

# **PATHFINDER**<sup>®</sup> ADVENTURE PATH™

## MUMMY'S MASK

ADVENTURE PATH  PART 2 OF 6

# EMPTY GRAVES



## CREDITS

### Authors

Crystal Frasier, Thurston Hillman, Will McCardell, Rob McCreary, and Amber E. Scott

### Cover Artist

Tyler Jacobson

### Interior Artists

Filip Burburan, Ekaterina Burmak, Johan Grenier, Miguel Regodón Harkness, Audrey Hotte, Jason Juta, Roberto Pitturru, Maichol Quinto, Antoine Rol, Florian Stitz, Tatiana Vetrova, Joe Wilson, Ben Wootten, and Kieran Yanner

### Cartographer

Robert Lazzaretti

**Creative Director** • James Jacobs  
**Editor-in-Chief** • F. Wesley Schneider  
**Managing Editor** • James L. Sutter  
**Development Leads** • Adam Daigle and Rob McCreary

**Senior Developer** • Rob McCreary  
**Development Team** • Logan Bonner, John Compton, Adam Daigle, Mark Moreland, and Patrick Renie  
**Associate Editors** • Judy Bauer and Christopher Carey  
**Editor** • Ryan Macklin  
**Editorial Interns** • Austin Bridges and Kaitlyn Sprague  
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**Design Team** • Stephen Radney-MacFarland and Sean K Reynolds

**Managing Art Director** • Sarah E. Robinson  
**Senior Art Director** • Andrew Vallas  
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**Website Team** • Christopher Anthony, Liz Courts, Crystal Frasier, Lissa Guillet, and Chris Lambertz

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# MUMMY'S MASK



## GODS OF EARTH AND SKY

I'm really excited about this month's volume of the Mummy's Mask Adventure Path. Beyond the fact that "Empty Graves" is Crystal Frasier's first adventure for the Adventure Path line, *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #80 also contains an article by yours truly detailing the major gods of the Ancient Osirian pantheon—gods with names and forms familiar to those acquainted with Egyptian mythology.

Back when we were first outlining Mummy's Mask, I knew I wanted to do something with the gods of Ancient Osirion. You can't have pyramids and mummies without giant animal-headed statues, and if you're going to have statues with jackal or lion heads, those statues need to represent something. The existence of gods previously unknown in the Pathfinder Campaign Setting was hinted

at in the original *Pathfinder Player Companion: Osirion, Land of Pharaohs*, which included brief descriptions of three ancient Osirian deities—Apep, Khepri, and Wadjet—though with no actual game information such as domains, favored weapons, or even their alignments. Apep, Khepri, and Wadjet are all gods from the real mythology of ancient Egypt, but where was Anubis, Osiris, or Set? For Mummy's Mask, I wanted to explore more of these gods and present rules for clerics and others who might worship them.

History and mythology have always interested me, particularly those of ancient Egypt, and I loved books like 1st edition AD&D's *Deities & Demigods* that brought real mythology into the game. I even backed Jeff Dee's Kickstarter campaign to recreate his art for the Egyptian

Mythos from *Deities & Demigods*, and I've pinned a selection of prints of the Egyptian gods from that Kickstarter to my cubicle wall to inspire me as I work on *Mummy's Mask*. So once we decided to do an article on the gods of Ancient Osirion, I knew I wanted to be the one to write it.

However, it turned out to be a lot more difficult than I anticipated. We wanted to do 20 gods of Ancient Osirion to mirror Golarion's 20 core deities, but paring down the literally hundreds of Egyptian gods to just 20 proved to be a challenge in and of itself. Who were the most important ancient Egyptian deities? Which gods would readers most expect to see? Conversely, who would they be disappointed to not see?

But these numbers were just the tip of the iceberg. The civilization that we call "Ancient Egypt" lasted for thousands of years, from the Early Dynastic Period of circa 3100 BCE to the end of the Late Period in 332 BCE (and even longer if you include the later periods of Greek and Roman rule). During this time, the gods of Egypt changed as the people who worshiped them did—as one city rose to prominence, so too did its patron gods and goddesses, just as new pharaohs promoted the worship of new or different deities when they took the throne. And as time progressed, various gods incorporated the attributes of earlier deities, and several deities were combined together into syncretized forms, essentially creating composite gods from what had formerly been separate deities.

What this meant for me was that virtually every god had different attributes, spheres of influence, relationships with other deities, and sometimes even names, depending on which period of ancient Egyptian history I considered. At the same time, very different gods often had very similar characteristics. Lastly, these gods had to fit in with the core Pathfinder deities and the cosmology of the Pathfinder campaign setting.

In the end, all of these factors meant making some difficult choices. I picked individual gods whose names I thought a good majority of people would recognize, or who had interesting stories or relationships with other deities. But with room for only 20 gods, some major Egyptian deities had to be cut, particularly those the Egyptians themselves grouped together, such as the Ogdoad of Hermopolis and the Ennead of Heliopolis. Other divinities, such as the sun-disk Aten whose monotheistic worship was instituted during the rule of Pharaoh Akhenaten, were excluded simply because they represented too much of a departure from the more traditional ancient Egyptian gods.

Once I had my core 20 deities, I still had to assign to them alignments, areas of concern, domains, subdomains, favored weapons, and holy symbols. Apparently the ancient Egyptians didn't worship their gods according to the nine alignments of the Pathfinder RPG, and they didn't seem particularly fond of evil gods, so one thing you'll notice in

## ON THE COVER

The mysterious and obsessive necromancer Nebta-Khufre appears on this month's cover. Having discovered and stolen the *Mask of the Forgotten Pharaoh* from Wati's necropolis, he's the cause of the undead uprising in this adventure, and the final villain the PCs must face to end the restless dead's reign of terror.



the Ancient Osirian pantheon is a lack of evil gods—with a few exceptions, they just don't really exist. Even Apep, for example, was more of a monster and a foe for Ra rather than actually worshiped. Likewise, not all of them had weapons, or easily identifiable symbols, which means I had to make things up for some of the gods. As far as I know, no one in ancient Egypt ever used a starknife, but it seemed a good choice for Maat's favored weapon. In some cases, I made changes to the stories or natures of these gods to better fit them into Golarion's existing cosmology, but I worked to remain as true to the original mythology as possible.

Though it was hard work to tie all of these pieces together, it was also a lot of fun. I've always enjoyed creating pantheons from scratch (or nearly so, in terms of game mechanics), and trying to figure out how these new gods should interact with some of the preexisting Pathfinder deities was an interesting challenge. It was even more interesting to work out why these gods are the same deities we know from ancient Egyptian mythology. We long ago established that Earth and Golarion exist in the same universe—and the Reign of Winter Adventure Path even connected them in time—so with a little bit of work you can make a pretty good guess as to why the gods of Ancient Osirion are remarkably similar to those of ancient Egypt.

Although these gods were primarily venerated in Ancient Osirion, they're worshiped on a lesser scale in Osirion today. They aren't necessarily less powerful than the 20 core deities of the Inner Sea, but they have a local focus and are not generally known outside of Osirion. Still, any of these Ancient Osirian gods can be chosen as a patron deity by PCs looking for more ancient Egyptian flavor in the *Mummy's Mask* Adventure Path.

**ROB**

**Rob McCreary**  
Senior Developer  
rob.mccreary@paizo.com