto our exposed faces.

*... Finally, when our strength was all but exhausted, our fiery assault broke the mummies! Never had I seen undead creatures flee from a*

*battle unless banished by a priest. As the bandaged-wrapped horrors writhed in the flames, we gave chase to the fugitives. Tracking proved to be effortless, as one of the fleeing mummies obliged us by leaving a trail of emerald green splotches which appeared to eat away the turf.*

*We made good time in our pursuit, and soon overtook our quarry, but our exultation was to be short-lived. Sensing our nearness, the mummies disappeared into a ravine, where they regrouped and turned on us, forming a wedge. Once again we hurled our pots of flaming oil to great effect, and the wedge broke apart. A mummy swathed in smoking green wrappings sallied forth from the flickering mass. Before we could launch another volley of flaming oil, the creature was among us, roaring like an autumn wind and swatting everyone it could reach. I saw Ashlocke crumple under a blow, screaming, yet it wasn't the force of the blow that made him cry (though that must have been considerable); an ominous green stain spread over the woodsman's breast. Ashlocke's leather jerkin disappeared in an instant, converted to the same emerald slime we had seen on the trail. As the woodsman clawed at his chest, his gloved hand collapsed into slime as well. With a shudder and a scream of my own, I struck the monster with my sword, and it too collapsed into slime.*

—from the letters of Caulay the one-armed

### Weightlessness

**M**y studies have revealed an account of a mummy with a unique and baffling power. This creature had command over its own body weight and could render itself literally as light as a feather. This supernatural weightlessness allowed it to tread on water, run straight up vertical walls, and perform other astounding feats of mobility. I have heard additional accounts of mummies that could levitate, and another of a mummy that could fly through the air while locked in a stiff, upright posture. If these accounts are accurate, I suspect that the mummies they describe had this power.



## IV- SALIENT POWERS

### DM Notes

#### Alter Form

This power allows a mummy to change its physical appearance or form.

Rank	Uses*	Duration**
First	1	30 minutes
Second	2	60 minutes
Third	3	90 minutes
Fourth	4	unlimited
Fifth	N/A	variable

\* The typical number of times each day a mummy with the listed rank can use the power. In most cases, a mummy can make only one alteration to its form during each power use.

\*\* The maximum interval each power use lasts.

✦ At the first rank, this power allows a mummy to make an illusory change to its form. Except for duration, this is similar to the 1st-level wizard spell *change self*.

✦ Second-rank alter form allows a mummy to make a real, though limited, change to its form. Except for duration, this power is similar to the 2nd-level wizard spell *alter self*.

✦ At the third rank, this power allows a mummy to make a real and extensive change to its form. Except for duration, this power is similar to the 4th-level wizard spell *polymorph self*.

✦ At the fourth rank, this power functions as it does at the third rank, except that a mummy actually gains all the assumed form's powers. Except for duration, this power is similar to the 9th-level wizard spell *shape change*.

✦ At the fifth rank, a mummy can freely make extensive changes to its form during each power use. Except for duration, this power is exactly like the 9th-level wizard spell *shape change*. Typically, a mummy can use this

power one, two, or three times per day; the typical duration for each use is one hour plus 10 minutes for each Hit Die the mummy has.

✦ Some mummies have a fixed inventory of forms they can use. For example, a mummy with the alter form power of the third rank might be able to assume the forms of a monkey, a cat, and an eagle, each once per day. Typically, a mummy with such a limit to its alter form power gains the duration and extent of change appropriate to the next higher rank; thus, the mummy in the previous example would gain the full abilities of each form and could maintain its assumed form for an unlimited time. Mummies with a limited repertoire of forms usually have limited power over the normal animals whose forms they can assume. This is similar to the 1st-level priest spell *animal friendship*.

#### Animate Objects

Rank	Size*	Damage
First	Tiny	1d8
Second	Small	2d8
Third	Man	3d10
Fourth	Large	4d8
Fifth	Huge	5d10

\* This indicates how large an object a mummy with the listed rank can animate, using the size categories in the *Monstrous Manual* and the various *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM*® volumes. A mummy can animate a single object of the size listed, two objects of the next smaller size, four of the next size smaller than that, and so on. For example, a fifth-rank mummy could animate one huge object, two large ones, four man-sized objects, eight small ones or sixteen tiny objects.

✦ A mummy generally can animate objects for two hours per day per power rank. If multiple objects are put in motion, their time is cumulative. For example, a third-rank mummy



## IV: SALIENT POWERS

with this power can animate one object for a total of six hours or two objects for three hours each. A minimum duration of one minute is used each time an object is animated.

### Charm

A mummy with this ability can exert control over animals, persons, monsters, or any combination of the three.

❖ A mummy can charm a number of Hit Dice or levels of *persons* equal to three times its own Hit Dice.

❖ A mummy can charm a number of Hit Dice of *animals* equal to twice its own Hit Dice.

❖ A mummy can charm a number of Hit Dice of *monsters* equal to its own Hit Dice.

### Command Undead

A mummy with this ability can command undead creatures as if it were an evil cleric of a level equal to its Hit Dice. If a mummy has retained any priest abilities, it commands undead at its priest level plus two, or at a level equal to its Hit Dice, whichever is greater.

The number of undead that can be commanded at any one time is usually three times the mummy's Hit Dice, but it can be higher or lower. If the mummy also has the create undead power, any undead it has created do not count toward this limit.

### Create Undead

In addition to spells such as *animate dead*, some mummies understand the process of embalming and the funerary rituals required to create new mummies. Usually the victim must have died while afflicted with mummy rot (death *from* mummy rot isn't a requirement). Creating a mummy of the third rank or less requires 12–18 hours of effort to prepare the body, and a further 12–24 hours before the spirit becomes permanently fixed into the

preserved body. Mummies of the fourth or fifth rank require very careful embalming and funerary rituals on a massive scale; see Chapter VI for more details. It is also possible for spellcasting mummies to know some of the necromantic spells described in *9412 Van Richten's Guide to the Lich*.

### Curse

Most mummies of at least average (8–10) Intelligence are capable of speaking a *curse of vengeance* against anyone who defaces the their tombs through theft or vandalism, whether the offender is directly present or not. A mummy's tomb and the goods stored within it represent the creature's ties to the mortal world and to life itself. To a mummy, any threat or damage to these ties is an ultimately profane act deserving the most grievous penalty.

### Delay

This power allows a mummy to postpone the effects of one or more of its other powers. A mummy's disease power is the one most commonly delayed.

Rank	Delay*
First	30 minutes
Second	1 hour
Third	2 hours
Fourth	1 day
Fifth	1 week

\* The maximum interval a power can be delayed; a mummy can opt for a shorter delay if it wishes.

### Elemental Command

A mummy with this power has control of one of the four classical elements: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water.

❖ At the first rank, a mummy can produce



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minor effects involving its element once per day, as a spellcaster of a level equal to its Hit Dice: *dust devil* (Air), *burning hands* (Fire), *wall of fog* (Water), or *grease* (Earth—in this case the “grease” is a slippery material similar to graphite).

❖ At the second rank, a mummy can produce the appropriate minor effect from the list above twice per day, and it gains a +1 saving throw bonus against any attack based on the element it can control.

❖ At the third rank, a mummy can produce effects from the list above three times per day, and it can create the following effect (related to its element) once per day: *control winds* (Air), *quench fire* (Fire), *transmute water to dust* (Water), or *rock to mud* (Earth). The mummy gains a +2 saving throw bonus against attacks based on the element it can control, and suffers –1 from each die of damage inflicted by such attacks, even if the save wasn’t successful.

❖ At the fourth power rank, a mummy can create all the appropriate effects listed above, and it is immune to attacks based on the element it controls. Once per day the mummy can create 2 cubic feet of its element for each of its Hit Dice. This ability has a range of 100 yards.

*Air:* Appears as a wave that knocks down any creature of *huge* size or smaller, unless the victim successfully saves vs. breath weapon. The wave is 2 feet thick and as long and wide as necessary to accommodate its volume. The wave otherwise acts like a *wind wall* spell.

*Water:* Appears as a stream that snuffs out any normal fire it contacts and knocks down any *huge* size or smaller target, unless the victim successfully saves vs. breath weapon with a –1 penalty. The stream is 1 foot in diameter and as long as necessary to accommodate its volume.

*Fire:* Appears as a sphere of searing flame large enough to accommodate its volume. Flammable objects within the sphere burst into flame (equipment held by a character remains

intact if the character makes a successful saving throw). Creatures within the sphere suffer 12d4+12 points of damage, though they can attempt a save vs. breath weapon for half damage.

*Earth:* Appears in any solid shape the mummy desires and otherwise functions like a *wall of stone* spell, except that it cannot be dispelled. The stone weighs 150–170 pounds per cubic foot.

❖ At the fifth power rank, a mummy can conjure a 16-Hit Die elemental of the appropriate type once per month. The elemental’s appearance is usually accompanied by a cloud of billowing mists; this effect is not entirely theatrical, as the Mists of Ravenloft cooperate to form the elemental out of the demiplane itself. The resulting elemental is a twisted, insane creature; it is mostly composed of a pure element, but the remainder of the creature is formed of the same corrupted matter from which Ravenloft is made.

The elemental is chaotic evil and consumed by an insane rage that causes it to fearlessly attack the nearest creature before it moves on to its next victim. No force of less than divine power can control the elemental, but the summoning mummy can attempt a save vs. breath weapon each turn to banish the creature into the Mists.

The corrupted material in the elemental imbues it with additional powers:

*Fire:* Everything the elemental touches burns for 2d6 rounds (nonliving matter burns away at the rate of 1 cubic foot per round). Air turns to smoke, creating a cloud 50 feet across that obscures vision (vision is reduced to one quarter within the cloud). Creatures suffer 1d4 points of damage for each round they burn.

*Water:* All water and liquids containing water within 30 feet become putrefied—including holy water and potions. Living creatures touched must successfully save vs. spell or suffer a debilitating disease per the *cause disease* spell.

*Air:* The air becomes turbulent within 50 feet



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of the elemental. Vision is reduced to 0 within this cloud. Random electrical discharges require any creature in the area to successfully save vs. death each round or suffer 2d4 points of damage (the elemental is immune). Living creatures touched must successfully save vs. spell or they become unable to breathe for 1d4 rounds (-2 or -10% penalty to all die rolls for duration).

**Earth:** Everything the elemental touches turns to stone. The air within 20 feet fills with graveyard dust, obscuring vision. Living creatures within the area must hold their breaths or choke and suffer 1d4 points of damage each round. Stone, crystal, and metal touched must successfully save vs. blow or crumble to dust (5 cubic feet of material can be affected at one time). Living creatures must successfully save vs. petrification or be turned to stone.

### Grapple

Mummies with this power make two normal melee attacks, inflicting melee damage according to the mummy Strength table below. If both melee attacks hit, the victim is enfolded in the mummy's arms and crushed or strangled. A victim can win free of a mummy's grapple by scoring a throw or gouge on the wrestling table (see the *Player's Handbook*), by inflicting damage on the mummy with a weapon (the mummy's iron grip imposes a -4 attack penalty), or through other methods determined by the DM.

Rank	Score*	Damage**
First	21	2d8
Second	22	2d10
Third	23	3d8
Fourth	24	3d10
Fifth	25	4d8

\* A mummy's effective Strength ability score when making wrestling or grappling attacks.

\*\* The amount of damage a mummy inflicts each round it grapples a victim.

### Illusion

Rank	Senses*	Area**
First	1	20
Second	2	40
Third	3	60
Fourth	4	80
Fifth	5	100

\* The number of senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell) that the mummy's illusion can affect.

\*\* The number of 10-foot cubes a single illusion of the listed rank can fill. A mummy can opt to create smaller illusions. Note that mobile illusions, such as creatures, cannot leave the area of effect.

❖ A mummy's illusions generally last as long as the mummy concentrates on the effect, plus one turn per power rank once concentration stops.

❖ A mummy usually can create an illusion in any area it can see, regardless of range.

❖ A mummy with an illusion rank of third or higher usually can "program" its illusions as if it were using the 5th-level wizard spell *advanced illusion*. The mummy can create one such illusion each day.

❖ A mummy with an illusion rank of fourth or higher can create illusions with quasireal components as if using the 4th-level wizard spell *shadow monsters* or the 5th-level wizard spell *shadow magic*. The mummy can create three special illusions each day, either quasireal or programmed.

❖ A mummy with an illusion rank of fifth can create quasireal illusions as if using the 5th-level wizard spell *demi-shadow monsters* or the 6th-level wizard spell *demi-shadow magic*. The mummy can create four special illusions each day, either quasireal or programmed.



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### Passage

This ability allows a mummy to pass through solid rock, earth, wood, or other common materials as though it were casting the 7th-level wizard spell *phase door*, which creates a passage usable only by the caster. The mummy can move directly through the passage or it can linger in it for one turn per power rank. A mummy typically can create one passage per power rank per hour. The length of the magical passage a mummy creates depends on its power rank:

Rank	Length*	Uses**
First	1 foot	1
Second	10 feet	1
Third	25 feet	1
Fourth	50 feet	2
Fifth	75 feet	3

\* The maximum length a passage can have. The passage need not be open at both ends, and the mummy can use it to create a hiding place for itself in objects that are too large to allow passage. If a mummy's passage rank is high enough, it can use this power multiple times to extend the length of a passage.

\*\* The number of times a mummy can use a passage before it is dispelled. Note that only the mummy or creatures accompanied by the mummy can use the passage.

### Resist Magic

Rank	Magic Resistance*	Class Bonus**
First	10%	+5%
Second	20%	+10%
Third	30%	+15%
Fourth	40%	+20%
Fifth	50%	+25%

\* A mummy's magic resistance percentage at the listed power rank.

\*\* If a mummy could cast spells of any type during life, its magic resistance is increased by the listed amount. A mummy does not receive the bonus if it belonged to a spellcasting class, but had not achieved a level sufficient to actually cast spells. For example, a 1st-level bard or a 7th-level ranger would not qualify for the bonus.

### Retained Abilities

The transition between life and unlife often wipes clean the subject's memory—this usually is true for mummies of the third rank or lower. Fourth- and fifth-rank mummies retain their previous skills.

Once created, a mummy cannot gain new experience levels.

### Racial Abilities

✦ *Elves*: Mummies from any elf stock (including drow and half-elves) gain enhanced infravision (an extra 30 feet of range). The unusually long elf life span often produces mummies with high *invulnerability* and *rejuvenation* powers. Mummies of elf stock retain special weapon skills only if they also retain some relevant class ability. The elf resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells becomes irrelevant to the ancient dead. Drow mummies retain their magic resistance or gain magic resistance commensurate with their power rank, whichever is higher.

✦ *Dwarves*: Mummies of dwarf stock receive enhanced infravision (extra 30-foot range) and retain whatever saving throw bonuses they had in life. Dwarf mummies retaining any class abilities also retain their abilities regarding stonework and mining. Dwarf mummies often possess superior forms of the *passage* ability and often have some form of the *earth elemental control* power.

✦ *Gnomes*: Mummies from gnome stock receive enhanced infravision (extra 30 foot



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range) and retain whatever saving throw bonuses they had in life. Gnome mummies that have retained any class abilities also retain their abilities regarding stonework and mining. Gnome mummies often possess superior forms of the *illusion* ability.

❖ *Halflings*: Mummies from any halfling stock possess infravision to 60 feet and retain whatever saving throw bonuses they had in life. Halflings that have retained any class abilities also retain their ability with slings and thrown weapons. Mummies from stout stock retain their direction sense and ability to detect slopes if they have a class ability.

❖ *Humanoids*: Most humanoid races do not practice funerary customs elaborate enough to create mummies. When encountered at all, humanoid mummies are created servitors or naturally preserved creatures of the third rank or less.

### Class Abilities

❖ *Priests*: Priest abilities of all kinds appear to survive the transformation from living being to mummy very well. Not only do most priests become fairly powerful mummies (usually third-rank or higher), but priests of evil deities often increase in level when they become mummies, as their respective deities (or the dark powers) are likely to find such a transformation an attractive one.

Priests of deities whose portfolios include death, disease, curses, forbidden knowledge, or deceit often gain several levels when becoming mummies. Specialty priests of evil retain all their spells and granted abilities.

Specialty priests of good and neutral deities generally retain most of their spells and granted abilities. A priest's transformation into an evil monster tends to sever contact with a good deity, but evil deities or the dark powers step in to fill the gap. Note that a usurped mummy might retain contact with its good deity so long as it seeks to further the deity's interests or

seeks its own final rest. Such a mummy probably would not have an evil alignment.

Evil mummies who were once good priests usually receive spells more in keeping with their new roles. Healing spells usually can be cast only in their reversed forms, for example. The ability to turn other undead is always lost. Granted abilities involving divination, combat, and warding usually are retained. Granted healing powers usually disappear or become reversed.

❖ *Rogues*: Thieves tend to die ignominious deaths and receive burials that are not aimed at preserving the body, so thief mummies are rare. However, an infamous figure or the head of a guild might find himself the subject of veneration, which could lead to mummification and ancient dead status. If such a character does become a mummy, his abilities are largely unaffected. The ability to move silently increases to 95%. Climb walls, pick pockets, and open locks abilities are reduced by 50%.

Bards retain most of their abilities; however the ability to influence reactions and inspire allies is lost, even if the mummy is in a preserved or pristine state of preservation. The vital spark that makes these abilities possible in a bard is absent from a mummy. The mummy might, however, gain the charm ability.

❖ *Warriors*: Warriors generally retain all their skills after becoming mummies, including multiple attacks and specialization.

A paladin who becomes an evil mummy loses all special powers and becomes a simple fighter. If the paladin had a war horse, the mount does its best to destroy the mummy (a task that is probably beyond its means). Retaining paladin status in the case of becoming a *good* mummy is extremely rare, as most paladins are likely to consider themselves compromised by the transformation; the faith of the character in him or herself is at least as important as that of the patron deity.

A ranger who becomes an evil mummy retains all stealth, combat, and spellcasting



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abilities. The ranger's followers, if there are any, shun the mummy and might try to destroy it. The ranger's animal empathy ability is lost, though the mummy might gain the charm animals ability.

❖ *Wizards:* The effects of mummification on wizard abilities are unpredictable. Often the ability to cast spells is lost altogether. The transformation to undeath, with its flood of positive and divine energy, disrupts the complex mental patterns that make the casting of wizard spells possible. Equally often, a mummy is physically unable to speak or perform somatic components.

Unless its mummy form is intact or pristine, a wizard loses one or more levels. Most mummies cannot learn new spells, though they can replace lost spell books. Mummies who were necromancers in life usually can learn new spells, to the limit of their Intelligence scores. Wizard mummies are likely to be wild mages.

### Summon Horde

A mummy does not have complete control over the creatures that make up the horde, but can direct them to swarm in any area within sight; the effect is similar to a *summon insects* spell. A typical horde lasts 1d4 rounds and has a movement rate of 18. A swarm obscures vision in its area of effect.

Rank	Volume*	Damage**
First	5 cu. ft.	0/2
Second	10 cu. ft.	2/1d4+2
Third	20 cu. ft.	3/1d6+3
Fourth	40 cu. ft.	4/1d8+4
Fifth	60 cu. ft.	5/1d10+5

\* The maximum cubic volume a horde can occupy without effectively dispersing. Generally, a horde can attack one man-sized creature per 5 cubic feet of volume.

\*\* The amount of damage victims typically suffer when attacked by a horde. The number



before the slash is the damage suffered each round if a victim does nothing except try to fight off the horde. The number after the slash is the damage suffered if a victim ignores the horde. Other possible effects include:

❖ *Poison:* The creatures in the horde are venomous; such creatures might inflict less damage than indicated, but carry a deadly or debilitating poison. Victims can attempt a saving throw vs. poison each round to avoid the effect.

❖ *Incapacitation:* The stings and bites inflicted by the horde are so distracting and painful that a victim is rendered helpless until the horde departs. Victims can attempt a saving throw vs. spell each round to avoid the effect. This type of horde might or might not inflict actual damage.



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❖ **Disease:** The creatures are infected with some malady that they can pass on to their victims unless the victims successfully save vs. poison each round. The DM can assign a specific disease or treat the horde's attack as a *cause disease* spell. Specific diseases typically take 3d12 hours to develop; effects include:

**Blindness:** The victim's eyes and eyelids become swollen and useless. A *cure blindness* spell restores sight for 1d4 days, but the condition persists until the disease is cured.

**Coma:** The victim falls into a deep coma for 2d12 hours. During the coma, the victim's Constitution score decreases 1 point per hour. If the score drops to 0, the victim dies. Once the victim awakens, 1 point of lost Constitution returns for each hour of complete rest. If the disease is not cured, the coma recurs every 1d4+1 months for the rest of the victim's life.

**Fever:** The victim becomes incapacitated when a bout of alternating fever and chills strikes. The bout lasts 1d3 days, and the victim must make a *system shock* roll each day or perish. If the disease is not cured, the bouts of fever and chills recur every 1d4+1 months for the rest of the victim's life.

**Inflammation:** One of the victim's limbs (determined randomly) swells two to four times its normal size and becomes useless. The victim loses 1 point each of Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma. Further, if the afflicted limb is a leg, the victim's movement is reduced by half. The swelling persists until the victim is cured. A cured victim recovers lost ability scores after one day of complete rest or a *heal* spell.

**Insanity:** The victim falls into a maniacal fit that persists for 1d4 hours. During this time, the victim attacks any creature he can reach, biting and scratching like an animal. At the end of the fit the victim falls into a coma for 1d12 hours, and at the end of this interval the victim must make a *system shock* roll. If the roll is successful, the victim wakes up and appears to be normal. If the roll is unsuccessful, the victim

dies. If not cured, the fits recur every 1d4+1 months for the rest of the victim's life.

### Symbiosis

The body of a mummy with this "power" is home to another monster. Typical symbionts include the various deadly molds (yellow, brown, and russet). Other possibilities include green slime and other oozes and puddings, venomous arachnids, rot grubs, brain moles, and any other creature small enough to make a home in a mummy's body. The mummy itself always is immune to any special attacks that involve physical contact with the symbiont.

### Weightlessness

❖ At the first rank, a mummy with this power can move at a rate of 18. It can climb smooth surfaces whose slopes do not exceed 45° and vertical surfaces that are rough; the mummy moves at a rate of 9 while climbing. The mummy also can pass over soft surfaces such as mud, snow, or loose sand without becoming mired or leaving tracks.

❖ At the second rank, a mummy can move at a rate of 24. It can climb as described above, but the movement rate is 12. The mummy can pass over very soft surfaces such as bogs and quicksand without becoming mired.

❖ At the third rank, a mummy can move at a rate of 24. It can climb as described above at its normal movement rate, and can climb smooth, sheer surfaces at a rate of 12. The mummy can walk across any surface without leaving tracks; the mummy can even walk across water and other liquids with ease.

❖ At the fourth rank, a mummy has all the movement and climbing abilities listed above, and it can *levitate* each day for a number of turns equal to its Hit Dice.

❖ At the fifth rank, a mummy has all the abilities listed above, and can fly at a rate of 9 (D).



# IV: SALIENT POWERS





## V: WEAKNESSES



*was ever a fighter, so—one fight  
more,  
The best and the last!  
I would hate that death  
bandaged my eyes, and  
forbore,  
And bade me creep past.*

—Robert Browning

To orchestrate a victory over a mummy, it is usually necessary to discover and exploit some vulnerability or weakness in the monster. Often a group with the proper knowledge can utterly destroy a mummy. At other times, a mummy can prove to be indestructible. Even then, however, a mummy can be laid to rest. If not indefinitely, at least it can be stilled temporarily.

In this chapter I shall discuss what I know about the weaknesses of the ancient dead. All of what I am about to reveal is genuine. I have gleaned this information through both research and first-hand experience. Nevertheless, I must warn the reader that what follows is not an irrefutable guide to battling the ancient dead. What I am about to present are methods that have led to success *in the past*. What might prove efficacious in the future has yet to be revealed. Still, take heart! The mummy hunter's task is to discover the fatal chink in a mummy's defenses. A judicious mix of common sense, courage, and a smidgen of luck makes this goal attainable.

### Typical Weaknesses

**J**ust as I began my discussion of the ancient dead's powers by examining those few abilities that seem to appear almost universally among mummies, I shall begin this discussion with a few weaknesses that also appear to one degree or another in most of the ancient dead.

Be warned, however, that these ordinary weaknesses seldom lead to a mummy's ultimate defeat. Rather, they serve as checks and restraints that allow the hunter time to discover a monster's true and fatal weakness, or to gather the materials necessary to send the mummy back into slumber.

### Elemental Vulnerability

Most ancient dead creatures are vulnerable to attacks based on some form of energy or the elements: fire, cold, electricity, air, earth, and water. Of these, fire is the most frequently effective.

When used against a very weak mummy, fire can have a spectacular effect. Flames can consume a creature's embalmed body, feeding on the very resins and tinctures that preserve the mummy's tissues.

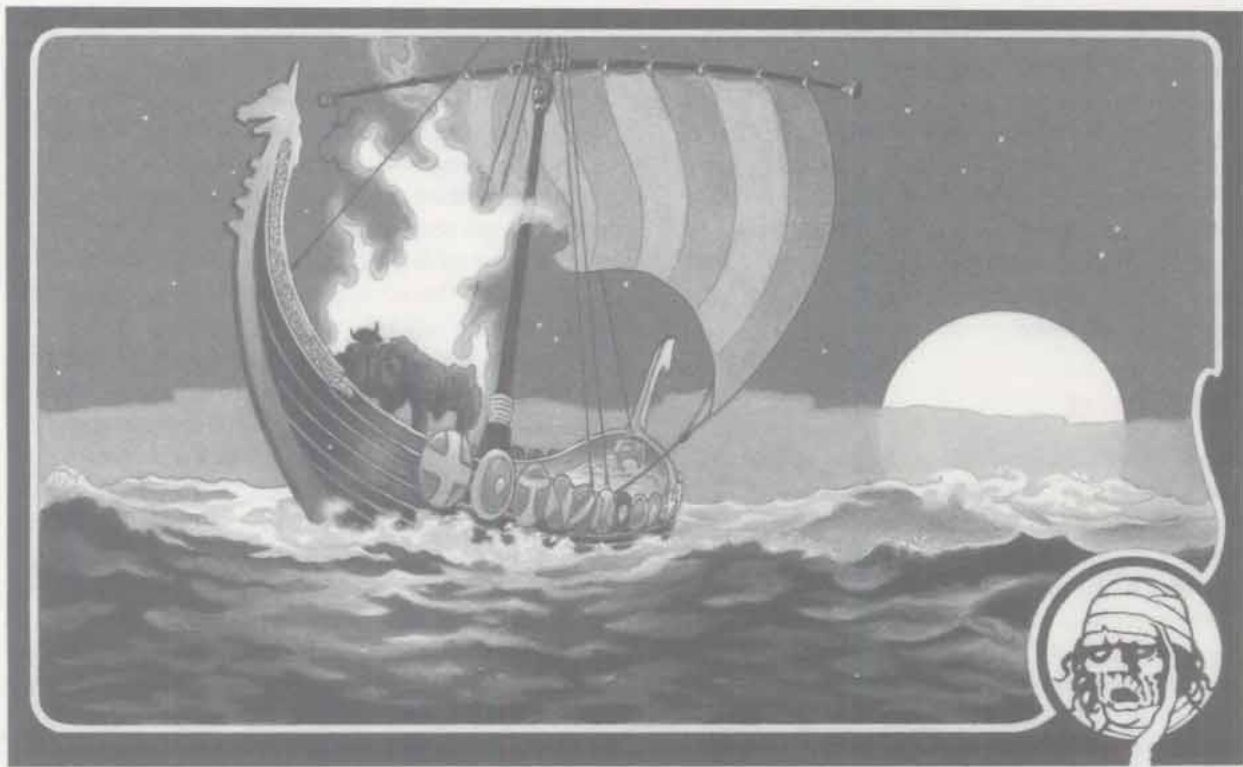
I believe that a mummy's susceptibility to fire is partially symbolic. In many cultures fire is part of the funerary ritual, consuming the body and freeing the spirit to ascend to the afterlife. It seems that fire can break a mummy's ties to the mortal world and put a creature's spirit to rest, or at least destroy its physical body and force the creature to retire to its tomb and rejuvenate. In nearly all cultures fire is a great purifier. It banishes disease, consumes rot, and clears away the old to make way for the new. Insofar as a mummy represents a being existing beyond its allotted time, it is no wonder that fire is a mummy's bane.

Of the remaining elements and forms of energy, cold and water seem to be the least likely to cause a mummy harm. Because a mummy's body is biologically dead, exposure to freezing cold or immersion in water usually has little effect.

However, naturally preserved mummies that originally froze to death or perished from some ailment brought on by cold frequently *are* susceptible to magical cold. This may be the case even with mummies found lurking on mountaintops or glaciers. So strong is a



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mummy's tie to its former life that what was a fatal scourge in life still plagues the creature in death.

Surprisingly enough, mummies found preserved in water usually do not exhibit any special susceptibility to water. A mummy that had been drowned, however, might have an *aversion to water* (see below).

### Holy Symbols

In my earlier work, *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts*, I explained that ghosts maintain few connections with their former lives and consequently are not hampered or repulsed by physical manifestations of man's faith. It stands to reason, then, that the ancient dead, with their tenacious grasp on the mortal world, *would* be affected by holy objects. One might also surmise that the ancient dead are restricted from passing through sanctified areas and are subject to damage if a holy or blessed object so much as touches them.

Alas, this is not the case. Holy objects, except for holy symbols wielded by priests or paladins, usually have no effect on the ancient dead at all. The same is true for hallowed ground; unless it is protected by some potent magical ward or formidable physical barrier, a mummy can invade any sanctified place.

It is true that a ghost is unhindered by consecrated objects and places because of its detachment from the mortal world. Mummies are similarly unaffected by the symbols of man's faith because they maintain their holds on the mortal world in complete defiance of all natural and supernatural laws. A mummy is no more deterred by a mere holy symbol than a thief is by a "no trespassing" sign; the convictions that lie behind a holy symbol or sanctified place have ceased to have any import to a mummy.

Mummies that have retained priest abilities are an exception. By maintaining links with their deities, these creatures leave themselves vulnerable to the symbols of man's faith. A



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mummy is not repulsed by a holy symbol any more than a warrior is repulsed by a sword. Nevertheless, a holy symbol from a faith that is not the mummy's own inflicts damage if it strikes a priestly mummy. Conversely, a touch from the symbol of its own faith actually heals a priestly mummy. It is worth noting that it is entirely possible for a mummy to have an *aversion* (see page 58) to certain holy symbols or to specific pieces of sanctified ground.

### Holy Water

A generous supply of this remarkable liquid is essential for any successful undead hunt. Though mummies are immune to other blessed or holy objects, holy water has the power to dissolve a mummy's preserved body in the same manner as acid sears living flesh. I believe this is the case because of the sheer power imparted to the water during its creation.

Unfortunately, the more powerful the mummy, the less effective holy water is when used against it, and a very powerful mummy is entirely immune to holy water. Note that, however efficacious, holy water only serves to destroy a mummy's body once—it does not prevent rejuvenation.

Further, a mummy hunter must be sure that the creature actually is splashed by holy water. This usually means opening a flask and hurling the contents. Simply tossing a stoppered vial at a mummy is not a good idea. Mummies are corporeal, but a vial seldom if ever shatters if it strikes one. Instead, the vial usually bounces off and falls to the floor, where it may or may not break. In the latter case, the mummy is not harmed at all. In the former case, a splash of holy water from a broken flask might not be sufficient to harm a mummy. Hurling a stoppered vial at the floor, wall, or ceiling near a mummy usually makes a generous splash that sprays the mummy with holy water, but there is still a chance the vial won't break.

### Spells

Magical spells are perhaps the most potent and versatile weapons in a mummy hunter's arsenal. They possess many virtues, not the least of which are their ability to work at a distance (it often pays to stay as far away from an undead opponent as is practicable) and their renewability (assuming the spellcaster survives to acquire his spells once again).

Unfortunately, the often unpredictable nature of magic, combined with the mysterious power of the ancient dead, can result in the unexpected, and even in disaster. Worse yet, I am given to understand that wise spellcasters never count on their magic to work perfectly in this land of Mists. Therefore, one should never consider any given spell to be a panacea in a battle with a mummy, let alone any other creature of darkness. Even when the arcane seems to be the ideal solution, I would strenuously urge the spellcaster to test his incantation from a safe distance before facing the enemy at close quarters.

Recall as well that many ancient dead are quite resistant, if not immune, to any number of spells. See my notes regarding magic resistance in the preceding chapter of this book.

### Turning Undead

In spite of the ancient dead's general immunity to holy objects and places, a priest or paladin can still drive away the ancient dead. A priest's power over the undead stems from the priest's own force of will, backed by the power of a deity. To my knowledge, no undead creature is *completely* immune to this ability.

Undead turning is not infallible, however. The more powerful the undead creature, the more difficult it is for a priest to summon enough spiritual energy to destroy or drive off the creature. The more-powerful undead cannot be completely destroyed by this method, and very powerful undead, including mummies, are not even driven off; they simply become unable to attack the priest.



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## Weapons

As I explained in Chapter II, specially constructed and enchanted weapons can inflict damage on a mummy's body. I must reiterate, however, that only a very weak mummy can be permanently destroyed in this fashion.

## Salient Weaknesses

Thus far, I have discussed those few methods that are at least somewhat effective in combatting the majority of the ancient dead. If a mummy hunter is lucky, these methods will be sufficient to destroy his foe. Luck, however, is an undependable ally.

A powerful mummy can be defeated only by discovering a vulnerability—frequently one that is unique to it. For purposes of discussion, I have divided these vulnerabilities into five general categories: *allergens*, *bonds*, *dependence*, *exotic weapons*, and *spells of retirement*. I have added a sixth category, *latent powers*, which does not provide the key to a mummy's defeat, but is important to mummy hunters nevertheless.

It is important for the reader to understand that I am speaking in general terms here. These *types* of vulnerabilities exist, but the particulars of each vulnerability vary from mummy to mummy. It is a mummy hunter's task to discover these particulars and to determine how to exploit them.

## Allergens

In my previous works I described various items that are useful for battling the undead. A typical vampire is repulsed by common objects such as mirrors and garlic, whereas some ghosts are repulsed by objects important in their lives; the exact object varies from ghost to ghost. Like ghosts, some mummies are repulsed by substances or items that were important to them in life. I call such items *allergens*. No two mummies have the same

allergen, and a great number of mummies have no allergens at all.

The most striking example of this variation in my journal is the case of the *ghost clan*. This misnamed band of no less than 28 mummies was a gang of murderous highland bandits in life. All were blood relatives. The bulk of them proved to be minor creatures; my party overcame them by outright attack.

The three leaders, however, were far more powerful. One proved to be *fascinated* (a term I explain below) by its own family badge. We laid the creature to rest by placing its body, along with the badge, in a suitable grave. Another could not bear the sound of a drumbeat, apparently because the soldiers who defeated the clan marched to drums. The third was equally discomfited by the whine of bagpipes, which had keened throughout the battle in a vain attempt to rally the clan's fleeing troops.

My companions and I discovered these weaknesses mainly by discussing the clan's final defeat with the victorious soldiers' descendants. These three mummies had a similar history, and each met his death under the same circumstances. It was the particular individual's feelings and personality that determined his mummy's allergen. One was stripped of its clan symbol and wanted it back. One feared the pounding drums that brought it death. And one loathed the bagpipes that failed to bring aid in its hour of need. The small details in each man's history had a huge impact on the resulting mummy.

## Presentation

In most cases, an allergen has no effect unless an opponent consciously presents the item in a forthright and forceful way. The allergen must be held toward a mummy in a clear, direct, and courageous manner.

An allergen's effect depends on a mummy's power. A mummy of low rank is usually unable to approach within 50 or 60 feet of an opponent presenting the item. More powerful mummies are



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less effected. Very powerful mummies might attack the presenter, though even in these cases the mummy will strive to eliminate the item that triggers the aversion in preference to anything else. Be warned however, that aversion does not render a mummy helpless. The creature can still attempt to maneuver around a character presenting an allergen, or it can launch ranged attacks. If possible, these will be directed at the character presenting the allergen, as the mummy seeks to remove the offending item.

A final warning: *Absolute dependence on an allergen is a recipe for disaster.* Even with exhaustive research, it is very difficult to determine exactly what item might be an allergen, and there is no guarantee that any particular mummy actually has this weakness. Trusting one's fate to an untested allergen is an excellent shortcut to death—or worse.

### Wards

It is possible to use an allergen to erect a barrier against a mummy. In some cases the mere presence of the item is sufficient to keep a mummy at bay. For example, my companions and I found the clan mummy with the aversion to drumbeats could not approach so long as we maintained a spirited marching cadence on our drum.

In other cases a line or circle of items can create a ward that shuts out a mummy. Be warned, however, special care is required to construct an effective ward. In one case, I determined that the mummy of an ambitious woman, who had risen from humble origins to a position of wealth, had an aversion to brooms; apparently this was because brooms reminded the woman of her days of labor as a common housemaid. A broom simply lying on the ground had no effect, but a broom held upright or at an angle, with bristles down and the handle facing the mummy, was effective. The mummy was unable to open any portal sealed by leaning a broom against it. I surmise the broom's angle was significant since a broom is held upright during normal use.

It is unwise to depend on the power of wards. Any mummy can ignore an improperly created ward, and some mummies seem altogether unaffected by them. Occasionally a mummy that has been thwarted by a ward will return after a time to test it again. The smaller the protected area, the more secure a ward seems to be.

### Fascination

In a few mummies, an allergen produces an effect that is exactly the opposite of aversion. These creatures are actually *attracted* to certain objects. When such items are presented, a mummy might stand transfixed for a short time, or it might attack, trying to obtain the item. Such items often are an integral part of a *spell of retirement* (see below). Allergens that cause fascination should not be used to create wards, for obvious reasons.

### Bonds

A fair number of mummies are bound to a certain place, object, or other creature. It is possible for several mummies to be bound to the same thing, but one should not depend upon the chance, even with a group of mummies encountered together.

Knowing the item to which a mummy is bound can be helpful in anticipating the creature's actions—and in remaining out of its reach. A mummy bound to an ancient temple, for example, cannot leave the site to harry its hunters in their camp.

In some cases, gaining control over an item that binds a mummy also grants control over the mummy. If the reader should ever be in this position, I strongly recommend using the control to quickly lay the foe to rest; exercising control over an undead creature often triggers unforeseen consequences.

A mummy frequently can be destroyed or badly weakened by demolishing the object to which it is bound (see my notes on *dependence*, below). In other cases, severing the bond simply



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frees the mummy. Be warned: Such creatures are seldom grateful for their freedom.

### Place

Mummies bound to a certain location are usually created or servitor creatures, deliberately placed there as guardians or stewards. It may be possible to visit the place without arousing the guardians, particularly if the visitor is respectful and refrains from vandalism or theft of any kind. Other guardians ruthlessly attack all intruders. A visitor might placate guardian mummies by performing some rite or ritual. These tend to be highly complex (and thus difficult to complete properly) and can require venerating an evil deity or performing some other dark act. Be warned: Such actions bring their own punishments.

A mummy bound to a particular place cannot leave it, and generally will do whatever is required to protect it. I am compelled to point out that the ancient dead are not grammarians overly precise in their turns of phrase. The definition of “a particular place” is often nebulous. A mummy bound to a certain building and charged with protecting it might normally confine itself to the building’s interior, but if the building were subjected to an assault from the outside, the mummy might have the ability to leave it and travel freely outside, so long as it kept the building in sight. Similarly, a mummy encountered within a ruined castle might not be bound to the castle itself, but to all the territory formerly under the castle’s sway.

### Object

Mummies are frequently bound to an object, and sometimes to several objects. I call these objects *focus items*. Focus items are likely to be objects the mummy owned or coveted in life, and which often were interred with the mummy after death. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a powerful mummy to be bound to each and every item contained in its tomb. This phenomenon is quite

in keeping with the nature of mummies; these creatures are forever obsessed with the material comforts of the mortal world. It does not matter that they can no longer enjoy such comforts.

In very rare cases a mummy is bound to some item that was hurtful to it in life, such as the weapon that killed it, a tool owned by a rival, or a personal possession that failed to live up to its expectations. In these cases, the mummy usually has an aversion to or is fascinated by the item.

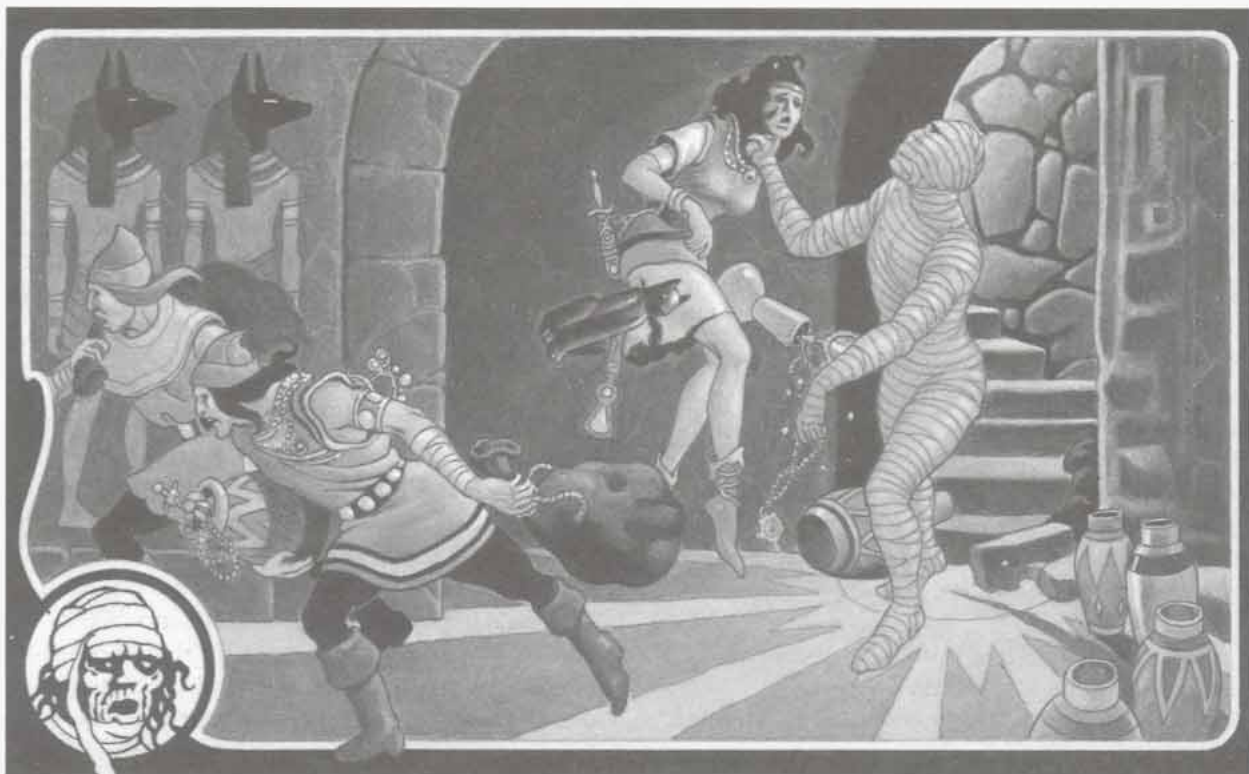
One such case immediately springs to mind: the tale of Hugh Ignolia, an aspiring artist in Il Aluk. Ignolia became obsessed with completing a massive, epic painting which he hoped to present to King Azalin. The artist expended a considerable fortune assembling the finest materials for the work, including some exquisite paint brushes made from rare and exotic materials imported from a distant land called Shou Lung. True to his nature, Azalin ridiculed the artist when Ignolia presented his painting, and the poor wretch was driven mad. When Ignolia rose from the grave, he set about retrieving his rare paint brushes, even though these implements had only led him to disappointment and madness. My colleagues and I used one of the brushes to seal Ignolia into his tomb.

In very rare cases a person possessing a focus item has some manner of control over the mummy. While such control can be useful when confronting a mummy and laying it to rest, the mummy not unsurprisingly resents any effort to control it. Such a mummy always seeks to subvert the intent of any orders it is given and attempts to gain control of the focus item and so obtain its freedom.

Even if a focus item does not grant the owner control, a mummy always seeks to protect it. The theft of such an item from a tomb is always a serious matter. Such thefts are considered grave robbing in most cultures; worse, a mummy will go to any length to retrieve its focus item. Further, the mummy always knows a focus item’s near-exact location, though it does not always know who has the item or how powerful



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or well protected the holder is. The destruction of a focus item may end a mummy's ability to unflinchingly track the grave robber, but the mummy will not rest until it recovers the item. If the item is destroyed before it is recovered, the thief earns the mummy's eternal enmity.

A clever mummy hunter might use a focus item to entrap a mummy in preparation for an attack, or to distract it while some vital research into the mummy's background is completed.

### **Creature**

It is not uncommon for a mummy to be bound to some other creature, usually to the creature who created it. Just as a living lord commands the loyalty of his family and serfs, so too might an ancient dead's creator command obeisance from its undead servants.

In some cases control over a mummy is granted to the holder of a particular office or title,

and it can be passed down through several generations. The reigning high priest at a temple, for example, might inherit control over that temple's guardian mummies. Care must be taken, however, to be certain where the binding actually lies—whether with the title or with some physical item that title holder has also inherited.

### **Dependence**

Some mummies are not entirely self-sufficient. They require something extra to maintain their ties to the mortal world. I have noted three types of dependence during my campaigns against the ancient dead: *object*, *substance*, and *action*.

A mummy that has withstood the most potent direct assaults can be extremely vulnerable to attacks that exploit its dependence. The reader should not assume an indirect campaign is necessarily easier or safer than a battle. The virtue of attacking a mummy through its



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dependence lies solely in the fact that indirect attacks have a better chance to succeed, provided the mummy hunters have done their research properly. Usually, the best clue that one is following the correct scent is increasingly deadly counterattacks from the mummy as it seeks to protect itself.

### Objects

Mummies are frequently interred with one or more symbolic objects that represent the creature's powers. I call these *spirit items*. Many spirit items are also *focus items*.

Most spirit items are found with deliberately created mummies, though ancient dead that have risen through force of will sometimes have them as well. Destroying a spirit item does not destroy the mummy's spirit—that rests in the mummy's preserved body. Instead, some aspect of the mummy's being is diminished or destroyed.

Some spirit items represent the mummy's force of will, but they usually represent a mummy's typical or salient powers. I am reminded of the case of *The Feathered Hunter*. This creature could change its shape and also summon swarms of biting, stinging ants. When my colleagues and I located its earth and log tomb, we found pipes carved from soapstone, a collection of stone tools, and many clay bottles decorated with grinning faces. When we began selectively destroying these items, the mummy appeared and attacked fiercely.

Fortunately, we had chosen our targets well, and the mummy was unable to either change shape or summon any ants. At last unhindered, our party defeated the creature, which could not rejuvenate once we had destroyed the clay bottles.

Patient research is essential when dealing with spirit items, as the method for destroying them tends to be linked to a mummy's history. As the mummy described above had abhorred drunkenness in life, the clay bottles in the tomb had to be filled with strong beer before they

could be smashed. Only repeated blows from an enchanted weapon broke the soapstone pipes.

It is not always necessary to destroy a spirit item to weaken a mummy. Often, simply removing an item from the tomb is sufficient. I should not say "simply," however; this course is frequently perilous, because if the item is also a focus item, then the mummy can unfailingly track the thieves.

### Elixirs

Some mummies need periodic exposure to certain substances, which I call *elixirs*, to maintain their powers. If the supply of an elixir can be interdicted, the mummy becomes weakened and vulnerable. In some cases, an elixir can be so necessary as to cause fascination in the mummy that requires it. Indeed, an allergen can be mixed with an elixir. If the tainted elixir is applied to the mummy in the normal fashion, it suffers a traumatic shock that immobilizes it for a time.

Elixirs are as varied as the ancient dead themselves. I have encountered mummies that sought the fresh leaves of rare trees, common pine boughs, spices, resins, and beeswax. Elixirs are associated with the embalming process that initially preserved the mummy's body, and not with its life or death. This makes identifying a particular mummy's elixir difficult, as one must either locate the records of the priest who embalmed the mummy, or study the mummy's tomb and the surrounding area for traces of the substance. In one case I identified a mummy's elixir by studying a merchant's shipping records. The mummy had been purchasing its elixir, an herbal extract from a tropical flower, on the open market and shipping it to various locations near its tomb.

### Maintenance Rituals

In certain very rare cases, a mummy has to perform some ritual (or compel others to do so) to use its powers; I call these *maintenance rituals*. It is very difficult to exploit this kind of dependence, but knowing about it can be useful



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to a mummy hunter, as it allows one to predict some of the mummy's actions with reasonable certainty. If, for example, a mummy must observe the sunrise every seventh day, it is not difficult to guess what the creature will be doing at least one morning a week. While this knowledge has limited use, a successful hunter never disregards even the smallest advantage.

Even rarer are mummies that derive their powers from veneration by the living. My encounter with this mummy and its living allies was one of the most bizarre episodes in my long career:

*We spent days in the claustrophobic depths of the catacombs, carefully charting their innumerable twists, turns, and intersections. Gedlan and Jameld (an elf ranger with a particular interest in the ancient dead) carefully studied the moss-slick wall, searching for a hidden valve which would open a door into the mummy's lair. For three days we did not see the sun. In fact, we had quitted our rooms at the local inn and for all anyone in the town knew, we had left altogether. We felt it prudent not to be seen entering and leaving the catacombs by the townsfolk. This precaution was wise, though we had no idea just how necessary it would prove.*

*Our search finally revealed a hidden portal, and we eagerly traversed the passage beyond, hoping to enter the mummy's burial chamber and unveil some vital secret that we might exploit to its undoing. What we found instead was a vast and profane temple. The mammoth chamber's lofty vaults soared above our heads and disappeared into smoky darkness. In the light of guttering oil lamps (whose charnel stench suggested the oil came from a singularly inauspicious source) we saw the mummy, robed as an unholy priest. Before him stood an altar upon which lay the three embalmed bodies of the brigands who had attacked our camp. In the flickering shadows surrounding this altar stood fully three dozen people, including our former host at the inn. The bodies and the onlookers were draped in the same funereal garb.*

*We watched in horrid fascination as the mummy performed a ritual over the bodies, accompanied by a throaty and vulgar chant from the assembly. Soon the corpses stirred with unlife, and an awestruck hush fell over the temple.*

*. . . The crowd did not shrink from the newly wakened mummies; rather, they embraced them as lost friends. Indeed, a strong family resemblance strung between the creatures and two onlookers (an altogether innocent-looking bourgeois couple). After the people had fawned over the new creatures, they turned to the robed mummy, prostrating themselves and singing its praises. The sight was so blasphemous we could hardly bear it.*

*. . . After trailing the cultists back to town, we presented ourselves at the inn once more. Entering that place, which once seemed so full of comfort and bonhomie, sent a shiver down my spine. The innkeeper smiled and welcomed us in the way of all innkeepers. He bobbed his head and exclaimed how glad he was business had brought us back to his house. He could little guess our business concerned the dark pact he had secretly entered.*

*Setting Claudia to distract the fellow with idle chat, Jameld and I managed a surreptitious look around. Our search revealed a small effigy of the robed mummy. But most illuminating of all was a tall closet where two mummies stood. The undead creatures resented being disturbed, and the resulting confrontation was hardly a quiet affair.*

*After dispatching the mummies, we conducted an intense, but by no means brutal, interview with our host. He confirmed all the members of his sect kept small effigies in their homes, brought regular offerings to the tomb, and were to become servitor mummies upon their own deaths.*

*Now that their unholy deity has been put to rest, it is my sincere hope that the surviving cult members are living out their lives in a manner that will grant them a more wholesome afterlife.*

*—from the private journal of Dr. Van Richten*



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### Exotic Weapons

In Chapter II, I discussed the value of enchanted and specially constructed weapons in battling the ancient dead. As useful as these weapons are, they cannot replace an understanding of a mummy's origins, which can provide clues that lead to the mummy's ultimate defeat. A hunter's wits can be sharper and cut deeper than any magical blade.

As with ghosts, research into a mummy's past often reveals a weapon that can slay the creature outright or seal it into its tomb. In many cases these items also serve as allergens, but their real value lies in their power to defeat the mummy. Why merely hold off an ancient dead foe when a little further effort can remove its foul presence forever? These items invariably are objects that played an important role in the mummy's life or death.

In one such case, I led a party against the mummy of a barbarian chieftain. Though the creature resisted most attacks, we finally laid it low with an heirloom sword borrowed from a rival's family. The rival had once overwhelmed the chieftain in combat, resulting in an eternal vulnerability. What had defeated the mummy in life defeated it again in death.

The fatal implement is not always a weapon. Though the violent demises that lead to unquiet deaths would seem to favor the tools of violence, many a man or woman's downfall is rooted in hubris and greed. These have their own implements and trappings which can serve to defeat an ancient dead. I once was called upon to investigate the gruesome deaths of several knights who had tracked a band of daring thieves to their lair after a series of spectacular burglaries. My investigations revealed that the gang's leader was the mummy of an infamous burglar who had contrived her own death and reawakening to elude pursuit many decades before. With the help of a few stalwart companions, I bound the mummy in chains made of gold from the thief's own stolen hoard.

### Latent Powers

Any sortie against the undead is best accomplished with all due speed. I do not mean to imply that reckless or ill-considered attacks are preferable to a more deliberate approach; rather, I urge the reader to avoid unnecessary delays and get on with the job. Groups who are reluctant to finish their task often find themselves counterattacked.

The speedy completion of a hunt can be even more important when the quarry is a mummy. As I explained briefly in Chapter I, there are mummies whose powers change (usually increase) over time. A newly awakened mummy might not gain the full use of its powers until certain items looted from its tomb are recovered. Another mummy might gain extra powers during certain astrological events such as equinoxes or planetary conjunctions. Although I have no direct proof, it seems likely that some mummies can gain considerable power when a comet appears (which helps explain a comet's reputation as a harbinger of ill omen). I have no less than four accounts of mummies that gained power each time they were slain and subsequently rose again through rejuvenation.

### Spells of Retirement

The supernatural processes that set a mummy walking among the living can sometimes be reversed—or at least suspended—under the proper circumstances. I call such circumstances *spells of retirement*, as they most often involve some series of actions that are symbolically linked to the mummy's origins. Alas, there is no universal spell of retirement for all mummies; each is unique. Further, unfortunately, a spell of retirement does not exist for every mummy.

Some spells of retirement are rituals created along with the mummy and recorded, either in the temple where the mummy's body was embalmed or sometimes in the heart of the mummy's tomb. Unfortunately, these records are often difficult to locate and even more difficult to



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translate. The records might exist only in fragments, scattered by the ravages of time or by the mummy itself.

Other spells of retirement are not recorded at all, but can be discovered by a mummy hunter who diligently searches out all the clues and correctly puts them together.

In either case, the first task (and often the most difficult) is identifying the ritual for what it is. A formal ritual might be concealed in a lengthy runic or hieroglyphic inscription that relates the story of the mummy's life (such inscriptions are well worth translating, as they can contain vital clues about the mummy's origins). Other rituals are even more elusive.

A typical ritual requires a focus object or allergen that is placed on the mummy's body or used to seal the tomb. My companions and I were able to lay to rest one of the leaders of the aforementioned ghost clan in this manner; in that case we reentered the mummy's body in a respectable grave, accompanied with an appropriate funeral ceremony.

I offer the reader two important pieces of advice when seeking out spells of retirement:

First, learn as much as possible about the mummy's death and initial burial. These events are the most likely to provide clues about the elements of the ritual. Second, look for signs of a past ritual. All too often a mummy is laid to rest, only to be inadvertently reawakened by some ignorant or greedy person.

I have used spells of retirement with great success. Of the many examples I could relate, my brief encounter with the skeletal mummy of *Three Wolf Priest* comes most readily to mind. Three Wolf Priest was a savage devotee of a jungle deity whose cult is all but forgotten today. I cannot tell how often this creature stalked the land, but some time ago, at the fringes of living memory, a band of hardy souls laid Three Wolf Priest to rest by binding his limbs with horsehair ropes and sealing the tomb with an iron horseshoe. According to local legends, the mummy could not abide horses; however, horses were all but unknown in that rugged area. (It seems that a mounted knight ended the mummy's mortal life.) Three Wolf Priest arose to menace the area again when foolish treasure hunters broke open its tomb and rifled the body. Once the horsehair bonds were loosed, it was only a matter of time before the mummy sallied forth to recover the goods looted from the tomb.

Between our battles with the mummy, I discovered a venerable old woman who had known the mummy hunters of three generations before. From her we learned the tale of the earlier campaign and were able to reconstruct the ritual. In the end we located the original horseshoe and used that to seal the tomb. Getting enough horsehair rope to bind the mummy proved to be a problem, and we ultimately were compelled to stave off the mummy's attacks while a companion went to fetch it from farther afield.

Curiously, a mummy itself sometimes strives to complete its own spell of retirement. The reunion between Ahmose Tanit and Simbel (see Chapter II) might be considered a spell of retirement, as might Quinn Roche's quest for *plate mail of etherealness*.



# V: WEAKNESSES

## DM Notes

### Elemental Vulnerability

A typical mummy is immune to all types of cold, but is susceptible to fire. More powerful mummies might be resistant or immune to other types of attacks, as described in Chapter III; this is in addition to any immunity the mummy might have due to the elemental command power.

❖ If the mummy is susceptible to an element or form of energy, nonmagical attacks based on the element can inflict damage, and magical attacks, including blows from an elemental, inflict +1 point of damage per die. Typical damage for nonmagical attacks is as follows:

Flaming torch, flask of water, chunk of ice, small rock: 1d3.

Flask of burning oil, immersion in water, avalanche: 1d8 for first round of exposure, 2d8 for second and subsequent rounds of exposure.

### Holy Symbols

Only mummies that have retained priest abilities are subject to damage from holy symbols. A holy symbol has no effect on a mummy unless it is held by a living being while it touches the mummy.

Rank	Damage*	Healing**
First	2d4	1d3
Second	1d6+1	1d4+1
Third	1d6	1d6+1
Fourth	1d4	2d6
Fifth	Nil	2d8

\* The amount of damage a symbol from any non-evil faith inflicts when used to strike a mummy. The wielder must make a normal melee attack roll.

\*\* The amount of damage that is healed (rejuvenated) when a mummy is touched with

the symbol of its own faith. Other evil holy symbols have no effect.

### Holy Water

Rank	Damage per Vial
First	2d4
Second	1d6+1
Third	1d6
Fourth	1d4
Fifth	Nil

A normal missile attack roll is required to splash a mummy with holy water. If an unstoppered vial is thrown, it will not break unless it strikes a solid object—a mummy's body does not count for this purpose. If the vial strikes a solid object, the player rolls a saving throw vs. crushing blow to see if it shatters. See the section on "grenade-like missile" in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* and consult the scatter diagram for resolving the effects of throwing and breaking vials of holy water.

### Effects of Wizard Spells Upon Mummies

**Antipathy-sympathy:** This spell may not drive back the ancient dead, and even the persistent itching that generally affects targets doesn't necessarily occur. If a mummy makes its saving throw vs. the *antipathy* form of this spell, it can remain in the area of effect or handle the protected object with no ill effects.

**Anti-magic shell:** Many ancient dead can freely cross the barrier created by this spell, but a created, servitor, or recalled mummy cannot do so. No matter what the mummy's origin, an *anti-magic shell* stops all special powers *except those delivered by touch*—a typical mummy's fear aura is negated (normal fear checks might still apply), but its rotting touch is not. This is because a mummy's touch puts its victim in physical contact with the positive energy emanating from the mummy's body, so the



## V: WEAKNESSES

victim suffers the consequences. Nevertheless, an *anti-magic shell* prevents the mummy from projecting its power over a distance.

**Banishment:** Successful use of this spell forces a recalled mummy's spirit permanently into the afterlife, destroying the creature. This spell has no effect on other types of mummies.

**Continual light:** Unless the creature has an *aversion* to light, this spell does not cause a mummy discomfort or drive it away. The spell can blind a mummy if cast directly on the eyes.

**Death fog:** This spell cannot poison the ancient dead. Mummies, however, are corporeal, and the spell's solid vapor *slows* their movement.

**Emotion:** This spell has no effect when used against the ancient dead. The spell's *courage* variation negates the results of a failed saving throw vs. mummy fear. *Fearstruck* characters (see Chapter III of the *RAVENLOFT Campaign Setting* box) don't go berserk if they receive this spell; the magic merely negates their fear.

**Feeblemind:** This spell is effective only against mummies with spellcasting abilities. A mummy's rejuvenation power, however, quickly restores its faculties. A mummy's mind is restored in the same amount of time that it normally requires to rejuvenate 25 hit points.

**Infravision:** A mummy's body radiates no heat. When motionless, a mummy is all but invisible to infravision of any kind. When moving, a mummy creates disturbances in the air that infravision can detect. If the surroundings are very warm (sunbaked rock, volcanically heated cavern), a mummy shows up as a cool spot.

DMs who interpret infravision simply as an ability to see in the dark should adjudicate accordingly.

**Legend lore:** This spell is an invaluable tool for determining a mummy's history. This spell can also reveal a mummy's salient weaknesses, and what actions or materials are required to destroy it or lay it to rest. Best of all, this spell can work at a distance, which usually allows a group to be fully informed about its foe before any combat is joined.

**Light:** See *continual light*, above.

**Leomund's lamentable belaborment:** This spell generally has no effect on the ancient dead. A mummy who was a noted orator, politician, or debater in life might be subject to its effects, however.

**Limited wish:** This spell can be very useful for revealing key facts about a mummy's background. It is not powerful enough to lay a mummy to rest, but it can usually cure mummy rot and negate other lasting effects from a mummy's attacks. A *limited wish* also can be used offensively, suppressing one of a mummy's abilities temporarily.

*Limited wish* can generally negate a first-rank power for 1d8 hours, a second-rank power for 1d4 hours, a third-rank power for 1d10 turns, a fourth-rank for 1d8-1 rounds, and a fifth-rank power for 1d6-1 rounds. If adjustments reduce the number to 0 or less, there is no effect. The mummy is allowed a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the reduction.

**Mordenkainen's disjunction:** This spell works normally when used against spell effects created by a mummy, but it has no effect on the mummy itself.

**Past life\*:** This spell is sometimes useful in researching a mummy's history. It is limited by the need to touch the mummy or, in the case of more powerful casters, handle one of the mummy's possessions.



## V: WEAKNESSES

**Protection from evil/protection from evil, 10' radius:** These spells do not hedge out the ancient dead, but do adjust the attack penalties and saving throw bonuses these spells provide.

**Reincarnation:** This spell can destroy most mummies by restoring them to life. However, the ties that bind mummies of the fourth or fifth rank to their undead "lives" are so strong that this spell cannot override them. Even if the spell works, a reincarnated creature tends to be dangerously psychotic: The transition from life to undeath tears at the mind; an abrupt change back to life is even more damaging.

**Remove curse:** In very rare cases, a powerful spellcaster can lay a very weak mummy (first- or second-rank) to rest with this spell. Generally, this works only on usurped or servitor mummies.

**Temporal stasis:** This spell can prevent a mummy from rejuvenating.

**Trap the soul:** This spell works against mummies of all types, and it is particularly useful for containing a powerful mummy while a permanent means of putting the creature to rest is sought.

**Wish:** This spell is powerful enough to literally wish a mummy right out of existence. Great care must be exercised, however, as this spell is notoriously dangerous. The spell also is most useful for uncovering a mummy's origins and weaknesses—that process is less dangerous than wishing a mummy out of existence, but only slightly less so.

### Effects of Priest Spells Upon Mummies

**Abjure:** Recalled mummies can be laid to rest with this spell.

**Atonement:** This powerful spell can bring peace to a restless, recalled, or usurped mummy. Extensive and careful research into a mummy's origins and history is necessary to determine with any certainty if this spell will be efficacious. For the spell to work, the mummy must have performed some act which helped doom it to undeath.

**Cloak of bravery:** This spell is useful for combating the effects of mummy-inspired fear, but the spell's reverse has no effect on the ancient dead.

**Continual light:** See the wizard spell of the same name, above.

**Cure disease:** This spell is a necessity for any mummy hunter, as only magical curing can combat mummy rot. The spell's reverse is useless against the ancient dead.

**Dispel evil:** This spell sometimes can lay a mummy to rest. Generally, only servitor or usurped mummies are affected.

**Emotion control\*:** This has no effect when cast on the ancient dead, but works normally if cast upon the priest or his comrades.

**Holy word:** This spell can obliterate a very weak mummy, and a more-powerful mummy is fully subject to the spell's side effects. In some cases, very powerful mummies can be laid to rest by this spell; only careful research into a mummy's history should reveal if the creature in question is vulnerable.

**Know age\*:** This spell is sometimes useful when researching a mummy's background or identifying objects associated with a mummy.

**Light:** See the wizard spell *continual light*, above.



## V: WEAKNESSES

**Moonbeam:** This spell might have an effect on certain bound or dependant mummies.

**Personal reading\*:** This spell can be very useful in uncovering details about a mummy's past. Its chief limitation is the need for the caster to know the mummy's birth name or exact birth date. Such information is not always easy to find (see Chapters V & VIII).

**Protection from evil, 10' radius:** See the wizard spell *protection from evil*, above.

**Raise dead:** The more-powerful mummies (third-rank and higher) cannot be destroyed by this spell. The spell also is ineffective if a mummy is older than the maximum age the priest can *raise*. Being returned to the world of the living is always physically and mentally traumatic, especially for undead creatures. In many cases the creature's body does not survive the transition, and the monster is merely dead (no longer undead). Even if the creature survives, it is usually hostile and suffers from some form of dangerous psychosis as well. The reverse of this spell has no effect on the ancient dead.

**Regenerate:** Like the various *cure* spells, this spell and its reverse have no effect on the ancient dead. The spell is somewhat useful for closing the wounds of a creature afflicted with mummy rot, but cannot cure the rot itself.

**Remove curse:** See the wizard spell of the same name, above.

**Resurrection:** This potent spell is essentially a more powerful version of the *raise dead* spell. It can affect any type of mummy, but see the *raise dead* spell for a caution. The reverse of this spell has no effect on the ancient dead.

**Squeaking floors\*:** A mummy using the weightlessness power will not trigger this spell.

**Sunray:** This potent spell can damage any type of mummy.

**Thought capture\*:** This spell can sometimes be useful in researching a mummy's history. To use the spell successfully for this purpose, the caster must visit a location where useful thoughts might still be available for capture.

**Time pool\*:** This spell can be very useful for researching a mummy's past, especially when the caster seeks to round out previous study. Curiously enough, the spell sometimes utterly fails to reveal any information. *Time pool* sometimes fails because it cannot reveal information about events that have taken place on another plane. If the mummy has been drawn into Ravenloft from somewhere else, a *time pool* can reveal information about only those events which occurred in a location that also has been drawn into the demiplane.

**Zone of truth\*:** This spell can be very useful when making inquiries about a mummy's past. Unfortunately, beings within the warded area are aware that they are being compelled to speak the truth, and often refuse to answer questions.

\* Spell described in the *Tome of Magic*.

### Turning Undead

Mummies are turned according to their Hit Dice. Treat 3 or more bonus hit points as another full Hit Die—a typical mummy (6+3 HD) is turned as a 7-HD creature.

Rank	Turning Penalty*
First	Nil
Second	-1
Third	-2
Fourth	-3
Fifth	-4



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\* If the turning attempt is successful, it remains necessary to roll 2d6 to determine how many creatures are turned, and apply the listed penalty. If the adjusted number is 0 or less, the mummy is not turned, but cannot directly attack the priest who made the attempt.

### Allergens

This weakness can produce two possible effects (sometimes both at once): *aversion* or *barrier*.

❖ **Aversion:** A single allergen produces either *repulsion* or *fascination*, but never both. However, a mummy may be repulsed by one type of allergen and fascinated by another.

*Repulsion:* The character with the item must have a clear view of the mummy, which must be aware of both character and item. The effect persists as long as the character can see the mummy and concentrates on repulsion. If the mummy is within the item's effective radius when repulsion is established, it must leave at the first opportunity. If unable to do so, it must remain as far as possible from the allergen.

Rank	Radius*	Save**
First	40–60 feet	-5
Second	20–40 feet	-4
Third	10–30 feet	-3
Fourth	5–25 feet	-2
Fifth	0–20 feet	-1

\* The typical radius of aversion. If the radius is 0, the mummy attacks the wielder in an attempt to stop the repulsion.

\*\* If a mummy cannot leave the radius of effect, or if the character presenting the item pursues the mummy to keep it within the radius, the mummy can ignore the repulsion for one round if it successfully saves vs. spell with the listed penalty. A saving throw can be attempted every round that the mummy is involuntarily kept within the radius.

*Fascination:* The allergen must be presented

as described above. A fascinated mummy moves directly toward the allergen, but stops within 1d4 feet of the object.

Rank	Duration*	Save**
First	1d12 rounds	-5
Second	1d10 rounds	-4
Third	1d8–1 rounds	-3
Fourth	1d6–1 rounds	-2
Fifth	1d6–2 rounds	-1

\* The typical interval a mummy remains fascinated. Fascination is broken if the mummy's view of the object is blocked, or if the object touches the mummy. If the duration is 0 or less, the mummy attacks the wielder and tries to seize the allergen.

\*\* A mummy can attempt a save vs. spell to avoid fascination. If the roll is successful, the mummy isn't vulnerable to the same object for an amount of time determined by the DM. A typical interval is one full day, or until the next sunrise or sunset.

❖ **Barrier:** The allergen prevents a mummy's passage if positioned to block a portal or laid down in a line or circle.

Rank	Radius*	Save**
First	50 feet	Nil
Second	30 feet	Nil
Third	20 feet	-4
Fourth	10 feet	-4
Fifth	5 feet	-3

\* The maximum area the object can ward. An object centered within a room whose radius is smaller than this distance wards the entire room. Warding objects in a line or circle can be no farther apart than the listed radius.

\*\* A mummy can breach a ward if it makes a successful save vs. spell with the listed penalty. If the saving throw fails, and the mummy can retreat outside the allergen's effective radius, it can attempt a new breach at another location after a number of hours equal to the saving throw penalty.



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### Bonds

If a focus item grants control over a mummy, the table below determines its extent of control.

Rank	Time*	Range**
First	2d4 hours	21 miles
Second	1d4 hours	9 miles
Third	2d4 turns	3 miles
Fourth	2d4 rounds	1 mile
Fifth	1d4 rounds	500 yards

\* The typical interval each day that a character possessing a focus item can control a mummy of the listed rank. Controlling the undead generally requires a Ravenloft powers check.

\*\* The typical maximum distance between a mummy of the listed rank and its focus item before control is broken. In most cases the focus-item holder must first summon the mummy to his presence before issuing any commands (the wielder and the mummy must be able to actually see each other).

### Dependence: Spirit Items

Rank	Number*	Radius**
First	1-4	0-90 yards
Second	2-8	90-180 yards
Third	3-12	180 yards-1 mile
Fourth	4-16	1-10 miles
Fifth	5-20	10 miles +

\* The typical number of spirit items a mummy of the listed rank possesses.

\*\* How close a mummy must be to a spirit item to benefit from it. A radius of 0 means the mummy cannot be separated from the item.

*Types of spirit items:* Most spirit items are durable things such as jewelry, tools, weapons, statues, and the like, that have been buried with a mummy. It is possible for the tomb itself to be a spirit item. A spirit item's form might reflect its function (see below); for example, a jewel

representing a mummy's life force or rejuvenation power might be shaped like a heart.

*Assigning spirit items:* Typically a spirit item represents one of a mummy's powers. Destroying the item reduces or eliminates the power. More than one item can be assigned to the same power, and a single item can be assigned more than one power.

*Destroying spirit items:* A spirit item can usually be smashed with blows from a weapon. A typical spirit item has the same Armor Class and invulnerabilities as the mummy and 3-5 hit points for each of the mummy's Hit Dice.

Some spirit items can be destroyed only in a specified manner. This might involve treating the item with an allergen, taking it to a specific place, subjecting the item to a specific ritual which is relevant to the individual mummy, or anything else the DM desires. Generally, the higher the mummy's rank, the harder a spirit item is to destroy. If a PC simply tries to smash such an item, the DM must decide what happens. Possibilities include: the implement the character uses to attack the item breaks; the spirit item is unmarked by the blow; or the spirit item appears to break, but the mummy is unaffected and the item slowly reforms itself during the next several days.

*Effects of destruction:* The power assigned to a spirit item usually decreases by one or two ranks when the item is destroyed. If a power's rank drops to 0 or less, the mummy can no longer use that power; however, typical powers (rejuvenation, fear, disease, and invulnerability) are unlikely to be reduced to 0 in this fashion. If the item represents a mummy's force of will, the mummy loses 1 or 2 Hit Dice when the item is destroyed. Alternatively, an assigned power can be lost when an item is destroyed, and it might be possible to destroy a mummy outright by destroying a spirit item that represents its life force.

Power losses can be permanent or they may be restored by replacing the spirit item.



# V: WEAKNESSES

## Dependence: Elixirs and Maintenance Rituals

A typical elixir or maintenance ritual applies to the mummy's force of will and must be renewed. If the elixir or ritual is denied, the mummy loses 2–3 Hit Dice, and all its powers decrease by one rank. These losses accumulate if the mummy is denied the elixir or ritual often. (If the mummy has at least 1 Hit Die, it still possesses first-rank rejuvenation, fear, disease, and invulnerability.)

Rank	Frequency*	Disability**
First	1–4 months	1–12 days
Second	1–4 years	1–8 days
Third	1–10 years	1–6 days
Fourth	10–100 years	1–4 days
Fifth	100–1,000 years	Nil

\* The typical maximum interval between doses of an elixir or performance of a maintenance ritual.

\*\* The typical minimum interval required for the mummy to recover its lost Hit Dice and power ranks when it begins receiving its elixir or maintenance ritual again. If the mummy has lost multiple Hit Dice and power ranks, it typically recovers one set of Hit Dice and power ranks during each disability interval. For example, if a mummy of the third rank is denied its elixir for 30 years, it might need as long as 18 days to recover all its Hit Dice and power ranks.

*Mixing allergens with elixirs:* Only allergens that produce repulsion are effective in tainting an elixir.

Rank	Detection*	Duration**
First	-5	1d12 rounds
Second	-4	1d10 rounds
Third	-3	1d8–1 rounds
Fourth	-2	1d6–1 rounds
Fifth	-1	1d6–2 rounds

\* No matter how carefully mixed, a mummy of the listed rank can detect the allergen if it rolls a successful save vs. spell with the listed penalty.

\*\* The mummy is incapacitated for this interval when it uses a tainted elixir. If the number is 0 or less, there is no effect.

## Latent Powers

As stated earlier, a mummy does not acquire new powers, but instead gains fuller use of abilities it has always had. The table below is only a guideline; if the DM chooses to invest the mummy with power gains according to astrological events or the recovery of looted grave goods, he or she is free to do so.


Rank	Frequency*	Scope**
First	1–10 years	1–3
Second	1–12 months	2–5
Third	1–30 days	3–7
Fourth	24–128 hours	4–9
Fifth	8–24 hours	5–11

\* The typical interval required for the mummy to gain use of a latent power. The actual number can vary widely.

\*\* The typical number of powers or power ranks the mummy gains.







*ut evil things, in robes of sorrow,  
Assailed the monarch's high  
estate,  
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never  
morrow shall dawn upon him  
desolate!)  
And round about his home, the  
glory  
That blushed and bloomed  
Is but a dim-remembered story  
Of the old time entombed.*

—Edgar Allen Poe

Thus far I have shown the reader the ancient dead in their various forms and guises, described their powers, and explained their weaknesses. But to fully understand the ancient dead (insofar as this feat is possible for a living mind), the reader

must also consider the events that form the preamble for a mummy's return—twisted triumph that it is—to the world of the living.

In this chapter I discuss the processes that enable mummies to walk the earth. I also give consideration to the ancient dead mind; one must understand one's foe to defeat it.

## Creating a Mummy

In Chapter II, I briefly explained that the creation of an ancient dead creature requires a preserved body and some reason for the departed spirit to return to that body. The first step, preserving the body, is not always sinister or evil. Embalming the dead, while not practiced everywhere, is an essential part of solemn and respectable funerary rituals in many lands. I have already warned the reader of the perils of interfering with such rituals. Still, the following particulars might prove to be useful in some circumstances.

The first step in preparing a body for proper (that is, ceremonial) disposal usually involves evisceration and drying. This can take anywhere from 1 to 80 days. The residents of Har' Akir, for

example, use an elaborate process that involves drying the body in a bed of natron (a naturally occurring salt) for 40 days. The internal organs are not discarded, but placed in sealed vessels called *canopic jars*. Curiously enough, the Har' Akiri do not remove the heart—they consider it essential that this organ remain with the body. The body is then washed out, stuffed with various aromatic herbs, and carefully wrapped in linen bandages.

In other lands the ritual is considerably different, and might involve baking the body, cremating it so that only the bones remain to be interred, or coating the body with waxes and resins.

Once a body is embalmed, a period of mourning and farewell usually follows; this can last up to a month (the Har' Akiri mourn for 30 days), sometimes longer. The mourning culminates in the interment of the corpse, often with a large assortment of grave goods, which are intended to provide the deceased with all necessities during the afterlife. My next chapter examines these goods in more detail.

It is at this stage that the true creation of an ancient dead begins. Powerful spells or alterations to the standard rituals serve to bind a spirit within its body, or to call it back from whatever afterlife to which it has gone. The conversion of a preserved body to an undead mummy usually is fairly rapid, no matter how long the mourning period is—usually no more than a few days. However, the resulting mummy often lies slumbering until wakened by an outside force.

In all my dealings with truly powerful mummies (creatures of at least the fourth rank), the deceased was given full funerary rites, totalling 70 days or more, and interred in a resplendent tomb. My investigations in the land of Har' Akir revealed that the tomb of Anhktepót has in excess of 80,000 square feet of floor space, including a complete temple to a deity of the underworld and no less than 30 subsidiary tombs for the pharaoh's family, servants, and advisors. Most of the tomb is carved from solid



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rock, and the structure is filled with monumental statuary ranging from a diminutive foot high to titanic figures many feet tall. The tomb's ultimate cost is incalculable.

Lesser mummies, by contrast, might not receive any funerary rites at all. This is obviously the case with naturally mummified ancient dead and with most that have been created by other mummies. In the latter case, a victim generally is subjected to a ritual that is similar to the local burial rites, but bent entirely toward creating an undead creature.

### Triggers

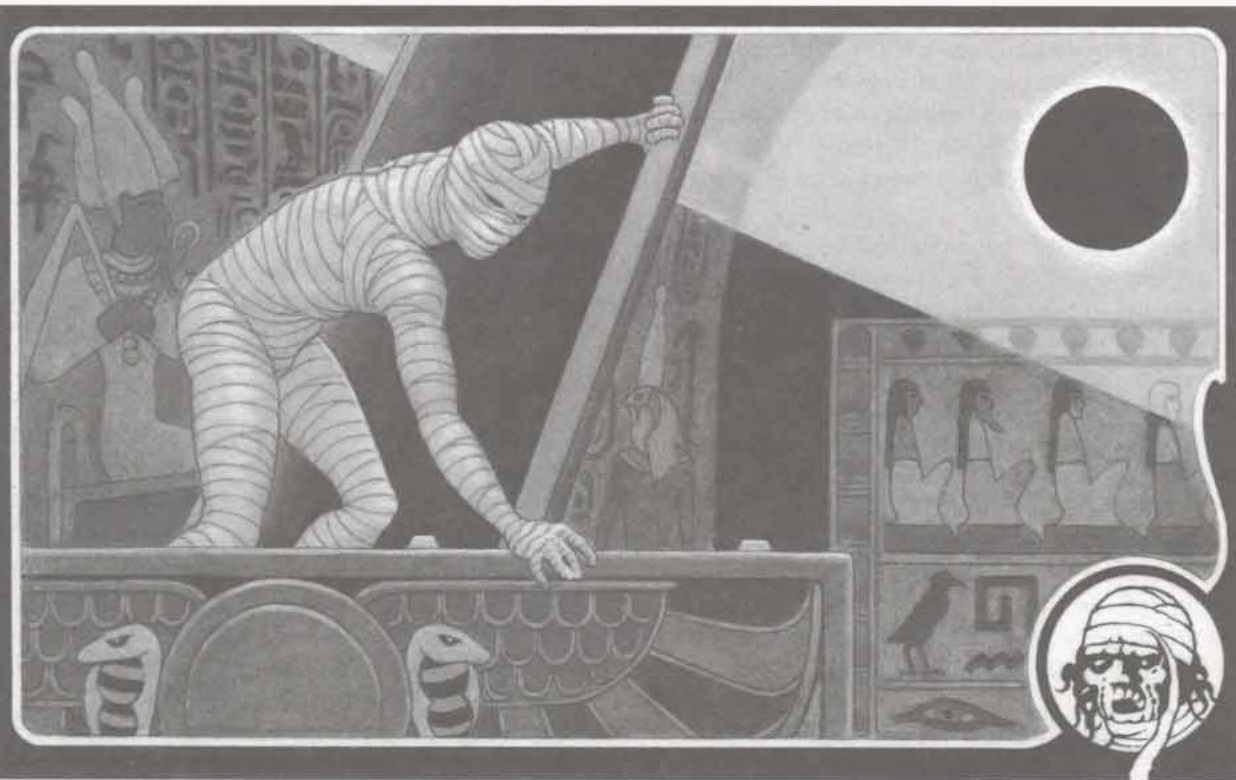
The ancient dead, being fully corporeal, are permanent residents in the mortal world. Nevertheless, they are prone to long periods of slumber. I suspect that this interval of sleep is similar to vampiric hibernation insofar as the creature's mind enters a dreamlike state. Unlike

vampiric hibernation, a mummy suffers no ill effects from its slumber, can rouse itself at any time and can immediately use its powers.

I call the circumstances that rouse a mummy from slumber *triggers*. They are similar in most respects to ghostly triggers. I have identified three types: *time*, *action*, and *event*. It is possible, even typical, for a single mummy to have several triggers.

### Time

A mummy with a time trigger rises on a regular schedule. How long it slumbers between awakenings depends on its origins. A guardian mummy might bestir itself every day and patrol an area for a few hours. The so-called *Sage of Levkarest* appears once a century; presumably it is curious to see what the living are up to. Given the political intrigues and torrid affairs in Borca, I'm sure it has much to discover.





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### A Recipe for Fine Mummification

- ❖ Lay body on a stone slab.
- ❖ Insert long metal instrument with hook through nostrils and pull brains out. Rinse brain cavity with palm wine.
- ❖ To open torso, carefully slit skin of left flank with sharp stone knife. Withdraw all vital organs through opening: heart, intestines, liver, lungs, and so forth. Set aside.
- ❖ Rinse body cavity thoroughly with palm wine; rinse again with spice infusion.
- ❖ Pack body cavity with herbs and spices, especially myrrh and cassia.
- ❖ To purify flesh, immerse body in oils and resins for no fewer than 40 days.
- ❖ Treat organs with spice and oils.
- ❖ Place treated lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines in individual canopic jars of stone or alabaster, with stoppers.
- ❖ Test body for doneness. When all flesh has been dissolved and naught but skin and bones remains, wash body again.
- ❖ Plump body and face with bags of myrrh and cinnamon for a natural look.
- ❖ Important: Return heart (center of intelligence and feeling) to chest. Return kidneys to abdominal cavity also, if desired.
- ❖ Sew body incision if desired. Leave small opening so heart may be withdrawn for testing in the underworld.
- ❖ Anoint body with scented oils, or treat with resin, or both.
- ❖ Wrap body with strips of linen treated with gum. Enclose scarab over heart, along with other protective amulets.
- ❖ Place mask over head.
- ❖ Place *Scrolls of the Dead* between thighs so deceased can reach them easily in the underworld.
- ❖ Place body inside series of coffins, including outer sarcophagus made of stone.
- ❖ Store upright in a cool, dark place.

Mummies with time triggers can be very difficult to combat. Their wakings seldom leave clues about their origins, and they may return to slumber—and so seem to be defeated—after a fixed period or after completing some repetitive task. In many cases the most expedient way to deal with such creatures is to help them complete their tasks! An ancient dead that slumbers through the centuries is not the most pressing threat. Of course, mere dormancy may not be the hunter's ultimate goal. When combating this type of mummy, it is therefore important to be certain one actually has slain it or laid it permanently to rest. Otherwise, it might have simply returned to a slumber from which it will emerge again when the time is right.

### Action

This is the most common type of trigger. The mummy wakes immediately when some specified act takes place. Most ancient dead possess an action trigger in addition to any other they might have. Typically a mummy wakes when its tomb is opened, when its grave goods are disturbed, or when some other act of disrespect is committed. Created and servitor mummies may wake at some other creature's behest. Invoked mummies often wake when a spell or ritual is performed. Naturally mummified ancient dead wake when their bodies or equipment are disturbed.

### Event

This trigger wakes the mummy when a specific phenomenon comes to pass. The occurrence can be mundane, such as the rising of the moon or a particular constellation, or esoteric, such as the reincarnation of one of the mummy's old enemies, a change in local politics, or a rare astronomical event. Event triggers are more difficult to identify than action triggers because there may be no immediately obvious connection between the event and the mummy's reappearance. Nevertheless, properly identifying



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an event trigger can reveal quite a bit about a mummy, because the trigger usually is symbolic of the creature's life or death. Further, cyclical event triggers such as astronomical events allow a hunter to anticipate where a mummy will be at certain times. They also make verifying a mummy's destruction a fairly simple matter.

### Psychology

If there is a culture or a people who do not believe the dead should be separated from the living, I do not know of it. The living may respect or venerate the dead, but the act of interment irrevocably severs the deceased's last physical link with the mortal world. This link can never truly be reformed.

When the living intrude upon the dead, the infraction might go unnoticed; grave robbers and their ilk should count themselves lucky if some curse or misfortune does not overtake them. When the dead are thrust back among the living, however, trauma is inevitable.

In many cases a mummy's "rebirth" creates such an intense mental shock that its original personality is obliterated. The mummy is not mindless, but loses all its skills and memories. It is left with only a vague recollection of what it was like to be alive. It yearns for the earthly pleasures it has lost, and it bitterly resents living beings for the vitality they still possess.

When awakened, such mummies tend to lash out at any being they encounter. Because they are bereft of most higher reasoning, they are not inclined to brood or to lay plans for the future, but they can be cunning in a fight, moving to their best advantage. They seldom leave their tombs except to pursue invaders or to recover stolen grave goods.

Mummies that have retained their memories are more complex creatures. They fully recall their former lives (and thus fully appreciate what they have lost). In addition, most retain their professional skills. They have the mental capacity to lay plans, to ponder contingencies, and to brood.

When awakened, these mummies first look to their own safety. They may leave their tombs and scout their surroundings, trying to anticipate how attackers might approach. If driven by sufficient motivation, they might wander the countryside. Such mummies may seek to complete or continue some unfinished task; other ancient dead go abroad simply to get a taste of life again, however blunted that taste may be. Mummies that have the ability to create undead or to charm other creatures invariably seek to locate and enslave a cadre of servants, especially if they can do so without arousing undue suspicion.

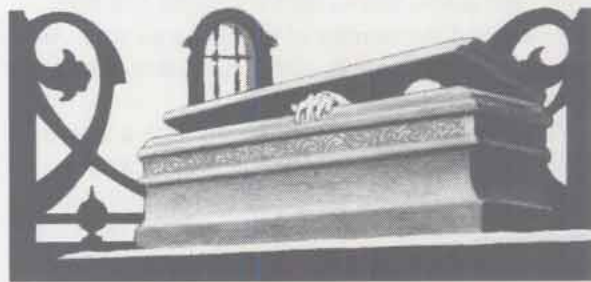
Yet for all their intellect, even the most powerful mummies are lethargic creatures. When one considers a mummy's state of being, this is not surprising.

Compared to a living being, a mummy is frozen in time. It never ages, tires, hungers, or sickens. Of all the sentient undead, a mummy is the most unfettered by external concerns.

For all its immortality, a vampire's fate is inexorably linked with the living by its need for sustenance. For all its power, a lich's thoughts are turned outward by an insatiable thirst for still more power, which eventually leads to demilichdom and a final exit from the mortal world.

For all its obsession with the world, a mummy is utterly divorced from it. A mummy's powers are fixed at the moment of its creation, so the creature has no goals or ambitions beyond protecting what it already has. No wonder then, that mummies slumber.

It also is no wonder that mummies are tenacious foes once disturbed. Though they seldom have anything to gain, they usually have much to lose.





## VII: HOUSES OF THE DEAD



*an is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave.*

—Sir Thomas Browne

*Death comes on wings to he who enters the tomb of a pharaoh.*

—Marie Corelli

To effect a mummy's ultimate defeat, it is often necessary to locate its lair, which is most frequently the tomb where its body was interred. From there the intrepid hunter must play out the final battle on the creature's home ground.

In many cases a mummy hunter's initial investigation requires a visit to the creature's

abode, as this is the repository for many clues and records regarding the mummy's past. As with vampires, liches, ghosts—the entire gamut of creatures that prowl the night—one must almost inevitably seek out the monster where it is most powerful and destroy it there.

I pause to make one emphatic point:

*A successful mummy hunter is not a grave robber!*

It is often necessary to remove some item from a tomb for study or for destruction, but no matter how tempting they may be, it is best to leave all other treasures behind. Senselessly looting burial places can bring into being or wake all manner of undead creatures: anchored ghosts, slumbering mummies, and fledgling vampires to name but a few. Grave robbers might find they have earned the enmity of the living as well. As I explained in Chapter II, burial is a sacred rite not to be tampered with lightly.

Finally, there is a power abroad in this land of Mists that visits doom upon the greedy and foolish. Through this power, the ancient dead become endlessly trapped in prisons of their own making. Take care not to join them.

### Tombs

**F**unerary architecture varies greatly from place to place, even today. Now consider the simple fact that a mummy's tomb might date from a bygone era, built by hands long since withered to dust. The spectrum includes points not only widely spaced in geography, but also separated in time. As a consequence, a tomb only a few leagues from one's own home might be utterly alien in form—so much so that one might not recognize it as a tomb at all.

I have observed or documented mummies residing in the types of tombs detailed below. I have compiled this list to help prospective mummy hunters recognize a tomb when it is found as well as to disseminate the methods typically used to enter one. The list, I am certain, is by no means exhaustive, and a wary eye and an active mind still are the best tools for sniffing out a mummy's lair.

❖ **Graves:** This term covers any sort of burial where a body or a coffin containing a body is completely covered with earth. Mummies that have risen from graves usually do not lair inside them unless they have the passage power. The only way for a mummy hunter to enter a grave is to use magic or dig it up. The former method is quicker and safer.

❖ **Mounds:** These tombs are earthen mounds covering a chamber of logs, timber, or stone that contains a body and its grave goods. Mounds can have various shapes; simple domes are typical, but various geometric or animal shapes are not infrequent. To the untrained eye even the most elaborate mound can look like a natural hill, especially if it has partially eroded or become overgrown with trees and weeds. A careful look, however, often reveals a mound's true contours. No matter how completely obscured a burial mound has become, its contours are unmistakable when viewed from the air. Having a spellcaster with the magical ability to fly is a marvelous way to accomplish many types of reconnaissance.

Mound burials generally have no entries, and a



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mummy must use the passage or shape change power to get in and out. Some mounds are merely decorative and contain no body at all. Great care is needed when excavating mounds to avoid trouble with the locals. As with graves, a magical means of entry is the best.

❖ **Lithic:** These tombs are made from huge slabs of stone, sometimes covered with earth. Frequently several tombs are built in a row, forming a long gallery of burials. A mummy uses its great strength to move the slabs aside when getting in and out.

❖ **Crypts:** This type of burial is found almost everywhere; it consists of a small chamber or building constructed according to the local style. The crypt is often part of a larger structure, such as a temple or residence. Large crypts may contain multiple burials.

❖ **Horseshoes:** This unusual style of tomb is found dug into hillsides, often at the base of the slope. The tomb is marked by a low, stone wall

describing an open-ended ring or oval. More elaborate tombs have walls built-in tiers. Often the wall surrounds a pavement. A door opposite the opening in the ring leads to a crypt. The space encompassed by the wall often serves as a ceremonial area where relatives of the deceased perform various memorial rituals according to the local custom. Mummies residing in these tombs often have associated cults.

❖ **Caverns:** These are sometimes used as natural mausoleums and usually contain other types of tombs, most often simple burials or lithic tombs. Caverns sometimes conceal entrances to other types of tombs. A mummy's burial mound, for example, could be built over one entrance to a cavern, and another opening into the cave might allow access to the crypt.

❖ **Labyrinths/catacombs:** These massive, underground structures are usually found near, in, or under cities. Large catacombs can contain miles of tunnels with literally thousands of



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burials. A mummy generally haunts only one section or level. Most catacombs have many entrances. These, however, are likely to be locked and can be legally opened only at the behest of the local priests. Many areas within a set of catacombs are completely walled off or secured by secret portals. A mummy's burial chambers are almost always hidden in this fashion.

❖ **Rock cuts:** These ancient tombs can be crude; more frequently they are elaborate. Entrances may be hidden under or in cliffs and sealed with stone slabs a mummy shifts when going in and out. Very large rock-cut tombs can contain multiple burials.

In any case, exploring these tombs requires great care and patience. The mummy's actual burial chamber and store of grave goods is usually hidden behind a secret door (or several secret doors, if one chamber houses the mummy and a second the goods buried with it). Often there is a false tomb containing an inanimate corpse or a weaker mummy.

Because rock cuts are expensive to build, the occupant—dead or undead—usually was very wealthy in life. Consequently, these tombs are often filled with precious grave goods and are a prime target for tomb robbers. This makes the mummy hunter's task even more difficult, because tomb locations tend to be jealously guarded.

Each chamber within the tomb likely has a sentinel or trap. The local government may patrol the area. Even worse, the civil penalty for tomb robbing in such areas is usually death, especially for outsiders. Further, governments can be eager to make an example of anyone accused of tomb robbing, which enthusiasm provides for swift, but not necessarily equitable, justice. Entering a tomb of any kind without carefully weighing the consequences is never a good idea, but this type of tomb requires special consideration over and above weighing the physical hazards. If possible, win the support of the local priests.

❖ **Pyramids/ziggurats:** These huge structures are the most elaborate of all tombs. Traps, guardians, and curses abound within them. Pyramids have one or two entrances at most, and they always are well concealed. The entrances can be located almost anywhere; sometimes a pyramid's entrance is in fact in another structure nearby. A pyramid's burial chamber is often hidden underground, below the pyramid, or concealed high inside the structure. Pyramids contain multiple burials and are frequently part of a necropolis (city of the dead), containing many more burials. Within a pyramid, each burial has one or more nearby rooms to hold grave goods.

All of the cautions I mentioned in the section concerning rock-cut tombs apply to pyramids and ziggurats, only more so. These wondrous monuments often house royalty, and trespassing within them can rouse local passions very quickly.

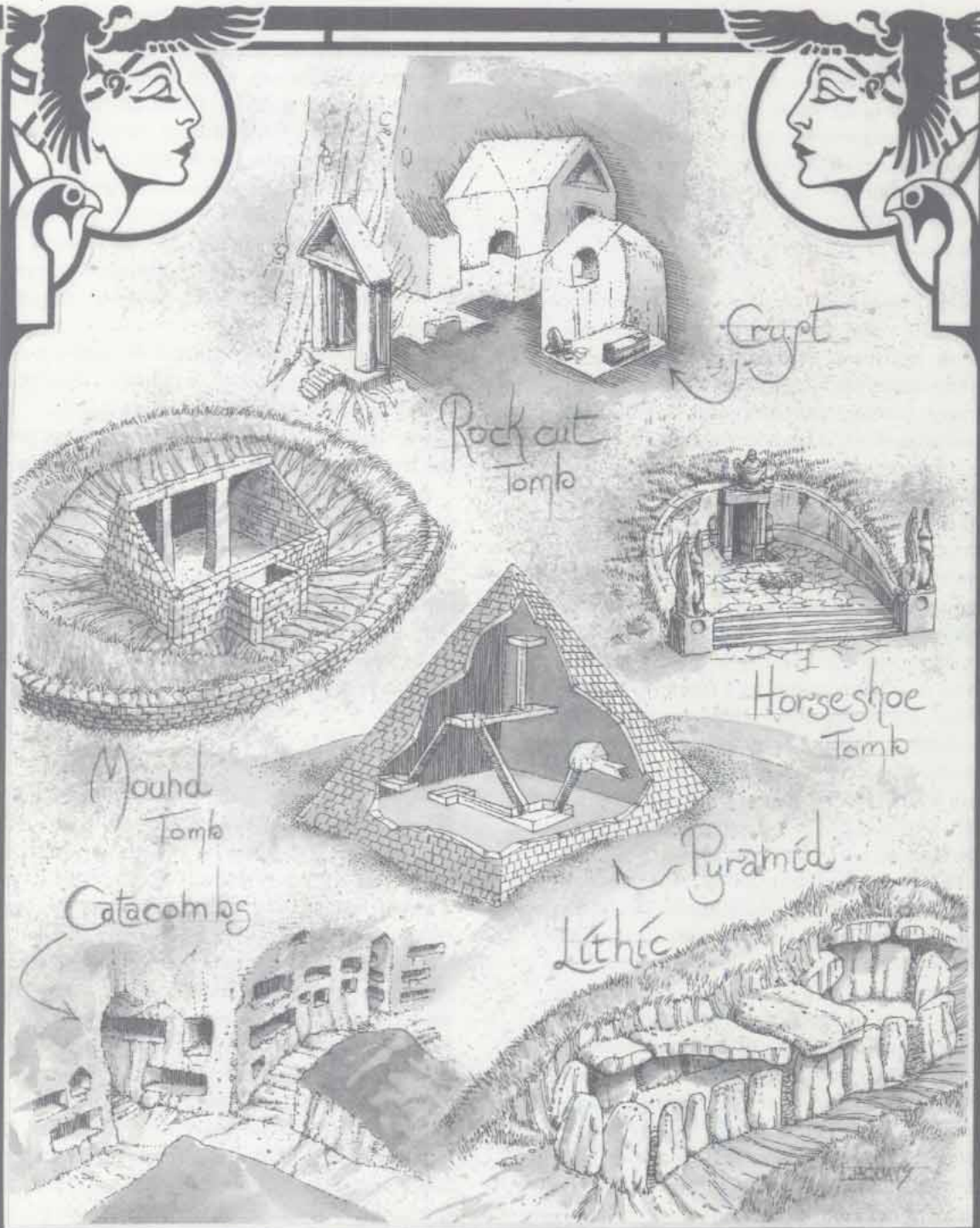
No matter what their outer style, mummies' tombs tend to be dark, cramped, dusty places on the inside. Whatever your reason for entering, be prepared to fight in close quarters! Passages within tombs are most often narrow (5 feet or less) and equally low. This creates opportunities for ambushes in which large adventuring weapons, such as swords and bows, are useless.

Though battling the ancient dead is often a perilous exercise made even more dangerous by a lack of information, one pattern seems to hold true, especially in the case of a creature which has become undead voluntarily: The splendor of the tomb indicates the power of the mummy.

A powerful mummy's tomb is often a vast, sprawling affair riddled with secret passages. Indeed, the true extent of a major tomb is always hidden. Explorers might initially find only those few chambers cultists (discussed in detail below) visit regularly. Further investigation can establish the inner lair, and vanquish the monster forever.



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### Guardians

**A** mummy often is not the only fearsome resident of its tomb, and it may not even be the *most* fearsome resident of its tomb. Usually, the more powerful the mummy, the better guarded its lair will be. The type of guardians a mummy employs varies greatly, but their nature usually reflects the mummy's powers and history.

❖ **The living:** It is common for mummies to have human and demihuman allies. Most of these do not reside in the tomb, but live nearby. In many cases the living unwittingly guard a mummy: Priests, catacomb guards, and even grave robbers must be approached carefully, as they might be unaware that a mummy has wakened. Likewise, superstitious locals might resent a mummy hunter's well-intentioned intrusions into burial sites, either because they fear the mummy's wrath or because they believe the mummy hunter is sacrilegious. When working in a populated area, gaining the trust of the locals is an important preliminary step in the hunt.

Even more dangerous to a mummy hunter are folk who are firmly allied with a mummy. These individuals are usually part of a cult (see below); however, this is not always the case, especially if the mummy has the charm person ability. Some people who appear to be a mummy's allies might instead be its victims.

❖ **The dead:** Most frequently, other undead creatures guard a mummy's tomb. These can be servitor mummies created by the mummy itself (or created for it by a cult), independent mummies who share the tomb or are interred nearby, lesser undead created through spells, or, as I once encountered, a fledgling vampire. A mummy need not command or create undead to employ undead guardians; it can forge alliances with other undead creatures or simply allow them as squatters in parts of its tomb. Note that the tomb of a very powerful mummy is almost certainly steeped in evil, and is a location priests may find difficult in which to wage spiritual combat with the undead.

❖ **Golems:** Mummies with spellcasting powers, or mummies supported by cults that include spellcasters, often enjoy the protection of one or more golems. Frequently, golems are created when a tomb is built, and most found in mummies' tombs are as old as the structures they guard. Guardian golems may be disguised to look like mummies or like inanimate statues; indeed, it can be very difficult to tell if a belligerent statue is a golem or merely a figure brought to life by the animate objects power.

❖ **Monsters:** Unintelligent monsters are often allowed to lair in a tomb, so long as they pose no threat to the mummy or its grave goods. Mummies with the charm monster power seek the most formidable monsters they can find.

❖ **Animals:** Mummies with the charm animals power generally see to it that a substantial number of the most dangerous local species live in or near their tombs. So, too, mummies with the alter form power often contrive to keep animals in or near their tombs. These ancient dead then use their powers to lurk undetected among the natural animals.

### Curses

**I**f one were to heed the tales of mummies' curses told by firelight on tempestuous nights, one might expect to be stricken afresh with a multitude of curses at each step one takes within a tomb. Fortunately, the ancient dead do not employ curses so freely as that.

In many lands, however, tombs are thick with protective curses. It seems that most are warded with sweeping curses that visit afflictions upon all who steal from or damage them. These curses are rarely life-threatening, and they seem intended more for marking grave robbers as enemies of the community. The rituals for constructing such curses are closely guarded secrets and I have not been able to record them. Priests I have interviewed simply shake their heads and speak of powers beyond mortal comprehension.



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Other tomb curses are evoked when trespassers commit a prohibited action or fail to perform one that is required. In Har'Akir, tombs are open and the living may visit them without fear—if they bring offerings of food and drink for the dead. But to enter a Har'Akiri tomb with a disrespectful attitude is to invite disaster.

In many cases the particulars of a curse are depicted in inscriptions found within the tomb. Typically the inscription warns trespassers against a prohibited action and hints at the consequences. It seems that curses are designed to discourage first and punish only when such discouragements fail.

### Traps

Whereas curses are apparently intended to provide ample warning to the foolish and the greedy, the traps found in tombs tend to be well-concealed, swift, and deadly. A tomb might contain as many traps as it has chambers. The best advice I can give in this matter is to be alert—*always*. Beware of pits, deadfalls, tripwires, slides, and the like.

Keep in mind, however, that unless a mummy has the passage or weightlessness power, there will be at least one safe path through the tomb—or at least one path clear of the sorts of dangers that might harm or hinder a mummy. The “safe” path still might include deadly gases or other hazards an ancient dead can safely ignore. Also be aware that these trap-free areas are frequently filled with guardian creatures.

### Contents

Burying goods with the dead is not restricted to those locales where mummification is the norm. In most places, one or two objects are interred with the deceased as a simple farewell gesture. In contrast, a mummy is buried with *all* the things it needs in the afterlife. This is no token demonstration of grief, but a serious and practical matter. As a general rule, cultures that mummify believe the

dead have the same physical needs as the living, and who are we to gainsay them? To have a necessity withheld is to suffer eternal privation in the afterlife.

Not every deliberately interred mummy is buried with a vast treasure. The quality and quantity of the grave goods naturally varies with the wealth and status of the deceased, and with the intentions of the being that performs the embalming and burial. An ancient dead seeking undead servants might mummify its slain foes and provide them with no grave goods at all. A greedy embalmer might substitute inferior goods for family heirlooms that he hopes to resell for a profit. Still, one can surmise a great deal about a mummy by observing the contents of its tomb.

A mummy that enjoyed a respectable status in life would be buried with basic necessities such as clothing, tools, weapons, and the like. Food might be provided figuratively, in the form of frescoes or mosaics on the walls. If the mummy was a little higher up the social ladder, one might find actual furniture, cosmetics, inscriptions bearing the names of people important to the mummy in life, and perhaps a few statues to serve as servants. Mummies of the highest status might be interred with hundreds of statues—both servants and guards—vehicles, extensive inscriptions and paintings relating the story of the mummy's life, books, and many valuable treasures.

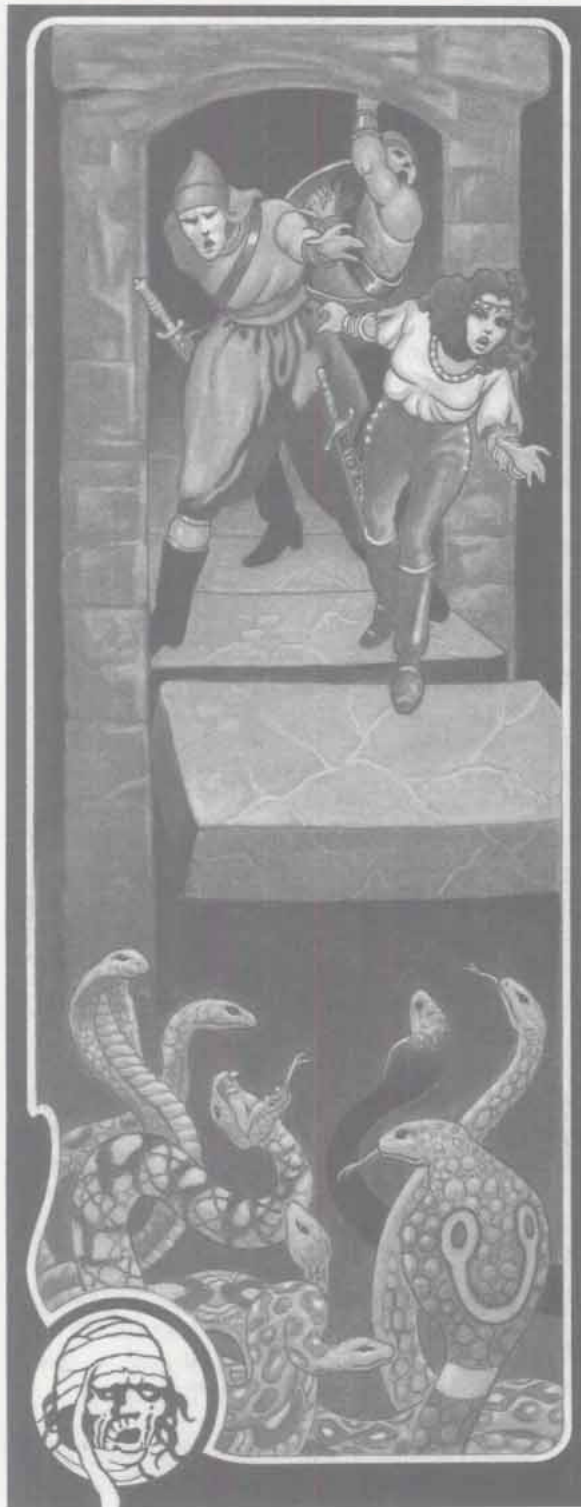
In some cases, mummies of station are supplied with offerings of fresh food, beverages, and other perishable items. This is a sure sign that a mummy cult is associated with the tomb.

### Cults and Temples

A mummy cult is typically a secret society of worshipers that attend or venerate an ancient dead creature, usually an invoked mummy; if the mummy employs living monsters or natural animals as guardians, the cult is responsible for their care and feeding as well.



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Mummy cults can consist of only a single individual, usually one of the mummy's descendants or an evil priest, but cults almost never number more than 30. The relationship between a mummy and its cult is bizarre and difficult to understand. The mummy seems to be the central figure and is venerated as a kind of minor deity or earthly representative of a greater power. Nevertheless, cultists enjoy the power to call their mummy forth to render service (and sometimes vice-versa). Often cultists are at the mummy's mercy, but one that slays its own worshipers may suffer from diminished powers or cease to exist altogether. As with all unholy pacts, the alliance between a mummy and its cult is an uneasy one at best.

In some cases a mummy cult actually serves to keep a mummy at rest. Cultists often venerate the mummy, keep its memory alive; they might also bring offerings to the tomb on a regular basis. If deprived of this attention, a mummy may rouse itself and seek new worshipers. Note, however, that the worship of one's deceased ancestors is not a dark practice in all parts of the world, and the presence of a cult does not always indicate that an undead monster is present. Again, I remind the reader that disrupting a cult may prove to be the very act that wakes an otherwise inoffensive corpse.

No matter what the circumstances, one must be very careful dealing with locals while hunting a mummy. One's foe might have allies in unexpected places, and an inadvertent misstep might alienate potential informants who possess valuable knowledge.

The tomb of a mummy with a cult is equipped with a temple where offerings are brought. In most cases the temple is dedicated to deities of death or the underworld to which the mummy ultimately owes its existence. If the cult is benign, the temple may be dedicated to deities of renewal, protection, or knowledge.



## VII: HOUSES OF THE DEAD

### DM Notes

#### Types of Tombs

Origin*	Type**
Aboriginal	Grave, mound, lithic
Central/South American	Grave, ziggurat, rock-cut
Chinese	Grave, horseshoe
Egyptian/ Mediterranean	Grave, pyramid, rock-cut
European	Grave, crypt, catacomb

\* The mummy's original cultural type; see DM notes in Chapter II for definitions.

\*\* The kind of tomb in which a mummy from the listed culture is typically found.

#### Curses

"Curses" associated with mummies actually stem from diverse sources, including *protective curses*, *punitive curses*, and *powers checks*.

✦ **Protective curses:** These are wards designed to prevent or discourage intruders from taking certain actions such as defiling a tomb. Their strength ranges from troublesome to lethal. They can be avoided simply by refraining from the proscribed action. Visual warnings in the form of writings or illustrations usually describe a method for avoiding the curse. A warning and effect might be:

*You have entered the eternal house of Sekenenre, who lies beyond. Your welcome ends at the threshold; may your senses fail if you heed not this warning.*

*Effect:* The first character across the threshold fails to note the next danger he encounters. If it is a trap, the victim triggers it even if he searches for it. If the next encounter is a creature, the victim is surprised.

Another warning might be:

*A warning to vandals! Destruction is a shortcut to death!*

*Effect:* Anyone defacing the tomb automatically ages 10–40 years.

✦ **Punitive curses:** These are designed to punish certain actions. They typically do not involve a warning, and their strength ranges from embarrassing to troublesome. Punishable actions might include: stealing treasure from a tomb (persists until the item is returned, intact), defacing a tomb (persists until the damage is repaired), and failing to observe a required ritual when entering a tomb, such as bringing an offering of food or reciting a prayer for the dead (persists until the victim leaves the tomb).

Punitive curses can be aimed at a specific character—the one who took or failed to take the action that triggered the curse—or at an entire party. Sample effects include:

*Disfigurement:* The victim is branded with an unholy symbol of the back on the hand, cheek, or forehead. The character loses a point of Charisma permanently and suffers a –15% reaction check when dealing with NPCs who see the symbol and recognize it.

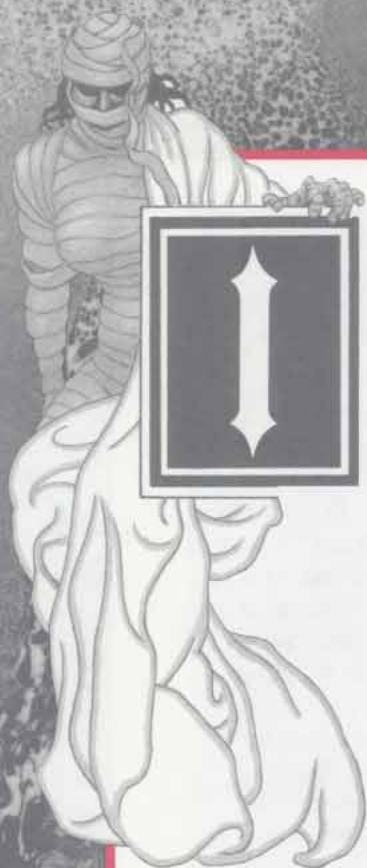
*Ill omen:* Characters who enter a tomb without placing offerings of food or drink in a designated area suffer a –2 penalty to all saving throws and ability checks within the tomb.

*Sensitivity:* Some common substance invokes a severe allergic reaction in the victim, causing a rash, cough, or similar irritation that imposes a –1 penalty to initiative and reduces movement by one third.

✦ **Powers checks:** Some of the effects Van Richten notes are actually the results of a failed Ravenloft powers check. In places where mummification is practiced, violating a tomb is a serious moral crime, which requires a powers check of 5–7% when the offender is an outsider. If the offender is a local, violating a tomb is an act of ultimate darkness, which requires a powers check of 50–100%.



## VIII: BATTLING THE ANCIENT DEAD



*It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.*

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

*Let's make us medicine of our great revenge,  
To cure this deadly grief.*

—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Defeating an undead menace requires careful thought, conscientious preparation, and immediate action when the time is right. This sequence of steps is, of course, vague, and carrying it out requires numerous smaller steps. The exact order in which sub-steps are performed varies with the circumstances. Each powerful undead creature is unique, and

a slavish devotion to any generalized plan will only assure the hunter's death—or worse.

In my campaigns against the ancient dead, success has rested on accomplishing five tasks: *identification, research, assessment, reconnaissance, and the kill*. In this chapter I explain what one must accomplish at each stage. The method presented here is a somewhat abridged version of the steps I outlined in my earlier work on ghosts, as these two types of creatures require similar approaches. Readers familiar with the procedures from the previous work should nevertheless review the material I have included here. To guide the reader, I have provided practical illustrations of the techniques I describe in the form of excerpts from my own journal.

I cannot over-emphasize the value of improvisation when hunting a mummy. Nevertheless, do not improvise blindly. One cannot best a mummy through mere guesswork. Do not be afraid to draw conclusions from what an investigation reveals, but always be sure one's conclusions follow logically from the evidence.

### Identification

Obviously, the hunt cannot begin until one learns that a quarry exists. One may encounter a foe first-hand, or one can discover some tale or account that points to a creature's existence. Of the two, the latter is much more typical; it is highly likely that someone else will be the first to see the creature.

Even when one happens upon a mummy, clues about the creature can be found well away from its lair. In any case, the first task is to discover what sort of creature one is facing, which is not always immediately apparent.

### Picking Up the Scent

A prime example of the kind of early detective work required at this stage is the case of the *Bog Monster of Hroth*, which I mentioned in Chapter II. This quest began, as so many of my adventures do, with a fireside tale.

*My companions and I had paused in the town of Skald to put up our feet for awhile and enjoy a hot dinner (a stew of mutton and flavorful Kartakan turnips, in this case) and a warm bed for the night. In keeping with local custom, the landlord had barred every door and shutter in the place at sunset. This, I learned, was a precaution against wolves, which were bold enough to enter the town. When I remarked that I seldom had visited so dangerous a place, my host gave a belly laugh and replied that but a few leagues west lay a land where the night was haunted by groaning spirits and where strange, horned beasts stalked the forest.*

*The landlord, of course, was referring to the adjacent land of Sithicus, whose border lay close at hand. The banshees of Sithicus were an old tale to me, but never before had I heard mention of any horned beasts. Knowing full well the Kartakan reputation for tall tales, I grinned and bade the landlord to recount the entire story. The fellow obliged, spinning a tale in that melodious*



## VIII: BATTLING THE ANCIENT DEAD



voice for which Kartakans are justifiably famous. He told of the cursed town of Hroth, where on moonlit nights the melancholy elf folk shunned a certain bog where a horned fiend dwelt. The creature stalked the countryside, seeking vengeance, and could be appeased only through an offering of gold or silver.

Needless to say, the innkeeper's tale was much more elaborate, but the words I penned in my journal capture the gist of it.

My friends and I were well aware that investigating a Kartakan tall tale might prove a fruitless endeavor, yet there were elements to the yarn that intrigued us. What manner of creature was this nocturnal monster from the bog? A wereboar, perhaps? How was it any tale illuminated the gloomy land of Sithicus, where the elf natives were friendly enough, but the prevailing pessimism did not encourage long

visits? We questioned the innkeeper at length, seeking to resolve certain contradictions and omissions. Our interest only deepened the fellow's jovial mood as he embellished his tale in response. At length he waived a hand, urging us to journey to Hroth and visit a certain Jameld, an elf hunter of some repute. It was this elf, the innkeeper maintained, who first told the story.

Our party had intended to return to Mordentshire by road, north from Skald through Silbervas and Chateaufaux. After hearing of the bog beast, we opted to travel west to Sithicus and hence to Hroth. We would seek out Jameld and test the story's verisimilitude. That done, we could strike northeast to the Musarde River and travel it to Richemulot. A short overland trek would take us into Mordent and home to Mordentshire. Even if the tale proved spurious, the cross-country trek would save miles of travel, even if it would cost some comfort.



## VIII: BATTLE THE ANCIENT DEAD

### Confirmation

I draw the reader's attention to the fact that, as we gathered up the first threads of information about the monster from the bog, my companions and I had no clear idea of what we were facing. We had a vague and highly questionable physical description (horned beast), a probable location (a bog near the town of Hroth), and the name of a contact who might have more details (the elf Jameld). Having learned all we could from the first witness, and having determined that he had not seen the creature himself, we sought a more reliable source of information.

The innkeeper's tale in no way convinced us we were dealing with the supernatural. The story might have been a complete fiction, or more likely, spun from a mere fragment of truth. Perhaps the yarn was based on the exploits of some entirely human bandit, though the reference to moonlit nights suggested that a werebeast might be involved. Or perhaps someone had merely been startled by an owl or fox one evening when the moon was out, and the tale grew in the telling.

*To our surprise, we did find a hunter elf named Jameld living in Hroth. He seemed a robust and steadfast person, if a little past his prime. He confirmed that he had once ventured into Kartakass, seeking wolf pelts. In the end, a yearning for his homeland and the deep-seated suspicion most humans have of demihumans sent him back to Hroth, to once again hunt deer and even the occasional banshee.*

*Yes, Jameld assured us, the bog monster was real. No, he hadn't actually seen the beast, but he had discovered the bodies of its victims from time to time. Jameld spoke of homes wrecked and their occupants torn to bits. In several cases he had found a set of prints made by cloven hooves, prints from a creature that walked two-footed, like a man.*

*In years past, elves living in the forested hills north of Hroth kept watchfires burning on moonlit nights, and left offerings of coins and*

*livestock for the monster. Eventually, the folk moved away, south or into the town. Even so, Jameld assured us, all manner of people tended to disappear if caught north of the town after moonset. Over the years Jameld had tracked the beast, but always had lost the trail in a vast bog northwest of town.*

*Upon hearing his story, we questioned Jameld at length and discovered two key facts:*

- ❖ *First, the victim's corpses invariably rotted very quickly.*
- ❖ *Second, the bog had been the site of an unusual battle many years before.*

*According to Jameld, a band of minotaurs—strange creatures with the heads of bulls and the bodies of huge men—had once tried to raid the town. The elves, however, were wary and laid an ambush for the monsters. Using their superior woodcraft, they surprised the raiders near the bog and inexorably drove them into it. The last phases of the battle took place in pitch darkness, after the moon had set. Both sides relied on their night vision during the fight.*

*To prove his story, Jameld introduced us to many veterans of the battle during the next few days. This was not a difficult feat, given the length of an elf's life span. Several elves confirmed the hideous condition of the monster's victims. The stories varied, but two factors were constant: the creature's great strength and the rapid decomposition of the bodies. Even more telling, all the accounts of the ambush at the bog were similar in their vital details: the date, the numbers of elves and minotaurs involved, the method of attack, and so on. It was clear that we were hearing accurate, eyewitness accounts of an actual event, and not retellings of a local myth.*

*Later that week, Jameld led us to the bog where the battle had raged. Several grassy mounds hummocked out of the still water, marking the graves of minotaurs that had fallen to the elves' arrows. The bog's murky depths hid the rest.*



## VIII: BATTLING THE ANCIENT DEAD

### Commitment

Once it becomes clear that a foe is genuine, the next step is to hypothesize about its nature and powers, and to decide if one has the resources and skills to achieve the objective of destroying the monster. It is fruitless to commit to a task one cannot finish, and there is no higher purpose served by one's needless demise. I do not fear death myself, nor do my comrades. Death, however, has been my constant companion, eager to embrace my smallest misstep. Before continuing with the hunt, one must decide if there is a reasonable chance of success. Doing so is instrumental in summoning the courage to undertake the job and see it through to its conclusion.

*We pondered Jameld's information carefully. The elf had not actually seen the monster—nor, it seemed, had any of the other witnesses. Still, there were remarkable similarities in all the anecdotes we had heard. Of these, I found the condition of the victims' bodies to be the most telling; surely here was evidence of mummy rot at work. While I was not willing to rule out all possibilities, I doubted the bog monster was a ghost; incorporeal creatures don't need to batter their way into homes, nor do they leave tracks. Likewise, I doubted the creature was a lycanthrope; moonlight held some significance for the creature, but there was no sign of the bloodlust that leads werebeasts to consume their victims, nor were there inconsistencies that pointed to a hidden shapechanger lurking among the townsfolk. When the beast's hunting ground had become barren, its predations seemed to have dropped off. Certainly a werebeast would have sought prey elsewhere.*

*Whatever the beast was, it seemed clear that its victims had little chance against it. There was no evidence that it had ever slain a spellcaster of any kind, nor had it ever faced an enchanted weapon. It remained to be seen if our own resources could meet the challenge.*

### Research

**T**o begin the second phase of the hunt, gather as much information about the creature as you can. Speculate about the mummy's origins. If possible, uncover the creature's past and relive its life. Consider the creature's death and how that drama might have affected its undead form. As the facts emerge, classify the mummy according to categories discussed in Chapter II. Draw some conclusions about the creature's reported powers and weaknesses.

*When we made clear our intentions to hunt down and destroy the bog monster, Jameld became enthusiastic. The creature represented a continuing threat to the community, and nothing would please Jameld more than to end that threat. During the next few days the elf led us over the sites of the creature's various attacks. Some careful mapwork confirmed that every attack took place no farther from the bog than a healthy man or elf could walk in a single night. Our most useful discovery, however, came when we found an elf who had survived one of the beast's assaults.*

*The witness, Aynruth, had decided to take over an abandoned homestead within what we had determined was the bog monster's hunting grounds. All had gone well for Aynruth and his family until one night, when the creature came calling. Aynruth had heard tales of a monster, but had dismissed them. In any case, he was a frugal elf and felt he had no coins or livestock to spare in appeasing the creature.*

*When it attacked, the monster used its massive horns and fists to literally tear the family home to bits. Only quick flight saved the elves. Once inside the house, the creature seemed more intent on plunder than on pursuing the fugitives; it stopped to grab furs, money, and anything else which might have value while the elves fled. Aynruth quickly determined that the attacker was an undead creature, and he lost no time dousing it with oil and setting it alight with a flaming brand from the fireplace. The monster's*



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waterlogged body appeared to be utterly impervious to fire, however, and the beast simply rampaged through the wrecked house, setting what was left of the homestead ablaze. For a time the creature, too, was completely engulfed in the flames, and Aynruth lost sight of it. When it emerged, it bellowed and prepared to charge, but a shot from Aynruth's bow sent it scurrying into the darkness, still clutching its smoking booty.

### Assessment

**B**y this time, at least a few key facts should have emerged from your research. This is a good time to review them. Reflect on your original hypothesis about the creature. Consider modifying it if the facts seem to warrant a change. Try to refine your classification of the creature, but do not be discouraged if you cannot make a definitive identification. Your investigation is really just beginning, and chances are you may have to throw out a few of your earlier theories. Do not hesitate to do so; stubbornly clinging to an insupportable theory is foolish and dangerous. Review all you have done so far and decide if there are any new lines of inquiry you can follow.

*We were hard on the creature's trail now. We had learned that fire would be of no avail against it, and its lust for treasure was confirmed. It seemed the creature could indeed be appeased by silver, gold, and other valuables.*

*Back in Hroth, we sought out a knowledgeable veteran of the battle at the bog and asked about the habits and abilities of living minotaurs (a subject we had neglected until now). The warrior protested that he knew very little, but his information proved valuable. We were reminded minotaurs could see in the dark in the same manner as elves. We also learned they were physically powerful, and that in their homeland (a place called Krynn) they believed themselves destined to rule the world. Though neither I nor any member of my party had ever heard of minotaurs, the veteran insisted they*

*were infamous brigands and pirates. Perhaps most importantly, we learned minotaurs took great pride in their horns. To be shorn of them was to suffer utter disgrace.*

*Further questioning revealed that the minotaur chieftain had been last to die in the battle. Volleys of arrows had driven the creature further and further into the bog until it finally sank from sight, thrashing and cursing.*

*It now seemed likely the monster from the bog was the restless, naturally mummified corpse of that minotaur chieftain. We surmised it was still seeking to pillage the area, as this would explain its desire for treasure. Several avenues of attack seemed promising: archer elves would likely defeat the creature, and elven bows might ward it off. If the mummy could not be slain through outright attack, shearing its horns might deal the final blow. If all else failed, a few gold coins seemed likely to distract the creature, should we need to escape a confrontation.*

### Reconnaissance

**O**nce you have assembled enough facts to form a few solid theories about your foe, it is time to get a look at the mummy yourself. In many cases your research will not be complete until you do this, as the mummy might have powers or vulnerabilities that other witnesses have failed to note. Now, too, is the time to test any suspected allergens and weapons. Use what you've learned to further classify the mummy.

Caution is still your byword. If possible, arrange to observe the mummy more than once, preferably from some position where it will not observe you. Also, if possible, test your allergens first by placing them where the mummy might stumble upon them. Once you've confirmed your theories about the mummy's weaknesses, you have a better chance of surviving your first assault. In all cases, plan your escape route carefully; time is not necessarily on your side, and if the worst consequence of failure is headlong flight, you have cause to be grateful.



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A succession of cloudy nights delayed our investigation for some time. We were certain that fading moonlight on the bog heralded the monster's appearances, and the fruitless nocturnal vigils we kept over the place seemed to confirm the fact. Our persistence was finally rewarded after a week of dreary nights spent in the open. A hush fell over the bog as the last rays of the waning moon diminished. The still water seemed to grow black, like a pit of tar. Shortly, my own sight failed altogether. I could see the stars above the trees, but nothing in the inky blackness at ground level.

Presently, I heard a clumsy splash in the bog, and Jameld hissed a warning. A musical tinkle filled the air as the elf moved forward, waving a bag of silver. (Because the creature had night vision at least as good as Jameld's, we assumed it would see us long before we could see it, and so we had resolved to distract it with some treasure.)

My ears strained to follow the beast's footsteps, but I heard only my companions carefully feeling their way downhill toward the bog. There was a hoarse bellow and a cry from Jameld, followed by a loud chink and the sound of pounding feet. The elf had dropped the bag of silver and fled.

Torches flared and the beast, which had stooped to seize the coins, straightened and whirled on us. I felt a wave of preternatural fear grip my heart as the creature faced us, but the feeling passed, leaving only a slight tingling in my limbs. (This, I noted, had to be mummy-inspired fear). The thrum of bowstrings filled the air as my companions loosed arrows out of bows we had borrowed from the elves of Hroth, and the creature staggered and bellowed as the shafts struck home.

The creature responded to our attack by lowering its head and charging down upon the archers, who held their bows high and stood ready to sidestep the beast if it came too close. This precaution proved unnecessary. The beast checked its charge, its watery eyes fixed on the upraised bows.

*Taking the better part of valor, the company used this respite to end the confrontation, and we scattered like chaff. Bellowing once again, the creature gave chase, but we had chosen our escape routes well. The creature rapidly lost ground, its horns tangling in low branches that nonetheless stretched high enough to offer no hindrance to us.*

### The Kill

Once you are sure of your theories and your weapons, lay your final plans and strike quickly. Speed is important. Your foe probably is not mindless, and it undoubtedly has been observing you even as you have been observing it. A delay invites countermeasures—or even counterattacks.

### The Plan

Your final plan should consider the following elements: *time*, *place*, *weapons*, and *escape*. Note also that no plan is complete until each member of the group knows exactly what is expected of him and is capable of completing his tasks without supervision. Your foe could have plenty of surprises in store for you, and you do not need any from your own team.

✦ **Time:** Assuming that a mummy doesn't force this decision upon you, time your assault for your own advantage. If, for example, the mummy's most potent ability is dependant on the rising of a certain star, make your attack when the star is not visible.

✦ **Place:** Again, you might not be free to choose the site of your battle. If you can, study the area. An intelligent mummy fighting on its home ground undoubtedly will try to exploit its knowledge; do your best to anticipate what it might do.

If you are not forced into a location, choose terrain that will give you an advantage, and use what you know to bring your foe to you. Judicious exploitation of a mummy's alligens and motivations is far more reliable for this



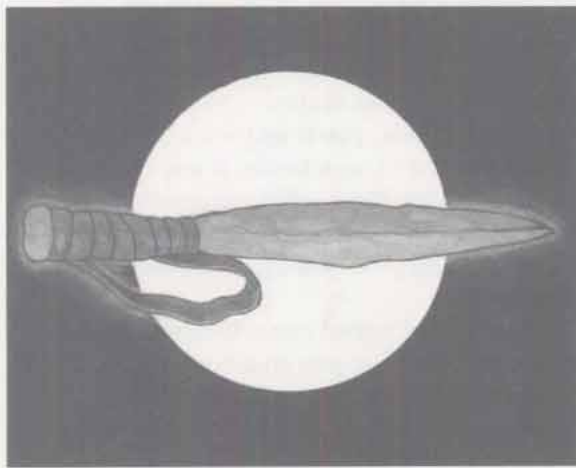
## VIII: BATTLING THE ANCIENT DEAD

purpose than simply picking a locale for an ambush and waiting for the mummy to happen by. Focus items are particularly useful for this purpose, as mummies usually attempt to retrieve them no matter what the circumstances.

❖ **Weapons:** If you accomplished nothing else during your preliminary encounters with the mummy, be sure you have tested every weapon you intend to employ in the final battle. I do not make this statement lightly. Test *everything* ahead of time. Enchanted steel, allergens, special weapons, even holy water and clerical power over the undead are unreliable until *proven* effective. If one item has failed during a preliminary encounter, replace it with another and test the replacement. I do not suggest leaving every bit of untested weaponry behind, although that is not a bad idea if encumbrance is a problem. Who knows? Fate might intervene of your behalf when you employ an untested weapon, but fate is a notoriously undependable ally.

❖ **Escape:** No plan is complete unless it allows for failure. After many years of undead hunting, I have learned to take nothing for granted. Confidence in a plan is fine, even desirable, but if things go wrong you must take steps to assure that you can retreat. Failure is perhaps the greatest teacher, but its lessons will go for naught if you don't survive.

If you have followed my suggestions thus far,



you might already have confronted your foe several times and quit the field. If at all possible, plan a new escape route for your final battle. If the mummy has observed your previous escapes, it might anticipate your actions and trap you.

By now your plans should be ready to bring to fruition. With all contingencies accounted for to the best of your ability, you are ready to move in for the final confrontation.

*Our success at the bog won us considerable support among the veterans of Hroth, and soon we had two dozen archers willing to take a hand in dealing with the beast. A quick scouting trip revealed a narrow footbridge spanning a deep, fast stream with high banks.*

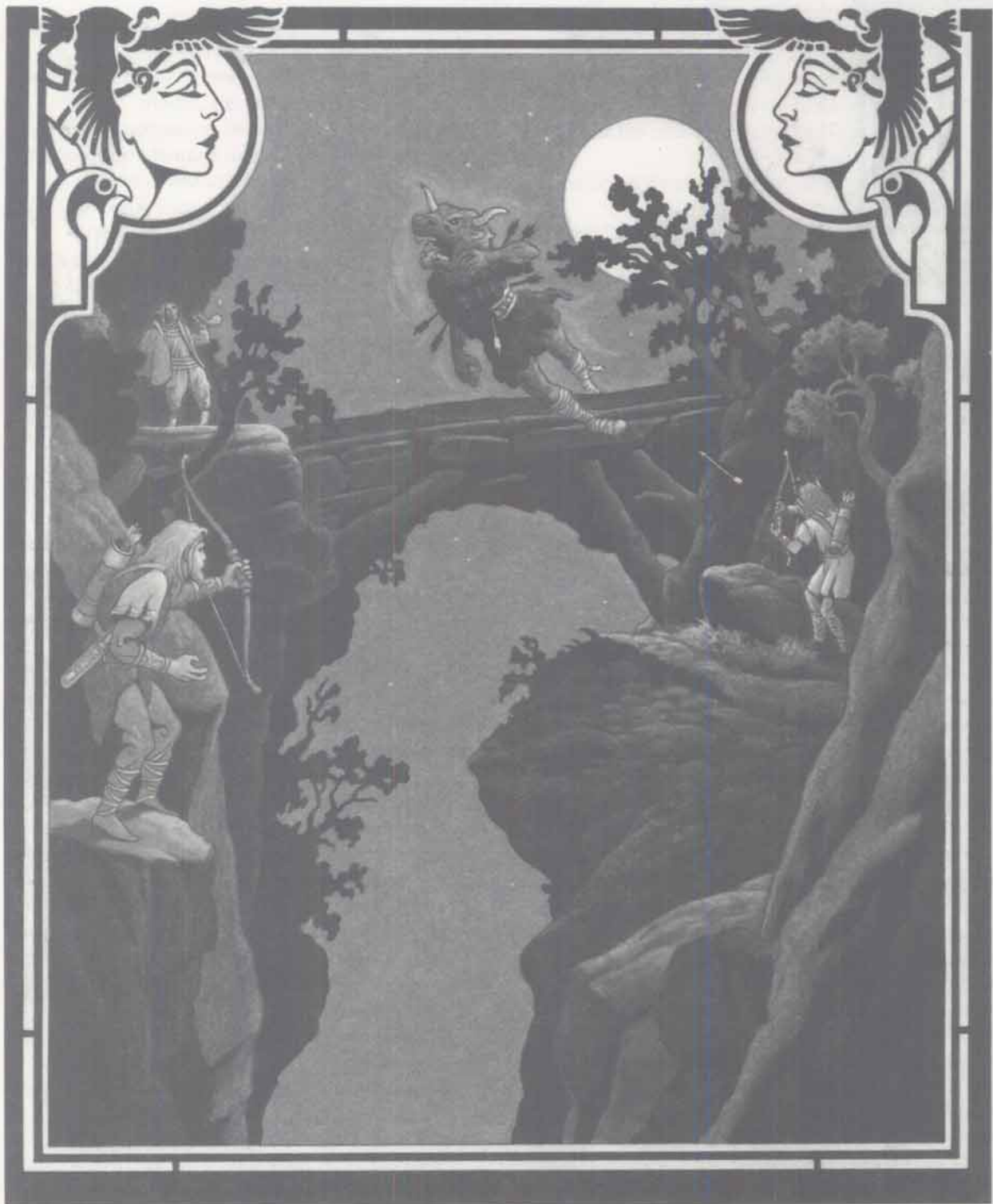
*We positioned these archers on both banks downstream of the bridge. We moored boats close by to aid in any retreat. At next moonset, two fleet-footed elves bearing jingling sacks of coins lured the beast onto the bridge. The archers opened fire. Two of my companions, bows once again held high, blocked both ends of the bridge, trapping the beast in the open. The creature was swiftly transfixd by dozens of shafts and toppled from the bridge. Taking to our boats, my companions and I hastily recovered the body and hacked off the beast's horns, whereupon the creature's withered body crumbled to dust.*

### Confirmation

The ancient dead are notoriously resilient, and any celebration of their demise is premature without first confirming the kill. If you have access to a creature's tomb, check it for signs that the creature's body is rejuvenating; a mummy often reappears within its tomb even if "slain" far afield. If you have recovered a creature's body, watch that for signs of rejuvenation, too. If the mummy's appearances were connected with a trigger, watch for that trigger's next few occurrences. If the creature does not return, at last you can celebrate. Your task is well and truly completed.



# VIII: BATTLING THE ANCIENT DEAD







*er lips were red, her looks were  
free,  
Her locks were yellow as gold;  
Her skin was white as leprosy,  
The Night-mare Life-in-Death,  
was she,  
Who thickens man's blood with  
cold.*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Most players in regular AD&D® campaigns develop a healthy respect for mummies as powerful, if inflammable, foes. They rapidly learn that it is much more efficacious to quickly fry mummies with flaming oil than to risk the perils of mummy rot by engaging the ancient dead in melee.

Enterprising DMs can give overconfident players quite a shock by introducing a fireproof mummy or two into the game.

There is a place in horror role-playing games for monsters whose primary threat is physical. There is no doubt that simply introducing a mummy with one or two enhanced typical powers and a single salient power will have players fearing for their character's lives. But it is a mummy's potential for inspiring psychological horror that can bring true chills to a role-playing campaign.

In the 1932 movie *The Mummy*, Imhoptep (the mummy) proves to be a subtle and cunning villain. He is a foe who has endured through the centuries. He understands ancient secrets that the film's heroes must painstakingly rediscover. Initially Imhoptep is a traditional bandaged-wrapped Egyptian mummy. Once awakened, however, he masquerades as a modern archeologist and effectively becomes invisible; the heroes cannot detect the monster lurking in their midst because he looks and acts just like they do.

Likewise, Imhoptep's motives are inscrutable because the key to his thoughts lies more than

3,000 years in the past. He seeks to revive his lover, Princess Anaka, who has been dead for centuries. She has long since passed from living memory, but Imhoptep remembers.

The mummy also poses an unstoppable physical threat. To prevail against Imhoptep, the heroes must abandon their 20th-century weapons and rely instead on their knowledge of ancient Egypt. It is a frantic plea to a long-forgotten Egyptian deity that finally brings about Imhoptep's destruction.

## Mummy Adventures

To successfully create an adventure featuring a mummy as the primary villain, the DM must pay special attention to four basic elements: *history*, *trespass*, *retribution*, and *mystery*. One element will predominate, but all must be considered. The primary element sets the tone and provides the focus for an adventure.

For example, Van Richten's campaign against the Bog Monster of Hroth revolved around a single historical incident and the consequences that arose from it.

To shift the adventure's focus to trespass, the scene describing the bog monster's awakening could be changed; perhaps the mummy rose when disturbed by a treasure hunter, or in response to an elf boasting about his victory over the minotaurs.

A mystery adventure involving the bog monster could do away with the tavern keeper's tale in order to create a story based upon trespass. Instead, the first hint of the monster's presence might be a set of unidentified footprints leading away from a burned-out cabin. While the hunters struggle to locate and identify the mummy, it could begin stalking them as trespassers on its territory.

A retribution adventure would redirect the mummy's attacks against the residents of Hroth. The monster would seek to destroy the elves who slew it, instead of simply attacking hapless victims who find themselves too close to its bog at the wrong time.



# DM APPENDIX

## History

A mummy's history is the factual story of its mortal life and death. This is the most crucial element in any mummy adventure because who or what the mummy was in life foreshadows its powers, weaknesses, and motivations, which generally are symbolic of some aspect of its life or death.

If the mummy has a high rejuvenation power rank and several salient powers and weaknesses, a detailed history is essential. If you have not developed a detailed history for your creature, you will find it very difficult to adjudicate all the detective work the PCs must complete to uncover the creature's weaknesses and defeat it. It is, of course, possible to create a mummy just by throwing together a few statistics, but if you do this, make sure the mummy is fairly weak and serves only as a minor character. Above all, be sure that you do not assign a high rejuvenation power rank to a mummy without also creating a detailed history, as these creatures are nearly impossible to destroy without recourse to a high-level spell such as *wish* or *resurrection*.

It is not necessary to develop all the minute biographical details about an important mummy's life, but you should note the mummy's profession, what it was doing and thinking when it died, and how and where its body was buried and preserved.

## Trespass

A recurrent theme in mummy stories is transgression. Some person or sentient entity violates a moral tenant or disturbs something that is best left alone. This might apply to the mummy itself, to the events that wake the mummy, or to both. Anhktepote, lord of Har' Akir, offended his deity by railing against his own inevitable death and the loss of his kingdom to his heirs. The bog monster, greedy for treasure, sought to invade Hroth and steal from its citizens. The hapless archaeologists in *The*

*Mummy* are very proud of their ability to read ancient hieroglyphics and carelessly read aloud from a scroll an incantation whose power they do not understand.

Frequently the transgressor knows that his or her actions are wrong. The character is not necessarily a scoundrel; ambition, greed, lust, hate, vanity, or some other powerful emotion often clouds the character's judgement.

It is the nature of the trespass and the trespasser's identity that shape an adventure. As Van Richten points out, Anhktepote is an undying bogey man. He is consumed by his desire to rule, but prone to lie in his tomb and dream of better days. The bog monster haunts the site of its death, lashing out at anything it can reach. The archaeologists in *The Mummy* must unravel a deadly mystery.

It's possible that neither the mummy nor the PCs are the transgressors. For example, an innocent victim of mummy rot, unwillingly turned into an ancient dead after death, becomes a tragic figure, even as a mummy. The actual transgressor is the being who slew the victim, or he who transformed the victim into a mummy. This being might play a role in the adventure, directing the mummy's actions, or he might be absent altogether. No matter what the case, PCs who put the mummy to rest ultimately serve as its liberators.

## Retribution

The trespass invariably sets in motion a chain of events that have dire and unforeseen consequences. The retribution reflects the nature of the trespass (the punishment fits the crime), and both the victim and the entity that delivers retribution shape the adventure.

Mummy curses are a common type of retribution, though these tend to come into play only after a mummy adventure begins.

As beings trapped in living death, all mummies are stuck in a form of eternal punishment. However, in Gothic horror retribution does not always fall solely on the transgressor. Anhktepote



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and the bog monster pay for their transgressions by becoming undead mummies, and both creatures use their newfound powers to menace innocents.

Retribution functions on two levels in *The Mummy*. The archaeologists suffer consequences for waking Imhoptep, but those same archaeologists ultimately frustrate Imhoptep's attempts to revive Princess Anaka. Just moments before completing his task, Imhoptep dies a permanent and agonizing death in the film's final scene.

### Mystery

In a RAVENLOFT adventure, it is best to keep the players guessing. This is particularly important in mummy adventures, where the PCs often must discover a foe's one weakness. Long after mastering the terror of facing a strange new creature that turns out to be a mummy, the player characters must continue to struggle with the exact nature of the beast, having exhausted their standard approaches to dealing with such menaces. It is not only the horror in the face of the unknown that is important to the game, but the mystery of dealing with it.

Never simply blurt out vital information about a mummy's vulnerabilities; indeed, never blurt out the fact that the PCs face a mummy. Instead, be prepared to feed the players a steady stream of vague clues. In the case of the bog monster, Van Richten began with the innkeeper's questionable assertion that the monster came forth on moonlit nights, which suggested that it might be a lycanthrope, and several other fragmentary clues such as the monster's desire to collect treasure. During the investigation, the survivor's account of an attack only indirectly revealed the monster's immunity to fire.

It is usually best to give the PCs only brief glimpses of the monster before their final confrontation. This actually works in the party's favor, as mummy rot can devastate a party, especially if it is not well provided with *cure*

*disease* magic. More importantly, keeping the foe hidden from the players slowly builds terror—everyone fears the unknown.

### Constructing Mummies Quickly

**T**he *Monstrous Manual* contains monsters that can provide starting points if you need to create a mummy in a hurry, including the mummy and greater mummy. The son of Kyuss (from the MC GREYHAWK® appendix), Senmet (from the MC RAVENLOFT appendix II), and Tiyet (from the *Darklords* accessory) are available too. These creatures are good examples of mummies whose powers have mixed ranks. A typical mummy has 6+3 HD and a movement rate of 6, and it makes one attack each round for 1d12 points of damage. This places it in the 2nd rank. It is harmed only by magical weapons and suffers only half damage from those, so it has 4th-rank invulnerability to weapons. It is immune to cold, but is vulnerable to even normal fire, so it has only 1st-rank invulnerability to energy. Its rejuvenation rank is not listed, but mummies are not known for regenerative powers, so we'll assume the power rank is 1st. Mummy rot from this creature is fatal in 1d6 months—1st-rank disease.

The typical mummy is a fearsome creature, but a few increases in its power ranks—say 3rd-rank elemental invulnerability, 3rd-rank rejuvenation, and 2nd-rank mummy rot—would make it a truly nasty opponent. To counteract these increased powers, we need to assign it a weakness the PCs can exploit. Perhaps it was a talkative barber who spread a little too much gossip; this might suggest that the mummy could be bound with a hair rope, damaged by a particular herbal tonic, or killed with a razor. The mummy's invulnerability powers could be dependent on clay tablets hidden in its tomb. If they are smashed, the invulnerabilities drop two ranks. These weaknesses also help make this "kit" mummy a unique creature.



## Constructing a Mummy from Scratch

**T**his method is more difficult and time consuming than modifying an existing creature, but it allows you to create a truly mysterious and dangerous villain, tailored exactly to your needs. Start by considering your story's four basic elements. These form the basis for your mummy. It is not necessary to fully develop the story before turning your attention to the mummy. Actually, it often is best to move back and forth between the story and the creature.

Once you have a story in mind, pick the mummy's origins and form. These will usually depend on the mummy's history. For example, if the mummy was a scheming power monger in life, it probably will be an invoked mummy because it would want to wield power even after death. Such a villain does not have to be invoked, however; if the mummy was killed by rivals, it could also be usurped or accidental—it all depends on how the creature died.

If the schemer died in his or her bed, it probably will be invoked (having completed that one final scheme to gather power even after death). If the schemer was killed in an ambush instead, it probably could not have become an undead mummy unless it was naturally preserved. If the schemer was more subtly assassinated, it is likely to be usurped (the rivals wrought a complete victory by forcing the mummy into subservience after death).

Once you have determined the mummy's origins, choose its state of preservation from the examples given in Chapter II. The circumstance of the mummy's death is the most important factor here. Naturally preserved mummies are usually withered or skeletal. Only mummies that have received elaborate or expensive embalming will be intact or pristine.

Now choose the mummy's general power rank and determine its powers. Examples given Chapters III and IV provide suggestions, but many others are possible. Don't forget that the mum-

my's powers do not all have to share the same power rank. Its powers should reflect a mummy's history. For example, the schemer discussed above probably would have some kind of charm ability. Power-mongers usually get ahead on a combination of ruthlessness and charm.

It usually pays to vary the power ranks at least a little bit from each other. This is particularly important if your players are the sort who read DM material. For example, it is fairly easy for players to determine an opponent's Armor Class, damage per attack, and movement rate. If the mummy's powers have uniform rank, a quick look at Chapters III, IV, and V would allow your players to use their characters' observations to determine the extent of all the mummy's powers. A little variety gives your villain strengths and weaknesses, and can keep players guessing at how hard they have to work.

When you've determined the mummy's powers, move on to its weaknesses; Chapter V gives some guidelines for the many possibilities that can be used here. Pay special attention to weaknesses if the mummy has a high invulnerability or rejuvenation rank; if the PCs cannot discover some method to circumvent these powers, they probably will not be able to defeat the mummy.

When you have completed all the mummy's statistics, go back to your story and add or alter any details required to explain these statistics. If you haven't done so already, consider how the mummy came to wake and decide what it is doing during the adventure.

Finally, turn your attention to the mummy's abode. Does it reside in the tomb where it was initially buried? Or does it lurk elsewhere? If the mummy has a superior rejuvenation power, it will need a secure place for its body to re-form after it has been "slain." In any case, the mummy's abode should be inaccessible and well-defended. As the characters thread their way through a lair filled with unanticipated dangers, the players' tension heightens, too. These penultimate jolts make an adventure's climax—the final battle with the mummy—that much more horrific.





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HUNTER IN

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SHOULD BE

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