

• BEQENU (FIGHTER) •

In every society of men, there will always be room for those who adopt the way of the sword. The land of Khemti has great need of fighters, what with its opposing city-states, mercenary bands and religious and political squabbles. The fighters of this land are as diverse in motivation as are those of other lands and cultures, but the means and methods of the Khemtian fighter do not vary as greatly from one to the next. This is, after all, one land, with a history of established weapons, armor and fighting styles. Only foreign beqenu provide any truly stark contrast to the otherwise “standard” mold of the Khemtian fighter. That said, a great deal of difference can be found between the various *races* of Khemtian fighters. A dwarven fighter, for example, while proficient in the same weapons as his elven or human counterparts, will bring his own race’s unique style to the warrior’s art. Each race’s aptitude with a different weapon further distinguishes Khemti’s fighters along these lines.

ADVENTURES

The beqenu are found in all levels of Khemtian life and society. Many Ta-Mehtu fighters are ex-soldiers, gladiators or charioteers; others are born and bred adventurers. Red Land fighters are often the elders of their tribes; at the very least,

they are the ones in charge of military campaigns. Regardless of their origin, beqenu often possess the knack for strategy and planning that their more instinct-driven cousins among the khasti or the wildwalkers lack.

CHARACTERISTICS

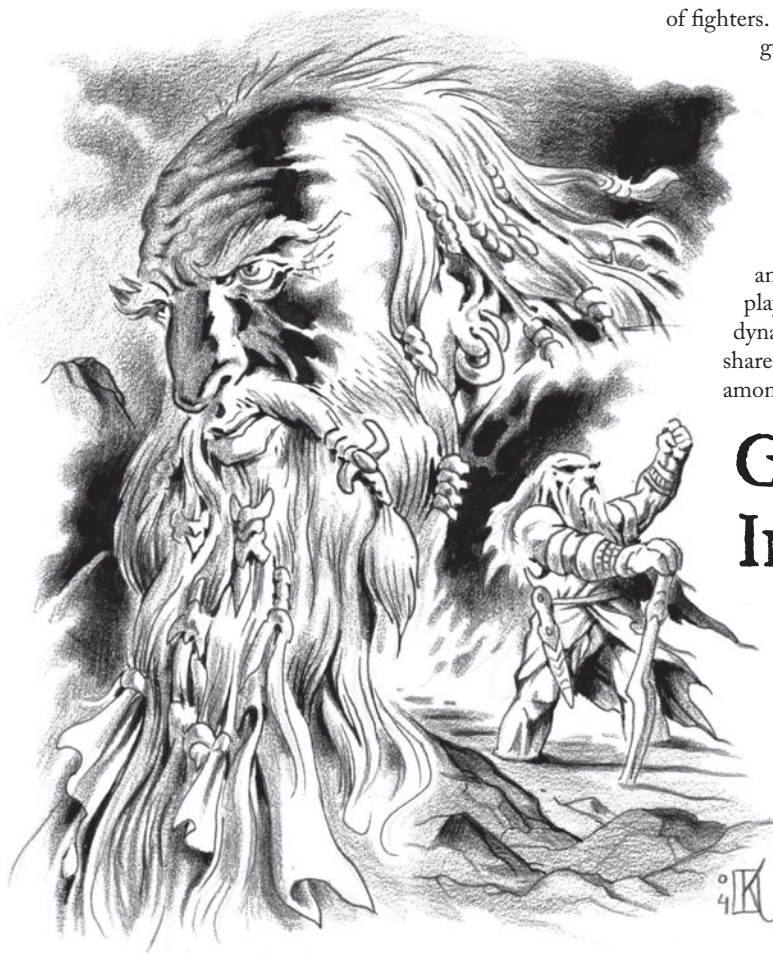
When it comes down to it, none can stand and deliver in combat more consistently or effectively than the beqenu. They are familiar with all manner of Khemtian weaponry, and many even know how to use and wear armor, though most opt not to. Khemtian fighters often hyper-specialize to distinguish themselves in battle, and the most legendary warriors in Khemtian history are associated with a particular weapon.

ALIGNMENT

The beqenu may be of any alignment. Good ones champion the causes of justice, law and peace, while evil ones might raid merchant caravans or trade ships along the river Yor, taking what they can with no care for the damage done. Lawful fighters often stem from military backgrounds, while chaotic beqenu are happy roaming the wildlands, offering their services in exchange for money or shelter.

TABLE 2-2: THE BEQENU

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	—
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	—
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Bonus feat
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	—
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	—
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Bonus feat
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	—
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Bonus feat
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	—
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Bonus feat
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	—
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	Bonus feat
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	—
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Bonus feat
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	—
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus feat



of fighters. Human beqenu are typically ex-military or religious guards, while many ptah-men beqenu are former slaves who took part in the rebellion. Anpur beqenu often act as lieutenants or lords to the ghaffir of their tribes.

OTHER CLASSES

Beqenu work well with people of every other class and from every walk of life. They are natural team players, and fit well in almost any possible group dynamic. In addition, Khemtian fighters don't usually share the mistrust or confusion about magic often seen among warriors of other lands and cultures.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Beqenu have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Strength is perhaps the most important ability for beqenu, as it determines overall prowess in melee combat. Dexterity is often just as key, and often even more so for those who opt not to fight in cumbersome and exhaustive armor. Lastly, Constitution is good for determining how well one can stand up to wear and tear in battle.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d10.

CLASS SKILLS

The beqenu's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str). See **Chapter Four: Skills** in the *PHB* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (2 + Int modifier) x4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the beqenu.

WEAPON & ARMOR PROFICIENCY

Beqenu are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all types of armor (medium and heavy) and with shields (including tower shields).

BONUS FEATS

At 1st level, a beqenu gets a bonus combat-oriented feat, in addition to any other feats the character gets at that level. The beqenu gets an additional bonus feat at 2nd level and every two beqenu levels thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 18th and 20th). These feats must be drawn from the feats noted as fighter bonus feats (both later in this chapter and in the *PHB*). The beqenu must still meet all the prerequisites for a bonus feat, including ability score and base attack bonus minimums. These bonus feats are in addition the feats a character of any class gets every three class levels. A beqenu is not limited to fighter bonus feats when choosing these feats.

RELIGION

The beqenu are found worshipping any and all of the 27, even those gods who normally don't have warriors associated with them (such as Hapi or Seshat). Of the greater gods, Ra and Osiris lay claim to a great many beqenu worshippers; Ra for his power and position as the god of rulership, and Osiris due to his current popularity and his promise of a peaceful afterlife for those who fall in battle in his name. Of the lesser deities, Horus likely claims the most beqenu worshippers, followed by Mentu and Apuat.

BACKGROUND

Most beqenu come to their chosen path early in life. Either they enter the military or gladiatorial pits at a young age or, for those outside the Black Land, they are brought up learning the ways of battle to better defend their tribe and way of life. A handful of formal academies exist, such as the fabled War College of Tjekut, but by and large one is either trained as part of an organized military or self-taught from day one. Barring shared upbringing or assignment, beqenu see little brotherhood with one another.

RACES

Beqenu hail from all the Divine Races, but not necessarily in equal measure. The preponderance of them come from human, ptahmenu and gnoll stock, but every race claims its fair share

• SERPENT DANCER •

One of the most revered and symbolically pivotal animals in Khemti is the snake. For the crowns of both Lower and Upper Khemti, the serpent has forever been a symbol of power and divine rulership, and over Khemti's long history, a number of pharaohs have claimed it as the symbol of their office. In each case, the ruler recognized the power the very image of the snake holds over his people. As time passes, the animal is becoming more and more associated with the god Set, but such has not always been the case.

Over time, an entire ethos has arisen around the serpent. The class itself began among the bahati, some of whom endeavored to fashion their fighting style around the quickness and lethality of the snake. As word of these initial successes spread, warriors of all stripes began to walk the same path, each seeking martial perfection in the form and grace of the serpent. Today, the majority of serpent dancers come from the ranks of the beqenu, kama'at and khebenti. The occasional wildwalker embraces the perfection of the serpent, as well, and those that do make some of the most intense and effective serpent dancers of all.

Serpent dancers are a surprisingly varied lot, considering the somewhat narrow focus of their attentions. Some are Set-worshippers, eager to prove their devotion and worth to the Lord of Storms, and these dancers gravitate toward organizations friendly to their cause. Other serpent dancers pursue their art to perfection in a quest for self-mastery, and it is these individuals who most often end up in the company of adventuring parties or special units in service to the various governments.

Hit Dice: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a serpent dancer, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Balance 4 ranks, Bluff 4 ranks.

Feats: Combat Expertise, Dodge.

CLASS SKILLS

The serpent dancer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con),

Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (nature) (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Tumble (Dex). See **Chapter Four: Skills** in the *PHB* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the serpent dancer prestige class.

WEAPON & ARMOR PROFICIENCY

Serpent dancers are proficient with all simple weapons and light martial weapons, plus the flail, the khopesh, and the whip. Serpent dancers gain no proficiency with any armor or shield.

IMPROVED DEFENSIVE FIGHTING

The serpent dancer excels at fighting defensively, and may add +2 to his Armor Class whenever taking an action involving sacrificing attack prowess in exchange for defense. For example, when using the Combat Expertise feat, a serpent dancer who takes a -3 penalty to attack rolls would gain a +5 to AC for the duration of the round. The dancer also gains this defensive boost to the protection offered by invoking total defense (see **Chapter Eight: Combat** in the *PHB*), raising the AC bonus it grants from +4 to +6.

DEATH-BRINGER (EX)

A 2nd-level serpent dancer is an expert of the quick kill. She may deliver a coup de grace as a standard action instead of a full round action. In addition, she does not provoke an attack of opportunity when doing so.

SERPENT MASTERY (SU)

The serpent dancer displays an affinity for and influence over snakes of all kinds. This affinity begins at 2nd level, when the character becomes immune to all snake venom (an extraordinary ability) and gains the ability to speak with snakes of all kinds (as per the *speak with animals* spell) at will. The latter is a supernatural ability.

TABLE 3-9: THE SERPENT DANCER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Improved defensive fighting
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Death bringer, serpent mastery
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Cobra sway
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Evasion
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sidewinder step
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Uncanny dodge
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Improved serpent mastery, serpentine skin
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	Improved uncanny dodge
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Asp attack
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Reflexive strike

The serpent dancer's serpent mastery applies only to ordinary or larger versions of ordinary snakes (of the animal type, generally speaking). Other normal reptiles, snake-like magical beasts, and snake-like humanoids are not affected.

COBRA SWAY

At 3rd level, the serpent dancer gains the Improved Feint feat.

EVASION (Ex)

At 4th level or higher, a serpent dancer can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save (such as a *fireball*), he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if one is wearing light armor or no armor, and a helpless character does not gain its benefit at all.

If the serpent dancer already has this ability from another class,

he gains the improved evasion ability instead (see the Rogue entry in **Chapter Three: Classes** in the *PHB*).

SIDEWINDER STEP

At 5th level, the serpent dancer gains the Mobility feat.

UNCANNY DODGE (Ex)

Starting at 6th level, a serpent dancer retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any), regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (He still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.)

If a serpent dancer gains uncanny dodge from a second class, the character automatically gains improved uncanny dodge.

IMPROVED SERPENT MASTERY (Su)

At 7th level, the serpent dancer gains the ability to rebuke, command or bolster snakes as an evil cleric rebukes undead. He may do this a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. This is a supernatural ability.

The serpent dancer's serpent mastery applies only to ordinary or larger versions of ordinary snakes (of the animal type, generally speaking). Other normal reptiles, snake-like magical beasts, and snake-like humanoids are not affected.

SERPENTINE SKIN (Ex)

When an opponent tries to grapple a serpent dancer of at least 7th level, the serpent dancer may opt to use his Dex modifier instead of his Str modifier during all opposed grapple checks. In addition, serpent dancers of this level or higher do not lose their Dex bonus to AC while grappling.

IMPROVED UNCANNY DODGE (Ex)

A serpent dancer of 8th level or higher can no longer be flanked. This defense denies another character with the sneak attack ability from using it by flanking her, unless the attacker has at least four more levels than the target does.

If a character already has uncanny dodge (see above) from a second class, the levels from the classes that grant uncanny dodge stack to determine the minimum level required to flank the character.

ASP ATTACK

At 9th level, a serpent dancer gains the Spring Attack feat.

REFLEXIVE STRIKE (Ex)

Upon reaching 10th level, a serpent dancer gains the ability to use his mastery of defensive fighting to great offensive advantage. If an opponent attacks and misses the serpent dancer during any round in which Combat Expertise is in use (i.e., the dancer is taking at least a -1 penalty to attacks to boost his AC), the serpent dancer may immediately make an attack of opportunity (minus Combat Expertise penalty) against that opponent. This attack counts as the character's attack of opportunity for the round. If the character can make multiple attacks of opportunity, such as from the Combat Reflexes feat, the serpent dancer may still only make one Reflexive Strike in a round.

