# The Royal Decree: A Strategic Deep Dive into the "Temple of the Kings" Archetype

## Introduction: Unsealing the Tomb

The "Temple of the Kings" series of cards in the Yu-Gi-Oh! TRADING CARD GAME (TCG) represents the modern incarnation of a strategy made famous by the anime character Odion (known as Rishid in the original Japanese manga and anime). Historically, the deck revolved around the singular, powerful effect of the Continuous Spell Card Temple of the Kings, which allowed its controller to activate Trap Cards on the turn they were Set.1 This was most iconically paired with Mystical Beast of Serket to "cheat" a powerful monster from the Deck or Extra Deck.3 For years, this combination remained a fragile gimmick, but with the release of new support in the *Maze of the Master* booster set, the strategy has been resurrected and transformed into a cohesive, Trap Monster-focused control archetype.2

The core game plan of the modern "Temple of the Kings" deck is to establish control of the game state through a network of highly synergistic cards. The strategy begins by leveraging a robust search engine to place Temple of the Kings, or a card treated as such, onto the field. From there, the deck summons a suite of "Apophis" Trap Monsters to build board presence and disrupt the opponent's plays. Through intricate resource loops, layered protection effects, and access to powerful Fusion Monsters, the deck aims to out-value the opponent over several turns, culminating in the summoning of its formidable boss monster, Anubis the Last Judge.2 This report will provide an exhaustive analysis of the individual cards, their intricate interactions, core combo lines, and their place within the broader competitive landscape.

## The Keepers of the Temple - Main Deck Monsters

The monsters of the "Temple of the Kings" archetype serve as the primary enablers and protectors of the deck's strategy, each fulfilling a distinct and critical role within the engine.

### The High Priest: The Man with the Mark

The Man with the Mark is the central figure and primary starter of the entire archetype. Its effects are designed to initiate the deck's core game plan and establish a foundation of protection.7

Upon being Normal or Special Summoned, its first effect allows the player to take one Temple of the Kings, or any Spell/Trap that mentions it, from the Deck and either add it to the hand or send it to the Graveyard (GY).7 This single effect provides unparalleled access to every key component of the strategy. The decision between adding to hand or sending to the GY is strategically significant. Typically, a player will add Treasures of the Kings to the hand to activate it and begin setting up the board. However, sending a card like Defense of the Temple directly to the GY prepares its secondary effect to be used later in the turn, demonstrating the card's flexibility.2

Its second effect provides a crucial layer of defense: while Temple of the Kings is on the field, The Man with the Mark and any "Apophis" monsters are indestructible by battle or card effects, and Temple of the Kings itself is also protected from destruction by card effects.7 This creates a resilient board state that forces opponents to rely on non-destruction forms of removal, such as banishing or sending to the GY, to dismantle the setup. The existence of this card elevates the deck from a collection of loosely connected pieces into a consistent and reliable engine. As the primary conduit to the deck's most important Spells and Traps—from the Field Spell to the Fusion Spell to the powerful Counter Trap Verdict of Anubis—nearly every optimal opening play begins with summoning The Man with the Mark.2

### The Sacred Guardians: Mystical Beast of Serket & Merciless Scorpion of Serket

The archetype features two "Serket" monsters, one representing its legacy and the other its modern evolution.

The original Mystical Beast of Serket is a Level 6 monster that is destroyed if Temple of the Kings is not on the field. Its effects, which banish monsters it destroys by battle and grant it an ATK increase, are secondary to its main purpose: serving as the specific named material for the second effect of the original Temple of the Kings Spell Card.4

In contrast, Merciless Scorpion of Serket is a modern retrain that functions as a powerful extender and combo piece. It cannot be Normal Summoned and must first be Special Summoned from the hand while Temple of the Kings is on the field by banishing one Level 10 or higher monster from the hand or Deck.1 This summoning condition is not a cost but a strategic setup. It allows the player to banish a key card like Anubis the Last Judge or, more notably, The Winged Dragon of Ra, to be summoned later through other card effects.2 Once on the field, Merciless Scorpion of Serket can add one Temple of the Kings or a Spell that mentions it from the Deck to the hand, providing valuable redundancy and access to follow-up plays.1 The distinct roles of these two monsters highlight the archetype's design evolution. The original Serket was part of a fragile, two-card combo to cheat out a single boss monster. The new Serket is a fully integrated engine component that facilitates more complex and resilient strategies, shifting the focus from an all-or-nothing gimmick to a resource-driven control game.

### The Final Judge: Anubis the Last Judge

Anubis the Last Judge serves as the deck's primary boss monster, embodying its themes of recursion and control.1

This Level 10 monster cannot be Normal Summoned. It must first be Special Summoned from the hand or GY when you have three or more cards in your GY with different names that are Temple of the Kings and/or Traps. The summon is performed by placing two of those cards from the GY on the bottom of the Deck.1 This summoning condition is easily met in a Trap-heavy deck and functions as a resource loop, recycling key Traps for later use.

The true strength of Anubis the Last Judge lies in its versatility. While in the hand, it can be sent to the GY to add The Man with the Mark from the Deck to the hand, acting as a vital consistency booster that turns a potentially unplayable opening hand into a full combo.1 While on the field, if a Spell or Trap you control is destroyed by a card effect, it can target and destroy one card the opponent controls, punishing common forms of backrow removal.1 Anubis is therefore not merely a 3000 ATK threat; it is a starter, an extender, a recovery tool, and a win condition all in one card.

## The Temple's Armory - Core Spells & Traps

The Spell and Trap lineup provides the foundation, resources, and powerful interruptions that define the archetype's control-oriented playstyle.

### The Foundation: Temple of the Kings & Treasures of the Kings

The original Temple of the Kings is a Continuous Spell whose iconic effect allows the player to activate one Trap Card on the turn it was Set.1 Following an errata, this effect is now a hard once-per-turn. Its second effect, which sends itself and Mystical Beast of Serket to the GY to Special Summon a monster, remains a niche but powerful option.1

The modern deck, however, is built around Treasures of the Kings, a Field Spell that is the linchpin of the entire strategy.1 Crucially, its name becomes Temple of the Kings while in the Field Zone, enabling every other card in the archetype that requires the original's presence.12 Upon activation, it allows the player to Set one "Apophis" Trap directly from the Deck, immediately generating card advantage and board presence. Furthermore, once per turn, if you control two or more Set cards or have a Trap in the GY, Treasures of the Kings can add any monster that mentions Temple of the Kings from the Deck to the hand.1 This provides a continuous stream of resources, searching out starters like The Man with the Mark or extenders like Merciless Scorpion of Serket. The decision to make this support a Field Spell was critical, as it grants the deck access to generic searchers like Terraforming, making the core strategy far more consistent than if it relied solely on the unsearchable original Continuous Spell.14

### The Serpent's Ambush: The "Apophis" Trap Monster Suite

The "Apophis" cards are a series of Continuous Traps that Special Summon themselves as monsters, forming the backbone of the deck's on-field presence.5

* **Embodiment of Apophis**: The original, which summons itself as a Level 4 Normal Monster with 1600 ATK and 1800 DEF.7
* **Apophis the Swamp Deity**: Summons itself as a Level 6 Normal Monster and can then negate the effects of face-up cards the opponent controls, up to the number of other Continuous Traps you control.7 This is the deck's primary source of on-field monster effect negation.
* **Apophis the Serpent**: Summons itself as a Level 4 Normal Monster and allows you to Set another "Apophis" Trap from your Deck, which can be activated that turn. If sent to the GY, it adds Embodiment of Apophis from the Deck to the hand.7

These Trap Monsters are not merely individual disruptive tools; they constitute a self-sustaining resource loop. A card like Treasures of the Kings can Set Apophis the Serpent, which in turn Sets Apophis the Swamp Deity. These monsters can then be used as material to Fusion Summon Divine Serpent Apophis, which can then use its effect to Set up to three "Apophis" Traps from the GY back onto the field.1 This cycle of converting Traps to monsters, to a boss monster, and back to Traps defines the deck's powerful grind game.

### The Divine Edicts: Fusion Spells & Counter Traps

The deck's power plays are facilitated by a dedicated Fusion Spell and a devastating Counter Trap.

* **Defense of the Temple**: A Normal Spell that Fusion Summons an EARTH Fusion Monster. If a monster you control that mentions Temple of the Kings is used as material, you can also use one of your opponent's face-up monsters.1 Its most important effect activates in the GY: by banishing it while Temple of the Kings is on the field, you can add Dangers of the Divine from your Deck to your hand, enabling the Winged Dragon of Ra combo line.5
* **Verdict of Anubis**: A Counter Trap that can be activated when an opponent activates a Spell/Trap, provided you control three or more other Spells/Traps. It negates the activation and destroys the card. Then, if Temple of the Kings is on the field, it also destroys as many monsters as possible that the opponent controls and inflicts damage equal to half their combined original ATK.1 The deck's natural strategy of setting multiple "Apophis" Traps makes the activation condition for Verdict of Anubis trivial to meet, turning a standard defensive setup into a game-winning board wipe.

### The Pharaoh's Chosen: Extra Deck Monsters

The archetype's Extra Deck is focused on two key Fusion Monsters that serve distinct strategic purposes.

* **Divine Serpent Apophis**: This is the engine of the deck's resource loop. It requires two monsters that mention Temple of the Kings as material. Its first effect allows you to target and Set up to three "Apophis" Traps with different names from your GY once per turn.1 Its second effect allows you to target and destroy one card the opponent controls once per turn when a Trap Card is activated.18 This monster is designed for the long game, recycling resources and generating recurring card advantage.
* **Divine Scorpion Beast of Serket**: This is the deck's primary offensive threat. It is summoned by fusing a "Serket" monster with any monster that has less than 2500 ATK. When it is Special Summoned or battles, it can banish a face-up monster the opponent controls or a card in their GY, gaining ATK equal to half the banished monster's original ATK. Furthermore, it can make a second attack during each Battle Phase while a Level 10 or higher monster is banished.2 This monster is designed to break boards and close out the game quickly.

## The Pharaoh's Blueprint - The Search & Consistency Network

The "Temple of the Kings" archetype is defined by its high degree of internal consistency, with nearly every card capable of searching or setting another piece of the engine. This interconnected network ensures that the deck can reliably access its key cards and execute its strategy. The following matrix illustrates the primary search and tutoring pathways within the archetype.

| **The Enabler (Card that Initiates the Action)** | **The Action (Add to Hand, Set from Deck, Send to GY, etc.)** | **The Target (Card(s) that can be accessed)** | **Source(s)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Anubis the Last Judge | Send from Hand to GY $\rightarrow$ Add to Hand | The Man with the Mark | 1 |
| The Man with the Mark | Normal/Special Summon $\rightarrow$ Add to Hand OR Send to GY | Temple of the Kings OR any Spell/Trap mentioning it (e.g., Treasures of the Kings, Defense of the Temple, Verdict of Anubis) | 7 |
| Treasures of the Kings | Activation $\rightarrow$ Set from Deck | Any "Apophis" Trap | 1 |
| Treasures of the Kings | Ignition Effect $\rightarrow$ Add to Hand | Any monster mentioning Temple of the Kings (e.g., The Man with the Mark, Merciless Scorpion of Serket, Anubis the Last Judge) | [1, 16] |
| Merciless Scorpion of Serket | Ignition Effect $\rightarrow$ Add to Hand | Temple of the Kings OR any Spell mentioning it (e.g., Treasures of the Kings, Defense of the Temple) | 1 |
| Defense of the Temple | Banish from GY $\rightarrow$ Add to Hand | Dangers of the Divine | 1 |
| Apophis the Serpent | Activation $\rightarrow$ Set from Deck | Any "Apophis" Trap (except itself) | 7 |
| Apophis the Serpent | Sent to GY $\rightarrow$ Add to Hand | Embodiment of Apophis | 7 |

## Executing the Royal Will - Core Combos & Endboards

Understanding the search network allows for the execution of consistent and powerful combo lines that establish a controlling endboard.

### Combo 1: The One-Card Starter (The Man with the Mark)

This fundamental combo establishes a solid turn-one board from a single card.

1. Normal Summon The Man with the Mark.
2. Activate its on-summon effect to add Treasures of the Kings from the Deck to your hand.2
3. Activate Treasures of the Kings. Upon its activation, its effect triggers, allowing you to Set Apophis the Serpent directly from your Deck.12
4. Activate the ignition effect of Treasures of the Kings to add Anubis the Last Judge from your Deck to your hand.12
5. Set any remaining Spells or Traps and end the turn.

* **Resulting Endboard:** This sequence ends with The Man with the Mark and Treasures of the Kings on the field, a Set Apophis the Serpent, and Anubis the Last Judge in hand. During the opponent's Main Phase, you can activate Apophis the Serpent, which summons itself and Sets Apophis the Swamp Deity from the Deck for a monster effect negation.12 This provides multiple points of interaction and resource generation from a single starting card.

### Combo 2: The Apophis Loop (Treasures of the Kings + 1 Monster)

This combo line focuses on establishing the deck's recursive engine.

1. Activate Treasures of the Kings, using its effect to Set an "Apophis" Trap from the Deck.
2. Use the ignition effect of Treasures of the Kings to search for The Man with the Mark and Normal Summon it.
3. Activate the effect of The Man with the Mark to search for Defense of the Temple.
4. Activate the Set "Apophis" Trap to summon it as a monster.
5. Activate Defense of the Temple, fusing The Man with the Mark and the "Apophis" monster on your field to Fusion Summon Divine Serpent Apophis.1
6. Activate the effect of Divine Serpent Apophis to Set up to three "Apophis" Traps with different names from your GY back to your Spell & Trap Zone.18

* **Resulting Endboard:** This line concludes with Divine Serpent Apophis and Treasures of the Kings on the field, along with a replenished backrow of two to three "Apophis" Traps. This board state is highly resilient, providing recurring destruction via the Serpent's effect each time a Trap is activated, potential negation from Apophis the Swamp Deity, and a constant stream of bodies for future plays.

### Combo 3: The Ra Turbo (Treasures of the Kings + Merciless Scorpion of Serket)

This combo showcases the deck's synergy with The Winged Dragon of Ra.

1. Activate Treasures of the Kings.
2. With Treasures of the Kings on the field (which is treated as Temple of the Kings), Special Summon Merciless Scorpion of Serket from your hand by activating its effect and banishing The Winged Dragon of Ra from your Deck.2
3. Activate the on-field effect of Merciless Scorpion of Serket to search for Defense of the Temple.
4. Activate the effect of Defense of the Temple in your GY by banishing it to add Dangers of the Divine from your Deck to your hand.5
5. Set Dangers of the Divine and end your turn.

* **Resulting Endboard:** This leaves you with Merciless Scorpion of Serket and Treasures of the Kings on the field and a Set Dangers of the Divine. During the opponent's turn, Dangers of the Divine can be activated to Special Summon the banished The Winged Dragon of Ra with 4000 ATK/DEF, providing a massive, unexpected threat.5

The optimal endboard for this archetype is not a static field of omni-negates but rather a flexible and interactive control setup. It typically includes Treasures of the Kings for recurring searches, The Man with the Mark for protection, Divine Serpent Apophis to fuel the resource loop, and a backrow of two to three traps, including Apophis the Swamp Deity for negation and a high-impact card like Verdict of Anubis or Solemn Judgment.17

## Alliances of the Kingdom - External Synergies & Tech Choices

While the "Temple of the Kings" archetype is self-sufficient, it synergizes well with a variety of external engines and generic support cards that enhance its consistency and power.

### Trap-Based Synergies

The deck's fundamental reliance on Trap cards allows it to integrate with other Trap-focused strategies like "Labyrinth" or "Eldlich," though the reliance on the Normal Summon of The Man with the Mark can create conflicts.20 A more direct and powerful synergy comes from generic Trap support. **Lord of the Heavenly Prison** is an exceptional choice, as it protects your Set cards from destruction and can Special Summon itself from the hand when a Spell/Trap is activated, subsequently setting any Spell/Trap from the Deck.22 This can search for a missing combo piece or a powerful floodgate. Other cards like **Statue of Anguish Pattern** also work well, as its effect to destroy a card triggers whenever a Trap Monster like an "Apophis" is Special Summoned.19

### Attribute/Type Synergies

The EARTH Attribute and Fairy Type of the "Serket" monsters open up unique engine pairings. The **"Vernusylph"** engine can search for Mystical Beast of Serket or Merciless Scorpion of Serket and provide additional Special Summons from the GY, helping to build a board.22 More recently, the **"Fiendsmith"** engine has seen play, using the deck's on-field monsters as material for powerful Link Summons, offering an alternative path to establishing board control and interruptions.23

### The Ra Connection

The archetype is thematically and mechanically designed to function as a support engine for **The Winged Dragon of Ra**. As detailed in the combo section, Merciless Scorpion of Serket can banish Ra directly from the Deck, and Defense of the Temple can search Dangers of the Divine, the Quick-Play Spell needed to summon Ra from the banished zone.2 This interaction transforms The Winged Dragon of Ra, a card notoriously difficult to summon, into a searchable and viable boss monster within this specific strategy.

### Generic Consistency Cards

To ensure the deck can access its starters consistently, players often include generic draw and search cards. **Pot of Extravagance** or **Pot of Prosperity** are excellent options, as the Extra Deck is often composed of multiple copies of the main Fusion monsters and can afford to have cards banished from it.17 The one permitted copy of **Terraforming** is also a staple, as it directly searches for Treasures of the Kings, the deck's most important card.14

## Conclusion: The Temple's Legacy

The modern support for "Temple of the Kings" has successfully revitalized a classic anime theme, transforming it from a niche, inconsistent gimmick into a competent and strategic control deck.

The archetype's primary strengths lie in its exceptional consistency and its powerful grind game. With multiple interconnected searchers, the deck can reliably access its core engine pieces turn after turn. The resource loop established by the "Apophis" Trap Monsters and Divine Serpent Apophis allows the deck to out-value many opponents in a prolonged duel, while the protection offered by The Man with the Mark creates a resilient board that is difficult to dismantle without specific forms of removal. Furthermore, access to devastating "blowout" cards like Verdict of Anubis gives the deck the ability to completely turn the tide of a game with a single, well-timed activation.

However, the strategy is not without its weaknesses. Its heavy reliance on the Spell & Trap Zone makes it highly vulnerable to cards that negate or destroy backrow, such as Royal Decree, Jinzo, or Red Reboot. The deck's primary combo line begins with the Normal Summon of The Man with the Mark, making it susceptible to common hand traps that negate monster effects, such as Effect Veiler and Infinite Impermanence. An opponent who can stop this initial play can significantly slow down the deck's development.

In conclusion, the "Temple of the Kings" archetype stands as a testament to thoughtful modern card design. It has evolved into a formidable, mid-tier control strategy that rewards skillful resource management and strategic planning. While it may not consistently overcome the sheer power of the game's top-tier meta decks, its unique playstyle, high consistency, and powerful recursive engine make it a respectable and engaging choice for duelists who appreciate a trap-based, control-oriented approach to the game.

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