

Gregorius21778:

Ssssnake-Men!



Labyrinth Lord
Compatible Product

Version 2.0; by Kai Pütz
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Gregorius21778: Ssssnake-Men! is a supplement for OSR fantasy RPG and Laybrinth Lord(tm) compatible. It features a LL-compatible stat blocks and articles about the possible culture, religion and civilization of Snake-Men, to you as the GM with a foundation to turn your Snake-Men into more than just another monster to slay but a living, breathing part of your game world. A table with 50 possible details of their appearance is included as well as ten minor magical items and six poisons/ potions/ lotions.

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Snake-Men

(LL compatible stats)

No. Enc.:	1d6 (3d10)
Alignment:	Neutral/Chaotic
Movement:	120' (40')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	4 (-3)
Attacks:	1 or 2 (bite or weapon)
Damage:	As weapon or Class 2 Poison
Save:	F:3 (F:6 vs. Poison)
Moral:	9
Hoard Class:	VII

Special: While fighting with a pair of light or quick weapons not doing more than 1d6 damage, a Snake-Men may attack twice per round. If fighting unarmed, a Snake-Men may attack with its venomous bite after a successful grapple attack. Snake-Men may be wizards or clerics (-1 HD) and thereby able to use spells (up to the GM).



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The Snake-Men are a race of humanoid reptiles with the upper body of a man and the lower body, skin and head of a serpent. Instead of four fingers, they have three and a thumb. Some of them resemble humans a little closer than others, with an almost human head and/or face, while others have bodily features that are more reminiscent of a dragon. They are an ancient race whose civilization had reached its peak before the dawn of men. Now, their overall numbers has dwindled and there are no great cities of them to be found anywhere nor are there large communities of them in other cities. They keep to themselves, which is met by the other races. Snake-Men are known to be condescending at best and merciless at worst in regard to others. They are meat-eaters, and are not averse to that of other intelligent humanoids.

Other races find it hard to tell male and female Snake-Men apart from another. As they are not mammals, the females have no breasts, and as their primary sexual organs rest inside their bodies, there simply is no easily notable difference in physique that could tell a male apart from a female. As Snake-Men usually do not wear much clothing these offer no indicator either, unless symbols of faith identify one as a priest, for priests are next to always female.

While Snake-Men can wield any weapon a human could wield, they favor lighter, bladed weapons and short spears that are easy to carry, as their quickest way of locomotion includes going to ground, literally. Furthermore, their high agility and quick reflexes lends itself to the use of quick and agile weapons, and they traditionally fight with a slightly curved short sword or long knives, often in pairs. When it comes to ranged weapons, the short bow and small throwing blades are their weapon of choice, as well as slings. Their alchemists are known to throw vials of explosive elixirs that either create smoke, blinding light or fire upon impact. Some even release a poisonous gas, Snake-Men are well known for their use of blade poisons. Armor is something that is rarely found with them, as they lose a lot of their agility when encumbered and have problems to move quickly if laden. Helmets, bucklers or metal arm guards are common, but otherwise worries rely on their speed and reflexes.



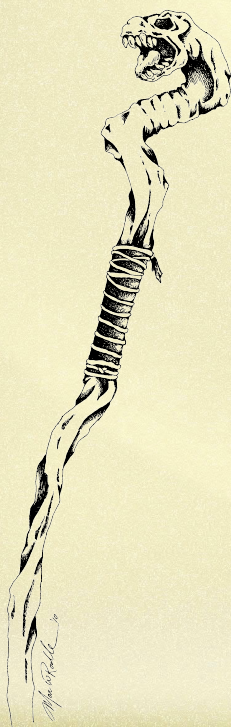
Civilization and Culture: while there is evidence that the Snake-Men once lived in large cities, they now either dwell in village sized communities or live in small roving packs that claim a larger territories. Those territories are often located around some ruin, temple or relic of their former civilization while their largest settlements have been founded on the ruins of old cities or around a temple where a priestess or oracle of their kind resides. Small settlements may be found near the lairs of dragons or monsters that resemble great serpents, whom many Snake-Men worship as divine creatures. The social live of Snake-Men centers on a family group called a tribe or clan, but these groups are only loosely based on genealogy. A Snake-Men that was born and raised in a given territory and is not considered an enemy due to his or her actions is considered a “sibling”, unless he or she already belongs to a different tribe or clan. Only large communities form clans along actual blood ties.

All Snake-Men start their life as an egg. Some of them are simply left in the wild and buried shallowly in lose ground while others are kept in nests, or even nest-shrines. The latter are raised by their clan after they hedged, often by communal “hatch mothers” who later have a role as advisors for all they hatched, and thereby are figures of considerable influence. The former are left to grow up on their own till they meet grown-up Snake-Men, who then try to bring the newly found sibling into their society. This works surprisingly well, even if the “wild ones” strive to take a leading position in society quickly. They often fail to do so after some quarrelsome weeks, but the society as a whole bears such “initiates”, as they consider this to be they way of things and as an “coming of age”. After a couple of month, during which the new initiate seeks its place, it quickly integrates into the community. As a rule of thumb, a Snake-Men that was breed in the wield will be more likely to be headstrong and fierce while one that was raised by the community often excels in wisdom and cunning. Most females do not stick to one method of treating their eggs but switch between the up-bringing in the community and the placement in the wild at least once in their life (if possible).

The culture of the Snake-Men values wisdom, cunning and martial prowess, in that order. Skilled hunters and fighters are respected, healers and sages are revered and those who rule a community usually are priestesses or wizards. Magic is not feared but adored and respected as “the way of old”, and different Snake-Men tribes have been found in an

alliance with powerful wizards not of their own kind. The Snake-Men know most of the crafts that mankind knows, but writing. Their history is both oral and based on wall paintings and bas-reliefs, which capture important deeds and happenings in pictures. Knowledge of each craft is kept within a given tribe or clan. As a consequence, overall skill seems to be in decline in all fields but one: alchemy. Snake-Men who study this art have a rich collection of wisdom to revert to, and sometimes others try to strike a bargain with them to gain insight into these well kept secrets.

As their hearing is bad compared to those of other races, and with their lack of lips, Snake-Men culture is not one of music and song but one of scent and dance. Their alchemists generate a multitude of scented oils, and the lairs or temples of them are often laden with a heady mix of scents. Unlike other cultures, dancing is not a joyful past-time among Snake-Men but always either a formal or ritualistic affair, or an act of expression or meditation. Snake-Men dance together to mourn their dead and have traditional dances that are meant to retell tales and even as way of confrontation (so these tend to have elements of wrestling as well, but are more a test of strength and endurance). The only way of dancing that snake-folk have in common with other people is dancing as a prelude to mating... but Snake-Men couples usually do not waste much time after the dance, and one flows over into the other.



Faith & Religion: all Snake-Men venerate their ancestors, both as individuals as well as “the ancients”, which commonly refers to those Snake-Men who lived during the peak of their civilization. Aside from this, there are three different main deities. Some worship them as pantheon, others worship only one of them and consider the others to be myth or even “false ways”:

Most Snake-Men pray to “**the Mother-Goddess**”, that is idolized as a giant snake (not as Snake-Men). It is a goddess of wisdom, healing, the hunt and fertility. Those who adhere to this faith tend to create guarded nests for their eggs (instead of simply spreading them or burying them) and often found communal nests inside of temples or shrines. Followers of this faith also try to regain the wisdom of “the ancients” and to re-erect their civilization on their ruins. It would be a dangerous error to assume that the Mother-Goddess is a benevolent faith. While it is benevolent in snake-men society, it includes a claim of superiority (but not dominance) of the Snake-Men in regard to all other races.

Others venerate “**Mother Earth**” or “**the Womb of Life**” in a way that is very similar to the faith of druids, but with fire as a strong element of worship. Fire is seen as “the might of life and creation” and a symbol of both magic and the soul. Holy places tend to be underground, as according to the faith life came up from below. Adherents next to always to bury their eggs for hatching.

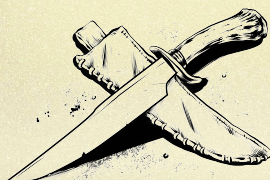
The third great faith of the Snake-Men is that of “**the Dragonsnake**”. It is similar to that of the Mother-Goddess, but its idols have more in common with dragons and at its core set of beliefs is hostile towards other races: according to this religion the Snake-Men were created by the Dragonsnake in response to the races other gods created, races that threatened to destroy the world if they were not culled. There is one minor schism of dogma: one group believes that “the ancients” were successful in the culling and thereby scattered and ended their own civilization before they would become what they were meant to fight, while others claim that “the ancients” were beaten and now, the Snake-Men still re-group to take up the fight. The former contemplate if they should take up arms against the other races once more, and against which one, while the others consider themselves to be in a state of war even so they have no mighty army to field.... yet.

Snake-Men and other races: even those Snake-Men who do not adhere to the faith of the Dragonsnake consider rat-people and all insect-races to be natural enemies that are to be snuffed, and giant monsters of those type are readily hunted by them. All of the major religions of the Snake-Men have legends and tales of mortal rivalries and feuds with these races since the dawn of time. They give Elves more respect than any other race, to the point of treating them like equals, while Dwarfs are given a grudging respect and sometimes even the honor of "acceptance". All other races are seen as "lesser" to some degree, and Snake-Men have no qualms about hunting and eating them if an opportunity arises. This is especially true in regard to humans, who all but those who venerate the Mother-Goddess see only as one step above the rat-kin (those who follow the Mother-Goddess still see them as inferior, but not as a species to be especially abhorred). This attitude led to open hostility more than once, and Snake-Men thereby often dwell in isolated places far from mankind, and other intelligent humanoids often give Snake-Men a wide berth.

Notable Customs and Habits

Skin Sacrifice: after shedding their skin, Snake-Men leave them as an offering at a holy site or temple on the next suiting occasion. This ritual is meant both as veneration as well as "thanks giving" for the gift of life. The skins of game animals are sacrificed to "Mother Earth" by burning, to thank for a successful hunt or at the end of summer (but never to ask for success... Mother Earth is venerated, but her children do not beg). The sacrifice of the skin of slain enemies is not uncommon, as is taking scalps from enemies as personal trophies. The skins of venerated Snake-Men are taken after death and worn on occasions where their power or guidance is sought. As every use of a dried skin produces wear and includes the risk of tearing, this is never done lightly.

Due to these customs, most Snake-Men are familiar with the techniques of flaying and often carry a skinning knife with them.



White Sand: the two most common ways of fortune telling among Snake-Men involve white (or bright) sand which is carried in small pouches. The first method involves a small number of different stones that are mixed into the sand and later poured onto a piece of tanned leather with it, or into a flat metal plate. The position of the stones is interpreted to receive answers. The other method works the same way but instead of stones being mixed into the sand, a tiny snake is set upon it, and the tracks it leaves while moving away are interpreted.

Preparation of Meals: snake-Men are unable to chew and thereby swallow pieces of food whole. The common flatware is a small knife with a heavy blade for chopping and a slight inward curve so that it can be used to "spoon up" pieces of a meat that are either thrown up into the air and "snatched" or directly dropped into the maw. Food is spiced, but not cooked unless this is necessary for preservation or to make sure the meat is wholesome.

Snake-Men that live together rarely eat together, at least not all of them at once. After a meal, they tend to be groggy and vulnerable. They eat in "shifts" instead. This is especially true for roving groups of Snake-Men, but is a tradition that is sometimes abandoned in larger settlements (where a militia or guard exists that defends the community as a whole).



#	Looks	#	Looks
1 - 2	(Rather) Large	51 - 52	Long snout
3 - 4	(Rather) Small/Short	53 - 54	Long tail
5 - 6	1d3 Armlet/s*	55 - 56	Metal capped fangs
7 - 8	1d3 Body belts*	57 - 58	Metal capped tail tip
9 - 10	Black Skin	59 - 60	Multiple rings on the left hand
11 - 12	Almost human face	61 - 62	Muscular body
13 - 14	Almost triangular head	63 - 64	Ornamental chain vest
15 - 16	Bright „belly“ color	65 - 66	Piercings
17 - 18	Bright body color*	67 - 68	Prominent fangs
19 - 20	Bright colored mouth	69 - 70	Round ornamental chest plate
21 - 22	Bright eye color	71 - 72	Short fingers
23 - 24	Bright head color	73 - 74	Slim head
25 - 26	Bright color pattern*	75 - 76	Slim/lanky upper body
27 - 28	Broad braceletts*	77 - 78	Small head
29 - 30	Broad necklace	79 - 80	Small horns on the shoulders
31 - 32	Cleft in the snout	81 - 82	Small ridge along the back
33 - 34	Cobra hood	83 - 84	Stout upper body
35 - 36	Convex/concave "belly"	85 - 86	Tail rattle
37 - 38	Flat head	87 - 88	Thick lower body
39 - 40	Flicks tongue constantly	89 - 90	Thick, keeled scales
41 - 42	Flat, diamond shaped tail tip	91 - 92	Three (instead of four) fingers
43 - 44	Lank shoulders	93 - 94	Torn (upper) skin
45 - 46	Large maw	95 - 96	Torc around the neck
47 - 48	Little horns near the eyes	97 - 98	Very dark/light skin color
49 - 50	Long "neck"	99 - 100	Very long tongue

#	Regular Body Color
1-3	Brown
4-6	Grey
7-0	Green

#	Bright Colors
1-2	Yellow
3-4	Purple
5-6	Blue
7-8	White
9-0	Red

#	Color pattern
1-2	Wide stripes along the head
3-4	„Diamonds“ over the back
5-6	„Bands“ across the body
7-8	„Stripes“ along the back
9-0	„Stripes“ across the back

#	Jewelry
1-2	Leather
3-4	Gold
5-6	Copper
7-8	Bronze
9-0	Snake skin

Notable Magic Items

Amulet of Holding Insects: an amulet made of an amber with an insect encased in it. By grabbing the amber firmly, the wearer is able to cast the *Hold Monster* Spell as a 3rd level wizard. It can only be used against insect and arachnid monsters.

Belt of Warmth: a belt made of copper rings with a buckle that contains a red or orange semiprecious stone. A Belt of Warmth negates all effects of cold weather for the wearer, even in the dead of winter. In addition, the damage of all cold based attacks is reduced by two points (up to zero).

Healing Stone: a small green precious stone, usually jade, in the size and form of a small egg. If swallowed, the natural healing of a character is doubled for up to three days. Snake-Men simply regurgitate a Healing Stone afterwards, while most other races will have the stone leave them “naturally” after 1d3 days (which is rather painful). A Healing Stone can only be used once between two full moons.

Belt of Strength: a belt made of iron rings with a buckle that contains a yellow or brown semiprecious stone. Sometimes, those belts are fashioned from the skins of constrictor snakes instead. A character that wears a Belt of Strength may re-roll any Strength-based tests that are a direct contest with another character or monster. The second result is binding.

Amulet of Infravision: An amulet made of copper in the likeness of a snake’s head, with ruby splinter inlays for eyes. The infravision of a character wearing this amulet is increased by 20 feet, and those with no infravision gain it (20 feet). The eyes of the character will gain a faint red glow while wearing the amulet.

Snake Stick: a small, thin wooden staff, between one and two feet wide and carved into the likeness of a snake. If the stick is thrown to the ground while the Snake-Men word for “serpent” is called out (a distinctive hissing sound) it will turn into a snake as per the *Sticks to Snakes* spell (if cast by a 3rd level cleric).

Bracelet of Potent Venom: a delicate bracelet in the form of a viper, made of gold or copper. All damaging poisons applied or delivered by a character wearing this Bracelet will do +1 damage.

Skin of the Ancestor: the dried and preserved skin of a Snake-Men, prepared by a 5th level Snake-Men cleric. Another Snake-Man wearing the skin as a cape may once per day use the ancestors Wisdom stat or any of its saving throws for a corresponding roll instead of the own.

Gift of the Mother: an amulet made of jade, in the likeness of a snake’s head, with emerald or sapphire splinter inlays for eyes. A Snake-Man wearing this amulet may cast the *Charm Person* OR *Charm Monster* spell once per day (as a 3rd level wizard). It cannot be used against rodents or insects of any type.

Bracelets of the Dancer: a pair of silver bracelets in the likeness of a slim, winding snake. A character may once per day use the amulet to cast a *Hold Person* spell (like a 4th level wizard) by dancing in the sight of the intended target/s.

Potions & Lotions

An applied Blade Poison will stay potent for up to one day, but after each battle that the poisoned weapon was used in the GM rolls a d6. On a result of 5 or 6 there is still enough poison left, otherwise the effect is lost. A weapon can only have one blade poison applied to it.

Fearful Heart (Blade Poison): after receiving damage from the poisoned weapon for the first time, the victim must *Save vs. Poison*. On a failure the victim will suffer from high blood pressure and tachycardia resulting in a (-2) penalty on all tests and damage rolls for 1d6 turns. If the character rests for a turn the penalty will be reduced to (-1) instead.

Kiss of Weakness (Blade Poison): after receiving damage from the poisoned weapon for the first time, the victim must *Save vs. Poison*. On a failure, the victim will suffer from muscle weakness and counts as stunned for 1d3 combat rounds. In that case, another *Save* needs to be passed, or the victim will count as paralyzed for 1d6 combat rounds.

Blood of the Dragonsnake (Elixir): The elixir grants warmth (equal to warm clothes), +1 damage for six turns and restores 1d6 hit points... to a Snake-Men or reptile creatures. Others will gain the same benefits, but need to Save vs Poison or will lose 1d6 hit points.

Bloodfire (Blade Poison): after receiving damage from the poisoned weapon for the first time, the victim must Save vs. Poison. On a failure, the victim will feel weak, suffer from sudden sweat and high blood pressure. 1d3 combat round later, the character will begin to sweat blood and lose 1d3 hit points, one point per round.

Poisonspit (Elixir): for the next 1d6 turns, a Snake-Man who made use of this elixir will be able to spit its poison as a regular attack at up to 10 feet range. If a non-reptile drinks the elixir, it counts as a Class I poison.

Hydrablood (Lotion): Hydrablood is a thick, red lotion that is to be rubbed onto wounds. If it is applied within a turn, up to 2d6 hit points are restored as the skin grows back and the wound beneath it begins to heal. But if the character is not a Snake-Men or reptile, she is in for a bad surprise: the skin regrows as reptile skin, and not only at the location of the wound. The Charisma of the character is reduced by the same amount as there are hit points healed. This Charisma damage heals as it would be hit point damage (and other healing potions or spells can be used speed up the process).

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