

The Sek'leth Scripture

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Excerpts Recovered From the Journal of Lawrence Rousé – Professor in Residence,
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EXPEDITION DAY 13

After nearly two weeks digging we finally broke through and entered the ruins. The tunnel complex appears immense and the architecture... I'll just say it's not what I expected. I've never heard of an elven civilization worshiping serpents. This might very well be the discovery of a lifetime...

EXPEDITION DAY 16

...these ruins are fascinating. This elven civilization unlike any I've studied. They developed their own language and if the half-man/half-serpent statues are any indication, developed a unique pantheon as well. Could this be an undiscovered branch of the elven genus, developed in isolation on this island?

Today we unearthed what appears to be a temple adorned with serpent ornamentation. On a jade altar we found a perfectly preserved book of parchment wrapped in snake skin. The book must be enchanted to have survived the ravages of time. I hope this book sheds some light on this mystery civilization once I translate the language.

I fear the strangeness of the ruins is affecting the diggers poorly. Many claim to have seen statue shaped shadows moving out of the corner of their eyes! One digger literally scared himself to death today, keeling over with a weak heart. Foolish superstition! Can't they see they're overreacting to nothing more than the play of torchlight?

EXPEDITION DAY 20

...closer examination of the temple book revealed a map of the site. Of particular interest is a chamber hidden behind the temple room. It's depicted guarding a pile of gold and jewels upon which rests a lantern whose light shines upon a twisted three pointed star-like symbol. The map shows this chamber guarded by a four headed snake that I believe may represent the four half-man/half-serpent statues located behind the altar.

The lure of wealth has renewed the diggers courage yet still two have gone missing, braving the horrors of the wilderness rather than the horrors of their own overactive imaginations. Another digger died in his sleep two days past possibly frightening the deserters into flight.

My study of the temple book leads me to a few startling possibilities. I've begun to wonder if we are actually dealing with an elven civilization. I've found no depictions of elves, humans or even dwarves anywhere in the ruins. Could this be something else entirely?

EXPEDITION DAY 22

The four statues in the temple room were indeed the key to the secret chamber... but its discovery has only led to more questions. Gone are the serpent motifs so prevalent in the ruins. Instead this chamber is constructed from pure black marble. Engraved throughout are mystical runes, sigils and circles, all inlaid with silver. Then there is the immense door... intricately carved into the leering lifelike face of an abhorrent... nauseatingly monstrous creature. Words cannot describe my revulsion upon first laying eyes upon this grotesquery. A number of the diggers fled with fear upon its unearthing and I fear tonight will see yet more desertions.

My study of this civilization and its language is beginning to bear fruit. I now believe this culture was monotheistic, worshiping an all powerful serpent god (although the grotesque door brings this into question.) Based on some rough translations I'm placing this civilization at somewhere between 2000 and 3000 years old, older than any documented elven civilization to date... more proof that perhaps these ruins are not elven after all.

Even more intriguing is the name given this hidden chamber. If I'm interpreting the language correctly (and I'll admit my translations are rough at best) it was named the "Vault of Honesty." The juxtaposition of "honest" with the horrific figure carved as a guardian makes me question the sort of morals this culture held dear?

The vault doors are protected by a puzzling lock mechanism. Random attempts to solve the puzzle have resulted in disaster, nearly costing me a hand. Writings in the chamber may hold the answers but translation efforts are hampered...

EXPEDITION DAY 23

What an amazing discovery! While poring over the temple book tonight I accidentally spilt a vial of ink soaking the parchment. As I went to blot it up the ink disappeared. I spilt a few more drops on the pages and again it disappeared. I continued to experiment using different inks, quills, charcoal, all of it disappeared until I started writing a translation in the margins, "Vault of Honesty." Only some of the ink disappeared leaving "Vault" behind! I tried different translations, "honor" "integrity" "valor" yet they all disappeared. Finally I hit upon "truth" and the ink remained. "Vault of Truth!"

After careful testing I believe the temple book is enchanted to hold no falsehood. What an amazing tool for a translator. With this I should be able to decipher the language in no time and from there the secrets of the strangely named "Vault of Truth."

THE SEK'LETH SCRIPTURE (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong divination; **CL** 18th

Slot -; **Weight** 5 lb.

Description

This tome is bound by a snake-skin cover embossed with a silver serpent. Writings on the parchment within recount the history of the Valossan city-state of Sek'leth.

The Sek'leth Scripture grants its user a +1 circumstance bonus to Knowledge skill checks dealing with Valossan culture, increasing to +2 when dealing with Yig.

Additionally *The Sek'leth Scripture* allows no falsehood to grace its pages. This ability grants a +5 circumstance bonus to Linguistics checks when translating the book. Once translated the book functions as a Rosetta stone for the Valossan language, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Linguistics checks to translate or interpret Valossan.

When found, the last three pages of the *Scripture* are blank. Any falsehood written on one of these pages disappears within seconds. True statements remain but expend one of the book's six remaining charges. If a statement is uncertain it is treated as false (and thus the *Scripture* cannot be used to divine the future.) Once all charges are expended no blank pages remain.

Destruction

Writing a false statement in an ink made from the blood of 13 murdered serpent people devoted to Yig destroys *The Sek'leth Scripture*.

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