

## Crystal Compass Podcast #28 – Transcription

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**Description:** Crystal Dynamics' studio podcast returns, rebranded as the Crystal Compass. Episode #28 explores the mythology of Rise of the Tomb Raider with Franchise Director Noah Hughes, tackles fan questions with Game Director Brian Horton, and explores the allure of ancient Egypt in a retrospective feature. Hosted by Meagan Marie.

*[Musical Transition]*

### Intro

*[Meagan Marie]* Hello everyone, I'm Meagan Marie, Senior Community Manager at Crystal Dynamics. Welcome back to our monthly podcast, newly rebranded as the Crystal Compass. It's been a while since our last episode so we're super excited to be back and bring new features including news updates, in depth interviews and retrospective looks at Crystal Dynamics titles. This episode we're diving into the mythological framework of Rise of the Tomb Raider with Franchise Director Noah Hughes. We know that you're all eager for any information you can get on the game so this should be a fun one. We'll also answer fan questions with game director Brian Horton, enjoy a little music interlude with Crystal Compass radio, and go out on a classic Crystal retrospective as we mentioned. Thanks for listening. Hope you enjoy.

*[Musical Transition]*

### Quick Hits [1:35]

*[Meagan Marie]* First a bit of news in our Quick Hits segment. In early February, Rise of the Tomb Raider came back with a bang, debuting an exclusive cover story with Game Informer magazine. Coupled with online features, the coverage released next gen screenshots, concept art and addressed topics ranging from choosing mythology, which we'll get into a little bit more in this podcast, to gearing up Lara for inhospitable climates. Some of the other features included concept art galleries, exploring the new setting in Rise of the Tomb Raider, interview with writer, Rhianna Pratchett, discussing tombs and puzzles, film influences and more. If you want to be completely up to date with Rise of the Tomb Raider information, head over to [GameInformer.com/ROTR](http://GameInformer.com/ROTR).

*[Meagan Marie]* Next news story: you might've heard the rumblings on social media but we'd like to formally welcome two talented gentlemen to the Crystal Dynamics family – Tore Blystad and Nate Wells. Tore started his career at Funcom in Norway over two decades ago. After his time at Funcom, he moved over to Denmark for a 10 year run at IO Interactive contributing heavily to the Hitman Franchise. So he's been in the Square Enix family for a while. Tore was most recently Game and Art director on Hitman: Absolution and he is now relocated to sunny California joining us as Performance Director. Nate Wells

got his start in the industry at Looking Glass studios lending his talents to System Shock 2 and Thief: The Dark Project. Moving onto Irrational Games, he took up post as Technical Art Director on BioShock and Art Director on BioShock Infinite. Fun Fact: Nate is actually credited with the original concept and visualization of the Big Daddy. Nate is most recently known for his work at Naughty Dog as a lead artist on the Last of Us. He's joining Crystal Dynamics as Environmental Art Director. So a big welcome to both. We're super glad to have them on the team.

*[Meagan Marie]* In LCTOO news, both of the Lara Croft & the Temple of Osiris DLC packs have dropped, including the Icy Death Pack and the Twisted Gears pack. Fans in particular were pretty smitten with the Twisted Gears pack because it contained an awesome Classic Croft skin. The LCTOO community challenges are still going strong and if you want to keep up with the weekly progress, head over to our official forums and check out the [Community Challenge Thread](#).

*[Meagan Marie]* Last but not least, we're bringing back features such as Croft Couture and continuing to regularly feature fan content on the Tomb Raider blog. If you want to submit something to be considered for a feature, please send an e-mail to [community@crystalld.com](mailto:community@crystalld.com). We'd love to see your work.

*[Meagan Marie]* And those are the big stories for this month! If you want to keep up with our daily happenings, head over to [TombRaider.tumblr.com](http://TombRaider.tumblr.com)

*[Musical Transition]*

## [The Mythology of Rise of the Tomb Raider with Noah Hughes \[4:27\]](#)

*[Meagan Marie]* I am here with Noah now, our Franchise Director and Creative Director, specifically on Rise of the Tomb Raider and... we get to talk about Rise of the Tomb Raider now! Isn't this exciting, Noah?

*[Noah Hughes]* Woohoo! I can't wait.

*[Meagan Marie]* Finally. So we just had the Game Informer cover and one of the things they talked about was the mythology behind the game but, now we have a little bit more time and I think we can dig down a little deeper into it. So... you ready for some questions?

*[Noah Hughes]* Sure. We're still early so we can only talk about so much but...

*[Meagan Marie]* The fans know. They don't want spoilers any more than you can give them so we'll skirt that line and just tease that stuff. But first off... does Rise of the Tomb Raider tie directly to what happened on Yamatai in the last game and do we have to play the game in its entirety to understand and pick up Rise of the Tomb Raider?

*[Noah Hughes]* Great question. We always set out to make a stand alone story so that if you haven't played the previous game, you can come in and enjoy the current game a great deal. But we also strive to pay off on fans who follow Lara's adventures from one to the next. So we strive for continuity and we strive to create a story that people were get even more out of if they played the previous one. So the

answer is a little bit yes and no on this – which is, absolutely, it's a stand alone story but I encourage everyone to play the series and experience Lara's origin as well as her rise to becoming a Tomb Raider as a holistic story as well.

*[Meagan Marie]* All right, let's get as specific as we can at this time, what is the myth that we're exploring in Rise of the Tomb Raider?

*[Noah Hughes]* We're talking about the lost city of Kitezh. This was an exciting myth for us. One of the things we started doing with the 2013 reboot was trying to find myths that were a little less explored in movies and media than some of the previous Tomb Raider myths and that's sort of fun to go through the process of cycling through all the possible myths we can do. There's a lot of things that were exciting about this one. Part of it was just this concept of a lost city that sunk beneath a lake and, as we talked about in the Game Informer article, we really wanted to give Lara this amazing first expedition to go on and this idea that, not only was there a secret lost in time, but there was also this fabulous, mythical place that you were going to travel to in order to find this secret.

*[Meagan Marie]* Mhm. Great. And then, did you choose the setting first and then find the myth or did you have to select a myth and that dictated the setting for the game?

*[Noah Hughes]* It was a little of both. We oftentimes do brainstorming about places in the world that would probably be cool to go and challenge Lara's skills in various ways as well as create new and interesting backdrops for the story. So we went through a lot of places that we could take her but we also, at the same time, go through a lot of the myths. Part of what we evaluate in terms of a myth is where in the world does this take place, what culture is it a part of, and can we turn this one myth into not just a part of the story but really bring it to life in the context of the location and the architecture and the culture and the visuals as well as the stories and things like that. So when we found this one, we liked a lot of those facets. We liked the idea of a remote Siberian location and that really played into our world fiction that these secrets that are lost in time are buried in the most, harsh, remote, hostile locations, otherwise they wouldn't still be hidden. Siberia felt like a great place to hide a secret and the mythical city of Kitezh sinking beneath the lake sounded like a great promise to discover.

*[Meagan Marie]* So this mythology that we're looking at in Rise of the Tomb Raider encompasses multiple cultures. Can you talk to that a bit?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah, one thing that's fun about the Kitezh myth is not only does it have the Russian backdrop to the mythology, but also legend has it that the city sunk beneath the lake when the Mongols attacked. There's this idea of a secret that was protected by a magical force that sunk this city into the lake but the part of that story is that there's these hordes of Mongols invading that city to steal those secrets. One of the things I love about it is that it really backs up one of the core conceits that I talk about with these secrets being hidden in these remote locations and that's sort of a truism in the Tomb Raider universe. The other truism is that these secrets that the power they represent really attract people like moths to a flame that would seek to possess that power. So the Mongols really tell the first version of that story as it relates to Kitezh and invading it for its secrets. But then we really see echoes of that through history. It's not just the Mongols that would seek to possess this. That really becomes an important part of Lara's universe - the desirability of these ancient artifacts and ancient secrets.

*[Meagan Marie]* So in a similar way that Yamatai was this melting pot of cultures because they literally got trapped there and had no escape, we're going to see this as a culture crossroads?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah, it allows us to layer in more cultures in addition to the initial Russian culture and we love to have those layers of history and that, like you said, melting pot of different identities that come to these places. In this case, rather than the storm itself dashing people into the same survival situation, we have the stories of this power attracting people through time to find it.

*[Meagan Marie]* So you've mentioned this before – the mantra of sort of “Google-able” myths – can you explain a little more about what that means and what you're looking for with that myth?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah, it's fun for us to ground the mythology in our real world mythology. It gives us a great inspiration. We always, as you know, take a certain amount of creative license and sort of build upon a myth and oftentimes, reveal sort of our own fictional truths behind the myth. It helps a lot to start with that real world starting point and that helps us because we can draw inspiration from a lot of these real works of art and fiction but also, for the audience, its fun to be able to look into a little bit more – maybe even a little bit more than what is revealed in the story – a little bit more about the myths and the cultures that Lara is exploring.

*[Meagan Marie]* So is there anything else that factors into making a good myth? Making a myth a good fit in terms of the ability to google it and wrap your head around it in terms of transcending cultures? Is there anything you look for?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah. When we talk about transcending cultures, part of that is trying to ground the myth in a certain credibility. When we established the sort of, post reboot mythology, we really wanted to find things that you saw different versions of throughout the world, through different cultures. You see echoes of these same stories and its easy to start to believe that these cultures independently come up with their own stories to explain an unexplainable things or what have you, but there's also this possibility that they're all speaking to an underlying truth. That if you have the mythology of an immortal soul that transcends culture and you really present that in a way that feels grounded and hopefully feels credible that you can always believe that somewhere in the dark corners of this planet that there really are secrets that are lost in time, that maybe at one point, we knew something about ourselves or our condition, or in this case, sort of the nature of the human soul and that that secret has been lost to us. We like to, sort of, believe that underlying the commonalities of these myths might actually be truths.

*[Meagan Marie]* Speaking to that mysticism, obviously Tomb Raider games are known for that – having that element that's fantastical. As we would expect, Rise of the Tomb Raider is no exception. How would you expect to balance it in a believable way that feels like it's just that one step beyond reality not taking the player too far?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah, I think a lot of that... well, one of the things we strive to do is build up to it. We use, very abstractly, Jaws as an analogy as something that's more powerful because you only glimpse it. I think some of the myths we treat that same way. We talk about a Raiders of the Lost Ark and how it deals with mythology as something you learn about through the culture, through the murals, through the books and ancient tomes and deciphering secrets and tombs and things like that. You only just barely ever get a glimpse of it and it is, to some extent, really earning that moment where you built it up

to a point where you could almost believe it could happen and you really get that final payoff. We try to, you know, build it a little more mysterious like that and maintain some of the mystique of the myth. Again, that's always the challenge. Part of what's fun about playing with the mythology is making something fantastical and that's inherently hard to believe. It's a balancing act and we like to make sure we're not over constraining our imagination and we want to make sure that when we pay off the myth, we really pay it off.

*[Meagan Marie]* This last question may be a more execution question, but how do you balance the exposition to the player who wants to – you know you have players who just want to jump into the action and experience the core game and then there are players who want to explore and uncover every relic and learn as much as they can about that mythology and put the puzzle pieces together – how do you balance that to make sure that you're delivering the necessary bits to the people that are on that fast-track?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah. I mean, one of the things that's great about a game and just, interactive story telling in general is the ability for lots of – whether its our documents or secondary missions or in-game story telling and murals and imagines and things like that – there's often a lot of canvas you can use outside of the core cinematics. But, as you point out, we always try to make sure the basics of the myth and the story that's necessary to understand the overall plot to present it to the audience. You'll often find a few scenes early on in a Tomb Raider game where people are talking about the myth, as it exists, before we start expanding and digging into the mysteries underlying it. For those who played the reboot, remember the campfire scene with Sam and Matthias and the orange.

*[Meagan Marie]* Hah! The orange. Funny you bring that up.

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah, the orange! That was one of the examples of one of those “storytime scenes” as I like to call them. You can expect to have some other scenes where characters are chatting about the mythology.

*[Meagan Marie]* Well that's it for now. Thank you so much, Noah. It was great chatting with you again. We'll have to have you back next month and... I guess we can open up to the community and listeners – what do you want us to touch on next?

*[Noah Hughes]* Yeah! I'm very excited. Like you said, it's nice to be able to talk about stuff again. Thanks for sharing and I hope we answered some questions and I can't wait to come back.

*[Musical Transition]*

[Take Five Q&A with Brian Horton \[18:45\]](#)

*[Meagan Marie]* Now I am joined by Brian Horton, who is our Game Director – which is exciting and new from last time so congratulations!

*[Brian Horton]* Thanks Meagan.

*[Meagan Marie]* So, we have some fan questions. Some of these are quite broad but we'll see how much we can answer early on. We have our monthly Q&A and these are a couple that hadn't been

answered because we're limited to 5 questions for those monthly Q&A sessions. So, our first question is: Tescar70 asks, "To what extent has the work on Tomb Raider 2013 been built upon during the development of Rise of the Tomb Raider? And can you share any examples?" So, I think they want to know about the evolution from the last game in terms of the foundation we started with.

*[Brian Horton]* Yeah. That's a great question because when we were going about making the last Tomb Raider game, it was explicitly our goal to really look at the franchise freshly and everything from the ground up and rebuild the game. For Rise, we wanted to build on the foundation we established on for Tomb Raider 2013 so what we did was take a lot of the things we liked and use it as a foundation especially as we were doing early prototypes. Everything was the same foundation of the game. From there, we started thinking what are the things we can grow and build on? That's where we started thinking about survivalist systems, to think about the living world and how to make hubs more engaging, to build that survival sandbox and really double down on some things we introduced in our desperate combat in the last game. Now that Lara's more confident and aware of her surroundings, we're starting to introduce more mechanics on how she can have this guerilla style in her combat. A lot of what we were trying to do was build on the foundation of 2013 and bring something new so as her as a character has evolved, so have the abilities.

*[Meagan Marie]* Okay, our next question is from Rai, and her question is, "Will the hubs be utilized within the story path allowing for a slower pace rather than the 'go go go' urgency of before?"

*[Brian Horton]* We always give the player an option to explore hubs. We introduce them in places where it's a natural place to take a break and really exploit them. But there are those players out there that want to continue along the main story line and we don't prevent the player from doing that. So it's always one of those things where we want to give the player a feeling like they can take a break from the main story and really explore and find some challenge tombs or do some hunting or pick up some collectibles. But, I think we allow for a pacing that keeps the story motivating but gives an opportunity to use the hubs.

*[Meagan Marie]* All right, our third question is from Tescar again and it's, "How difficult is it to acknowledge and/or reflect on the legacy of Tomb Raider while at the same time follow your vision for the reboot?"

*[Brian Horton]* We're always respectful of the past. We always reflect on what came before us. But, as we've said in past interviews, this is a reimagining of Tomb Raider and Lara Croft as a character so she will never quite evolve into the classic, Core vision of what Lara was but we will always try to make sure she's maintaining the spirit and the franchise maintains the spirit of what its always been through our modern lens. So what we try to do is think about how would Lara evolve from where she was in the last experience that she did and what challenges would we want to embrace her with that would make her continue her legacy? I mean, this is Rise of the Tomb Raider – it is the continuing journey of her finding her destiny.

*[Meagan Marie]* Okay, another question from the community is this is one we get kind of frequently: Is archaeology still at the heart of Lara's experience with tomb raiding because she tends to leave quite a bit of damage behind her sometimes.

*[Brian Horton]* [Laughs] The idea of being a Tomb Raider isn't purely an archaeologist. She has the soul of an archaeologist. She has the desire to find these ancient relics and societies and the mysteries of the world but often she's presented these life and death situations and when you're in a situation like that, she's going to take a route that's going to allow her to survive. Oftentimes, that's going to leave a bit of damage on the backend of it. She's not there to do anything other than, hopefully, seek out the truth and, in doing so, you know, she's putting her life on the line and she does have a reverence for ancient cultures and societies and artifacts and relics. Obviously we exploit that in the relic system too and you know, there's a lot of reverence for the things she finds. But, at the same time, it is a survival action game and there is going to be a little bit of collateral damage.

*[Meagan Marie]* All right, our next question – it looks like it's from both Blacktron and Chocolate\_Shake - that's a fun name. It says, "Darrell called Rise of the Tomb Raider something truly special and the most ambitious Tomb Raider ever built..." and they want to know in what way? Can you tell us something about the game – is it length, graphics, some new features that no TR has ever seen before? Can you tell us what do you see as some of those cutting edge features?

*[Brian Horton]* We've had a fantastic opportunity on the sequel to utilize the generation switch. To bring another level of fidelity and performance into Lara and the supporting cast members so that's a huge thing for us – to continue to make Lara the most believable character in video games. The other thing is the scope and the breadth of the game – we've often talked of our hubs being larger than the last game but we've really tried to make them something larger and we've talked about them being three times the size. Not only is it larger, it's more dense. We've put a lot more work into the systems of the game, not only to make these hubs larger but to make these hubs even more immersive and interactive. Every single system in our pillar, every aspect of the game, we've built on the last. So, yes, we would definitely say it's the most ambitious game we've made.

*[Meagan Marie]* Fantastic, I think the hubs size in particular is going to get fans excited. All right, in one of the GI features, you said it's not easy being a Tomb Raider. What are the challenges we're going to see Lara encounter and how will she rise to the occasion?

*[Brian Horton]* [Laughs] I'm not going to go into a lot of details because I don't want to spoil the surprises, right? But I can tell you that stakes are always an important part to being a Tomb Raider. The idea that Lara is going after some of these secret truths in the most distant and hostile places in the world mean that she's going to have to up her game. We see in the Game Informer article that she's coming prepared and you know, she's not going in there unaware of the danger that she's going to face. But even going prepared, there's things that she will discover and encounter that she'll have to learn to take on and overcome. So, trying not to be specific because I don't want to give spoilers, just know that the challenges that we present Lara and the player are building up on the same patterns of you introduced to something that's extremely overwhelming, you learn, you grow, evolve and eventually, hopefully master.

*[Meagan Marie]* So one last question – and this one has been popping up since the really awesome international press cover that we showed with Lara in the ice cave – what's your process for doing renders? They know you do a blend of photography and art, so what's that process like?

*[Brian Horton]* Sure. So, I was very fortunate to learn some photography in the past few years. I've always been a painter but, my fine art has brought me to photography. I've been doing it now for about

6 years and when we did the cover for Tomb Raider 2013, we worked for an amazing agency and I was along for the ride and I was like, “Wow, this is a great way to get some high resolution promotional images.” So the goal is always – what is the image? What is the content that we’re trying to create? And Bren (Brenoch Adams - Art Director) is really the guy that drives what that content is. We’ll have discussions about it but he tends to come up with the images and iconography and then once we agree on that iconography through concept, then we bring a model in, we do wardrobe, make-up if needed and we do pose explorations. I set up my studio lights, which I generally have two of those, and I have a Canon 63D and I try to get the highest resolutions I can, either for me or for Bren, for us to work render images into from the model that Kam Yu (Principal Artist) so we’re using all of our game assets this time, blended with photography to create some of those cover images that you see on Game Informer or our international press.

*[Meagan Marie]* Very cool. So would you say the final piece – is it more... is it a 50/50 blend or does it more lean towards one side of the photography and the art and the paintovers and so on?

*[Brian Horton]* I think the last couple that we’ve done have been more photography influenced and then we brought in render stuff for likeness and things like that. The technique is both illustrative and photographic. We’re just trying to get a movie poster quality is really what we’re going for and that’s sort of the aesthetic for PR images.

*[Meagan Marie]* Fantastic. Okay, well that’s what we got for this time and we’ll be sure to bring you on next month to answer some more fan questions. Thank you so much, Brian.

*[Brian Horton]* Thanks Meagan. And thanks everyone!

*[Musical Transition]*

### [Crystal Compass Radio \[29:05\]](#)

*[Meagan Marie]* And now for something a little different with Crystal Compass Radio. We’re going to take a quick break before the final segment of our podcast and let you listen to two tracks – one classic, and one current – from our titles. This episode we’re going to listen to the main theme from Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, composed by Peter Connelly, followed by the Lara Croft Overture from Lara Croft and the Temple of Osiris, composed by Wilbert Roget. These two tracks have been specially chosen to lead into our Classic Crystal feature which takes a retrospective look at Tomb Raider and the allure of ancient Egypt.

### [Classic Crystal: The Allure of Ancient Egypt \[34.18\]](#)

*[Lara Croft from Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation]* The inscription reads... “One night, in dreaming, came to me, the spirit of the sphinx. In his passing, he spoke unto me, words of great wisdom. Tuthmosis here is your true destiny. This land of Egypt is forever yours to rule.

*[Meagan Marie]* Lara Croft is a well-seasoned adventurer. Her exploits have taken her around the world and back again, traveling from the darkest corners of Parisian streets, to the dense jungles of India, and even the frigid and isolated landscapes of Antarctica. She’s also pinpointed the fabled city of Atlantis. No big deal.

*[Meagan Marie]* Despite all of this globetrotting, many fans agree that the quintessential archeological expedition is one that sees Lara braving the sun and sand of Egypt, which she's done in the Original Tomb Raider, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, the mobile title Tomb Raider: The Osiris Codex, and most recently in Lara Croft and the Temple of Osiris. This isn't counting her trips to the Land of the Nile in comics and other offshoots – there was that messy business with the cat goddess Bast in the Top Cow series.

*[Meagan Marie]* Lara isn't alone in these adventures. Fictional explorers Indiana Jones found himself drawn to Egypt in his quest for the Ark of the Covenant, as did Rick & Evelyn in their altruistic attempt to undo the mess they made in The Mummy. But these fictional tales aren't to be outdone by real-world accounts, such as with Howard Carter, who discovered the Tomb of Tutankhamun, and was thought to suffer the Curse of the Pharaohs as a result. Then there is the 19th century explorer and novelist, Amelia Edwards, whose travels through Egypt led her to compile her hand drawn illustrations and travelogue into the 1887 bestseller, A Thousand Miles Up the Nile. These discoveries acted as a catalyst for periods of increased interest in Egyptian culture by the Western world, referred to as Egyptomania in a broad sense. Their influence can be seen to this day from the obelisk in Washington DC, to the Egyptian Bridge in Saint Petersburg.

*[Meagan Marie]* The world is full of intrigue and adventure. So what makes Egypt stand out as an oasis for fantasy and fiction?

*[Meagan Marie]* The History Channel states it well – Egypt is a culture so rich that it spawned its own field of study. Noted as one of the cradles of civilization and as having one of the longest histories of any modern country, Egypt offers incredible breadth and depth to draw from.

*[Meagan Marie]* In particular, Egypt has an incredibly well preserved legacy of art and written word. Hieroglyphs and their less formal variations of script allow us to read and comprehend much about daily life in ancient Egypt, as well as the more fantastical tales told in religious texts. There is little need to exercise your imagination with these tales. They are so colorful and rich they beg to be told and told again.

*[Meagan Marie]* The discovery of the Rosetta Stone, inscribed with Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs, Demotic script (referred to as document writing by the Egyptians), and Ancient Greek, provided a key to the modern understanding of Egyptian Hieroglyphs and as such opened Egyptian culture to the rest of the world. And there was an incredible amount to draw from – religious materials, funerary texts, hymns and rituals, temple decorations, and more. Who could forget about the Book of the Dead, fragments of a funerary text with nearly 200 spells aimed at helping one navigate the afterlife.

*[Meagan Marie]* The stories these murals and text told were ripe for adventure. These gods make for perfect antagonists. Or allies. They are literal personifications of good and evil, of life and death, of chaos and order. The lines are already drawn.

*[Meagan Marie]* The Osiris Myth, one of the most elaborate and fleshed out ancient myths, is explored in our recent Lara Croft and the Temple of Osiris. Some creative liberties are taken, but the heart of the myth holds true.

*[Meagan Marie]* Alisha Thayer, designer on Lara Croft and the Temple of Osiris, was part of the team that decided to explore the Osiris Myth in LCTOO. They used concept explorations from the Guardian of Light team as a starting point for their brainstorm.

*[Alisha Thayer]* We had a few settings we were tossing around as options, but Egypt definitely generated the most enthusiasm from our team and so we spent some time familiarizing ourselves with Egyptian mythology and some of the key players in Egyptian myth. The Osiris myth was a fun choice for us because it adapted so easily into a simple, arcade-y video game structure. Osiris was murdered by Set and split into a varying number of pieces depending on the story, which gave us a fun, thematic, tri-force kind of collectible to frame our levels and progression.

*[Meagan Marie]* Once the LCTOO team decided they did in fact want to move forward with the Osiris myth, they say the rest of the characters fell into place pretty easily. Isis reassembled the pieces of Osiris in order to conceive their son, Horus, making them both viable options for playable characters.

*[Alisha Thayer]* As for other gods, we had a handful of meetings early on where we'd discuss our favorite characters and themes. Ra was brought up a great deal in the beginning because we were toying with a lot of light/dark ideas and he is a solar deity, but he also had this really great boat that he travelled on that took him through the sky and into the underworld, and we loved the idea of a level on a magical solar boat! Ra and Set showed up in our early meetings, because they fought Apep together and we loved the idea of fighting a big snake boss. And, if you've played the game, you'll notice that we ended up keeping Apep as a boss.

*[Meagan Marie]* Set was a familiar face to fans, being first introduced to the franchise after Lara accidentally unleashed him on the world in Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation. Fun side note, according to Alisha, for a split second the team considered tying LCTOO the Last Revelation, featuring Lara trapped in the Underworld and trying to fight her way out, but decided to keep it a spiritual successor rather than chronological one.

*[Meagan Marie]* Playing by the rules of ancient Egypt also means that death isn't final. It's the start of a new adventure, full of further trials and tribulations. If the dead can make their way through gateways with spirits and other monstrosities, their heart will be weighed against a feather by the god Anubis. If the heart is found heavy and rejected, it will be eaten by Ammit, the devourer of souls, and the individual will never reach paradise.

*[Meagan Marie]* As Alisha hinted at, using Egypt as a location means that boss battles nearly write themselves. Ammit is a female demon, part lion, hippo, and crocodile.

*[Meagan Marie]* Here's a few more. Apep is a giant serpent and enemy of Ra, also known as the "Lord of Chaos" and embodiment of all that's evil. He was known to be miles long, and so large he attempted to swallow the sun every day. He was at the center of a puzzle-esque battle in LCTOO.

*[Meagan Marie]* And another appearance - Khepri, a scarab god and solar deity, thought to roll the sun through the sky in the same vein of a scarab beetle and dung. Guess how that one played out in the game?

*[Alisha Thayer]* One of our designers, Jeff Wajcs, had always really wanted to do a boss fight on a rolling ball, and so he adapted that idea to Khepri's myth. Narratively, Khepri was a nice place to start because

his myth ties into themes you see repeated over and over in Egyptian mythology and iconography: the sun, scarabs, rebirth, life and death, light and dark, all of which we were using to inform our game mechanics early on.

*[Meagan Marie]* As you can see, these myths are grandiose. Full of conflicts that play to the duality of human nature, ripe in intrigue. A pretty great fit for pop culture, and for a game.

*[Meagan Marie]* The ancient Egyptian achievements in the physical realm are pretty incredible, too. Egypt is home to monuments that have stood the test of time, be it pyramids, crypts, or sphinxes. Who wouldn't want to explore the Valley of the Kings or the Theban Necropolis, inspired by name alone?

*[Meagan Marie]* The best part? The origin of some of the world's oldest and largest monuments, such as the Great Sphinx of Giza is still hotly debated. When was it built? By whom? And for what purpose? The concept of the "riddle of the sphinx" is based on this enigmatic nature, again lending an air of intrigue to ancient Egypt.

*[Meagan Marie]* To this day new discoveries are still being made. Expeditions continue year after year. According to National Geographic, before 1922 it was widely believed that the 62 tombs in the Valley of the Kings were all that existed. Then Howard Carter discovered the Tomb of Tutankhamun. In 2005, another tomb was discovered, only 50 feet from the walls of King Tut's final resting place. In January of this year an ancient replica of the mythical Tomb of Osiris was unearthed. Who knows what's out there to find?

*[Meagan Marie]* Staring out into a dry and desolate landscape of the Sahara desert, you can't help but feel that there are secrets, just waiting to be discovered. Time and sand reclaims all. Until an adventurer like Lara Croft comes to find them that is.

## Outro

*[Meagan Marie]* And that's it for this episode of the Crystal Compass podcast! We hope you enjoyed the show, and the new features we've added to it. Feel free to send your feedback to [community@crystald.com](mailto:community@crystald.com). Untill next time!

*[Musical Transition]*