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# pharaoh

## by Tracy and Laura Hickman

**This module can be played by itself or as the 1st part of the DESERT OF DESOLATION Series.**
**AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS LEVELS 5-7**



No one has ever returned from the tomb of Amun-re: his Star Gem must still lie unclaimed! You will need all your cunning, imagination, strength and magic — just to survive!

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ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
ADVENTURE MODULE

# pharaoh

## Introduction

A lonely group of horsemen stands huddled at the base of a range of craggy, dry mountains, the red light of a dying day casting long shadows behind them. A parched wind, still alive with the desert heat, rustles their capes over their sweat-soaked leather armor. The horsemen have formed a circle astride their steeds and hunch down sadly against the sandy wind.

It is your party that stands within this circle of grizzled soldiers. The last thing you recall is enjoying the richness of this land and absorbing all of its strange tales of wealth and greatness. But now you are awake, confused amid these heavily shadowed faces under a deep red sunset.

The weathered face of the commander turns toward you, leather-brown skin setting off his steel-blue eyes. He pulls from his saddle pouch an elegant scroll and reads loudly over the rustling wind its flowing, formal message:

know ye
by order of his majesty
ruler and trustee of the realm

whereas it hath been reported of late to our majesty that certain dark and vile desert raiders have crossed the terrible mountain wastes of the south, over long—forgotten paths, thence to raid and pillage our hamlets and towns and thence disappearing into those same forbidding hills, and

whereas our valiant troops have tracked these same vile creatures through the very teeth of that awesome range to the very borders of the most accursed land, known to the wise as the desert of desolation, and being knowledgeable as to the curses of that dead and haunted land did our host of brave knights wisely halt their pursuit,

and furthermore, whereas certain foreign characters, whose descriptions match those of the very group here assembled at my most honored and revered request, were seen in the vicinity of the tent of wan-doo the wondrous, wizard of the court, in the latter part of the evening and

whereas those persons did attain entry to said tent and did short-sheet the wizard's bed and do all manner of petty pranks and did leave for the wizard a certain maid for an alleged date with said wizard, and

whereas said wizard did return to said tent with yet another wench whereupon both the first maid and the second wench did begin a loud commotion and disturbance the like of which has never before shaken this stately court and upset the wizard to no end,

therefore be it decreed that said persons be appointed special force under our majesty to track the course of the raiders from the desert of desolation, where surely even the raiders could not survive, search out their hiding place and bring us back proof that they have found that hidden fortress in the desert. we further decree that they may retain all that they bring forth with them for their own use from that fabled land of treasure and death.

be it yet further decreed that if they prefer not this quest they may choose of death by hanging, death by fireball, death by polymorph, death by flame strike, death by lightning . . .

Rolling the scroll back up with his calloused hands, the commander leans down toward you. "What this means, you poor foreigners, is that you have been chosen to enter that cursed dead land south of here. It means that it doesn't matter whether you were in the tent that night or not, because you are easy to get rid of without ruffling any feathers."

"And it also means," speaks the aged, though rugged, form beside the commander, "that these here raiders has caused his majesty a good deal of trouble with the Barons. You're his proof that he is doing something about them." His laugh rolls through the hills.

The commander silences him with a sharp look, then continues. "We have brought you certain supplies and mounts from which you may choose. There is no water within two weeks' tortured ride over the mountains from this spot, and those hills are full of cutthroat barbarians that kill for the sheer joy of it. Without this armed escort, it would be suicide to attempt crossing back from whence we have come. Your only hope, for what it may be worth, will be to follow those tracks and hope that they lead to water." His lifted arm points southward, and all eyes follow its direction. There in the desert sands, a confused trail mars the surface and leads straight into the heart of the burning land.

Looking south across the barren wastes, lifeless dunes roll in an endless succession away from the mountains to the south, east and west. You have heard tales of this place. Fabulous wealth as yet unclaimed lies there waiting to be freed. It is all yours for the taking—if only you can survive this haunted land.

**STOP!** If you plan to play in this module, do not read any further. The information in the rest of this module is for the Dungeon Master to use in guiding the adventure.

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# notes to the dungeon master

This module is the first in the three-part **Desert of Desolation** series. As with all modules in this series, you may play this module either with or without the other modules of the series. Players who enjoy this module might wish to continue their desert adventuring in the "OASIS OF THE WHITE PALM" and "LOST TOMB OF MARTEK" modules.

This module is designed for a party of six to eight players of the 5th to 7th levels of experience. A balance of character classes is suggested, for a wide variety of problems will confront the players. Each character class will certainly have its moment to shine.

Players should be directed through the wilderness setting to the the pyramid tomb. This pyramid tomb of Amun-re represents the main area of play in this module. **The Sunken City of Pazar** and the treasure hidden there may either be an interesting sidetrack, or, if the party is playing through all three modules in the series, a major event.

SECTION DETAILS: Each section begins with a SECTION PROLOGUE. The prologue outlines the section and how the section works. Random Encounter tables and other information for each section are found in the prologue. Under ENCOUNTERS, each section is divided into individual areas that are numbered and keyed to the maps for easy reference. The details concerning each numbered room or area are then listed under the following subheadings:

**Description:** This is a general description of the area as the players first see it. Any readily noticeable and obvious features are generally described here to allow the DM to read the text directly to the players. These descriptions are boxed-in to be easily distinguishable for the DM. The descriptions were written with the assumption that the characters are using a torch to see by. A torch normally lights a 30 foot radius area.

**Play:** This outlines the general sequence of events that may take place in the room. For example: "Players entering the room from the door must first encounter the **Trap**, which releases the **Monster**. Only by defeating the **Monster** can the **Treasure** be found." **Play** explains the general order that the sections should be used in. Additional size and dimension information about the area is also included here.

**Monster:** All important creatures that are encountered in the module, regardless of whether they are man or beast, good or bad, plant or animal, intelligent or not, are described in this section. Each person/creature noted in this section is described by an abbreviated listing of its characteristics as detailed below. For the convenience of the DM, whenever a monster or NPC is described in the text, the game statistics will be listed in parentheses in the following order:

**Monster Name** (Armor Class; Movement; Hit Dice; hit points; number of Attacks per round; Damage; Alignment; and Special abilities of the character.)

**ABBREVIATIONS USED IN MONSTER STATISTICS**

**AC** = Armor Class
**MV** = Movement
**HD** = Hit Dice
**hp** = hit points
**#A** = Attacks/round
**Dmg** = Damage
**C** = Cleric
**F** = Fighter
**MU** = Magic User
**T** = Thief
**S** = Strength
**I** = Intelligence
**W** = Wisdom
**D** = Dexterity
**Con** = Constitution
**CH** = Charisma
**AL** = Alignment
**LG** = Lawful Good
**NG** = Neutral Good
**CG** = Chaotic Good
**CN** = Chaotic Neutral
**LN** = Lawful Neutral
**N** = True Neutral
**CE** = Chaotic Evil
**NE** = Neutral Evil
**LE** = Lawful Evil

**Character:** This is a description of the creature encountered, how it might react, and what its attitude might be. Information that monsters have that might be of use to the player characters (PCs) is also listed here. The personalities of the monsters and characters that the PCs meet are left up to the Dungeon Master—so ham it up!

**Treasure:** All the treasure that can be found in the room or area is detailed here.

**Trap/Trick:** Traps, such as sliding walls, booby-trapped trunks, spears from the walls, etc., are explained in this section.

**Lore:** This catch-all contains points of interest about the room or area, its purpose, its history, etc. These details will help you to make your game more interesting. Characters will have opportunities to read from runes (verses written in an ancient alphabet), scrolls, tablets, etc., that they find while adventuring. The percent chance of their reading the writing correctly is given in **Lore**. If the characters fail their chance of reading the writing correctly, the DM should tell them, for example, "You cannot read or understand the writing."

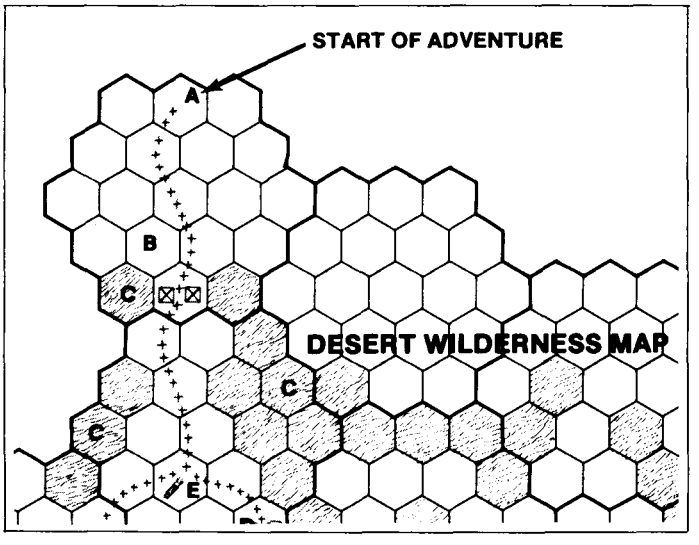
FINAL NOTES: Occasionally, the text calls for dexterity or constitution checks. This means that the character must roll his dexterity/constitution or less on 1d20. The effects of the roll are explained in each case.

A "cumulative chance" means that each time a roll is made, the chance becomes greater. For example: As long as a character sits under a palm tree, there is a 5% cumulative chance, per turn, that a coconut will fall onto his head. This means that there is a 5% chance of a coconut falling the first turn, a 10% chance the second turn, a 15% chance the third turn, and so on.

Some sections of the tomb are fixed with complicated magical spells and traps. The DM should pay special attention to these areas before playing this module, to make the game flow more smoothly.

Certain areas in the tomb are duplicates of other areas on the same level. Areas that are exactly alike have the same area number on the map. There is only one text description to use for each of these areas.

Players begin their adventure in **SECTION I**, area A on the DESERT WILDERNESS MAP.




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# SECTION 1: DESERT WILDERNESS

**DESERT PROLOGUE:**

Any time the players are not at any specifically numbered, set location, they are considered to be in the desert, where the following description may be used. The characters should meet the ghost of Amun-re and discover his tomb in the desert. Details about the desert should be avoided since they do not directly affect the outcome of this adventure and will tend to slow things down. A reasonable example of play in the desert would be: "You have journeyed for two days without incident and see an oasis in the distance." Run random encounters as explained below in RANDOM ENCOUNTERS.

> Stretching to the limits of your sight, the grey mounds of the desert roll with ashen stillness into the distance, baked by the blazing sun. Not a single stone shows through the powdery plane nor a single insect scurries across its surface. All about you, the burning silence of the sand-sea is oppressive and forbidding. No landmark steers your way, except the sun, its track seeming to sink ever closer and hotter towards your own path. The ash-dust billows under your feet and chokes your parched throats.

WATER: The soldiers who escort the player characters to the desert will give them enough water for their party, including their pack animals, to travel in the desert for seven days. If they ration their water and travel only at night, their water will last for 10 days. Player characters will lose two strength points for every day they are in the desert without water. They will regain three strength points every day they drink at least eight pints of water.

MOVEMENT: It takes a human, moving at a scale speed of 12," two hours to cross any hex on the Desert Wilderness Map. All other movements should be adjusted to that scale. For example, a dwarf who moves at a movement rate of 6" would take four hours to cross a hex. A wild horse that moves at a rate of 24" would take only one hour. Ten hours is certainly a full day's trek. Movement is also affected by terrain. Movement through hilly regions is ½ normal for all characters except dwarves.

The pack animals available are camels and horses (see below). Heavy loads affect movement, so each character must list what his pack animal is carrying, including the character's own weight if he is also riding. Should an animal disappear into a sinkhole, the list will also be helpful in determining what has been lost.

Camel: (AC 7; MV 21"; HD 3; hp 3d8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; AL N; spits) The weight camels carry affects their movement. They move at a maximum of 9" if carrying between 500 and 600 lbs. (5,000-6,000 gp weight) or at 15" if weighted between 400 to 499.9 lbs. (4,000-4,999 gp weight). Camels attack by biting and spitting. There is a 50% chance that they will spit at those trying to ride them. If they do, there is a 25% chance of blinding that rider for one to three rounds. They are ill-tempered and will refuse to rise for travel 40% of the time. Check again after 2 turns of coaxing. Once they have risen, however, they will continue on without much further difficulty. If the camels remain in one place without moving for one hour, there is a 20% chance they will lie down.

Draft Horse: (AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 2d8+2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-3; AL N). A medium horse can carry up to 650 lbs. (6,500 gp weight) but its movement is slowed to 9" with any weight in excess of 400 lbs. (4,000 gp weight). Horses are panicked by raging fire, sudden movement, loud noises or strange smells 90% of the time.

SIGHTING DISTANCE: Sighting distance is also affected by terrain. While in the dunes area, all above-ground objects that are numbered on the Desert Wilderness Map can be seen from a distance of 2 hexes (4 miles).

Distances are difficult for any character to determine in the desert. There is a 90% chance that the distance guessed by just looking will always appear to be ¼ to ½ mile away, regardless of the actual distance involved. Pillars of smoke that are many miles away will seem to be right over the next dune.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS: While in the desert, check for random encounters once every four hours. A roll of 1 on a 1d10 indicates that an encounter takes place. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d12 to determine which encounter to use from the RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE below. See **MONSTERS, CREATURES, AND MEN** for monster descriptions.

DESERT OF DESOLATION RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

1. 5 **Dustdiggers** (AC 4; MV 3"; HD 4; hp 14, 12, 12, 12, 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + AC of victim; AL N).
2. 1 **Sandman** (AC 3; MV 9"; HD 4; hp 13; #AT nil; Dmg nil; AL N/E; sleep attack). Roll 1d6. If the result is a 1, then roll again on this table for another encounter after the sandman attacks, ignoring any other sandman results.
3. 40 **Thunderherders** (AC 3; MV 20"; HD 7; hp 7d8; #AT nil; Dmg nil; AL N; earthquake) As they stampede, their trumpeting can be heard up to four miles away. The party cannot be surprised by these thunderherders.
4. 1 **Dustdigger** (AC 4; MV 3"; HD 4; hp 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + AC of victim; AL N).
5. 6 **Sandmen** (AC 3; MV 9" HD 4; hp 10, 13, 21, 11, 7, 15; #AT nil; Dmg nil; AL NE; sleep attack).
6. A **dust storm** rises on the wind. The party will risk an 80% chance of being lost unless they halt all movement. Parties that are lost change the direction of their travel randomly and then move in that direction for the distance their movement indicates. Movement during a dust storm is at half the normal rate. The storm will last 3-22 (1d20+2) turns.
7. Clouds start to build on the horizon. Within 21-30 (1d10+20) minutes, black clouds will close overhead and an **acid rain** will start to fall, doing 1-4 points of damage per round to any exposed flesh or food supplies. Cloth and other coverings seem to shed the rain without damage. Animals must be sheltered or take the damage. The rain will last for 1-10 minutes before it ends and moves on.
8. 120 **Thunderherders** (AC 3; MV 20; HD 7; hp 7d8; #AT nil; Dmg nil; AL N; Earthquake) will stampede by in relative silence.
9. 3 **Dustdiggers** (AC 4; MV 3"; HD 4; hp 12, 14, 8; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + AC of victim; AL N).
10. 5 **Giant Tarantulas** (AC 6; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 10, 8, 8, 6, 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 + paralysis poison; AL N). Save vs. Poison or be paralyzed for 1-6 turns.
11. Use the DESERT OF DESOLATION SPECIAL ENCOUNTER TABLE at right.
12. Use the DESERT OF DESOLATION SPECIAL ENCOUNTER TABLE at right.

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DESERT OF DESOLATION SPECIAL ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 1d6 and use the corresponding encounter number.

1. In the distance, directly to the south, a pillar of smoke will appear on the horizon and continue for four days. This pillar of smoke comes from area H on the desert map.
2. A pillar of smoke rises above the horizon. It wil continue for 4 days and comes from area K on the desert map.
3. 10 Members of **Dervish Hunting Party** (AC 6; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 4d10; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 + 2; AL LN) These Thune Dervishes are looking for a caravan which was reported to be in this area and could provide much needed food and supplies for their encampment. They will not give up their search, but if they are treated nicely, they will point the way to their camp at desert area K.
4. 10 **Symbayan Airlancers** (AC 6; MV 12"; HD 4; hp 4d6; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 +2; AL LG) fly overhead in the distance on the backs of Pegasi (AC 6; MV 24"/48"; HD 4; hp 4d6; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-3; AL CG). The riders appear to be carrying lances and flying in a pattern. They will land to investigate the party but will not trust them and will not disclose their place of origin under any circumstances. They are looking for a caravan that is lost in the desert as well as guarding against evil Thune invaders and spies. They will quickly depart. They have only one gallon of water that they might sell to the party. They jealously guard the location of their empire, and inquiries will gain a hostile response. They will offer no aid to the party and certainly will never take any party member with them when they leave. Their steeds will serve no one but their original masters.
5. The ground beneath the party begins to shake when suddenly, breaking from beneath the ash, rises a **Purple Worm** (AC 6; MV 9"; HD 15; hp 54; #AT 1 and 1; Dmg 2-24 (2d12)/1-4; AL N; tail has death poison).
6. An oasis is seen in a random direction two hexes in the distance. It is actually a **mirage** that will disappear whenever the party gets within 100 yards of its apparent location. Players may attempt to save vs. Spells at -2 per day without water to disbelieve the illusion.

## DESERT ENCOUNTERS

Use the DESERT WILDERNESS MAP.

### A. Start of the Adventure:

**PLAY:** Read the **INTRODUCTION** found at the beginning of the module, to the players. The guards will not allow the player characters to return over the mountains. Characters attempting to do so will always encounter the guards. The guards will distribute the items found in **Treasure** to the party. Give each character a rumor as detailed in the TABLE OF RAMDOM RUMORS below.

**Treasure:** The following items are presented by the guards as a token gift from the king to his Advanced Scouting Party:

GENERAL PROPERTY:

Enough water for the entire party to travel in the desert for seven days (10,000 gp weight).

Three large tents with poles, 10 feet x 20 feet in size, weighing 4,000 gp each. They require four turns (40 minutes) to set up or take down.

One Writ of Authority granting permission to be in the Desert of Desolation. It weighs 1 gp.

Ten bundles of firewood weighing 20 lbs. (200 gp weight) each. One bundle provides one night's fire.

One old map of a pyramid. It weights 1 gp.

EACH CHARACTER IS GRANTED:

2,000 sp for expenses.

Two bags containing food. One bag contains one week's standard ration weighing 20 lbs. (200 gp weight) while the other contains two weeks' iron rations weighing 15 lbs. (150 gp weight).

Their choice of either a camel or a draft horse. (See **DESERT PROLOGUE** under MOVEMENT for a description of these animals.)



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