

EGYPT, WITH its long history of magic and mystery, deserves a place in *Call Of Cthulhu*, and this article presents information about Egyptian magic for Keepers to incorporate into their campaigns.

Arcane Knowledge

EGYPTIAN MAGIC

For Call of Cthulhu

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If the Keeper places some mysteries in Egypt, a 1920's travel guide for Egypt (available in good libraries), the monsters from the rulebook, and this article will be sufficient for detailed and interesting play. Even if the investigators never enter Egypt, however, Egyptian magic could enter the campaign through Egyptian sorcerers or other means. Finally, some of the spells that follow could be part of any magical tradition, so the Keeper could use them without involving his/her campaign in Egypt.

This article is written for Keepers, and, like the *Call Of Cthulhu* rulebook, it contains information that a Keeper might not want his players to know.

THE EGYPTIAN OCCULT

Egypt has a long, interesting history in the occult, and this summary is meant to provide a Keeper with enough background information to lend coherence to the Egyptian magic system, especially as it is tied to the Cthulhu Mythos. Being familiar with the Egyptian occult traditions will help a Keeper design mysteries that are more believable to the players and more authentically Egyptian.

Egypt has three layers of occult tradition. The most ancient tradition, which underlies the others, is that of worship of the Other Gods and of Nyarlathotep in particular. Developing from this worship was the magic of dynastic Egypt. After the empire of ancient Egypt fell, the land was occupied by people of various cultures, and since Muslim culture was the last and most important foreign culture to affect Egypt, the occult tradition of Islam also has importance here.

Before Egypt was united under its first king around 3100 B.C.E. and Egyptian history truly began, worship of the Other Gods stained the land. Cults worshipping Nyarlathotep and other deities harvested sacrifices from the population and ruled surrounding areas with black magic. Through magical powers, the early cults and their unearthly partners carved out expansive underground chambers for the proper worship of the Other Gods. As the central government became strong, however, worship of evil deities was forced into secrecy. Worship of some Other Gods continued in a new, benevolent form. Worship of Nyarlathotep, for instance, developed into the worship of Thoth, the ibis-headed god of

knowledge. While many worshiped Thoth as the benevolent god of knowledge, secret priesthoods carried on the true traditions of Nyarlathotep worship, and many people used the power that this black worship promised them. King Khafre followed the way of Nyarlathotep to acquire power that even being king could not offer him. Queen Nitokris of the 6th Dynasty followed his example.

Some ancient Egyptians who knew the truth about the Other Gods, however, actively opposed their worshippers. Many Egyptian deities were loosely inspired by Elder Gods, and their priests developed potent magic to help them fight against the horrors of Nyarlathotep.

Most Egyptians, however, worshiped a great variety of gods unaware of the secret conflict between the Other Gods and sanity. Death and rebirth was central to the metaphysics of the Egyptians, and cults formed around the worship of dead kings. The famous *Book of the Dead* gives the reader the information he would need after his death to convince Osiris, the divine judge, that his soul was worthy of the afterlife. Ancient Egyptian metaphysics divided a person into several aspects, some of which could be important to play. The *khaibit*, for example, was an astral double that remained around the burial site, and the *ka* was the animating force. Both aspects were separate from the soul proper.

When Egypt fell to invaders, only the covert worship of the Other Gods survived. Various cultures left their marks on Egypt, but since Muslim culture was the last and most important foreign culture, it is the Muslim occult tradition that is of current importance in Egypt. According to Islam, Allah (God) and his angels oppose Eblis (Satan) and his devils. Eblis, a spirit of fire, will roam the world until Judgment Day. In this culture, the Jinn are powerful spirit beings that ruled the world and built marvelous cities before Adam was created. They have the ability to change themselves into toads, serpents, or rats. Those Jinn who follow Allah are angels, those who follow Eblis are devils, and the rest are independent. The peasants of Egypt (the *Fellabeen*) fear efreets, a malevolent breed of Jinn.

ARCANE BOOKS

Each culture that dominated Egypt, including the relatively short Greek

and Roman occupations, left arcane books in the country. The physical form of the text as well as the content will depend on the culture from which it comes. Ancient Egyptian works will probably be papyrus scrolls written in hieroglyphics. Most of the authors are priests or court wizards, and the spells available from these works will most likely be those dealing with the Egyptian gods (e.g., Flash of Ra). Greek and Roman works will also be scrolls and will be written in ancient Greek and Latin, respectively. The authors will most likely be Greek or Roman scholars studying Egyptian occult. Arabic texts probably will be true books, which had replaced scrolls by the time Islam came to Egypt. These books will more likely deal with Jinn and devils than with ancient Egyptian gods. With Egypt's long history of writing, many of the works found in or from that country will be translations of earlier works, perhaps from earlier cultures.



The books themselves can be designed by the Keeper. Most of the books listed in the rulebook are western and are inappropriate for Egypt, though the *Al Azif* and books of unearthly origin (e.g., the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*) could appear in Egypt in various translations. One important book in Egypt is the magical text that, according to myth, was written by Thoth. In other words, these scrolls were penned by Nyarlathotep itself. Whether the Keeper includes such a work, which could rival the *Al Azif* in potency, is up to him/her. Such a work might best be found in separate volumes, each of which would not be overwhelmingly powerful.

SPELLS

Many of the spells in the rulebook are appropriate to Egyptian magic. Especially suitable are:

- Call Azathoth
- Call Yog-Sothoth
- Contact Nyarlathotep
- Contact Ghoul
- Contact Sand-Dweller
- Create Gate
- Dread Curse of Azathoth
- Powder of Ibn-Ghazi
- Shrivelling

More important than these spells, however are the following new spells designed specifically for Egypt.

ANIMATE MUMMY

Following the typical mummification procedure, including eviscerating, embalming, and wrapping the corpse, this spell can seal the *ka* (animating force) into the *khat* (corpse). Since the *ka* is not the soul, the mummy will not be able to regain spent magic points. The mummy will have double its previous STR, half again its original CON, and two-thirds of its original DEX. It will move at a rate of 6 instead of 8. Mummies retain all intelligence and knowledge (including spell knowledge) from their lives. They may (and often do) remain dormant for indefinite lengths of time.

The spell can only be used on a willing person who has been properly mummified. It costs a permanent point of POW to cast and causes a loss of 1D10 SAN points.

The spell can be reversed, in which case the caster expends a certain number of magic points and with that total tries to overcome the magic points of any mummy in sight and within 30 yards. If the caster overcomes the mummy's magic points, the magic points of the mummy are reduced by the number of magic points expended. If through this (or any other) means, a mummy's magic points drop to zero, the *ka* leaves the body, leaving an inert mummy behind. Casting the reverse of the spell takes two melee rounds and costs 1D6 SAN points.

In ancient Egypt, when the worship of Nyarlathotep was being persecuted, worshippers would often arrange to have this spell cast upon their corpses so they could carry on their worship in secret after death. If investigators unfamiliar with this spell fear that all mummies are capable of animation, the Keeper should not discourage their error.

CREATE UNDEAD (Ghost, Skeleton, Zombie)

Spells for creating ghosts, animated skeletons, and zombies developed out of the Egyptian's obsession with death and the dead. Through these rituals, a magician sacrifices POW to bind some aspect of a dead being to the living world. The effects are permanent; indeed, investigators in Egypt could find creatures constructed during or before the Egyptian dynastic period.

The ritual to create an undead being takes over an hour and requires ritual paraphernalia.

Though the spell is permanent, it can be reversed. Someone casting the reverse of the spell spends an any number of magic points (at least one) and tries to overcome the magic points of one appropriate target within sight and within 30 yards. If the resistance roll succeeds, the undead creature is destroyed. Ghosts dissipate, skeletons crumble to dust, and zombies collapse into stinking piles of putrefaction. The reverse of this spell takes two rounds to cast, like *Shrivelling*.

Knowing one *Create Undead* spell does not help in creating or dispelling other undead. Creating undead entails a loss of 1D6 SAN points. Attempting to destroy an undead with this spell entails a loss of 1 SAN point.

Create Ghost: This spell, which must be cast on a willing being within one hour of its death, captures the *khai-bit* of the deceased and binds it to the site of the burial. The resulting ghost has the POW and INT it had in life, and it can cast any spells it knew. It either appears as the shadowy double of its body or remains invisible, as it decides. Casting this spell requires the expenditure of a POW point.

Create Skeleton: Any corpse will do for this enchantment as long as the bones are still strong. The caster sacrifices two POW points in the ritual and gains a skeleton animated in his service. Any flesh still on the bones will rot off at the normal rate. Except for *SIZ*, which is the same as that of the original being, roll all the attributes as directed in the 1920's Sourcebook.

Create Zombie: The corpse which becomes a zombie must have been dead for less than a week when the ritual is cast. The ritual costs three POW points and results in a walking, mindless corpse that will follow the orders of the caster. The zombie's STR and CON will be 1.5 times as high as they were originally, but DEX will only be two-thirds as high. The zombie will have no measurable INT or APP. Zombies are described in the 1920's Sourcebook.

ENCHANT DUST OF ANUBIS

With this spell one can create powder, originally created by the priests of the god of the dead, which destroys those things that should be dead but are not

(i.e., undead). The potency of the batch is determined by rolling 1D6 for each point of POW the caster sacrifices in casting the spell (up to three points for any one batch). Each batch created yields enough dust for five applications, each of which fills the hollow in the palm of a cupped hand. When sprinkled over something undead, compare the potency of the dust to the POW of the target on the resistance table. If the potency overcomes the POW, the undead is destroyed. If the undead successfully resists, no dust of that potency or lower will ever be able to affect it. Whether the dust grants its potency or weapon on which is sprinkled depends on the benevolence of the Keeper. (It is likely that ancient and powerful undead things could not have become ancient without resisting some Dust of Anubis during the millenia, so if the Keeper does not want her prize mummy "Dusted," he can simply decide that it has previously resisted Dust of a certain potency—potency 18, for example).

FLASH OF RA

This spell creates a brilliant flash of light emanating from the caster that can blind sighted beings and destroy less substantial or noncorporeal creatures, such as wraiths, ghosts, and hunting horrors. Each point of POW expended when this spell is cast will do 25 points of damage to appropriate creatures within 10 meters. If a target has no hit points, the damage reduces POW. The light blasts forth in all directions, and it will temporarily blind all sighted beings within 10 meters who do not take precautions against the flash. For those that the blast surprises, roll percentile dice. If the result is more than CON x 5%, the character is blinded for an hour. If the roll is equal to or less than CON x 5% but more than CON x 1%, the character is blinded for 1D6 minutes. If the roll is equal to or less than CON x 1%, the flash blinds for only 1D3 melee rounds. The Keeper determines the effectiveness of various precautions (such as covering one's eyes with one's hands) in reducing the effects of the Flash.

MAGIC PORTAL

To remain hidden over the millenia, secret passages have needed magical protection. This spell conceals and holds a secret portal, or opens such a portal, depending on how it is used. The Magic Portal creation spell can

only be cast on a well-built portal that is already difficult to see. After the spell is cast, the portal will be undetectable by normal means and its passive STR will be increased by 15 (making it harder by 75% to open by a STR vs. STR contest). Sealing a portal with this spell costs 1D6 SAN points and at least 1 point of POW. Additional POW can be sacrificed into a Magic Portal at any time, and the total number of POW sacrificed into a portal must be recorded, as this total is important when opening the portal.

This spell can also be used to open a Magic Portal already in existence. Opening a Magic Portal requires the expenditure of at least 1 magic point for every POW point sacrificed into the portal. Spellcasters cannot combine their magic-point expenditures to open a strong portal. More important Magic Portals have higher POW levels, effectively restricting their use; Magic Portals with POW levels of 20 or higher are rare but present. When this version of the spell is cast with enough magic points and within five yards of a Magic Portal, the outline of the nearest portal will glow and the door will be free to open. The door will stop glowing once it is opened and will seal itself once it has been closed. If ten minutes pass without the door being opened, the outline ceases to glow anyway and the portal seals. It costs 1 SAN point to open a Magic Portal with this spell.

SACRIFICE

With this spell one can ritually slay a victim to provide magic points or POW for one's own use or to give psychic energy to a deity. The amount of magic points, POW, or energy depends on the type of victim. The spell involves a lengthy ritual and ritual paraphernalia, such as a sacrificial dagger.

Casting the spell takes one magic point and allows the caster to sacrifice one victim. If the caster takes magic points, they will be added to his magic-point total. After 24 hours, however, any magic points over his POW are lost, and no one may exceed double his POW in magic points through this spell. A wizard with magic points but without normal POW (such as a mummy) does not lose excess magic points, but it still cannot gain more than twice its POW in magic points. If the caster takes POW from the sacrifice, he must immediately use them to cast some spell that requires the expenditure of POW points and

match those POW points he wishes to use with some of his own. This effectively doubles the power of the spell cast. If a wizard took two POW from a sacrifice and used them to enchant a Magic Portal, each POW point he personally expended, up to two, would enchant the Portal with two POW points, one from the wizard and one from the sacrifice.

The amount of magic points or POW depends on the destructiveness of the sacrifice. Sacrificing a child or a virgin woman gives the sacrificer magic points equal to the POW of the sacrifice of two POW points. Children and women are preferred victims because of the potential for reproduction and growth that is lost by their destruction. Young women who are not virgins and young men provide the sacrificer with one-half the victim's POW in magic points (at least two) or one point of POW. Older people provide the caster with one-quarter the victim's POW in magic points (at least two) and no possibility for POW. Those who are tainted by the evil of the Cthulhoid gods are already mostly lost, and the destruction of their souls provides little. Thus sacrificing a cultist gives the sacrificer two magic points and no POW. Remember that the sacrificer must expend one magic point in the sacrifice, so a two magic-point gain is profit of one magic point. At the Keeper's judgment, exceptionally virtuous or beautiful sacrifices might provide more rewards than listed above because of the extra loss caused by their deaths.

When a sacrifice is used to feed a deity, it is usually performed by Keeper-characters, and the precise results are up to the Keeper. Generally, deities prefer those sacrifices that would have net a sacrificer more magic points, as detailed above. In return for sacrifices, the deities may provide services, use of servitor races, guidance, information, spells, or even possibly POW.

The soul of a sacrificial victim is shredded, annihilated, or devoured, depending on the type of sacrifice, making the spell unappealing for frequent investigator use. Performing a sacrifice costs 1D10 SAN points and one magic point.

WARD OF HORUS

Horus was a sky god of ancient Egypt who had many different forms, one of which was the falcon of the sky whose

eyes were the sun and moon. This spell sensitizes a Cthulhoid creature or dedicated human servant of a Cthulhoid deity to Horus's "eyes," making sunlight and moonlight lethal to the ward being. For each round a warded being spends under sunlight, its POW drops by 1D6. For each round it spends under the light of the full moon, it loses 1 POW point. If the moon is not full but still in the sky, the warded being will lose 1 POW point every two, three, or four rounds, depending on the moon's size and at the Keeper's discretion. When both the sun and moon are in the sky, only the sun's damage counts. (Remember that the moon is in the night sky only half of the time.)

Casting the spell requires an hour-long ritual performed under the sun or moon, climaxed by the sacrifice of two POW points and an expenditure of any number of magic points available. Any others who know that spell can

take part in the ritual and each expend one magic point to add to the total. If the total of the magic points expended, plus two for the two POW points expended, overcome the magic points of the target, the spell takes effect. Though the ward is typically permanent, more powerful beings will be able to remove the effects eventually.

Casting the spell or partaking in the ritual costs 1 SAN point.

OTHER SPELLS

Various supplements to *Call Of Cthulhu* have spells appropriate to an Egyptian campaign. Rather than repeat them here, I will just direct you to them:

Chant of Thoth	<i>Masks of Nyarlathotep</i>
Dust of Suleiman	<i>Shadows of Yog-Sothoth</i>
Seal of Isis	<i>Masks of Nyarlathotep</i>
Voice of Ra	<i>Masks of Nyarlathotep</i>

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