



Just upriver from the city of An stands its sister city Tephu: City of the Reed People and home to the Great Library of Tephu, the greatest repository of knowledge in Osirion. Tephu is an enigma, with secrets shrouded behind an innocent facade. The gently waving reeds hide the black-scaled hetkoshu, just as the smiling face of the Outer Sanctum conceals an empire of knowledge with lurking secrets and outrages. Some say the library is a living that winds through the city, ever-shifting and loath to give up its secrets. In truth, the full extent of the Great Library is a mystery known only to a handful blessed enough to walk its stacks and pluck knowledge from its branches.

-Excerpt from Along the Sphinx

he confluence of the Crook and the Asp, where they join to form the great River Sphinx, is the site of the three sister cities Wati, An, and Tephu. Founded in –1605 AR, Tephu sits on the west bank of the confluence, across the water from its sister cities. While An and Wati glower enviously from across the rolling river, Tephu folk look down upon the other two cities, regarding them as lesser, and those two cities bear the butt of

Tephu's jokes. Tephu is not the oldest of the sister cities, nor is it the largest, but having made a fortune in papyrus and become a center of scholarship, Tephu regards itself as the home of culture—not just in the region, but in all Osirion.

Surrounded by tall, swaying papyrus reeds and towering orchards of date palms, this ochre city teems with movement, its famous papyrus merchants busily filling the latest shipments for Sothis and beyond. The papyrus of Tephu, they say, does not keep secrets; the secrets return home like fish returning to spawn. All knowledge eventually returns to the Great Library of Tephu, sitting among millions of words of recorded history and academic texts carefully shelved into the stacks, for the library to either boast about or hide.

Yet it's not only the library that most know Tephu for—it is also Tephu's papyrus trade.

This was a town that grew on the back of the papyrus that was so easily created here, and later a city that grew on the money of the traders in the town. This is a land of plenty and fortunes are waiting to be made. From the lowliest apprentice rolling her first fibers to the master artisans crafting the finest quality papyrus, all work and trade here, hoping to make their fortunes and often succeeding. As competition within the city is fierce, Tephu traders are astonishingly aggressive. They learn from their masters, who in turn learned from their masters, and have over centuries honed their talents for commerce and negotiation. To a merchant from Tephu, the only reason the word "no" enters a conversation is because the price is not yet quite right.

The River Sphinx toils on its way to the Swells of Gozreh nearly 200 miles northward. Near the city, the fields of papyrus plants that grow for miles around keep the river's flow calm. These plants add stability to the shore and keep the worst effects of erosion at bay, while intermixed white and blue lotus flowers lend an air of tranquility to the landscape and a gentle perfume to the breeze.

From the endless parade of barges to the abundant fish that are devoured by the great hetkoshu, the waters of the River Sphinx are never still. Those who fish here are always on the lookout for the black-skinned crocodiles, the clumsily aggressive hippopotamuses, and even worse creatures that lurk in the depths of the river.

TEPHU'S DISTRICTS

Once, Tephu sat back from the River Sphinx as though afraid to dip its toes in the water, but it now presses against the river's edge, trusting that the swaying

papyrus fronds will absorb the worst of the floods' fury and the embankment will do the rest. Space is at a premium within Tephu, pinched as the city is between the river and the desert—only the Old City remains free of crowding. The city is further divided by a canal that cuts deeply into the city, bending behind the Old City before meeting with the Sphinx once again. Along the canal, the papyrus manufacturers and merchants have erected elaborate and sometimes gaudy townhouses called riads, built on the backs of slaves who toil day and night to meet the demand for the finest quality papyrus in Osirion. In the shadows of these townhouses and warehouses live the majority; crammed into apartment and shanty towns, raising their chickens, they strive to keep the jackals, both animal and human, from their doors.

New City: This crowded and chaotic district has grown up between the river and the Old City. The New City is the center of trade in Tephu, and the streets of the district are congested and noisy. This district caters to visitors, who can find welcoming coffee houses, take a deserved bath in a hammam, or barter for commodities such as dates, olives, carpets, and of course papyrus.

The New City is separated from the River Sphinx by an earthen embankment. Beyond this levee—which teems with traders, guides, and children—are the papyrus fields, filled with carefully tended plants guarded jealously by their owners and hired workers. Sturdy piers stretch into these reeds, allowing moorage for harvesting boats, and further out, where the river is deeper, providing safe harbor for shipping vessels and the barges of visiting dignitaries.

Old City: The original city of Tephu was built at a distance from the river to avoid the worst of the annual flooding, with stone walls to keep out the rest. Throughout the Old City, remnants of the past stare mournfully from sandstone walls worn by time. Sandstorms over the ages have worn away many of the features of the dozens of statues and hieroglyphs that populate the plaza; some are known only because of diligent record keeping by the scribes of

FLAG OF TEPHU

MUMMY'S MASK

TEPHU

LN large city

Corruption +0; Crime +2; Economy +4; Law +3; Lore +6; Society +4

Qualities Academic, Holy Site, Prosperous, Strategic Location, Wealth of Information

Danger +10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 19,480 (15,584 humans, 1,753 half-elves, 718 elves, 681 halflings, 389 dwarves, 355 other)

Notable NPCs

Abderrahmane Zagora (N male human expert 10)
Commander Abdallah (LG female human fighter 8)
Grand Scholar Fatimid (N old male human bard 4/
wizard 6)

Haty-a of Tephu Deka An-Keret (LN female human cleric of Nethys 10)

High Priest Netukheret (LN female human cleric of Thoth 17)

High Priest Khu (N male human cleric of Maat 14) **The Viper** (CE male human roque 11)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 11,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 75,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 9th

Minor Items 4d4; Medium Items 3d4; Major Items 2d4

NOTES

Wealth of Information The Great Library at Tephu is a vast repository of knowledge. (*Lore +2; Society +2*)



the Great Library. The Old City is built around the Great Plaza, which was built upon the ruin of the old palace. This airy, open space amid the bustle of the city is home to both the Sanctuary of Nethys and the Great Library. In the plaza's atmosphere of calm, sisters of Nethys shuffle past temple guards, wealthy merchants, and scholars. The library's Outer Sanctum stands at the heart of the Great Plaza, surrounded government buildings and the finest townhouses and offices of Tephu's worthiest citizens.

Two gates allow access into the Old City—the Gate of the Sun, which faces the river, and the Gate of the Moon, which faces the desert. However, countless alleys and passages have punctured the old walls over the centuries, leaving the surrounding wall riddled with holes that allow people to pass into the Old City. While beggars and pilgrims are not turned away from entering the Old City, peddlers and hawkers are actively and aggressively removed. The area is diligently patrolled by the Tephu watch, who aren't known for their patience.

Outer City: The edges of Tephu where the city greets the desert are collectively known as the Outer City; here the poor and working class make their homes. The back streets are crammed with improvised dwellings, children at play, and squalid souks selling anything from rope to staple foods to flax. Those toiling in the date orchards and papyrus mills return to this district each night, and the scent of garlic, onions, beer, and sweat wafts from cramped houses and small public squares.

Wadjet's Walk: Tephu's canal, named Wadjet's Walk in honor of the goddess of the Sphinx River, runs through the district that shares its name. The Walk was designed to bring water deeper into the city and to facilitate trade. It flows through the city, flanked on both sides by fine apartments, the offices of the papyrus merchants, and bustling markets. Water is drawn from the canal by those locals not wealthy enough to have access to wells, while laundry women ply their trade at its edges, carefully watching out for the crocodiles that also call the canal home. Wadjet's Walk is navigable by all but the largest sailing vessels, and visitors regularly arrive at the Old City to visit the haty-a (or governor) via this canal.

The merchants, traders, and wealthier artisans of Tephu live in this district in colorful riads with lush green courtyards and beautiful arched doorways. Others make do with simpler dwellings, generally mud brick or sandstone compounds and apartments. Mausoleums, souks, and even fortified communal granaries are crammed side by side with temples, small palaces, papyrus mills, and warehouses. When particularly popular or notable caravans come to town, the squares are overtaken by bright circular tents while carts and overloaded camels block the streets.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are some of the more prominent or noteworthy locations in Tephu.

Academy of Scribes: It's said that nothing ever happens in Tephu without someone writing it down. The Academy of Scribes, the largest such academy in Osirion, is run by the kindly Grand Scholar Fatimid, who recently has been suffering from bouts of prolonged forgetfulness, and has been picked up by the watch in various locations about town—partially dressed or spouting mad ravings. The day-to-day running of the academy has fallen to Scholar Idriss (LN female human cleric of Nethys 8), who correctly fears that the old scholar is succumbing to dementia.

Idriss keeps the vast number of scribes busy and oversees the training of the clerks, who enter the academy at 5 years of age and remain until they are of marriageable age, when they're given the choice to continue their careers or leave the service of the academy. The youngest are tutored by a dozen elderly wizards, while those drawn to the gods'

service are trained by the Seer Sisters from the nearby Sanctuary of Nethys. Being trained in Tephu is a great honor and badge of respect; those who study here are very serious as they engage in research in various parts of the Great Library or move silently about the city.

Anippe's Date Orchard: A pleasant, shady retreat from the bustle of urban life, Anippe's Date Orchard sits just on the outskirts of town. The orchards have been worked and maintained for generations, and the city has expanded right up to the operation. In fact, the groves were much more expansive 2 centuries ago. The siblings who inherited the orchard back then sold off parcels of the land to eager agents looking to expand the city. This sale transformed the former orchards into a significant nest egg, an investment that has launched the Anippe family into social circles far higher than farming ever would.

The grove produces dates of excellent quality, and many dishes served within Tephu feature their distinctive taste. The dates are also dried and exported beyond the city's borders, and sometimes to lands beyond Osirion.

In addition to harvesting the fruits of the palms, workers tap their trunks

to extract their sap, which is then fermented into palm wine. Some of the palm wine is further distilled into a more potent drink called lagmi.

Camel Souk: This square is given over to a camel souk—a noisy mass of livestock, temporary pens, and traders haggling. Many of the stock are lazy or aggressive camels that no one would wish to own, but characters who succeed at a DC 15 Handle Animal check can find animals suitable for use as mounts.

Caravan's End: This inn caters to merchant caravans and travelers just stopping through or to those that don't have lingering business in the city. Located just inside the city on the road that heads north along the River Sphinx, it features comfortable, well-appointed rooms at fair prices.

Because it caters to traveling merchants, Caravan's End has an impressive amount of space dedicated to stabling horses, camels, and even rare mounts and beasts of burden. Stabling carries an additional cost, and guests can spend extra to have their animals groomed, healed, treated for infections or diseases, and even trained if the owner wishes to leave his animals for an extended period of time (often between regular visits to the city). The inn also has a deal with a local granary, allowing it to provide discounted feed to its guests.

Dark Depository: Part of the Inner Sanctum of the Great Library, this archive contains many works deemed too dangerous for public access. The Dark Depository is detailed on page 25.

Eye of the Heavens: A massive dome capable of being opened to the night sky caps this huge marble and sandstone building. The Eye of the Heavens is one of Tephu's oldest buildings, and lies in a plaza just beyond the wall of the Old City. Here, astronomers plot the movement of celestial bodies and record their measurements on long papyrus scrolls. They keep an archive dating back to before the founding of Tephu itself, and those interested in the stars pay handsomely to peruse the records kept here. The astronomers are always cautious of those who come to study the movements of

Aucturn, however, and turn them away more often than not.

The observatory is built around an incredible device of

The observatory is built around an incredible device of brass, copper, and sandstone known as the Oracle of the Heavens. The Oracle is used to predict the passing of comets, eclipses, the precise time of sunrise and sunset throughout the year, and other celestial events.

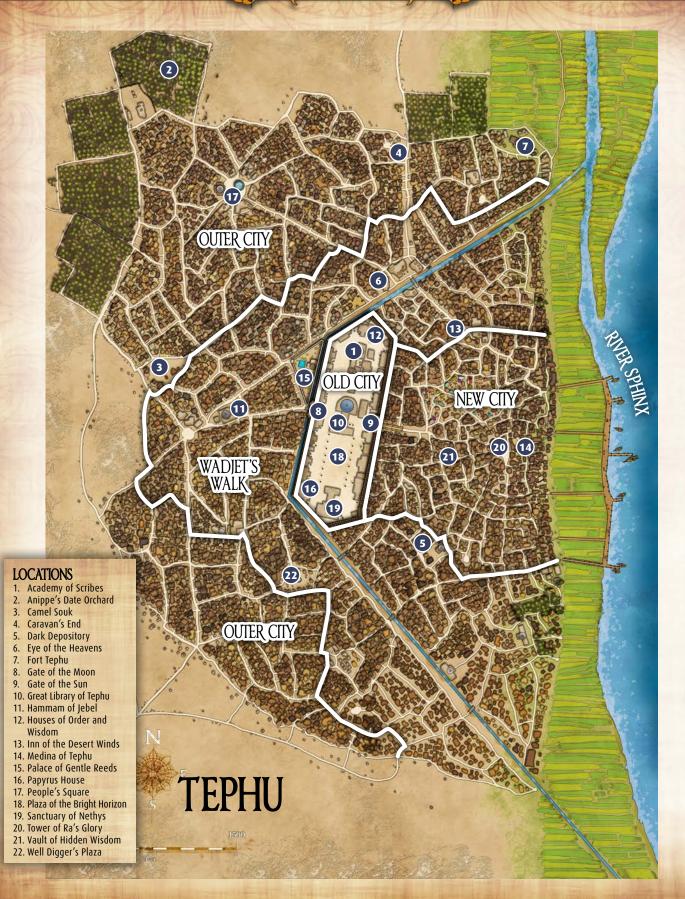
Fort Tephu: A squat sandstone building houses the main military force of Tephu. The fort covers a broad footprint, and has two floors and a tower that rises above the main building, commanding an excellent view of the city. Commander Abdallah, who leads the city watch, has a perpetually stern face, and she rules her soldiers with iron discipline. Her admiration for the city and its haty-a borders on fanatical, and she is a devout worshiper of Abadar, encouraging her troops to attend prayers regularly. She also personally oversees the drilling of the watch three times per day with the aid of her two captains, Daghreb and Maranad.

The fort has a large stable housing hundreds of camels and horses, and a percentage of the watch are trained cavalry, able to cover long distances and fight from camelback. The fort is rarely in a state of alert, however, and attack is considered not only unlikely but almost unthinkable in these enlightened times.

Gate of the Moon: The Gate of the Moon has a magnificent arched bridge that crosses the slow-moving Wadjet's Walk. Said to be blessed by Thoth, the Gate of the Moon bears a curious attraction to scholars, who gather there to philosophize and consider the finer points of life. The scholars are often seen strolling along the bridge while talking to themselves, or loudly extolling some

COMMANDER ABDALLAH

MUMMY'S MASK



new theory. The haty-a finds the bridge a valuable resource for scholars and encourages such activity—providing those scholars don't contradict the teachings of Nethys or foment rebellion. The philosophers are a diverse group, ranging from portly layabouts who have not washed in months to bright young idealists confidently predicting the rebirth of the Osirian Empire.

Gate of the Sun: The Gate of the Sun is the main thoroughfare between the Old City and the New City. A row of guards ensures that the hawkers, false guides, and other shady dealers who cram the gate do not enter the Old City, but they allow in pilgrims, beggars seeking alms, and those with official business.

Great Library of Tephu: The vast blue dome of the Great Library looms over the Great Plaza. The walls of the building are propped up by enormous footings, and a massive bronze door allows access. The building actually houses only the Outer Sanctum, the public part of the Great Library; access beyond is granted only by the haty-a of Tephu. The Outer Sanctum is watched by day by curators and temple guards, and at night the place is empty save for its guardians and the rare scholar with

special dispensation to stay later. The Spiral Archive, part of the Great Library's Inner Sanctum, lies beneath the Outer Sanctum, and access to it is tightly controlled by the library's curators. See page 20 for details on the Spiral Archive. Beyond, the library courses, weaves, and slithers into the very fabric of the city, and is said to touch every part of Tephu, much like the catacombs or sewers that underlie other cities. Building works often uncover forgotten wings, strange cabinets of ancient crumbling scrolls, or caches of tomes and books.

Hammam of Jebel: This enormous hammam claims to be the largest public bath in Osirion. The pool beyond the disrobing chamber is almost 100 feet long, while the steam and cold rooms can each seat hundreds of customers at a given time. An army of masseurs await to brutalize bathers at the end of the process with scented oils and strong hands. Visiting the hammam costs 1 sp.

Houses of Order and Wisdom: This large building contains two temples—one dedicated to Maat and the other to Thoth. Though they share exterior walls, the temples are largely separate, with only a pair of doors penetrating the wall between them. The Houses of Order and Wisdom were built shortly after the founding of Tephu and served as the center for civil administration

until Qadira's satraps came to rule Osirion. As worship turned to the modern gods, the Sanctuary of Nethys overshadowed the Houses of Order and Wisdom both spiritually and physically.

High Priest Khu sees to the shrine of Maat, and his wife High Priest Netukheret maintains the shrine of Thoth and the library within. The priests of

Thoth keep vast records in chambers within and below the House of Wisdom, and they gaze at the Great Library with envy, feeling that they should have the exclusive right to catalog the wealth of knowledge held within. An accord settled long ago restricts the priests' entry

to the Great Library, however—no more than three of them can peruse the

library at any given time. High
Priest Netukheret takes every
opportunity to assign her
clergy to study within the Great
Library, where they copy and
memorize the more valuable
information they encounter
in order to add to their own
sizable collection.

While the priests of Thoth maintain their original task of cataloging knowledge, the clergy of Maat are no longer as heavily involved in the administration of

Tephu as they were in ancient times, although a few priests still serve as judges or magistrates in Tephu's government. Instead, most priests now administer to the needs of members of the community who still revere the old gods. The House of Order holds small shrines to all of the nonevil ancient gods, and keeps its doors open throughout the daylight hours, allowing worshipers to come and go freely as they leave offerings to the old gods. Other visitors to the House of Order request mediation from High Priest Khu, who is well known and appreciated by many merchants in Tephu for his skillful service.

Inn of the Desert Winds: This inn is among the most popular in Tephu among travelers and those new in town. The inn has comfortable rooms and a spacious tavern where dozens of patrons drink and dance long into the night, with performers every night of the week. The kitchen billows mouth-watering scents throughout the building, carrying the aroma of roasted waterfowl, roasted vegetables, grilled fish, baking bread, and bean or barley stew with sliced eggs.

The inn's owner, **Thabat Pehta** (N female expert 3), tends the bar, serving up an array of beverages for thirsty travelers. In addition to yeasty beers and palm and date wines, Thabat makes a pomegranate liqueur that is easily

ABDERRAHMANE ZAGORA

MUMMY'S MASK

THE BASICS OF MAKING PAPYRUS

Papyrus is made from the papyrus plant, a reed that grows in abundance along the banks of the River Sphinx. These plants grow in thick clumps in the water and can reach heights of up to 16 feet. The shores of the River Sphinx are cloaked in dense clumps of the plant, but closer to the city of Tephu, the boundaries of individual plots are fiercely guarded and marked out by slender rods marked with hieroglyphs and tied with ribbons dyed the house colors of the owner.

After a papyrus reed is cut, the outer layer is removed and the inner layer is cut into thin strips that are soaked in water for several days to soften them. The strips are woven together or stacked in alternating layers. The resulting sheets are then rolled flat using heavy stone rollers. After they are rolled, the sheets are wrapped in linen and pressed flat between heavy wooden blocks before being allowed to slowly dry. The linen is changed over the next few days until, about a week into the process, the final papyrus can be rolled again and is ready to sell. The finished sheets can then be cut into whatever shape or size is desired, or joined end to end to form long rolls.



considered the best in town. She has considered leaving the operation of the inn to her husband in order to expand her distillery, but can't yet pull herself away from the bustle of tending bar.

One regular patron of the Inn of the Desert Winds flows in and out of the building like a gentle breeze. This unscrupulous figure, known as The Viper, involves himself in a list of criminal activities as extensive as the tavern's menu. He mainly acts as a fixer, but he also fences stolen or illegal goods, traffics in various drugs, and can even be contacted to arrange a hit.

Medina of Tephu: The vendors in this complex maze of shops sell everything from brass lamps, herbs, and spices to linen and cotton fabric, enormous clay pots, and copperware. The shops are crammed into a handful of alleys in which light is fleeting at best, so it's quite possible to get lost. Every 15 minutes spent in the medina, PCs must succeed at a DC 15 Survival check to avoid getting lost when looking for a specific shop. Those who become lost in the medina often end up victims of pickpockets or worse—many petty criminals stroll the medina hoping to spot the look of confusion that identifies a potential mark. Because of this risk, new visitors to the medina often hire guides, who charge just a few coppers for an hour's service. These guides are frequently children, and many are paid by merchants to bring patrons to specific shops. The merchants in the medina haggle like it's an art form.

GMs using the bargaining rules on page 138 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign* to simulate this haggling should treat the merchants as having a Charisma score of 14 and a +16 bonus on Appraise, Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive checks.

Palace of Gentle Reeds: This lush estate is set aside for the pharaoh's use, but more often than not his representatives enjoy the palace's amenities instead. Gardens and water features surround the property, and peacocks pecks at insects in the soft grass. Though this is usually a quiet and peaceful block of Tephu, recently the Palace of Gentle Reeds has become a lively whirlwind of entertainment and commerce as performers and merchants have flocked to the growing collection of tents that have sprung up since the coming of Muminofrah of Sothis. With her ostentatious pleasure barge docked in the canal in front of the palace, the spontaneous revelry has expanded down the bank of the canal and now winds through neighboring streets.

Papyrus House: Home to the taxation and mercantile services of Tephu, the huge Papyrus House is run by the grumpy Abderrahmane Zagora with the help of a large body of clerks, assistants, inspectors, and enforcers who collect taxes and dues from the thousands of merchants and citizens within the city. Haty-a Deka An-Keret despises Zagora, who she correctly suspects is loose in his enforcement of the taxation laws, taking regular bribes and gifts from the wealthier locals in exchange for more liberal interpretation of the laws.

People's Square: By day this plaza is busy, if pedestrian. But by night, after the hot sun descends, it's transformed into a stage for fire-eaters, street-vendors, acrobats, dancers, contortionists, snake charmers, and other performers. The square throngs with life, and the scent of charcoal-cooked food, incense, mint tea, and densely packed bodies is almost overpowering. The plaza is crowded with locals wearing their finest clothing, wigs, and makeup and ready to be entertained. The entertainers are incredibly diverse: storytellers, jugglers, magicians and wizards, bards, dancing baboons, artists, and singers. Slipping among these entertainers are hawkers, petty traders, and thieves. Apothecaries, dyers, perfumers, wig-makers, and other artisans are some of the many diverse traders frequently encountered in the square after dark.

Plaza of the Bright Horizon: Built partly upon the ruins of the first palace to stand in Tephu, the Plaza of the Bright Horizon stretches almost 500 feet long and nearly as wide. Its marble surface echoes the footfall of visitors, and 16 huge pillars depicting the history of the city rise from it between the Great Library and the Sanctuary of Nethys. Magnificent riads and official buildings surround and overlook the plaza, which during religious festivals and

civic events is opened to all visitors and crammed with celebrating crowds.

Sanctuary of Nethys: The present haty-a of Tephu, Deka An-Keret, lives and works in this magnificent marble and sandstone building, one of the largest buildings in Tephu. Every inch of the Sanctuary is painted or carved with depictions of the life and miracles of the All-Seeing Eye.

Tower of Ra's Glory: The remains of an ancient marble and sandstone tower clutter the center of this small plaza with stacks of stone blocks. A cluster of coffee houses, markets, and small businesses ring the rubble-choked plaza. For more information on what lies beneath the ruins, see page 32.

Vault of Hidden Wisdom: The entrance to this archive, part of the Great Library's Inner Sanctum, is carefully hidden—its existence is unknown to the citizens who walk past it every day. See page 32 for more details on this site.

Well Digger's Plaza: This open square was once the site of a short but bloody rebellion, but now the place is an idyllic escape from the bustle of the city. A gorgeous marble fountain is built upon the location of the first well dug outside the Old City. The well was dug without permission of the city's haty-a over a thousand years ago, and for generations it was a gathering place for the poor and working classes. Citizens would gather and commiserate with one another about new regulations and taxes, between glowering glances at the walls of the Old City. When city officials came to block access to the well, the citizens there refused to abandon what they considered theirs. Refusal turned to aggression, which then turned to bloodshed. The fountain was built on the site centuries later.

TEPHU PAPYRUS

In most markets in Tephu, standard grade papyrus costs 4 sp per sheet, but more robust papyrus and sheets with special qualities are also available in the city's markets and shops.

Impossible Papyrus: Touted by its creator as being so strong that it's impossible to tear, this papyrus is popular with adventurers, builders, engineers, and others who take books, journals, and maps into difficult places. Impossible papyrus has hardness 1, and tearing it requires a successful DC 24 break check. Impossible papyrus costs 3 gp per sheet.

Set's Papyrus: Dark papyrus is mixed with a dye made using a secret recipe that gives the papyrus a vague luminescence when pressure is applied via a stylus, rendering whatever is written on it visible even in complete darkness. The writing faintly glows red for 1 hour before fading to normal writing. Set's papyrus costs 5 gp per sheet.

Sphinx Papyrus: Some merchants claim the process for making this unusual papyrus came from a sphinx, while others say this form of papyrus merely borrows the great river's name. Sphinx papyrus is thin and light, but surprisingly robust. A full-sized sheet of sphinx papyrus can be folded down to the size and thickness of a copper piece, allowing the message or magic scroll to be hidden within a tiny space. Sphinx papyrus costs 10 gp per sheet.

Tephu Spellbooks: Tephu spellbooks are among some of the finest in the Inner Sea, and are in great demand across Golarion. No two are the exactly the same, and they are often created with a particular type of user in mind. Many of these are lengthy and ornate scrolls, as opposed to bound books. Tephu spellbooks cost 50% more than normal spellbooks, but it's said that

