



Drakken Ruins

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System

This adventure was written for use with the Talislanta 4th edition roleplaying game. It will work as well with the 5th edition. It would also convert easily to use with any 'Omni' system roleplaying game.

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Map

This adventure uses the map located at the Wizards.com archive stated below. This map is not part of this document and is used under the original terms of the Wizards D&D Map Archive:

http://www.wizards.com/dnd/images/mapofweek/May2007/03_May2007_72_vbn230_ppi.jpg

To use the map you need to note several changes. Download and print the map and amend it as follows:

1. The rockfall between Room 18 and the curving corridor with multiple Room 15s is total. **There is no passage through.** Otherwise characters can short circuit the whole level too quickly.



2. The rooms marked **15** on the North East of the curving corridor are different to the rooms marked **15** on the South West curve. This is detailed in the text below.
3. So far the adventure only uses the first level. At this stage the GM either populates the upper and lower levels, or simply blocks them off. Later versions will inhabit the lower level with a *Raknid* hive.

Drakken Ruins Intro

You stand in the main square of the Drakken Ruins. The time has come to explore deep within these incredibly ancient ruins, the remaining structures of a draconic civilisation that ruled these lands before humanity had struggled to master fire. These were the true dragons of Talislanta, not the crude Saurans of the Volcanic Hills and their lumbering Land Dragons, the Drakken wielded magic, literacy, culture and built huge cities and palaces, many of which stand today.

Ask for a History roll, full success means the player receives the Drakken information below. Ask for a Naturalism roll, or a Nomad/Rural Background roll at -5. Those that succeed should be given the Sauran information below.

Drakken

The Drakken were a race of reptilian giants who were driven out of Talislanta by the Archaens. The mark of the Drakken is still found on the continent. The Watchstone in the Plains of Golarin is their most noteworthy monument, and the Kharakhan Giants are apparently descended from a race of neomorphs created by the Archaens to battle the Drakken; the Saurans and Saurud might also be related to the ancient Drakken. Those who know of such things say that the Drakken survive on the continent of Draknar south of Talislanta. Drakken ruins are impressive because of their sheer size. Even the tall Sindarans often find the thick walls, massive archways, and broad steps in the ruins overwhelming. Drakken writing is found on many of the walls and pieces of rubble, but Talislantan scholars have never been able to decipher it. This writing is always found carved into stone, and the depth at which the characters are carved varies considerably. Also to be found here are the images that earned the ruins their current name: numerous bas reliefs of dragons or dragon heads. A few bas reliefs depict the reptilian Drakken riding dragons through the air. Because of these images, few Talislantans are sorry that these reptiles left the continent. (adapted from *Scent of the Beast*, page 33, excluded from CC licence.)

[Only land and sea dragons are known in Talislanta and they certainly do not fly.]

Saurans

Standing up to seven feet in height, they are formidable creatures of warlike aspect. Their skin is tough and scaly, their hands and feet clawed, and their jaws lined with rows of sharp teeth. A primitive folk of limited intelligence, the Saurans nonetheless have adapted well to their surroundings. Utilizing volcanic mounds as natural forges, they make crude armor and weapons, mostly of low-grade red iron alloys. The Sauran clans have domesticated the massive creatures known as land dragons, which they outfit with plates of hammered metal and ride into battle. Though ponderous and slow, these beasts are awesomely strong. The Saurans employ their dragons much in the manner of siege engines, using them to batter down enemy fortifications and as cover against opposing missile fire. The Saurans know nothing of magic, but do have a religion of sorts. Their patron deity is Satha, a fire-breathing dragon-goddess who supposedly gave birth to the Sauran race. The Saurans erect huge cairns of stone in her name, and fill them with offerings of fire gems, a particularly spectacular variety of ruby common to the Volcanic Hills region. Dragon icons fashioned of beaten metal are also in use among some Sauran tribes. (from *The Chronicles of Talislanta*, excluded from CC licence.)

Back to the action.

Before you rises a vast door, some 5 metres high, dull and grey and worn by sandstorms and rain. You know, as many have done, that this is the entrance to some Drakken lair, but none have found the way to open it. You have, however, the advantage of possessing an Archaen artefact, a scroll scribed on papyrus thousands of years before, one that in the hands of a mage can reveal the secrets of the entrance.

The scroll has enscribed upon it an Archaen spell named *Nuunoxhl's Stratagem Of Drakken Cunning*, which is in itself a Cryptomantic spell of the Reveal Order, but which can be cast by any user of any Order with their best Mode skill, it is **very unique** and only of use to overcome Drakken concealments. It is drafted in a long dead dialect and will require some kind of reveal mode magic to even read. Suitable spells would be *Symbol of Clarity* (Talisanta 4th edition, page 49) but there may be others. Once the spell has been read then the scroll can be read carefully and slowly, the players are under no pressure and the casting modifier can be said to be -5. Any suggestions that the players make to help in the casting of the spell should be granted generous bonuses, since this spell needs to work...

As the last unnerving and polysyllabic tones of the spell echo around the square a wind blows from the East and dust whirls in small eddies around the stone door. To your shock you can see ripples of a fiery magic aura surging from the Drakken structure, but the dust eddies batter at the door and as the flames die down, the dust has marked out images and runes which now can be clearly seen against the stonework. Across the top of the doorway is a stylised reptilian beast quite like a land dragon but, shockingly, with wings! Below that is a huge, tall reptilian figure. In it's claws it holds a

sceptre, the head of which is another reptilian head, the tongue replaced by flames! Around the feet of the figure curl serpents. Script curls around the figure and to your astonishment you all can understand some of it's meaning.

The Drakken runes describe how to open the doors by placing one's claws in the alcoves to either side of the door and reaching for a series of tumblers to unlock the door allowing them to be pushed open. This is easily done if you are a giant.. it will be less easy for human scale characters. Allow the players to come up with their own clever ideas, but if all else fails then two people standing on two other people and each 'stack of people' approaching either side of the door would seem sensible.

The tumblers are trapped. Secretly make a Traps skill roll for any player that possesses it, or Artificier at -5, or a simple PER roll if no characters have such skills. Any success at all notices that of the 6 tumblers on each side, the last has never been turned and yet it seems to be under tension. Characters that leave that tumbler alone will be fine and the door will unlock, those that move it at all will feel a sudden rush of heat. A ball of flame will erupt from the hole. This will cause 10 hp of damage to any character that fails a simple DEX roll, or 5 hp on a partial success.

At last the door is unlocked and as you press against it and feel the ancient stone move under your combined strength, a chill of anticipation fills you as you realise that none have entered these tombs in thousands of years.

This is ironic given that the first room is full of heat, but also not factually accurate.. as the players are about to discover..

Level One

Room 1: Corridor

As the huge doors open a rush of stale hot air rushes forward and sweeps around you. It feels as hot as an oven, and as you stand there the waves of heat rush past you and into the square. A few scorpions and a snake scuttle and slither away from the bright sun.

A Naturalism roll or a simple PER roll will notice that the snake has completely white eyes and is probably blind. Openings above the mouth seem enlarged, as if the sense organs there have grown to compensate.

A simple PER roll will suggest that the temperature is in the 40s (Celcius), which will make wearing armour uncomfortable. It is a dry heat, which is a blessing. You may wish to ask the players what their characters will take into the ruins with them, water being a very key one. As the characters advance into the ruins ask them for simple CON rolls every 15 minutes of actual play time if they have water. A full success means they cope, a partial success means they are a little fatigued and suffer a cumulative -1 penalty on all die rolls, a failure means that one has started to dehydrate and loses 5 hit points as well as the cumulative penalty. It is fair to give natives of very hot areas a +5 bonus to this roll, and/or to substitute the Survival skill (or any appropriate skill the GM is happy

with).

The tunnel in front of you glows in a pale red light, and with the heat and the rush of air past you it feels like you are entering some devilish hell. The scale is huge, this is more of a room than a corridor, and along the walls are bas-reliefs of reptilian humanoids, somewhat like Saurans but with more refined features, ornament and wielding artefacts and items unknown to you. After some 40 metres a side corridor leaves the main corridor and heads off the east.

A simple PER roll reveals that the walls themselves have patches of glowing red lichen or moss on them. At the end of the long wide corridor are a pair of doors, much like the entry doors, closed and locked in a similar way. If the players proceed to try and open them in the same way feel free to hurt them when they discover that on this door it is the first tumbler that is trapped! [Traps roll to notice and avoid.]

Room 2: The Sky Dome

This vast domed circular area is dark and seems open to the sky. Above you stars glitter and shimmer in a clear night sky. Except, and this takes you aback, they are the wrong stars, or at least in the wrong places!

This room was a main meeting area for the Drakken and they enjoyed watching the glittering autochronous display of magic and machinery that duplicated the stars. Sadly the underlying magics and mechanisms have failed and the sky dome is still beautiful but static. Allow a player with a suitable scholarly skill, or Geography to hazard and estimate as to why the sky dome is wrong. A partial success suggests why, a full success suggests that it is broken, and a critical success reveals that the sky depicted here predates the Archaen Age and even shows celestial bodies that *no longer exist!*

Meanwhile ask the characters not making scholarly rolls to make either Scout or Guard or simple PER rolls, a full success means they hear and see glittering forms in the distance scuttling across the mosaiced floor towards them. A partial succes will hear scuttling. A critical success will also notice that the giant scorpions, since that is what they are, are clearly skirting a dark circular hole in the centre of the room.

Combat will commence, the scorpions have every intention of killing and eating the characters.

Scorpions (1 or 2 depending on your character's powers)

10-12feet long, 5-6 feet high.

CR +8 SPD +3 HP 38

Sting DR 6+poison on an unarmoured foe, CON roll or convulsions (-10 to all rolls) for 3 rounds.

2 x Pincer DR 3, but on a successful hit it adds +5 to the Sting attack

Tactics: Attacks on initiative with both pincers at one character. Then at initiative -5 it will try and sting that character. Tends to attack animals before humanoids.

Room 3: Laboratory

This circular room is simply decorated with curving serpentine patterns, but it is full of quite remarkable alchemical equipment! Even after all this time and in this heat, huge glass vats, pipes, containers and baths stand out in the deep red light of the walls. One can never know what was done here, but it is clear that the Drakken were the equal of any modern day Sindaran.

Allow an alchemist to rummage around. Nothing organic has survived, but you should allow a good 15 minutes of climbing around (these tables and chests are big) to discover sizeable quantities of inorganic chemicals, metals, ground powders and the like. Rather than detail them you should allow a bag of such stuff, with a value of some 200gl to be collected and either detailed later by an alchemist or sold by uninterested characters.

A Traps roll or a difficult PER roll at -10 should be made for the characters, and if so they should notice that there is a mismatch in the endlessly curling snake like patterns on the walls. On the north west wall is a three hole mechanism to open a secret door. Other than that the obvious exit is a door to the west.

Room 4: Antechamber

This area, whilst huge, is the smallest you've encountered so far. On the wall before you is a shocking sight. In a bas-relief a tall Drakken stands with a cup in one hand and a lightning bolt in the other. Before him, crawling on the floor are unmistakably human forms, naked with matted hair. But behind them, on either side of the Drakken, are other humanoid figures. These, however, are neither Drakken nor human, they bear signs of both! Half Drakken and half human they stand maybe 2-3 metres tall, wearing clothes unlike the Drakken and bearing weapons, artefacts and tools! Around the whole image curves runic Drakken script.

If a character has the ability to decode alien scripts (cryptomancer magic usually, but other magicians with the Reveal mode may have spells) then they may try and decode the script. It is incredibly complex and at -10. If they succeed then the alien concepts best appropriate to:

"The Ninth King Who Made the Labyrinth commanded the Despicable Flame and the Dress of Shadow to make allies of our Enemy."

Room 5: A Room With No Meaning

This room, decorated with endless Drakken scripts of varying depths, has a series of stone sculptures, rather like hummocks or smoothed boulders, strewn across it.

Drakken liked to sleep on shapes and stone native to their culture and body form. This is a rest room and reception for a Drakken leader, probably the leader of this complex. It is simply not possible that any character will guess this, but if anyone makes a critical success on some suitable skill at a -10 penalty, then make this as a suggestion!

Room 6: Komoda Lair

As you follow the winding corridor you think you hear a scuffling or panting ahead.

Not all of the Ruins are sealed from the outside, and along one of the tunnels that have been bored to a nearby cave complex, a group of Komodo Dragons have chosen to live. They hunt largely in the desert outside, but they appreciate the heat of the Ruins and bed down here. They fully intend to eat the characters.

Komodo Dragons (2 or 3 depending on your character's powers)

5-6 feet long, 3-4 feet high.

CR +7 SPD +3 (save for first attack) HP 13

Ambush Skill +8

Bite DR 1+poison on an unarmoured foe, CON roll or another DR 6 every round until a CON roll is made

Tactics: These are ambush predators that poison their prey with the vile bacteria in their bite. Make an Ambush skill roll for each Dragon before combat, minus the best PER in the party. If the Dragon succeed fully then it attacks first on the first round irrespective of initiative order, and the target's CR is ignored for defence.

The dragons will then keep attacking and trying to poison characters in turn. If one dies then the rest will scurry off.

Room 7: Collapsed Room

This collapsed room has a corridor leading down and round to the north. Above the corridor is Drakken script.

If a character has the ability to decode alien scripts (cryptomancer magic usually, but other magicians with the Reveal mode may have spells) then they may try and decode the script. It is incredibly complex and at -10. If they succeed then the alien concepts best appropriate to:

"The Tenth Red Emperess with a Mouth of Amber invites you to the Gown of Ash"

Room 8: Collapsed Antechamber

This collapsed antechamber has a shattered mosaic floor and a sealed door to the north east. By the eerie red light you can see that the door has a dragon with wings carved into it. There are complex series of carved knobs and buttons of great size at the left side of the door. Drakken script curls around the door.

If a character has the ability to decode alien scripts (cryptomancer magic usually, but other magicians with the Reveal mode may have spells) then they may try and decode the script. It is incredibly complex and at -10. If they succeed then the alien concepts best appropriate to:

"The Marquessa Talent with a Heart of Sapphire Who Is In the Necropolis of Venom Warns You"

This door allows access to the hatchery, and as such was protected, locked and trapped by the Drakken. If the characters examine the knobs and buttons by full spectrum light then they'll see that they are coloured red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The knobs and buttons should be pressed in the reverse order of the spectrum, failure to do so will trigger a long dormant Ward that will hold anyone in a 30feet radius near the door in a shell of a 20 PR Ward. This could be counterspelled using the Ward Mode (assume the original spell was cast at 10th level), or battered down physically over time.

Room 9: Dead Archaens

To your surprise the floor in this partially collapsed room has human like skeletons, dressed in familiar clothing, holding swords and wands and equipment you recognise. The fact that the collapse covers half or more of the skeletons suggests how they met their doom. So.. you are not the first to enter here.

If the characters search the bodies then they will find some rusted weapons that crumble to dust when touched, wands that blow away in the wind and armour that barely covers bones. Having said that, they will find a number of enchanted or magical items that equal the characters number. They will also find a small number of ancient gold coins, larger than a lumen and minted with ancient Archaen script and the heads of ancient wizards. Anyone who speaks Archaen will see coins minted in the names of such as Arkon, Cascal and even the feared Necromancer Drax of Torquaran. These coins are maybe 5gl in terms of their gold value but they are worth many hundreds each to the right collector, but the Drax coins may be problematic to sell, especially if a Xambrian hears of the sale.

Room 10: Shower

This room is plain with a hole in the centre of the floor and at the far end a spout formed in the shape of a draconic head. By the head is a simple lever.

This is a shower. Pull the lever, hot water pours out. Simple as that. Note that whilst the water is hot it will relieve anyone suffering from fatigue and remove any penalties.

Room 11: Collapsed Room

This room is cool. The coolness comes from the eastern wall. It is cold to the touch and quite pleasant.

A secret door lies where the cold is, leading to Room 12.

Room 12: The Fridge

This door to the this room is cold. On it is engraved Drakken script. By it is a simple knob that can be turned.

If a character has the ability to decode alien scripts (cryptomancer magic usually, but other magicians with the Reveal mode may have spells) then they may try and decode the script. It is incredibly complex and at -10. If they succeed then the alien concepts best appropriate to:

"The Third Dutchess That Burns the Acrobat Offers The Second Prince in the Enchantments"

You open the door and a wave of cold air greets you. Before you is an icy cold room, filled with vials and bottles and boxes. You feel refreshed.

This is a fridge and if the characters search then they can find some vial and bottles small enough for humans to hold and carry them. These are:

Potions

1. The glowing, viscous tonic that is cerulean with rose specks. It smells and tastes like chocolate.
2. The moving, chunky draught that is silver in color. It smells and tastes like coconut and red pepper.
3. The opalescent elixir that is purple in color. It smells and tastes like bread.
4. The smoking, glowing mixture that is white in color. It smells and tastes like black pepper.

5. The smoking, thick mixture that is sapphire with purple globules. It smells like strawberries and bread, but tastes like excrement and tea.
6. The swirling, oily liquid that is ebony in color. It smells and tastes like raspberries and peppermint.
7. The thick potion that is topaz in color. It smells and tastes like vanilla and blood.
8. The topaz substance. It smells like peach and bread, but tastes like apples.
9. The transparent, oily elixir that is purple in color. It smells like mead and tea, but tastes like cherries and celery.
10. The watery elixir that is jade with blue streaks. It smells like bile and pears, but tastes like peppermint and spit.

A kind GM will happily choose nice potions from the rulebook, a nasty one might not..

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Room 13: Snakes Alive

As you enter this partially collapsed room you hear a loud and persistent hissing.

The 3 Chasm Vipers in this room are blind but this does not stop their wish to kill these intruders. They will not follow any characters that flee, they prefer to eat rats but they can't escape from this room.

Chasm Vipers, page 133 of Talislanta 4th edition, or the various published menageries.

Room 14: A Dusty Dry Room

Nothing of interest.

Room 15: Hatcheries on North East of Map

Each of these oval rooms is full of mounds, each one with a concave indentation at the top. Each mound is about two metres high and there are 4 in each room. On the walls are large bas reliefs of Draconic faces and scripts.

If a character has the ability to decode alien scripts (cryptomancer magic usually, but other magicians with the Reveal mode may have spells) then they may try and decode the script. It is incredibly complex and at -10. If they succeed then the alien concepts best appropriate to:

"The Courageous Adventurer Who Watches Agony Overcomes The Foul Gigolo"



It is best to let players who like to mull such matters do so before letting them find a hatchery with a significant find.

After a while you come to a room where the meaning of the mounds is clear. In this room three of the mounds have eggs upon them, and the fourth has the smashed remains of an egg and the ossified skeletal remains of a reptilian creature that you guess to be an unborn or juvenile Drakken.

The whole eggs have calcified in the heat and are quite robust. They could easily be carried out of the Ruins one at a time by most characters. They could have great value for a Sindaran collector or similar studier of ancient times. They also could be broken open by an alchemist or thaumaturgist looking for dragon bones for potions or magic. They probably have a value of 1000gl to the right collector but sold 'on spec' to a trader might yield as little as 20gl each.

Room 15: Hatcheries on South West of Map

Each of these rooms is full of 3 stone shapes, of near human scale, they look for all the world like couches. Tables in the rooms have metal plates upon them, each covered by Drakken runic scripts. Bottles and vials lie broken and discarded. On the walls are shocking images of humanoid figures, half draconic, half mammalian. Your eyes are drawn to three that seem to repeat:

- *This vain female dragonling has droopy, slit-pupiled, red eyes. Instead of hair, she has bony plates on her head. She is short and has a voluptuous build. Her bony scales are tangerine-colored. Her face has an inhumanly reptilian look to it. She has horns on the side of her head. She has clawlike hands and human-like feet. She has tiny, insectile wings. She has a prehensile tail tipped with a stinger.*
- *This willfull female dragonling has almond-shaped brown eyes that are like two bronze coins. Instead of hair, she has bony plates on her head. She is tall and has a graceful build. Her scales are burgandy. She has webbed ears. She has clawlike hands and human-like feet. She has enormous wings. She has a stubby tail.*
- *This tense female dragonling has slanted, slit-pupiled, purple eyes. Her silky, straight, red hair is neck-length and is worn in an uncomplicated style. She is very short and has a lean build. Her fine scales are lavender. Her face is more reptilian than human. She has cruel horns on the side of her head. She has bony plates on the side of her head that function as ears. She has a series of quills running down her back. She has clawlike hands. She has large, elegant wings. She has a long tail that bears bony spikes.*

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These are the hatcheries where Drakken morphologists cross bred human and draconic forms to create hybrids. The metal plates are far too complex to decode in a short while but a Cryptomancer may be able to slowly decode them over a period of months or years and gain some tiny glimmer of the process and/or some notable ancient spells.



The plates have some value to a non discerning collector or a Sindaran specialist, say 30gl each.

Room 16: Rubble filled room.

Nothing of interest.

Room 17: Bore hole.

The room you stand in has substantially collapsed and there is a hole in the ceiling and in the floor. A breeze blows from the floor hole up into the top hole. The walls and floor are rubbed smooth like a pebble left in a stream. Scuffed marks and tracks on the floor suggest that something uses the bottom hole as an entrance and exit.

A Geography roll, or a suitable other skill, will suggest that at some point this room had a stream break through and flow through it. A Scout or similar skill roll will confirm that Komodo Dragons (big lizards) use this to enter and leave the ruins.

Room 18: Rubble filled room.

Nothing of interest.

Level Two

This will be a Raknid lair on the lower level. I may write it or someone else might!