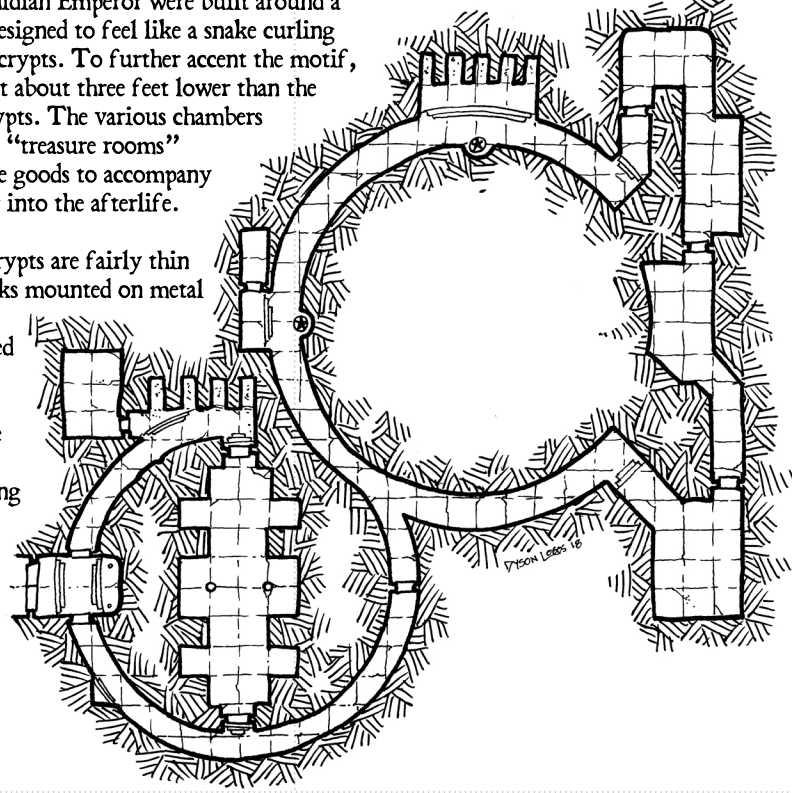


The crypts of the Ophidian Emperor were built around a double-circle motif, designed to feel like a snake curling around the tombs and crypts. To further accent the motif, the circular halls are set about three feet lower than the other chambers and crypts. The various chambers are tombs, crypts, and "treasure rooms" stacked with fake grave goods to accompany the Ophidian Emperor into the afterlife.

All doors within the crypts are fairly thin single-piece stone blocks mounted on metal hinges. All doors and most walls are decorated with frescoes and bas-relief carvings of idealized images of the reign of the Ophidian Emperor, often showing off his mighty golden snake staff and the black Orb of Empire.



Upon entering the crypts for the first time, would-be tomb robbers may be unnerved to find the following:

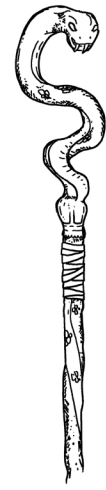
1. Hundreds of dead songbirds litter the floor. Some as fresh as a day old, others nothing more than bones and dusty feathers.
2. "Fools we were, unable to escape this place" scrawled on the floor in old ink.
3. Strange discordant music begins to play upon entry. It always seems to be coming from "just around the bend" and only ends when the crypts are empty again.
4. A rank wind blows out of the crypts for 10 minutes and then dies out.

The circle crypts of the Ophidian Emperor are home to death traps, curses, and a lot of false treasure sent along with the Emperor to the next world. Copper and brass coins, bottles containing vinegar "wine", bolts of ancient cloth, paste gems and jewelry, hundreds of dusty black spheres, and all sorts and shapes of pottery painted gold. In the mix of all this trash are the Golden Snake Staff and the Orb of Empire.

Anyone claiming treasure from the crypts will be cursed by ancient hexes laid out by the high priests of the Ophidian Empire. Those who take the Staff and Orb are cursed twice.

The Golden Snake Staff is treated as a magical weapon, and the wielder can speak and understand all spoken snake and lizard languages.

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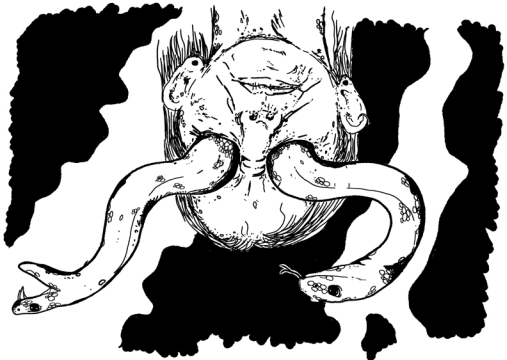
The Golden Snake Staff is treated as a magical weapon, and the wielder can speak and understand all spoken snake and lizard languages.

The Orb of Empire is an invincible black 5 inch sphere that does not detect as magical. It gently levitates into position above and slightly behind the owner's head. While in position, it doubles any Charisma bonuses the owner has to domination management tasks and checks (for good or ill).

1. Devotes the Bald, a disgraced slaver
2. Hesper Krell, a heretic from the desert
3. Thero One-Armed, retired dwarven gladiator
4. Voros Dilligence, an elven deserter
5. Worshaw Dungechewer, mad goblin shaman
6. Xelor Bykhan, half-ogre mystic

1. Elder vampire dust.
2. 106 fangs from a still-living demon.
3. Fresh yolk of an elemental's egg.
4. The Eye of Hedrek.

The most likely source of information on the crypts of the Ophidian Emperor is "the Basilisk Seer", a crone who accepts few guests to her mountain home. If enticed with appropriate gifts, exotic cheeses, and rallow of rendered werbear fat, she can describe the way to the crypt and more importantly what key is needed to open the great sealed doors (roll 18, table continues on next page):



5. a 7 inch dagger poisoned with wyvern venom.
6. a live merfolk child sacrifice.
7. liver of a person drowned in alcohol.
8. a night with three moons.

WHO SEEKS THE OPHIDIAN EMPEROR?

TRACES OF THE OPHIDIAN EMPEROR

FROM DYSON'S BASEMENT

1. All magical healing takes the form of snake skin and flesh where the wounds were.
2. All hair falls out
3. Disadvantage on all saves against ophidian spellcasters and magical abilities.
4. Legs want to act as a tail - roll under Dex in order to move faster than a walk, or fall down.
5. Check for wandering snakes once per day or night, 1 in 6 chance that locally-appropriate snakes attack in unusual numbers (twice normal number appearing).
6. Polymorphed into a harmless garden snake.
7. Tongue becomes forked, disadvantage lying and convincing others.
8. If slain, your corpse turns into a snake and tries to slither away (making it hard to find / heal).

Regardless of the source, the snake's curse has the following effects until removed:

THE SNAKE'S CURSE

There are many ways to come under the spell of the Snake's Curse - robbing the circle tombs, or merely arousing the ire of the basilisk seer...