

Fiat Lingua

Title: Section VII: Sentence Structure and Speech Patterns

Author: Madeline Palmer

MS Date: 01-18-2013

FL Date: 03-01-2013

FL Number: FL-000012-00

Citation: Palmer, Madeline. 2013. Section VII: Sentence Structure and Speech Patterns. In *Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred: A Grammar and Lexicon of the Northern Latitudinal Dialect of the Dragon Tongue*. FL-000012-00, *Fiat Lingua*, <<http://fiatlingua.org>>. Web. 01 Mar. 2013.

Copyright: © 2013 Madeline Palmer. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

Table of Contents

For

Section VII

<u>Section VII: Sentence Structure and Speech Patterns</u>	I
7.1. Overview.....	I
7.2. Word Order.....	I
7.3. Evidential Sentence Enclitics.....	4
7.3.1. Evidential Sentence Enclitics, Aspect Markers and Adverbs.....	8
7.4. Conjunctive, Disjunctive, and Conditional Words between Sentences.....	11
7.5. Conjunctive and Disjunctive Words within a Clause or Sentence.....	12
7.6. Clauses.....	14
7.6.1. Quotations and Reporting Speech.....	17
7.7. Question Words.....	17
§7.8. Speech Patterns, Euphemisms and Figures of Speech	18
§7.8.1. Directions and Navigation.....	22
§7.8.2. Lunar and Seasonal Names.....	25
§7.8.3. Numerals.....	28
§7.8.4. Constellations and Skywatching.....	29
§7.8.5. Borrowed Words.....	38
§7.8.6. Euphemisms, Figures of Speech, Curses and Swearwords.....	39
§7.10. <i>Xániwésin</i> Poetry and Poetical Forms.....	42
§7.11. Non-Verbal Communication.....	47

Sentence Structure and Speech Patterns

7.1. Overview

Until now the focus of this paper has been essentially how to create *words*, nouns, adjectives, verbs and so forth and the various methods in which they are generated and what subtleties in meaning can be created by the morphological combinations of Srínawésin’s infixes and roots. In section VI **Verb Modifiers**, the beginnings of how various words are combined in order to create phrases such as adverbial, adjectival and possessive forms were introduced but until now the way full draconic *sentences* are actually constructed has not been treated. Although examples of real draconic utterances have been used to illustrate points, this section will cover the ways complete sentences are generated, how clauses and dependent clauses are generated and inserted into larger sentences and how actual utterances are used by the Kindred with conjunctive words, disjunctive words and the like.

Although it has been mentioned before that a single word in Srínawésin can, and often are, used as an entire sentence by dragons, a language made up in this way would be incapable of true and complex expressions necessary for any intelligent speaker. Although the Kindred prefer to keep their words short and to the point (which is why there are so many layers of important meaning attached to the various affixes placed on a single word), especially in the presence of those they do not trust, they relish the use of their language and enjoy creating complex and layered sentences as much as any human or other race does (although they prefer to do it in a different way and with different intentions). While humans seem to enjoy saying five words when two will do—or as Tear of the Sun once said “*qxnéhiréshá*¹ will say five words when *none* will do”—a Sihá prefers to indicate meaning in slightly different ways. It is considered a mark of verbal skill to say what one means with as *few* as possible words, creating words which are layered with various grammatical and semantic meanings which are as rich and meaningful as long sentences. Despite this tendency, the Kindred often do make use of sentences just as complex as any of the Younger Races and the methods which they use to build these sentences will be treated in this section.

7.2. Word Order

Word order is one of those fancy linguistic terms which is really not all that fancy at all because it means exactly what it says: it is the means in which a language orders its words within a sentence. Many languages have different ways of arranging words within an utterance, some are extremely strict in their rules on the subject, and others pay virtually no attention to it whatsoever. The subject of word order is often vitally important to meaning, a speaker will either not make sense or say the absolutely wrong thing if he or she ignores these types of rules.

For example, in a selection of sentences in human languages:

<i>Fégaid in macc in cú</i>	Old Irish
<i>Otokonoko wa inu o mimasu</i>	Japanese
<i>Der Junge sieht den Hund</i>	German

All of these sentences mean “The boy sees the dog.” However the order in which they arrange the parts of speech (verbs, nouns and subjects, objects and verbs) vary greatly. In Old Irish:

<i>Fégaid</i>	<i>in macc</i>	<i>in cú</i>
Sees	the boy	the dog
(Verb)	(Subject)	(Object)

¹ Note that Tear of the Sun refers to humans as *inedible creatures* so either she was simply attempting to be extra insulting or she just didn’t like the way humans tasted.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Like all Celtic languages, Old Irish is a *verb initial* language, the verb *fégaid* ‘he sees,’ coming at the beginning of the sentence with the subject and object coming afterwards. In this sentence *in mac* ‘the boy’ is the subject of the verb while *in cú* ‘the dog’ is the object of the verb. The subject and the object are differentiated by the use of what is called *mutation* in Celtic languages, or the altering of the pronunciation of the initial sound of a word to indicate if it is genitive, nominative, accusative or prepositional (in this case [*in cú*] would be pronounced /in gu:/ to indicate that it is the object of the verb). Old Irish can be classified as placing the verb first, the subject second and the object of the sentence last, commonly notated as a VSO (Verb-Subject-Object) language. However, in Japanese:

<i>Otokonoko wa</i>	<i>inu o</i>	<i>mimasu</i>
Boy	the dog	sees
(Subject)	(Object)	(Verb)

In this case Japanese is a *verb final* language as *otokonoko wa* ‘the boy’ is the subject of the sentence while *inu ga* ‘dog’ is the object and the verb *mimasu* ‘to see’ comes finally. Thus Japanese is a SOV language. In German:

<i>Der Junge</i>	<i>sieht</i>	<i>den Hund</i>
The boy	sees	the dog
(Subject)	(Verb)	(Object)

German and English are related to one another and both are *verb medial* languages, i.e. the verb *sieht* ‘see’ comes in between the subject, *der Junge* ‘the boy,’ and the object *den Hund* ‘the dog’ making them SVO languages. Sentences are usually not as short as those above but the rules for these languages specify the order in which the subject, object and verbs come within a sentence, and with few exceptions to this rule (*italics* = Subject, **bold** = Verb, underlined = Object):

I **threw** the rock for my dog, Vander
I **couldn't see** whether he caught it or not
But my sister **said** that he caught it in mid-air

English follows this example because it is vital to the meaning of the sentence, change the order of the words and a different meaning ensues:

The boy **sees** the dog
The dog **sees** the boy

These two English sentence mean two very different things because the subjects and objects have been switched, rendering totally different meanings with this simple action. Although most languages have other ways of indicating which words are the subjects, objects and so on of their sentences, many have rather strict rules in the order in which they are placed into a sentence. Many other languages have no real word order because they rely on other factors such as suffixes or prefixes, inflection (such as Latin), particles (Japanese)² and other morphological indicators to specify the parts of speech of a sentence. Generally speaking a language either indicates these meanings due to the *order in which the words come in a sentence* or there is no specific order words must come in but meaning is shown with *morphological indicators such as suffixes and so forth*.

² Although Japanese relies on word order to some extent as well.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

As you can assume from the previous sections of this paper the Dragon Tongue prefers to use *morphological* indicators (affixes) for virtually everything and therefore it could be assumed that the word order of Srínawésin is extremely fluid and comes with no real order. This is both true and not true. The word order of Srínawésin can in fact be of any order whatsoever with almost no restrictions in how words are placed in relation to one another and the verb as meaning is carried almost exclusively with morphology rather than syntactic order. *However*, there is a strong tendency in all of the sentences recorded by Davis towards a certain type of word order which I assume is “normal” and without emphasis being placed on any one word. I would call these *tendencies* rather than definite rules but they seem to be followed both by Davis and his draconic subjects fairly regularly. Without the recourse of actually speaking to a native speaker of Srínawésin, and without further information I cannot be sure of calling these patterns anything other than *tendencies*.

The typical order of draconic sentences in Davis’ notes is VOS or Verb-Object-Subject such as in the closest draconic translation to the example sentences above:

<i>Tsínšáwáx</i>	<i>innexíyex</i>	<i>iqxnéhiqxéyék</i>	<i>ni</i>
Sees	the dog	the human-youngling	(definitely)
(Verb)	(Object)	(Subject)	(Evidential Enclitic)

This word order is fairly common amongst human languages although as always with the Dragon Tongue this is a simplification of how the language really works. The true-verb is *tsínšáwáx*, however the object infix *-ín-* as well as the subject suffix *-áx* must agree with the corresponding object and subject. This methodology is true in many languages of the Younger Races but Srínawésin possesses the additional hurdle in that although the sentence above *is grammatical* it would *not* be the preferred way of actually speaking. The reason is that the language *prefers* object infixation into the verb unless the object is complex (such as an adjectival phrase, possessive phrase or so forth) or unless there is a reason to emphasize the object. Thus, the preferred draconic sentence would be:

<i>Tsixíyesháwáx</i>	<i>iqxnéhiqxéyék</i>	<i>ni</i>
Dog-seeing	the human-youngling	(definitely)
(Object+Verb)	(Subject)	(Evidential Enclitic)

So, more properly Srínawésin should be categorized as a language with a tendency towards a word order of:

(O+V)S

However, as I noted above, this is a tendency only and a speaker may organize the sentence in any way he or she sees fit in order to emphasize particular aspects of the sentence. The initial words are typically the ones which are emphasized although there are additional ways a speaker may indicate emphasis if they choose to. Thus, a speaker could easily say any of the following and make complete sense:

Iqxnéhiqxéyék tsixíyesháwáx ni
Innexíyex tsínšáwáx iqxnéhiqxéyék ni
Iqxnéhiqxéyék innexíyex tsínšáwáx ni
Innexíyex iqxnéhiqxéyék tsínšáwáx ni

Although all of these sentences are grammatical, they do *not mean the exact same thing* but emphasize the actors and actions in the sentence slightly differently. Approximate translations would be:

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

It is the boy who sees the dog (as opposed to Bloody Face)

It is the dog which is seen by the boy (as opposed to that other dog over there)

It is the boy and the dog (the boy looking at the dog but the action of looking de-emphasized)

It is the dog which the boy is looking at (action de-emphasized but the dog as opposed to the boy emphasized.)

Srínawésin is capable of all the subtleties of human speech in emphasizing certain actions and actors over others merely by arranging them in a particular way as opposed to another. However, words cannot appear in *any order whatsoever*, so although there is fluidity in order there are three main exceptions to this rule. 1) as noted in the sections above, the various verbal modifiers such as adverbs, adjectives and possessive forms must be in particular relations to the words they modify in order to make sense. The rules differ slightly in each case on how exactly the modifiers and modified must relate to one another, but they *must* be in a proper syntactic relation. 2) clauses must always occur within the particles *sa* and the proper object/subject/locatives etc. must be attached to the *sa* particles (this will be treated in **7.6. Clauses** below) and finally 3) clauses (and sentences) must *always* end with the proper evidential sentence enclitic, which serves as a spoken end to a thought (this will be dealt with in **7.3. Evidential Sentence Enclitics** below).

All of these exceptions are applied without fail to all of Davis' draconic sentences, both those which he speaks himself as well as those of his sources so I consider these to be absolute rules in the word order of Srínawésin. In all of the examples given in the previous sections I have retained the tendency towards (O+V)S (or VOS for simplicities' sake) but from now on it is important to remember within certain contexts fluidity of order is the norm rather than strict word order as we are used to in English.

7.3. Evidential Sentence Enclitics

Srínawésin possesses an interesting array of *evidential enclitics* which always occur at the end of an utterance, clause or sentence to express the *degree in which the speaker has confidence in what he or she is saying* as well as positive and negative meanings as well as tense and other semantic determinatives. Although this is hardly a unique feature of the Dragon Tongue (I believe that Turkish possesses similar distinctions) to my knowledge the Kindred rely on these enclitics to a degree unknown in other languages of the Younger Races. The reason for this is that—as with everything else in the draconic mindset—these enclitics appear to possess essentially verbal qualities and serve as a sort of *sentential verb* which modifies the entire sentence according to various rules and conditions. These enclitics carry a variety of meanings which are vital to expression and *must always occur* at the end of an utterance, it is important to note that the Dragon Tongue has *no other way to express these various meanings, such as negative statements, questions, requests, commands and so forth without these enclitics*. To my knowledge no other language of the Younger Races relies on enclitics to such a degree as the language of the Shúna and understanding of their use is vital.

For instance:

Tsiserawéshá ríhawúth shixánrawéshá ni

The maggots **are** crawling through the carrion

The enclitic *ni* indicates that the sentence is a *positive one*, i.e. one that means exactly what it is saying, and it indicates that the speaker has direct knowledge of the sentence and has seen it for himself or herself. However if a different enclitic is used:

Tsiserawéshá ríhawúth shixánrawéshá qsi

The maggots **are not** crawling through the carrion

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

The enclitic *qsi* alters the statement into a *negative one*, as opposed to the *positive* statement enclitic *ni*. *Qsi* also indicates that the speaker has definite knowledge of the event not transpiring i.e. saw that it did not actually happen. Interrogative statements can be formed by the use of a specialized “question particle” which turns any statement to which it is attached into a question:

Tsiserawéshá ríhawúth shexánrawéshá xi?
Are the maggots crawling through the carrion?

It is interesting to note the follow example however:

Tsaserawéshá ráhawúth shaxánrawéshá na
The maggots **were** crawling through the carrion

This sentence has been placed into the *Past Tense* and just as all the various affixes are inflected for tense *the enclitic is also inflected for tense*, which is why both Davis and I consider these enclitics to carry a verbal meaning to them. Often enclitics are reduced or contracted in form, especially the three commonly occurring ones *ni/na/nu*, *qsi/qsá/qsu* and *xi/xa/xu*. In this paper I follow Davis’ rather haphazard methodology and show these contracted forms as ‘n, ‘qs and ‘x respectively. The lack of tense inflection on these contracted forms of enclitics does not really matter as the rest of the sentence is inflected for tense. The contracted form of the above example (in positive, negative and interrogative forms) would therefore be:

<i>Tsiserawéshá ríhawúth shixánrawéshá’n</i>	The maggots are crawling through the carrion
<i>Tsiserawéshá ríhawúth shixánrawéshá’qs</i>	The maggots are not crawling through the carrion
<i>Tsiserawéshá ríhawúth shixánrawéshá’x?</i>	Are the maggots crawling through the carrion?

The proper use of these enclitics is vital for speech and being understood, the wrong enclitic can vastly change meaning so careful attention must be paid to these simple words. The various enclitics and their usages are given below inflected in the three tenses in the normal format (Non-Past, Past and Cyclical tenses).

<i>ni/na/nu</i>	This <i>positive</i> enclitic indicates the speaker has actually seen, heard, smelled etc. the event themselves and are certain that it transpired as they are speaking. As noted it is often contracted to -’n in all the tenses.
<i>nihú!/nahú!/nuhú!</i>	This <i>emphatic</i> enclitic is used much like a spoken exclamation mark, emphasizing the statement in its certainty. Sometimes an alternate form of <i>nin!/nan!/nun!</i> appears in casual speech.
<i>nin!/nan!/nun!</i>	The casual or slang form of <i>nihú!/nahú!/nuhú!</i> The process of forming these slang terms are detailed below.
<i>qsi/qsá/qsu</i>	This enclitic is the reverse if <i>ni</i> , in other words it <i>negativizes</i> the statement it attached to and implies the speaker has seen, heard, smelled the event <i>not</i> happening with certainty. This form is often contracted to -’qs in all tenses.
<i>qsihú!/qsahú!/qsuhú!</i>	This is a <i>negative emphatic enclitic</i> and is used much like <i>nin!</i> except it negativizes the statement with emphasis.
<i>qsigs!/qsags!/qsuqs!</i>	Slang or casual form of <i>qsihú!/qsahú!/qsuhú!</i>
<i>xi?/xa?/xu?</i>	This enclitic transforms the statement into a <i>question</i> and functions much like a spoken question mark. This enclitic often occurs contracted into -’x.
<i>xihú?/xahú?/xuhú?</i>	This is the <i>emphatic</i> form of <i>xi?</i> asking a question in a highly emphatic way.
<i>xix?/xax?/xux?</i>	The casual form of <i>xihú?/xahú?/xuhú?</i>

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

<i>wíx/wáx/(wúx)</i> ³	This form indicates the speaker <i>believes the statement to be true but has no certain knowledge of it</i> and is often used to indicate a “future tense” meaning. This translates approximately into <i>possibly</i> or <i>probably</i> in English.
<i>híla/hála/húla</i>	This is a <i>hearsay</i> particle, indicating that the speaker has <i>heard or been told of the event happening but has not seen it themselves</i> . This form’s contracted form is anomalous as the voicing of the inflected vowel bleeds over into the non-voiced final vowel to render the contracted form –’lá in all tenses.
qser!	This interesting word is <i>not inflected for tense</i> and can be translated approximately into the English word <i>obviously</i> but it implies the speaker believes the listener is a fool for needing this information and carries a highly insulting tone. Davis’ notes translate <i>qser</i> as: “A spoken combination of rolling the eyes, scoffing, sneering and turning away in utter disgust while muttering something about the listener’s mother.” The use of this enclitic can start a fight almost instantly.
hi!	This enclitic is much like <i>qser</i> in that it does not carry inflection for tense and is used to transform a statement into a <i>command</i> much like saying ‘ <i>do it!</i> ’ in English. This enclitic is usually used on younglings and hatchlings and implies the speaker has some sort of command over the listener. To use it against an adult is highly insulting and can also start a fight. To make a request the <i>Optative Enclitic</i> treated below would be used.
<i>ísyá/ásyá/úsyá</i>	This form is used to express <i>desire</i> or a <i>wish to do</i> the statement being uttered. This desire is usually attached to the subject of the sentence although with the addition of the beneficial prefix <i>xyí-/xyá-/xyú-</i> this desire can be transferred to the prefixed noun. This evidential can also be translated as <i>likes to</i> or <i>enjoys to do X</i> .
<i>íqxra/áqxra/úqxra</i>	This enclitic expresses the reverse of <i>ísyá</i> above, in other words that there is a desire <i>not to do</i> or a <i>wish not to have happen</i> on the statement to which it is attached. Otherwise it is used just as <i>ísyá/ásyá/úsyá</i> .
<i>ríth/ráth/rúth</i>	This optative form is used to make requests which are polite (as opposed to <i>hi!</i> above) and can be translated as <i>would that X do Y</i> . This form is only used to make requests of adult Sihá and is “polite” to use.
<i>rísí/rásá/rúsú</i>	This is a <i>negative optative</i> form, the reverse of <i>ríth</i> above. It indicates <i>would that X not do Y</i> and is also polite in form. This enclitic is unique as tense inflection occurs in both of the syllables within the enclitic rather than in just one as in all the other enclitics. I would surmise that perhaps this is just one of those strange exceptions that happen in all natural languages or that this single enclitic used to be comprised of two separate enclitics which became merged over time but retained their tense inflections. Often it is contracted but its form is anomalous in that it retains inflection even through contracted. It appears in these anomalous forms as –’sí, –’sá and –’sú respectively (another hint that it was originally two enclitics in the past).

These enclitic forms can occur in conjunction with on another to make combinations of meanings in the statements they modify. For instance, *xi?* and *qsi* may be combined into *qsix?* to indicate a negative question:

NáSewé sa Swéhéláséts aWátsí sa Qxítsúqx qsax?
Didn’t Ash Tongue kill Frost Song?

³ This enclitic rarely occurs for both logical and phonological reasons.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Only two of these enclitics may be combined in this way and the final vowel of the following enclitic is almost always dropped, creating a single-syllable word. The slang or casual forms of several of the evidentials are formed in this way, such as *nin* replacing *nihú* with the logic of *ni+ni* → *nin!* Davis never defines the suffix *-hú*, although it appears several times in conjunction with the various evidentials. *-Hú* appears to be a “formal” or older form of emphatic suffix when attached to an evidential. The evidentials with the *-hú* emphatic suffix seem to slowly being replaced by the more “casual” forms detailed above, although when Davis writes “slowly being replaced” I am not sure that means in the last two or three draconic generations or the last million years. *-Hú* can also be attached to noun-verbs (usually when they are used vocatively) in order to add emphasis such as *XiXútsitsíwánets’hú* ‘O Sun Catcher!’ Additionally, when the evidential *xi?*, *xa?* or *xu?* follows the *-ts* sound in the previous word, it is often contracted to the sound *-ch*, which seems to be the only way this sound appears in Srínawésin:

Náénlášéts xa? → *Náénlášéch?*
He/her killed him/her?

Rarely, if the previous word ends with the subject ending *-ets*, the evidentials *xi/xa/xu* or *xihú/xahú/xuhú* are “contracted” along with the rest of the word and the sound changes from *ts+x* to *ch* but the vowel remains, giving the form *-chi/-cha/-chu* or *-chihú*. Evidentials may be used to form entire statements without the need of an attached sentence and express the same meanings by themselves as they do along with sentences:

Aqxehín saenhíšáth xa? Did the male reindeer hear you?
Qsa...qsawáx... No...probably not...(qsawáx is the negative *qsa* + *wáx*)

Or:

SaQxítsús sa Wátsíqxítsú na. Saensaya’n. I have spoken with Ash Tongue. We are allies now (Lit. We have become allies).
Xa? What (did you say/do)?

As shown above, these enclitics are used in normal speech in the same way “yes” and “no” could be used in English, but they possess a greater degree of meaning to exactly how sure the speaker is of his/her statement. Additionally, since these statements retain tense marking, three units of meaning are expressed in a single word; positive or negative, degree of certainty and tense:

Saxrášéts xánwánharésu tsansa tsasráhets sráthútsin nasa’x? When you came up to the female pig were you making sounds as you moved through the fireweeds?
Qsahú! Absolutely I was not! (negative, emphatically certain and past tense)

Evidentials which are used to stand for entire sentences or utterances must *always agree with their referent in tense*, although in certain cases a difference of tense may appear in order to indicate something *was* one way but is not now or is *now* but was not then:

Saxáhir xyáhaséš xa? Were you afraid of him?
Íš, nin! Well, I am *now!*

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

7.3.1. Evidential Sentence Enclitics, Aspect Markers and Adverbs

Howard himself believed that since every sentence or clause in the Dragon Tongue requires an evidential sentence enclitic to truly function, the enclitic is in fact the heart of all draconic utterances with the true-verbs, subjects, objects, locations and other words simply modifying the enclitic rather than the other way around. He believed that the general condition of the sentence (positive, negative, interrogative, conditional, optative, hearsay or combinations thereof) was the logical prerequisite of the rest of the sentence as it was *always* required even when various aspects of the sentence were removed in order to create truncated utterances.

For instance the sentence below:

AHúqsa sa Šáwéq̄x nášasrawésínets xánnanraha sa tsehenrésu axáxétséwíha'lá

I heard that White Eye suddenly chased the male caribou into a dead end without escape through that big birch forest over there by the cliff

As will be shown in §7.8. **Speech Patterns, Euphemisms and Figures of Speech**, this sentence can be shorn of various aspects such as the subject, objects and locatives if they have already been specified earlier in the dialogue or can simply be understood from context. If the maximum extension of this process was applied to the sentence above (and most of the aspects of the sentence were previously mentioned or identified) it could be reduced to:

Náyxísínets'lá

I heard that (he/she/you) suddenly chased them (large-prey) into a dead end without escape

The true-verb *sína-* 'to chase into a dead end without escape' could even be removed and replaced with a general true-verb such as *šáhín-* 'to do':

Náyxíšáhínets'lá

I heard that (he/she/you) suddenly did (that) to them

Or it could even be reduced to simply:

Háta

I heard that...

But in all cases of reduced sentences the hearsay enclitic *háta* or *-'lá* must always occur so Davis considered these enclitics to be the "heart" of any draconic utterance. I do not know if the evidence I have found in his notes warrants this sort of conclusion but I am quite sure that 1) I do not possess all of his notes and 2) that if he was telling the truth at all, I have never spoken to any dragon before so it is quite possible that he possessed information which I do not so he might have had more reasons to believe this. One thing his notes explicitly mention is that evidential enclitics may be used with aspect markers, just as if they were a true verb. In fact, along with the draconic linguistic tendency to use everything as a verb, the (aspect + evidential) morphology is one of the greatest reasons that both Davis and I believe that these evidentials are in fact a form of true-verb.

Therefore, the sentence above could maximally be reduced to:

Náhíta

I heard that X suddenly did Y

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

In this case the aspect marker *ná-* “suddenly, swiftly, violently” is attached to the hearsay evidential *-híla* to form the above utterance, which may be used as an entire “sentence” in-and-of itself. Interestingly, one would think that since the evidential is usually inflected for tense it would continue to be even when it had an aspect marker attached to it and appear as:

**Náhála*

I heard that X suddenly did Y

But this is *not* the case. It seems that the Non-Past Tense is considered to be the “base” or “natural” tense and so *all evidentials which have aspect markers attached to them are always in the Non-Past tense* as the “tense” appears to be borne solely by the aspect marker. The morphology of this usage is quite simple although with the caveat that the evidential is *not* inflected for tense and remains in the *Non-Past Tense* base-form:

[(Aspect Marker+Tense Inflection) + (Evidential in Non-Past Tense)]^{ASPECT+EVIDENTIAL}

This could form such words as:

Tsaqsix?

(*tsa+QSI+XI*)

(incomplete past tense aspect + NEGATIVE + INTERROGATIVE)

Was X not happening?/Was not doing X (to Y)?/Was X not doing Y to Z?⁴

Huhíla

(*hu+HÍLA*)

(haphazard cyclical tense aspect + HEARSAY)

I heard that X sometimes and cyclically happens (to Y)/I heard that X sometimes and cyclically happens to Y/I heard that X sometimes and cyclically does Y to Z⁵

Šiwixqsi

(*ší+WIX+QSI*)

(“Just Beginning To” Non-Past tense aspect + POSSIBLY + NEGATIVE)

It is possible that X isn’t just starting to happen (to Y)

Since no true-verbs appear in the phrases above it is impossible to know if the sentence thus replaced originally had a transitive, intransitive or reflexive true-verb without further context, which normally would be supplied through the previous dialogue. These (aspect+enclitics) do not have to appear in isolation but can come with other sentential specifiers such as objects, subjects, locatives and so forth but *not with a true-verb* which would lead to two aspect markers in a single sentence:

Anneháqsrúth xáyśyá

(I) usually wanted to do X (eat, chew, gnaw upon) to the dead bone-marrow

⁴ Because these collapsed forms have multiple possible meanings they usually have multiple possible and equally likely translations. Any confusion about what someone means when they use one of these shortened forms would doubtlessly be understood from context and body language.

⁵ These readings are similar to the note 4.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Axúhísu xáy sax?

Who habitually wanted to do X?

Šárúnáwéha náhíla

I heard that X suddenly Y'ed (rushed?) past the mountains

And so forth. One last fascinating aspect of these forms and the evidentials is that they may take *adverbs just as if they were functioning true-verbs*. This is another major reason to consider the evidentials to be true-verbs. These forms have the following morphological structure:

[(Aspect Marker+Tense Inflection+Adverb) + (sa) + (Evidential Non-Past Tense)]^{ASPECT+EVIDENTIAL}

Therefore forms such as this occur:

Šahaxlá sa nihú!

X had just begun to wearingly do Y (to Z?)!⁶

Essentially in these cases the true-verb's root is removed from the "true-verb" and replaced with the *evidential* (in the *Non-Past Tense*) which then forms the new root of the modified true-verb. The evidential "root" does *not* take the usual subject endings that the original root possessed, the evidential "root" appears to replace not only the original root but also the subject endings as a whole. In this manner the following sentence:

Šixrari sa ranets qsiwix

I have no trouble not starting to believe that (*lit.* probably isn't) he/she is dead

With:

Šixrari sa qsiwix

I have no trouble not starting to believe that (*lit.* probably isn't) he/she/you are X

If the previous sentence was placed in the past tense it would appear as:

Šaxrari sa qsiwix

I **didn't** have any trouble not starting to believe that (*lit.* probably isn't) he/she/you are X

In all the cases above you will note that there are no evidentials attached to the evidential "root" true-verb sentences. Obviously this is not required as the evidentials are now included in the true-verb of the utterance otherwise illogical forms such as the one below would occur:

**Šixrari sa qsiwix qsiwix*

**It probably isn't that he/she/you are X probably isn't*

Unfortunately, Davis never specifies whether a *transitive verb-root* may be replaced by an evidential in this manner, all the examples he gives are of *intransitive forms* and a transitive-enclitic

⁶ "Wearingly" in this case implies grinding, eroding or the like and while this utterance does not make a very good English sentence, it makes a perfectly useable Srínawésin sentence.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

replacement never occurs in any of the dialogues I have. There are several possible reasons for this; 1) *transitive* verb-roots may not be replaced by enclitics, 2) they may be replaced but they don't occur that often so don't appear in Howard's notes and 3) they do appear but they are simply in notes which I don't have. I would imagine that they do actually appear but for reasons 2) and 3) above I simply don't have any evidence for them. My guess would be, following the logic that if enclitics replace both an intransitive verb-root *as well as the subject endings*, that if transitive roots can be replaced the enclitic would replace the *object, the root and the ending*. Thus the sentence below:

Hahahínwéhanrítš aSníša sa Shányéš'lá

I hear that Glacier Dipper periodically check up on the boundary markers (of her territory)

Could be replaced with:

**ASníša sa Shányéš hahíla*

*I hear that Glacier Dipper does X to Y

The sentence above is marked with a '*' because I have no evidence that this usage occurs but I believe it is a logical assumption given other Srínawésin examples. One last caveat of these aspect and adverbial functions with enclitics is that since enclitics always occur at the end of a sentence *any true-verb which has an enclitic incorporated into it must also be at the end of the sentence or clause*. This is an exception to the general habit of placing the verb in the initial position and occurs without exception throughout all of Davis' notes and he mentions it explicitly several times. Forms such as:

**Hahíla aSníša sa Shányéš*

*I hear that Glacier Dipper does X to Y

Do not occur not only because this violates the rule that verb-enclitics must appear at the end of a sentence but also as the above utterance would *require an enclitic to end it*, making two enclitics appear in the same clause, which is also impossible:

**Hahíla aSníša sa Shányéš'lá*

*I hear that Glacier Dipper does X to Y I hear that

7.4. Conjunctive, Disjunctive, and Conditional Words between Sentences

Evidential enclitics such as those treated in 7.3. always appear at the ends of sentences or clauses, however consider the following example:

ATsitsír sa Štíšéš xáslénéš xyáhéyawén tsanséšiwésu sráhišrísu ísyáwx tšyenyárú innesa sayxílášéts wáxrúsa qsi'lá

As for Tear of the Sun, she usually **liked** crouching in the hunting cover of the pine trees for the female moose **but** I have not heard or know if she has killed any of them

This fairly complex draconic sentence has several concepts yet to be introduced, including dependent clauses, but the important thing to note in this sentence is the word *ísyáwx* which is formed from a *combination of two separate words*, in this case the evidential sentence enclitic *ísyá* which expresses "desire or preference" and *hux* 'but/although,' and can be translated roughly as 'enjoys to do X but...' This is a case of *combining enclitics with conjunctive words* such as *and, but, or* and *if*, which commonly occurs in the speech of the Kindred. Conjunctive and disjunctive words such as those given above *and which occur in between two different sentences or clauses* have two separate forms in Srínawésin; *singular* and *conjoined*. The following

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

section, 7.5. **Conjunctive and Disjunctive Word within a Clause or Sentence** discusses the ways in which the Shúna use these types of words *within a clause or sentence* but this section deals only with those words which connect two complete together. Singular conjunctives and disjunctives usually appear at the beginning of a statement such as:

Reyá tsisráhawén srísnerísu ixuhunwén ixínanxnahuwéha wíx!

Or the female caribou could be going into the snow-covered forest along the hills over there!

But when they *follow an evidential sentence enclitic* (and thereby combine two complete thoughts) they are conjoined with the enclitic forming a single complex word:

Tsisráhawén ixuhunwén sríxuyáha wíxyá srísnerísu ixínanxnahuwéha wíx!

The female caribou **could** be going to the drinking holes **or** towards the snow-covered forest along the hills over there!

In this case the word *reyá* ‘or’ is combined with the possibility evidential *wíx* to form the conjoined word *wíxyá* ‘possibly or...’ Throughout all of Davis’ notes whenever a conjunctive/disjunctive word such as *reyá* follows an evidential it is altered into a *conjoined* form, so I assume that this is always the case and is thus required without exception, however I can not state this unequivocally. The various conjunctive, disjunctive and conditional words are given in their singular and conjoined forms below:

	<u>Singular</u>	<u>Conjoined</u>
And	<i>axá(n)</i>	<i>-án</i>
But/although	<i>hux</i>	<i>-ux</i>
Or	<i>reyá</i>	<i>-yá</i>
If	<i>rú</i>	<i>-rú</i>
Then (If/then)	<i>slátsu</i>	<i>-tsú</i>
Therefore/because	<i>hán</i>	<i>-hán</i>

Generally the conjoined forms are simply a shortened form of the singular word, although anomalous voicing occurs in the case of *slátsu/-tsú*. These words may be spoken without an attaching sentence (usually at the beginning of a sentence or utterance in order to indicate an alteration of meaning with earlier dialogue) and when they do so they appear in they appear in the singular forms.

7.5. Conjunctive and Disjunctive Words within a Clause or Sentence

The section above treated the way the various conjunctive and disjunctive words are combined with previously occurring evidential enclitics, however, consider the two English sentences below:

I heard that Tear of the Sun wounded my far-distant-neighbor **and** almost killed him

I heard that Tear of the Sun **and** Black Honey wounded my far-distant-neighbor

In the first sentence the ‘and’ conjoins two entire thoughts: ‘I heard that Tear of the Sun wounded my far-distant-neighbor’ (and) then ‘she almost killed him.’ Each of these thoughts can stand alone and although the second sentence shares the same subject and object as the first and relies upon this information to be meaningful, both are true, independent sentences. The second example on the other hand is different, the ‘and’ indicates that both Tear of the Sun *as well as* Black Honey are the *subjects of the verb*, acting on the object, *my far-distant-neighbor*. ‘And’ in this case conjoins two *nouns* rather than two *sentences* and makes them act in tandem as the subject. Srínawésin has two ways of indicating the second type of meaning, one of which can be shown with the translation of the second example into the Dragon Tongue:

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Annesírtsésē *aTsitsír sa Šlísēs aŠátha sa Qxúhusu saensláyawéts'lá*

I heard that **Tear of the Sun** and **Black Honey** wounded my far-distant-neighbor

This example shows the Kindred's' elegant way of indicating 'and' without having to say it explicitly. If there are two different explicit subjects mentioned *they simply both are assigned the appropriate subject prefix indicating both are the subject of the verb* and no explicit "and" need ever occur because it is obvious from the grammatical clues. This applies to any types of prefix, multiple words can have identical prefixes attached to them to indicate explicit pluralization of various types:

Annesírtsésē *aTsitsír sa Šlísēs aŠátha sa Qxúhusu aHathá sa Snarēs aSláya sa Snarēs saensláyawéts'lá*

I heard that **Tear of the Sun, Black Honey, Angry Face** and **Bloody Face** (all) wounded my far-distant-neighbor

Or

Hasukúth sa qsúla qxasraníwén narátharéha *xánthawéwésin xánqsuséwésin na*

Sometimes I would swiftly fly towards the male moose trail **through the low-hanging clouds and the rain**

It is important to note, however, that in the cases above the subject ending of the verb *must still agree with its subjects*, which in the prior case are *pluralized* (two named dragons) and thus the verb has the plural infix *-wé-* attached to it forming *saensláyawéts* and not the singular form **saensláyets* (this is ungrammatical only if **saensláyets* was to agree with multiple Class I subjects). This type of form can occur not only in between nouns but also between verbs as well:

Sahuxéláséts saháqsasláyech?

Did he/she/you kill that male deer (and) wound the female deer?

This type of double-verb may also occur if the object is the same in both cases:

Sahuxésáwéts sayxláséch?

Did he/she/you see **the male deer** (and) then did you kill **(him)**?

Double verbs have only one evidential enclitic as they are considered to be one thought and inherently linked but both must generally agree in tense and so on. This way of expressing 'and' is by far the most common although the Kindred possess separate particles which can also indicate *and* as well as *or* when conjoining or disjoining two nouns (but these words are not used between clauses or sentences).

These words are:

And, as well as, also *shán*

Or, either *rášye*

The word *shán* 'and' or the simple addition of identical affixes may be employed to indicate 'and':

Tsašathíréshá xánsešerésu shatsuwéréshá shaqsaqxeréshá ratúhasa nan!

*Tsašathíréshá xánsešerésu shatsuwéréshá **shán** shaqsaqxeréshá ratúhasa nan!*

The innumerable geese **and** heron were fleeing from me through the alder forest!

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

However, even if *shán* is used to indicate ‘and’ *all the nouns still require the proper subject/object/reflexive object (or other) prefixes*. Since even with the explicit form of *shán* all the nouns must have the same prefixes, this renders *shán* redundant and is thus not usually used unless the speaker wishes to be very clear and precise (although this might possibly offend the listener see §7.8. **Speech Patterns, Euphemisms and Figures of Speech** below) or emphasis is required. However ‘or’ cannot be expressed in any other way than by explicitly stating the ‘or’ word *rášye*:

Annesírtsés aTsitsír sa Šlisés rášye aŠátha sa Qxúhúsu saensláyawéch?
Did Tear of the Sun **or** Black Honey wound my far-distant-neighbor?

Both subjects in this case must still have the proper noun prefixes, in this case the past tense subject prefix *a-*, but to indicate ‘or’ *rášye* must be explicitly used. *Rášye* is often used with a question but it can easily come within a statement as well, usually translated into English as ‘either’:

Tsiqxníléš ríth! Annesírtsés aTsitsír sa Šlisés rášye aŠátha sa Qxúhúsu saensláyets nan! Ahasawés qsaqs!
Please wait a moment! Either Tear of the Sun **or** Black Honey wounded my far-distant-neighbor!
Not both of them!

It is important to note that both *shán* and *rášye* are essentially *particles* and therefore are never inflected for number, person or tense in any way and in all of Davis’ notes and dialogues are *always* found in these forms and do not appear to have alternate forms.

7.6. Clauses

Clauses are complete thoughts in and of themselves, capable of indicating meaning without further information if needed. However, examine the following example:

Sasínhišá annesa ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá nasa’n
I heard the seabirds and swans swimming on the lake

The phrase ‘the seabirds and swans swim on the lake’ is a sentence and a complete thought however in the above example *the entire sentence serves as the direct object of the verb ‘to hear’* and is thus a *dependent clause* or a clause (sentence) which is subsumed in a larger sentence. Thus, the sum total of the information in the clause ‘the male and female swans swim on the lake’ in its entirety serves as the object of *what was heard* forming a complex thought or a dependent clause within a larger sentence. In English we show that this kind of transformation (independent to dependent clause) has taken place by changing the phrase:

The seabirds and swans swim on the lake

Into:

The male and female swans swimming on the lake

Although English has a variety of other ways to indicate depended clauses in this case once this transformation has occurred it may then be subsumed within the larger sentence and serve as the direct object of the verb ‘to hear.’ It does not have to be *only* the direct object, but could be the subject, indirect object or even a locative form in English:

I heard the seabirds and swans swimming on the lake (Obj.)
The seabirds and swans swimming on the lake heard me (Subj.)

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

I gave the bread **to** the seabirds and swans swimming on the lake (Indirect Obj.)
I was traveling **towards** the seabirds and swans swimming on the lake (Locative)

All known languages have the capacity to make these forms of elaborations upon the various actors within a sentence (these types of clauses supply additional information about their constituents) and Srínawésin is no exception to this, although its solution to how to form dependent clauses is extremely elegant and remarkably simple. The example above illustrates the way in which the Shúna generate dependent clauses admirably:

Satsunhíšá annesa ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá nasa'n
I heard the seabirds and swans swimming on the lake

In this case *ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá na* translates to 'the seabirds and swans were swimming on the lake' and is thus the dependent clause of the greater sentence. In order to make this a dependent clause Srínawésin *brackets the clause within two particles (sa) forming a sort of spoken beginning and ending of the clause.* Thus, the previously independent sentence:

Ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá na

Becomes a dependent clause:

-sa ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá nasa

Davis always combines the evidentials with the final *sa* particle, forming in this case *nasa (na+sa)* in his examples and this appears to be the standard form. This new dependent clause is then treated as if it was a single thought or complex noun-verb and is assigned the proper noun-verb prefix to indicate how it participates in the sentence, in this case as the direct object along with the prefix *anne-*:

Annesa ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá nasa

And it is then placed within the larger sentence:

Satsunhíšá annesa ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá nasa'n
I heard **the seabirds and swans swimming on the lake** (Obj.)

It is important to note that the direct object of the verb 'to hear' still must be represented by *an infix which agrees with the object.* However, since the direct object in this case is an entire dependent clause, *the object infix agrees with the reflexive subject of the dependent clause,* in this case 'the seabirds and swans.' Thus, in the example above the verb *-híšá* has the object infix *-tsun-* which is Class VI Inedible plural, which agrees in number, class and person with the *reflexive subjects* of the dependent clause *shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá* 'male and female swans.' Just as in English and other languages, these dependent clauses may be subjects, objects, locatives and so forth of the main verb of the sentence:

Sasithhíšáwíš asa ašiháxusu tsašánuwéshá shaswiriwéshá shaheshíwéshá nasa'n
The seabirds and swans swimming on the lake heard me

In this case the dependent clause is prefixed with the subject prefix *a-* indicating it is the *subject* of the true-verb *-híšá* and the proper subject suffix *-wéshá (-wé+shá)* agrees with the *subject* of the dependent

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

clause ‘the seabirds and swans.’ These concepts are vital to speaking and understanding Srínawésin as they are often found in complex sentences. Their construction can therefore be diagrammed as a series of steps:

- 1) Bracket the sentence to serve as the dependent clause with the particles *sa* (*sa* CLAUSE *sa*)
- 2) The final *sa* particle becomes one word with the final evidential of the clause (*ni+sa* for example)
- 3) The proper noun-verb prefix is attached to the initial *sa* particle and now the dependent clause is treated as a single unit of meaning (as object, subject and so forth) (*a+sa* for example)
- 4) If the dependent clause is the subject or object of the main true-verb of the sentence the matching affix attached to the true-verb agrees with in number, class and person with the *subject* or *reflexive subject* of the dependent clause.

More than one dependent clause may appear in a single sentence and when this occurs the normal rules applying to multiple subjects, objects and so forth apply (i.e. the use of identical prefixes or the particles *shán* or *rášye* and so forth):

Asa tsyałsháthunya inneTswenléxusu Uqxéhasu tsnisihéš nisa asa tsisráhets iširúnáwéha ixixútsusin sa hurúsin išuthéš híłasa sahínxátsuwéts annesa tsasráharéx aqxnéhiréx ašixéxnahuwéha nasa’lá

I heard that the dragon we call Born of Fire and that unknown stranger who I have heard lives in the mountains to the north killed but did not eat the innumerable humans which lived on the hills way over there.

In this instance the first clause reads literally ‘the Kindred who we have named Born of Fire’ using the particularly rare 1st Person Plural subject suffix *-ya* in the true-verb ‘we name’ while the second clause is literally ‘(and) the unknown stranger who I have heard moves upon the mountains on the left side of the dawn (north).’ The final clause is read literally as ‘(I heard that) the innumerable Chatterers (humans) who move upon the hills way over there.’ Broken down it reads as:

Clause 1:	<i>Asa tsyałsháthunya inneTswenléxusu Uqxéhasu tsnisihéš nisa</i> The Kindred we have named as Born of Fire (Subject 1)
Clause 2:	<i>asa tsisráhets iširúnáwéha ixixútsusin sa hurúsin išuthéš híłasa</i> The unknown stranger I have heard moves (lives) upon the mountains to the left side of the dawn (Subject 2)
True-Verb	<i>Sahínxátsuwéts</i> They killed but did not eat (the innumerable small prey animals)
Clause 3:	<i>annesa tsasráharéx aqxnéhiréx ašixéxnahuwéha nasa’lá</i> The innumerable Chatters who move upon the hills way over there I have heard (Object of the verb)

Although this process seems daunting at first, it is in fact a fairly straightforward, if rather complex process because the clauses always appear between the particles *sa* with the proper prefixes and so forth attached to indicate how they act within the sentence. All dependent clauses are formed in this manner and once their internal meaning is understood the rest of the sentence seems to fall into place, and is not, in fact as complex a process for forming dependent clauses as some other languages. One important aspect to keep in mind in this process is the fact that because every word within an utterance or clause in Srínawésin is inflected for tense and that all the words within a clause must agree with one another tenses *cannot switch within a clause* but may change tenses between clauses. For instance:

Innehusa tsaswéhéš shaQxéhawésu sráŁalínsu waša tsyałxrarits qsix, xistinéš?

You do not (currently) believe that that sound was **Fire Blossom** singing?

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Qsi, Innesa *tsaswéhéshá sharínáshá lanananhusúqx waša'n*

No, I think it was a female giant singing (playing) on one of those whistling-things.⁷

The fact that clauses are inflected for tense helps to differentiate the various main and dependent clauses from one another and generally aids in understanding, although I would imagine that a speaker new to the language would not think so!

7.6.1. Quotations and Reporting Speech

Beyond the formation of dependent clauses as outlined in the section above, the use of the *sa* particles in bracketing other statements is most often used as a form of a spoken quotation mark in the various dialogues in Davis' notes. Essentially the way all these examples are formed is identical to the way the *sa*+CLAUSE+*sa* constructions are used with two important differences: the true-verb of the larger sentence is always some variation of 'said, spoke, told, reported, mentioned,' and so forth and the dependent clause (as outlined by the *sa* particles) is *what the subject of the true-verb of the main sentence said, reported, mentioned, etc.* For instance:

Xwáłqxítsúts xúnhasa unnesa rú xátséyets qsatsú xátsaqsáthits annéhítsá sa hawáqx nan, xisáhunéš sa usléxúš nun!

My mother is always saying to me "If you didn't sleep all the time then you'd eat so much better!"

In this case the phrase *annesa rú xátséyets qsatsú xátsaqsáthits annéhítsá sa hawáqx nan, xisáhunéš* is both a dependent clause, the object of the verb *qxítsú-* 'to speak, to say' and the quotation "If you didn't sleep all the time, you'd eat so much better!" which the speaker's mother (the subject) is speaking. In this instance the word *xúnhasa* translates as 'towards me' (*hasa-* being a pronoun for "me" as it has no classification markers as discussed above as discussed in 5.5. "Pronouns") and serves as a sort of indirect object of the true-verb of the sentence.

Literally this sentence means:

Habitually and cyclically (my) mother is always speaking towards me "if you didn't habitually sleep then you would eat better meat, my child!"

7.7. Question Words

The primary way in Srínawésin for asking a question is the simple inclusion of one of the questioning enclitics such as *xi?* or *qsix?* to ask a negative question. However the language does appear to possess a very interesting form which makes use of the root *xúhá-* 'does-what?' This interesting root forms the basis for almost all question words such as "who, what, when, where, why, with who, for what reason, how" and so on. Used in a verbal form it questions *what precisely was being done* although this is directed primarily at the verb itself and the subjects and objects might already be known to the speaker:

Tsáwíxúxúhéts aTswenléxusu Uqxéhasu'x? Born of Fire **did what** to those dead things?

Although this root may not only question the action but also the participants in the action:

⁷ This exchange came from a discussion that Davis had with a very unpleasant Artic dragon named Rotten Teeth who lived in northern Canada. From what Rotten Teeth told Howard female giants in particular enjoyed playing *-husúqx* or 'whistling-things' which Davis surmised was some sort of flute or woodwind instrument. These 'whistling-things' were one of the only reasons that the old, crabby, gray Artic dragon suffered to have any giant tribes near his hunting territory.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Tsiqxéxúháhen nínanxnahuwéha'x?

Who is **doing what** to whom on those hills over there?

This root may also form the basis of noun-verbs, forming words which would be translated as “who, what, where” and so forth:

Níxúháhá xihú?

Where *exactly*?

Axúhéš xa?

Who (dragon) did it?

Sláhaxúháx qsix?

With what small prey animal didn't (go, do etc.)?

This root is extremely productive and is often found in situations when a true-verb is not stated (which could otherwise carry the question-meaning by the affixation of Class XIII Varia/Unknown affixes) although true-verb or noun-verb forms of question words are apparently used interchangeably:

Saenšáwá na!

I saw him/her!

Saqsešáwéché?/Annexúhéš xa?

Who did you see?

-*Xúhá* also may be used in an *adverbial form* in this case indicating ‘why, for what reason (is X being done?)’:

Saxúhá sa sithrisech?

Why'd you bite me?

§7.8. Speech Patterns, Euphemisms and Figures of Speech

Normally concepts such as speech patterns are relevant to the description of a language, but not always vital to the understanding of that language (unless one wants to be truly fluent in the language in question) therefore they are not always included in grammars and papers on the grammar of languages. By “speech patterns” I mean not *what* a speaker is saying or the grammatical way in which they are saying it, but the non-grammatical ways in which they are speaking. The difference between grammar and speech patterns is similar to the difference between the mechanical functioning of a car engine and the *way in which a driver drives that car*. Two different drivers driving the same car at two different times are all making use of the exact same mechanical processes which operates the engine but one might be a terrible driver, such as myself, or an expert stunt-driver who executes incredible pyrotechnic and mechanical acrobatics for movies. The same mechanics, a greatly different result.

Grammar is the mechanics of the language; speech patterning is the way in which an individual speaker (or “driver”) handles the language. Howard Davis writes extensive notes on how his discussions in Srínawésin with his subjects were often difficult and full of misunderstandings because while his sentences were perfectly accurate in terms of grammar he was speaking the wrong way. This trend continued until Bloody Face apparently hissed angrily at him: “It’s not what you say; it’s what you *don’t* say that matters!” He reports he went over his notes and recordings and began to understand what Bloody Face was saying to him as he was speaking Srínawésin but with *English* speech patterns, which was considered extremely rude by his Sihá subjects. Luckily, he had time to go over his notes and figure out what he was doing, both Bloody Face and Moonchild refused to see him for almost three whole moons (their version of counting to 10, I suppose). He was a trained linguist but had not done very much in the way of field work until this singular project presented itself to him so he can be forgiven for not paying attention to what any anthropological linguist would have done in the beginning: listen not only to the rules of the language, but the *way* it is used. Luckily, his initial subjects were kind enough (or felt that he was just a *qxnéx* so how could one expect him to get something as beautiful as Srínawésin right?) not to kill him for his rudeness, although only Bloody Face had the wherewithal to express what all the other Sihá were thinking. Although the speech patterns of the Kindred can be extracted from all of Davis’ dialogues and notes, he was kind

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

enough to record his general observations on how dragons spoke to one another and what he had been doing wrong up until that time and how he began to correct it.

The biggest single difference between English and Srínawésin's speech patterns can be summed up with a single sentence: *If the speaker assumes that something is obvious, they simply won't say it*, a far cry from most English speakers. This thought lies at the core of what kind a speech a Sihá will consider to be "polite" or "impolite" (with some very bloody consequences in the second case). Essentially, the logic of this idea as explained by Davis is this: not saying what is "obvious" is a sign of respect from the speaker to the listener, assuming they understand what is "obviously" there so it does not need to be said. Conversely, if a speaker explains every single detail explicitly, this implies that the speaker thinks the listener is a fool and cannot grasp the subtleties of their speech; therefore the speaker needs to spell out everything *for* the listener. The closest thing I can relate this to, would be the way "check" is used in a modern Chess match. Among beginners it is standard to say "check" when one checks the other player's king, it is simply something you say. On the other hand, in a professional Chess championship, saying "check" is rude and annoying, implying that the other player cannot see the obvious threat.

The dragons in Davis' notes are, without exception, *experts* at interpreting their world and understanding the meanings of what is around them. They live solely by their ability to read trails, the smallest twitch or reaction of a deer or elk and are all masters at hunting. They are *extremely interested and aware* of their surroundings at all times and they never listen to another speaker idly (even if they appear to be disinterested or not paying attention) so they carefully listen to what a speaker is saying and watch *how* the speaker is saying even more intently. Therefore, there is often very little reason to spell out *precisely* what one is saying at all times, as a dragon will understand the subtext and context of what the speaker is saying, the body language with which they say it, the smells they convey while they're speaking and a host of other factors that amply supply much of the context of any sentence. That is why it is extremely rude to say *precisely* what one means and spell out every little piece of information, it implies the listener is not really listening (and therefore is a fool) or is *incapable* of reading the context (also implying the listener is a fool) and doing this will often end extremely messily.

This is expressed in actual speech in several ways:

- 1) Once a subject, object, location or other action is stated, it will simply be left out from every further utterance, *until a new subject, object, location etc.* appears. This includes pronouns as well, these are simply assumed from context (and it is easy to guess from the subject/object affixes in the sentence), as well as verbs in many cases.
- 2) If something is "obvious" (an extremely fluid concept to be sure) it simply isn't said.
- 3) Asking repeated questions is a sign of inattention—which is rude—or foolishness which will invite an attack just as quickly as being rude.
- 4) Rhetorical questions are considered to be extremely rude and pretentious.
- 5) If someone asks a question and the target of the question does not reply in any way *it is understood to be a positive answer*. A Sihá will usually only respond to a question if the question is wrong and needs to be corrected.
- 6) A speaker will often look directly at what it is they are talking about or to whom they are speaking to, making this a sort of "unspoken grammatical marker" to indicate how the sentence should be understood.
- 7) A Sihá will often use body language such as looking in a particular direction, gesturing with their head or making other movements without speaking (especially while hunting)

Many of these draconic inclinations are very similar with how the Shúna express body language, the "Unspoken Rules" and Body Language forming a continuum of *how* they speak. Draconic body language is detailed in **7.10. Non-Verbal Communication** below. However, Davis notes that exchanges as the one

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

given below are common in Srínawésin, and serve to illustrate how the Shúna *imply* most of their meanings from context:

Iš, annesa saSewe sa Swéhésheyets aWátsí sa Qxítsúqx nasa átsiXíyanawášéts'la, xiSláya sa Snaréš.
So, I heard from Scatterlight that Ash Tongue slew Frost Song, Bloody Face.

Íš! Ašawaxráxéš saensheyechihú!?
Ha! That foolish idiot killed her!?

The second sentence assumes several things. Literally it means “Ha! That stone-who-moves-itself-through-the-brush-while-making-sounds slew him/her/you?” The verb *saensheyechihú* is problematic as both the subject and the object of the verb are both Class I Kindred, but it is *not* reflexive (it is a contraction of *saensheyets xihú!?*). However, in the context of the above exchange it is merely understood that the object is *Frost Song* and this does not need to be stated explicitly again, and the subject is *Ash Tongue* (and that the term *ašawaxráxéš* ‘that foolish idiot’ which is also the subject of the sentence) refers back to him:

Annesralatsithíš'n, xúxi?
(Yes, he did.) She was always such a troublesome one, wasn't she?

Naxúháhá'x? Nathéhališáha rášye naqxewáxúháhá'x?
(Yes.) Where did he kill her? His hunting territory or another's?

Again, there are several assumptions here. Firstly, in the translation (Yes, he did) is considered to be understood as the speaker does not correct the questioner's question so the answer is therefore positive. The first part of the spoken sentence has the object prefix *anne-* prefixed to the adjectival form *-sralatsithíš'n* ‘always such a troublesome dragon’ which means it refers back to the object of the previous sentences, i.e. to *Frost Song* therefore means ‘her’ rather than ‘him’ or ‘you,’ and in an Active Adjectival Voice, indicating that the statement is integral to the argument the speaker wishes to put forth. Therefore, the fact that she was always so troublesome is the primary reason which she is now dead. As if this was not enough, the first sentence has two tenses in it, the Past throughout most of the sentence and the Cyclical Tense in the question enclitic *xúxi?* implying that *Frost Song* was habitually troublesome and that is why she was slain by *Ash Tongue*. The second sentence begins with an unspoken answer (yes) while the word *naxúháhá'x* means simply ‘at where?’ and (did he kill her) is unspoken and understood. The second part of the second sentence translates literally to ‘at his/hers/your hunting territory or at the other's-where-place?’

The conversation continues:

Tsiqseyáru'qs.
I don't know (where he killed her.)

Tsisráhéš xi?
Is he alive then?

In the first sentence here the object infix is *-qse-* the Class XIII Varia/Unknown object infix, which refers back to the original question posed “Where did he kill her?” and although it is not spoken, it is assumed to be a part of the response. The second sentence is a little more understandable, since *Frost Song* is “obviously” dead and the speaker hasn't asked the listener if they are sure the fact that *Frost Song* is dead is agreed upon or at least assumed so the rather ambiguous Class I Kindred subject ending *-éš* does not refer back to her and it is unlikely that it would refer to the other speaker, so it is “obviously” regarding *Ash*

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Tongue once again and would thus be understood as ‘is *he* alive then,’ rather than the other possible translations.

As can be seen in conversation, Srínawésin discussions appear much like inverted pyramids in terms of content. Once the general location, actors and conditions of the sentence are established, they are simply left out, and slowly the number of words reduces, as they are simply understood and assumed. This is of course a simplistic picture of how the language actually works; new ideas, new actors, qualifications and other factors are constantly introduced by both speakers and therefore only in ideal situations will conversations appear in this fashion, but it is a good way of picturing the mentality behind the language’s idealization.

The inclination towards leaving out unnecessary information extends to all areas of Srínawésin, noun-verbs, true-verbs and so on. One example is the removal of a true-verb entirely from the sentence when its meaning can be understood. True-verbs are often left out of command and imperative forms as partially covered in section 4.8. **Command Forms and Imperatives of True-Verbs**, but they are often *left out when body language can supply their meaning* or if the verb has been previously stated and there is little need to repeat it. For instance, a speaker may say:

Inneqsnaníshá’x?

This utterance is difficult to translate properly as the speaker would be relying on previous context or body language to explain their meaning. This example literally means ‘(Doing something) to the pheasant?’ and it is the object of a non-existent true-verb by the inclusion of the object prefix *inne-*. This makes a great deal more sense than it appears, the speaker is generally asking if the listener is doing *something* to the pheasant, seeing, hearing, smelling, eating or otherwise, and usually the exact meaning can be interpreted from context. The speaker may also specify the meaning they intend by pricking up the ears and saying *Inneqsnaníshá’x?* and a watchful listener (which all dragons are or they simply would not be alive anymore) will understand that this means ‘are you listening to a pheasant?/can you hear the pheasant?’

Another aspect which illustrates the importance of context in Srínawésin is the fact that, like all languages, the Dragon Tongue can have a single spoken utterance which can mean more than one thing, i.e. one string of *phonetic* sounds has more than one possible *semantic* or *grammatical* meaning. This is similar to the English utterance (rendered phonetically):

/Øer kars/

This *spoken* string of sounds can be interpreted as any of the following:

“Their cars.”

“They’re cars.”

“There, cars.”

While the final example is admittedly ungrammatical, but it *is* within the scope of the spoken language as spoken by some dialects of English. The phonetic representation /ther kars/ can be interpreted in any of these ways, and it is incumbent upon the listener to determine the speaker’s meaning from context. The same is true in Srínawésin, particularly in the instance of 1st Person utterances such as:

/t^sit^seyan/

This utterance can be interpreted in two ways:

Tsitséya’n (*tsi+tséya+Ø+’n*)

I am sleeping

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Tsitséyan' (*tsi+tséya+an+'n*)

The large prey animal is sleeping

Both of these interpretations are perfectly legitimate ways of understanding the phonetic utterance above and although they can be differentiated in *writing*, due to clues provided in the orthography much like in English's *Their*, *They're* and *There*, phonetically there is nothing to tell them apart. Additional problems arise in an utterance such as:

/t^sit^seyaf/

This utterance also has two possible interpretations:

Tsitséya'x? (*tsi+tséya+Ø+'x*)

Am I sleeping?

Tsitséyax'? (*tsi+tséya+ax+'x*)

Is the small prey animal sleeping?

In all of the examples above, *context* is of vital importance between differentiating what the speaker intends to say. If a large prey animal has been mentioned before or there is one in the vicinity which can be smelled, seen or heard, then *tsitséyan'* 'the large prey animal is sleeping' is a perfectly reasonable interpretation of /t^sit^seyan/ but *tsitséya'n* 'I am sleeping' is most likely not. The reverse is also true. And if a small prey animal has been discussed before, the speaker has sent out the listener to see the conditions of a small prey animal or other reasons *tsitséyax'?* 'is the large prey animal sleeping' would be a fine translation of /t^sit^seyaf/. Context is vitally important in these cases and the speaker's intention must simply be assumed according to the situation, just as in English or any other human language.

Exchanges of this type are common throughout all of Davis' notes and it is fascinating how the Shúna make use of these small subtleties of speech in order to fully express themselves although they do not have concepts which are "obviously" (to a human) required, such as the 2nd Person and other forms. Srínawésin's speech patterns are therefore a balancing act, a speaker and listener balancing what each believes to be "obvious" while not wanting to appear foolish to the other by asking a question which the other thought was "obvious." Davis believed this, along with their predatory natures, makes them just about the most intent listeners he had ever seen and not only could they easily guess what he was about to say, he found it virtually impossible to lie to them.

§7.8.1. Directions and Navigation

Srínawésin possesses a unique three-dimensional approach to the concept of direction, a quality that Davis attributes to the fact that many—if not most of the Kindred—are capable of flight and therefore think in decidedly three-dimensional ways. Even a Sihá which is incapable of flight often enjoy swimming in deep waters (or that is their natural habitat) and in these situations they also require this form of directional delineation. Davis notes several conversations with a sea dragon named Wave on the Sea, and although these discussions were all in the Northern Latitudinal dialect (which both knew) Wave on the Sea did discuss a little of how the various Oceanic dialects function. Davis noted that while the Oceanic language spoken by Wave on the Sea did have class systems like other dialects it did not rely on them to the same extent but instead *required specification of any noun-verb in terms of distance, relative depth and orientation* with regards to the speaker, an interesting form of thinking to say the least.

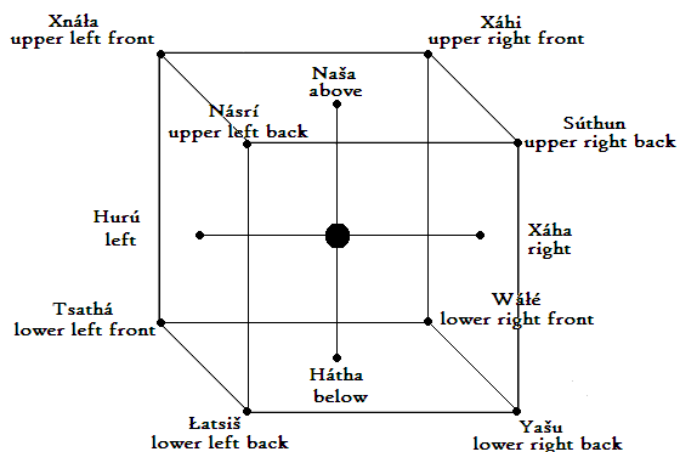
Draconic concepts of direction include not only "simple" terms which most English speakers tend to think in; up, back, forward, down, right, left, which are used mostly due to our inability to fly and "two-dimensional" natures. Draconic concepts include *xnála-* 'upper left front' and *súthun-* 'upper right back' and other such three-dimensional terminology. Note that while we can refer to such directions in English by specifying it with several words, Srínawésin and the Sihá can merely say *Xirtsathásin ni!* 'it is flying across the lower left front side!' (the root being *tsathá-* 'lower left

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

front’). These directions appear in a variety of classes depending upon whether the direction is in the air (used in Class VIII Aerial as in the case above), in the water (Class IX Animate and *not* Class V Aquatic as this class refers only to aquatic *animals*) or along the ground or within the earth (Class X). Directions also can appear in Class XII Components if the speaker does not wish to further identify the direction and the aerial/aquatic/or ground quality of the direction.

Directional terms are given both below in diagram form and in the lexicon:

Ráshá
in front, forward



Xhísa
back, tailwards

In addition to directional terms such as this, the Sihá have a complete system of cardinal directions in which to tell others how to navigate, roughly analogous to North, South, East and West in many human languages. Although dragons are fully capable of describing locations in this manner, the way in which these terms are expressed are uniquely draconic and do not exist in any language I am aware of. Simply put, Srínawésin *has no terms for the cardinal directions in terms of North, South, East and West*. Instead they have a system in which they refer to directions depending on the location of the sun using terms such as *nítsitsír sa hurúsin* ‘at the left of the sun’ and *nísárhásin sa xhísin* ‘at the behind during dusk.’ What is interesting about this system is that *both these terms refer to the direction of East* because dragons’ cardinal sense is determined by *where the sun is* but the sun moves throughout the day, thus altering the relative relationships between the sun and the directions. As noted, the Shúna do not pay much attention to the sun in terms of a timekeeper, but their sense of the sun is intimately connected to their sense of *location*, thus the sun is more a moving compass in the sky than a clock delineating “useless” hours.

Therefore, although dragons do understand and use cardinal directions the words they use to express these directions depends on the relative position of the sun and thus the time of the day. When a dragon uses a term such as *srixútsuha* ‘towards the dawn along the ground’ they are not only referring to the direction and location of movement but *the time of the day as well* as the location ‘towards the dawn’ is only used during dawn or the early morning to indicate “East.” During the middle of the day, when the sun is to the South and high in the sky “East” is called ‘left of the sun.’ Therefore, the Sihá think of *time* more as a specification of *direction* rather than the passage of some mysterious force and whenever a dragon uses terms to navigate themselves or another across any distance *they are also referring to the time of day in which they are speaking*. As I noted, this

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

methodology is unique to any language I am aware of, although this does not mean it does not exist elsewhere.

Draconic terminology for the cardinal directions is given below, determined by the time of day (locations are left without directional prefixes which would usually appear or class markers to delineate location in the air, ground, and water):

Night

East	<i>-qsánir xaháxútsu-</i>	the moon's dawn
South	<i>-qsánir</i>	moonward
West	<i>-qsánir xahásárhá-</i>	the moon's dusk
North	<i>-qsánir sa xhísa-</i>	the back of the moon

Morning

East	<i>-xútsusin</i>	the dawn
South	<i>-xútsusin sa xáha-</i>	the right of the dawn
West	<i>-xútsusin sa xhísa-</i>	behind the dawn
North	<i>-xútsusin sa hurú</i>	the left of the dawn

Day

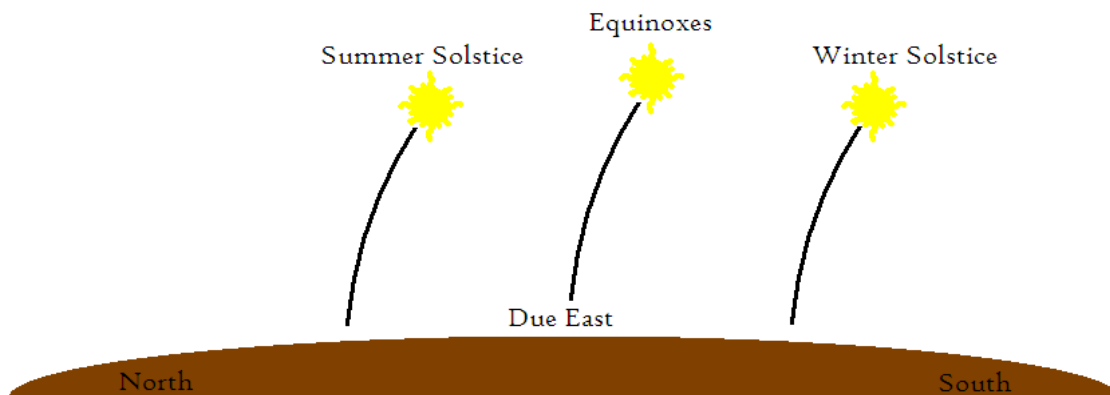
East	<i>-tsitsír sa hurú-</i>	the left of the sun
South	<i>-tsitsír</i>	towards the sun
West	<i>-tsitsír sa xáha-</i>	right of the sun
North	<i>-tsitsír sa xhísa-</i>	the back of the sun

Evening

East	<i>-sárhásin sa xhísa-</i>	behind the dusk
South	<i>-sárhásin sa hurú-</i>	the left of dusk
West	<i>-sárhásin</i>	the dusk
North	<i>-sárhásin sa xáha-</i>	right of dusk

These directions can be thought of in an extremely general sense not the precise cardinal directions humans think of for two reasons, one of which is that precise directions are not really needed for navigating when one flies, from a high enough vantage point it is easy to see mountains, rivers and so forth and so only general directions are needed for the most part. The second (and more subtle) reason is that both the sun and the moon's apparent "dawning" and "dusking" change throughout the course the year, a fact I was not aware of until I began to read Davis' papers (and subsequently did some research on the subject on my own). This motion is shown in the following diagram (note that the apparent positions are identical on the western horizon as well):

Apparent Solar Positions Throughout the Year



Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Before learning a little bit more about celestial mechanics, I believed the commonly known truism that the sun rose in the east and set in the west. This is generally true but it is also incorrect as the sun will only rise *due east* only *two days in the year*, namely the Vernal and Autumnal Equinoxes. Because of the tilt of the Earth and its rotation, the sun rises slightly to the *north* of due east from around March 21st to September 21st (from the Vernal to Autumnal Equinoxes) and slightly *south* of due east from September 21st to March 21st (from the Autumnal to Vernal Equinoxes). This seems to be a relatively minor concern to us indoor-dwelling city folk whose only outside experiences involve walking to and from the car but to all ancient cultures, people who are outdoors for long periods of time and the Shúna, this fact is so apparent and obvious there is almost no need to mention it (a dragon with the very descriptive name of Slit Belly found the need to explain this fact to Howard to be extremely amusing and mercilessly teased him about it so much that Howard simply stopped visiting him, writing in his notes that “apparently even dragons can be asses.”)

This fact might seem interesting or just plain useless but this factor must be taken into consideration when attempting to understand Srínawésin and the directionality of the Kindred when they speak. “East” as an absolute direction (as most humans tend to think of it) simply does not exist to the Shúna because direction is tied to the location of the sun and moon when they rise and these locations change through the year! Therefore any attempt to assign absolute directionality to a draconic mindset is doomed to fail from the start and it is vital to understand that when a dragon says what is translated into English as “east,” he or she is very likely to mean something entirely different than what a modern human might consider to be “east.” Additionally, the motion of the sun is much more regular and predictable than the apparent rising and setting of the moon against the horizon as the moon is inclined 5° from the plane of the Ecliptic and therefore can rise much farther northward or southward in relation to the sun throughout the year and this relation slowly changes over a cycle of nineteen or so years (known as the Metonic Cycle).⁸ This means that if a dragon gave directions to a particular locale from another location at two different times of the year the directional adjectives the Sihá used would *subtly change* simply because the locations of the moon and the sun changes during the intervening time!

§7.8.2. Lunar and Seasonal Names

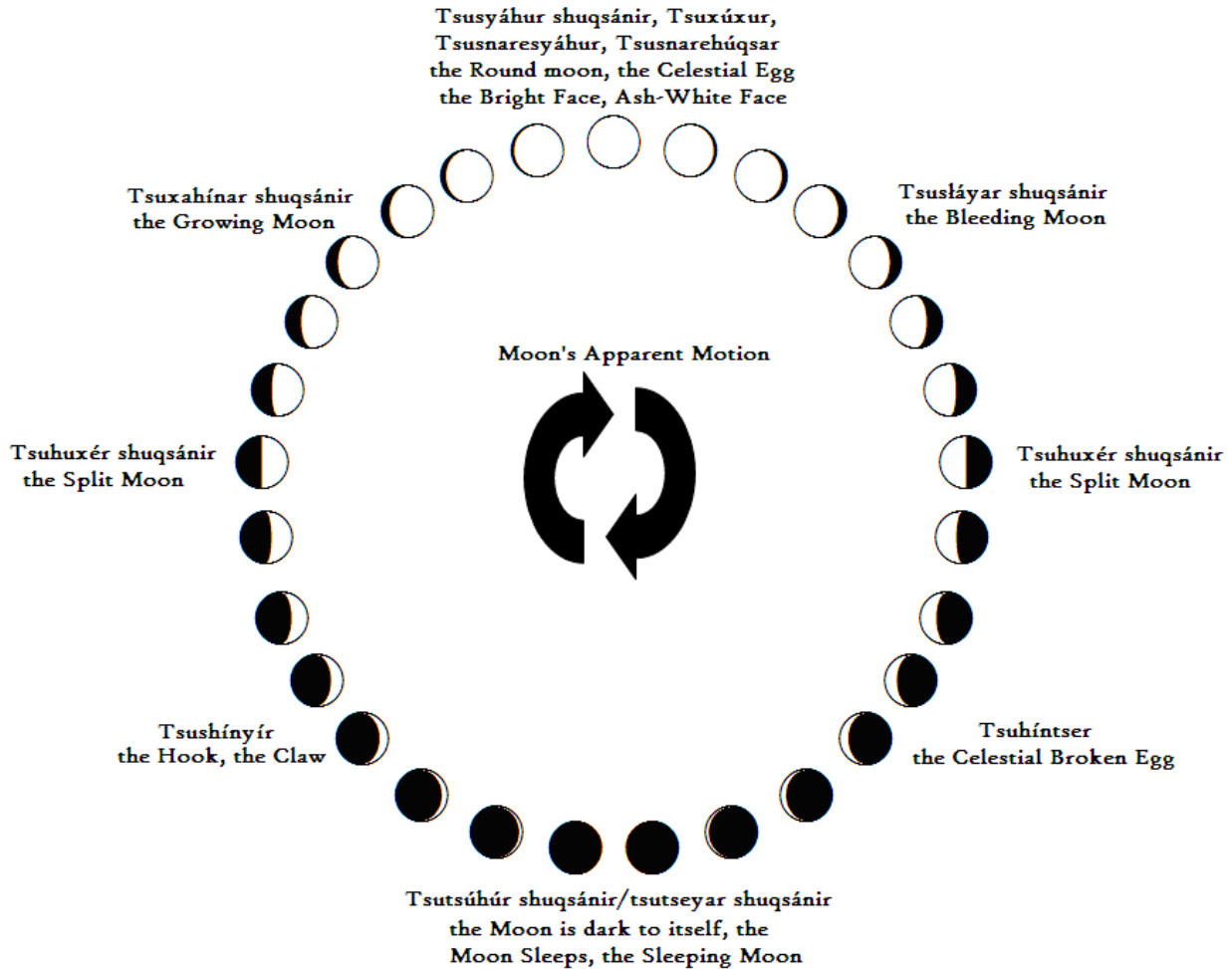
As noted previously the draconic conception of “time” is extremely different than that of a human’s but despite this they do recognize two major types of change and use them if needed. The first major cycle of change is that of the moon from month to month. The lunar names which occur in Davis’ notes are:

Phase	Srínawésin	Translation
No moon	<i>Tsutsúhúr shuqsánir/tsutséyar shuqsánir</i> <i>-tséya sa qsánir, tsuqsánitséyar</i>	the Moon is dark to itself, the Sleeping Moon, the Sleepy Moon
New moon	<i>Tsushínyír</i>	the Hook, the Claw
Waxing Half Moon	<i>Tsuhuxér shuqsánir</i>	the Split Moon
Waxing Gibbous	<i>Tsuxahínar shuqsánir</i>	the Growing Moon
Full Moon	<i>Tsusyáhur shuqsánir, Tsuxúxur,</i> <i>Tsusnareyáhur, Tsusnarehúqsar</i>	the Round Moon, the Celestial Egg The Bright Face, Ash-White Face
Waning Gibbous	<i>Tsusláyar shuqsánir</i>	the Bleeding Moon
Waning Half Moon	<i>Tsuhuxér shuqsánir</i>	the Split Moon
Waning Crescent	<i>Tsuhíntser</i>	the Celestial Broken Egg

⁸ For specific information on these process see: Penprase, Bryan E., *The Power of Stars: How Celestial Observations Have Shaped Civilization*, pages 9 & 14.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

The lunar phases can be depicted in a more dynamic form (which is closer to the way the moon actually moves around the earth and how the Shúna conceive of its movement than a simple list of names) with the following diagram:



Lunar and seasonal phases are recognized more for the effect they have on the timing of various prey animals, how and when they mate, when they have children, when they hibernate, when they migrate, and other such concerns, not really for “telling time” in the human sense. These phases are considered to be more a part of the environment or the prevailing conditions just like mentioning a location, the weather, temperature or the like.

The second major grouping of “time periods” the Shúna recognize is the concept of *wále-*. There seems to be no precise translation of *wále-* as Davis gives it several translations but the overarching meaning of this term is that of “season, time period, or a section of environmental conditions.” *Wále-* includes a vast array of human concepts including seasons (fall, winter, spring and summer), epochs of celestial events, and the cycles of rutting and birth of the various prey animals, the annual fishruns, migrations of birds and animals and even the vast stretches of time which continents drift across the face of the Earth Father. This term includes all of these concepts but does not mean any one of them in particular at the same time, the precise meaning of this general term being determined by the class which the speaker places it in. The various uses and translations of this term I have found in Davis’ notes are:

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

-wáter	celestial season (epoch, 26,000 year period of the precession of the equinoxes)
-wálesin	weather season (temperature and weather conditions (detailed further below))
-wálésš	draconic “season” or a lifetime of a Sihá (usually several wáter)
-wálen	large prey cycles of change (rutting, pregnancy, birth, and migrations, dependent on the species)
-wálex	small prey cycles of change (generally similar to those of large prey but dependent on the species involved)
-wálin	aquatic animal cycles (fishruns, spawning etc.)
-wáte(ré)shá	insect/bird migration cycles (dependent on what type of species one is referring to)
-wáleha	earth “season” (continents drifting, geological change, ice ages)
-wálistu?	“how many seasons?” or “seasons of what type?”
-wáléqx	smaller period of time (generally used to mean “day” or “little period of time (not really worth counting)”))

Not all of these cycles are used all of the time or if they are used they are not all equally common in everyday speech. The three main uses of the root *wáte-* are *-wálesin* “weather changes” and *-wálen/-wálex* “prey animal cycles.” *-Wálin* “aquatic animal cycles” is also used by Sihá who live near to and depend on rivers and seas and the fish which live in them. These larger sections of time are each broken down into smaller units, describing the state of the weather, the behavior of the animals and so forth:

-Wálesin “Weather Cycles”

Srínawésin Term	Translation	Approximate Human Equivalent
<i>-shusu sa wálesin</i>	Cold Time	Beginning of November to March
<i>(-tséya sa xítsarésu)</i>	(Sleeping Trees)	(Beginning of November to March)
<i>-šerá sa wálesin</i>	Budding Time	March to June
<i>-qxéha/tsitsí sa wálesin</i>	Hot/Warm Time	June to November

-Wálen/Wálex “Prey Animal Cycles”

Srínawésin Term	Translation	Approximate Human Equivalent
<i>-xerya sa wálen/wálex</i>	Rutting Time	October to November
<i>-šura/tséya sa wálen/wálex</i>	Lean/Sleeping Time	Late November to late February
<i>-qxéyé sa wálen/wálex</i>	Birthing Time	Late February to July
<i>-wanal sa wálen/wálex</i>	Good Hunting Time	July to October

-Wálin “Aquatic Animal Cycles”

Srínawésin Term	Translation	Approximate Human Equivalent
<i>-nara sa wálin</i>	Fishrun Time	Dependent on species and location
<i>-wanal sa wálin</i>	Many-Fish Time	Dependent on species and location
<i>-thanrá sa wálin</i>	Fish Spawning Time	Dependent on species and location
<i>`-séwanal sa wálin</i>	Without Fish Time	Dependent on species and location

There are several caveats about the above charts. Firstly the approximate human equivalents are just that, *approximate*. Dragons do not conceive of either weather or their prey as obeying strict constraints or actions which they “should” or “ought” to be doing at a specific time. These terms are *descriptive* not *proscriptive* and merely describe what is happening at the moment or what *probably*

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

will be happening at a certain date. Therefore, the “Cold Time” does not begin on a certain date but rather whenever it actually becomes cold. The Fishrun Time does not begin at a particular time, but whenever the fish actually begin to swim upstream to their spawning grounds. Also, many of these terms will change slightly depending upon what sort of species the Kindred is speaking about as animals will begin rutting, giving birth and so on at different times. These periods of time *generally* correspond but do not always occur at the same time. Lastly, these terms are those used by the Northern Latitudinal dragons so they refer to environmental and predatory conditions which they see at *their latitudes* but these terms would not be universal to all the Shúna. A Tropical Latitudinal speaker in Australia will obviously use different types of terminology not only because he or she speaks an entirely different dialect but also because they see entirely different weather conditions, hunt different animals and so forth. These draconic “seasons” revolve entirely upon *actual* conditions and situations, not according to proscribed future conditions as modern humans tend to think of them as. Therefore there are no “late” winters or “early” summers in the draconic mindset, only cold or warm periods that last slightly shorter or longer than others in past *-tsitsíwésin* “years.”

One final characteristic on how the Kindred denote seasonal changes through the course of the year is the changing names used to refer to “the sun” during its yearly path, names which specify its characteristics during those periods. Although the root *-tsitsír* ‘warm celestial thing’ is by far the most common term used to describe “the sun,” a dragon can refer to a season or time simply by mentioning *which* sun was or is in the sky at the moment he or she is talking about. Davis recorded seven commonly used terms in his notes and also observed that these phrases tended to be used more by dragons who lived in a more northern clime (who spoke either Northern Latitudinal or Artic Srínawésin) than those in the south.

The seven common terms are:

Srínawésin Term	Translation	Corresponding Seasonal Period
<i>-natsar</i>	“Cool Celestial Thing”	Autumn to early Winter
<i>-hasar tsintsínáqx</i>	“Celestial Thing on the Horizon”	Depth of Winter
<i>-shusur</i>	“Cold Celestial Thing”	Winter to Spring
<i>-hírnar</i>	“Low-in-the-Sky Thing”	Winter to Spring
<i>-tsitsír</i>	“Warm Celestial Thing”	Generally Spring to Midsummer
<i>-qxéhar</i>	“Burning Celestial Thing”	Middle of Summertime
<i>-réha sa syáhur</i>	“Blazing Bright Celestial Thing”	Middle of Summertime

In this way a dragon can say things such as:

Sahuhéyatsúlá tsnasánu sa qswátséth⁹ qsárréha sa syáhur nán šayxwána šayxsnahé narúnásuranáqx nan!

I tracked that female moose across the entire tundra that **hot summer day** (Lit. under the Blazing Bright Celestial Thing) and finally caught her, sank my teeth into her and shook her until she was dead!

§7.8.3. Numerals

As strange as it seems the Kindred appear to *possess no numerals in their language whatsoever*. If they do exist, I have yet to find an instance of them in any of Davis’ notes, although there is a possibility that they appear but either he did not ever record them or none of his subjects ever used them in his presence. Although this might seem bizarre to a modern human, it makes a great deal of

⁹ The use of the root *qswátsa-* ‘tundra, cold empty land’ with the Class XI Dead suffix *-éth* in this context implies that the land was quiet and still because it was so hot during the summertime rather than because it was cold and icy.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

sense in retrospect. Humanity is extremely concerned with counting, enumerating and calculating virtually everything we can get our hands on, but this habit comes primarily from the desire to count time, days, months, years and seasons. It is believed that the nightly passage of the moon overhead and the monthly change in its phases was one of the primary ways in which ancient humans counted nights and seasons and thus what food they were likely to find, whether they should prepare for winter, what animals they might hunt and so forth. Because we have taken the concept of counting and numerals into virtually every conceivable aspect of our lives, it is difficult to imagine why a race would have no need for counting.

The Shúna, in comparison, do not farm or forage for plants, and their senses are so incredibly sharp that they can much more easily determine what animals are nearby to hunt simply by listening, smelling and looking rather than counting out moons and nights to hypothesize when caribou will be migrating. None of Davis' sources ever talks about counting in any of his notes and he appears to have never asked about the issue of counting, but I would not be at all surprised if the Shúna have no numbers whatsoever as they are almost completely irrelevant to them and their lives. Although *specific* numerals never occur in any of Davis' notes on several occasions, the Kindred do appear to possess some extremely general ways of referring to numbers, the most notable is the root *heshú-* or 'a clawful' referring to the approximate number of small stones required to fill up the forepaw of the speaker. This is not in any way exact, but seems to indicate between 50 to 100 of whatever the speaker is talking about.

Another word in Davis' notes is the root *susa-* 'double, twin, two' which can be used to describe any pair of objects and "the number two" in certain instances, although these are rare. Other than general numerical classifiers such as that, it appears as if dragons have no expression in their language to speak about specific numbers, although this might be a case more of missing evidence than actual fact.

§7.8.4. Constellations and Skywatching

Constellations, asterisms and 'pictures in the sky' are common features in all human societies across the world. There is no human society which does not look up at the night sky and arrange the stars into meaningful pictures and images. This, of course, applies to humans and as with all things the way in which we look at the night sky is conditioned by our natures. And since our nature is extremely social, our brains are physically built to find meaningful and 'human-like' shapes in random patterns and thereby assign *social* meanings to these patterns about which we can weave stories, draw conclusions, illustrate moral points and other socially-oriented ways in which human societies have traditionally participated in the sky.¹⁰

By this time I doubt I have to say that the Shúna are *extremely different* from we *qxnéhiréx* and so the way they look at the sky is very different than ours. Dragons have an *extremely close* nature with the sky and the stars. It is a constant feature in their worlds not only because of the ability of many dragons to fly but also because they can see the stars through the glare of the sun during full daylight, so the stars are 'always out' for the Shúna. Many individual stars have specific names and are recognized instantly by the Shúna, day or night, and are used in navigation and orientation. Although dragons have a close connection to the stars they both do and do not habitually pick out shapes in the stars above and form them into meaningful patterns.

Davis believed that the primary reason for this was that constellations are *not* the immutable pictures in the sky to the Kindred that they are to humans because the Kindred live so long they can actually see the stars slowly shift and their positions change relative to the earth as well as one

¹⁰ Due to my lack of knowledge about stars in general and astronomy in particular, most of the following star-maps and other non-Shúna-related information in this section is based on two books; *The Power of Stars: How Celestial Observations Have Shaped Civilization* by Bryan E. Penprase, and *The Constellations: An Enthusiast's Guide to the Night Sky* by Lloyd Motz and Carol Nathanson. Both these texts are referenced in the Bibliography.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

another. Although this process takes an exceedingly long time (for a human) it appears to happen fairly “quickly” to the Shúna, therefore there is little reason to assign definite meaning or shapes to the stars. This is similar to the fact that humans do not “name” cloud formations, which are subject to rapid change throughout the day so it would be ridiculous to expect us to name a cloud “The Dog” and expect to look back in a short while and find that cloud at all, much less in the same shape. This is the same for the Shúna and star-shapes for in a “short while” they will change so why have a particular name for them? This is approximately how the Kindred view their relationship with the stars, although it is not a perfect analogy. Stars move much slower in relation to the lives of dragons than clouds do to a human’s life, it will typically take about 10,000 years before stars will alter their positions enough to render asterisms no longer recognizable and while this is relatively “quick” to a species which will live probably 100,000 years, it is not as quick as clouds will change to a human’s timespan.

Although Davis never mentions this, I would guess that another reason that dragons do not have the types of constellations which humans have is because since they are not as inherently social as humans, their brains are not built to recognize shapes in the same manner as people. The human brain is structured in such a way that it is always looking for *socially important* shapes relevant to our lives, faces, human forms and the like. This is why it is so easy to see faces in cliff sides, human forms in mountains or clouds, or a pair of eyes looking at us from the random pattern of the weave of a carpet, our brains are always looking for those shapes. Humans have also lived throughout most of our evolution as a prey species for large cats, snakes and eagles, so we also have evolved to constantly see the shapes of predatory eyes in the world around us, it was a simple matter of survival for our ancestors. I would hypothesize that dragons—which are not social at all and have never been hunted for their meat—have brains which operate extremely differently and thus do not “look out” for those sorts of shapes which appear so readily to human sight. Also, a significant portion of the draconic population lives underwater or beneath the earth and their contact with the stars in general is limited so they have little reason to look at them to see interesting shapes in the night sky.

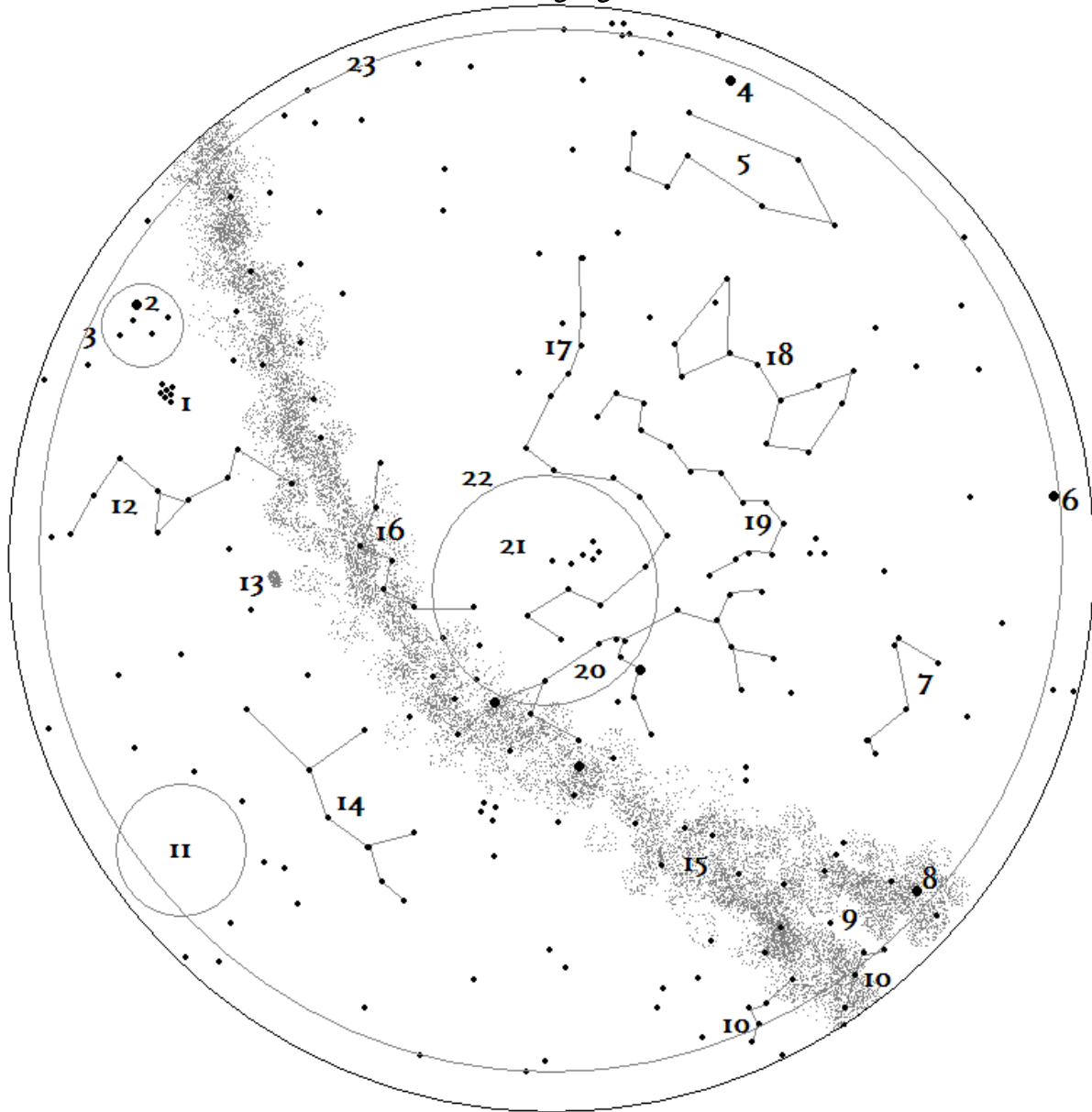
The Kindred *do* see shapes in the sky above them, although they are extremely different in nature and quality than human constellations. Essentially, there is only one “constellation” which is recognized throughout the entire draconic species, even though most humans would not consider it a “constellation” *per se*. The only pan-dragon asterism is *Tsúhúr xaháStéxur* ‘The Night Mother’ or the glittering span of the Milky Way galaxy as it arches above the night sky. As noted in the cosmology section above, this glittering road is viewed as the ancestral spirit of the Night Mother wrapping around the Earth Father, the Great Fiery Egg and all life which lives in and on the Earth Father, (most importantly the Kindred themselves and only slightly less important the prey animals which feed the Shúna). This view was encountered in every dragon which Davis asked, including Wave of the Sea, the sea drake who said that all sea dragons which she knew of saw their ancestor curling around them in the sky.

Although the Night Mother is the only pan-draconic “constellation” Davis could find, he did note that the Kindred enjoy playing similar games with the stars that humans like doing with the clouds (particularly on sunny summer days while lying lazily on a grassy hill). Dragons often look up at the sky and try and find interesting shapes and images in the stars and sometimes these shapes and names “stick” eventually becoming a common name for that grouping of stars for a mated pair of dragons as well as their offspring. These “names” will sometimes spread to other dragons and if it is a particularly good one will become a “common name” for a group of Sihá, typically in a “small” geographic area (from the Shúna’s point of view). These constellations are *not* the “names” of star-groupings, at least not for all the Shúna. Davis noted that a dragon in one area will often see a totally different configuration in the same group of stars, despite living nearby to another Kindred who will call those same stars according to the “common name” of the dragons in the area.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

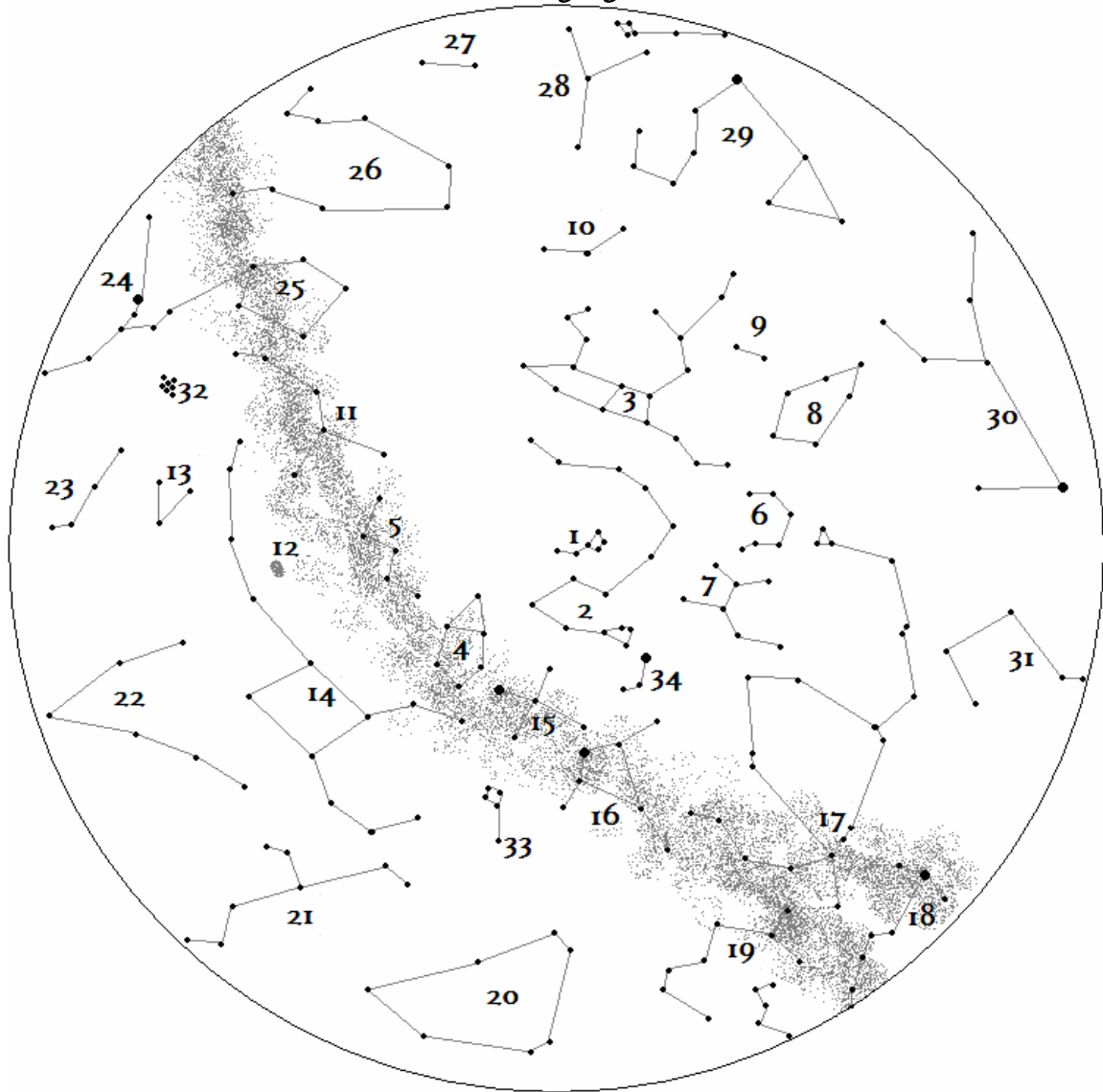
Most of the constellations that Davis noted were described to him by Bloody Face and Moonchild, although they seemed to be fairly common to most of the dragons he spoke to in the British Isles although neither he or I can guarantee they will be recognized by all of the Shúna in that area. The constellations generally recognized by the British Shúna are shown on the following page (with a secondary map showing the modern human constellations on the page after that for comparison):

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Shátsár</i> “Bunch of Celestial Eggs” (Pleiades) | 13. <i>Sláya sa Šanir</i> “Blood Spot” |
| 2. <i>Sláyar/Hushír</i> “The Bloody/The Wound” (Aldebaran) | 14. <i>Xiyer</i> “The Wolf” |
| 3. <i>Łasur</i> “Herd of Celestial Prey Animals” | 15. <i>Šúrir/Tsúhúr xaháStéxur</i> “The Glittering Span/The Night Mother” |
| 4. <i>Shuxur</i> “The Spitter” (Regulus) | 16. <i>Rárar</i> “The Ribcage” |
| 5. <i>Hútsur</i> “The Skull” | 17. <i>Séyur</i> “Celestial River” |
| 6. <i>Nahunar</i> “Blue-then-White” (Spica) | 18. <i>Xélárar</i> “The Butterfly” |
| 7. <i>Sruthar</i> “Male Rabbit” | 19. <i>Qxútsúwéth wisaNahír/Wášáwér sa Sihész</i> “Pearl String/The Celestial Star Dragon” |
| 8. <i>Swehí sa Úrun sa Wášáwér</i> “The Red and Blue Stars” (Antares) | 20. <i>Tsutháhér shuSriyur</i> “The Charging Elk” |
| 9. <i>Hanráar</i> “The Yawning Mouth” (of the Night Mother) | 21. <i>Šátha sa Łusar</i> “The Black Place” |
| 10. <i>Sláya sa Húráwér</i> “Blood Dribbles” | 22. <i>Xúšéhawér shuWášáwér</i> “The Always Circling Stars” |
| 11. <i>Xnúyar</i> “Celestial Sleeping Place” | 23. <i>Xéryur</i> “Hunting Track of the Sky” |
| 12. <i>Súhur</i> “Diving Celestial Hawk” | |

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Ursa Minor (Little Bear) | 18. Scorpio (The Scorpion) |
| 2. Draco (The Dragon) | 19. Sagittarius (The Archer) |
| 3. Ursa Major (Greater Bear) | 20. Capricorn (The Sea-Goat) |
| 4. Cepheus (The King) | 21. Aquarius (The Water Bearer) |
| 5. Cassiopeia (The Queen) | 22. Pisces (The Fish) |
| 6. Corona Borealis (Northern Crown) | 23. Aries (The Ram) |
| 7. Hercules | 24. Taurus (The Bull) |
| 8. Boötes | 25. Auriga (The Chariot) |
| 9. Canes Venatici (Hunting Dogs) | 26. Gemini (The Twins) |
| 10. Lynx | 27. Canis Minor (The Lesser Dog) |
| 11. Perseus | 28. Cancer (The Crab) |
| 12. Andromeda Galaxy | 29. Leo (The Lion) |
| 13. Triangulum (The Triangle) | 30. Virgo (The Maiden) |
| 14. Pegasus and Andromeda | 31. Libra (The Scales) |
| 15. Cygnus (The Swan) | 32. Pleiades (The Seven Sisters) |
| 16. Aquila (The Eagle) | 33. Daphnia (The Dolphin) |
| 17. Ophiuchus (The Serpent Bearer) | 34. Lyra (The Harp) |

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Many of these “constellations” have a story or at least a rationale behind their naming, much like the legends humans give to their constellations. The dragon name is given first, followed by the human astronomical equivalent then a description as well as any legends or stories which the name derives from.

- Shátsár* (Pleiades star cluster): The “Bunch of Celestial Eggs” this constellation refers to is the legendary first clutch of eggs of the Night Mother and Earth Father which birthed the first dragons. The Night Mother swallowed the broken eggs along with the dead eggs of the Sun and the Moon and they continue to move through her body and can be seen in the sky above.
- Sláyar/Hushír* (Aldebaran in Taurus): In modern human astronomy this star forms the eye of the Bull of Taurus but to the dragons it is named *Sláyar* ‘Bloody’ or sometimes *Hushír* or ‘The Wound,’ both of which refer to the star’s bloody red color. Davis records a legend that this is a bloody wound in the side of the Night Mother caused laying the eggs which the Shúna and their siblings were born from.
- Łasur* (Hyades cluster in Taurus): The draconic name means “Herd of Celestial Prey Animals” and refers to the grouping (or “herd”) of stars which make up the Hyades cluster. This name does not seem to come from any story or legend (which was recorded in Davis’ notes anyway) and appears to come primarily from their appearance.
- Shuxur* (Regulus in Leo): This bright star is found in the human constellation of Leo and the draconic term *Shuxur* means simply ‘The Spitter.’ Davis believed this was because every summer the Leonid Meteor Shower appears to come from Leo in general and Regulus in particular and the name refers to the star ‘spitting out’ the meteors.
- Hútsur* (parts of Leo): The “Skull” is formed out of most of the stars which make up the human constellation of Leo except for Regulus. Davis records no legend or story about this asterism and I believe that it simply refers to the (very) general outline of a horned dragon skull they appear to form.
- Nahunar* (Spica in Virgo): The draconic name for this star seems to have the connotation of ‘blue-white’ or possibly ‘blue-then-white.’ This seems to be a reference to the either the star’s color or perhaps that it is a binary star.
- Sruthar* (parts of Libra and Serpens?): The “Male Rabbit” is a dim constellation to human eyes and has not stories or legends. This constellation was pointed out by Bloody Face alone, but Moonchild didn’t think that these stars looked like anything, much less a male rabbit. I’m inclined to agree with Moonchild.
- Swehí sa Úrun sa Wášáwér* (Antares in Scorpio): The draconic name for this star translates to ‘Red and Blue Stars.’ This is a fitting name as what appears to be a single bloody red star to human eyes is actually a reddish star with a small blue companion to a dragon’s eyes or to a human with a telescope.
- Hanrár* (the dark space in the Milky Way between Sagittarius and Ophiuchus): This “constellation” isn’t a star-grouping *per se* but a dark space that appears to divide the Milky Way into two parts much like a mouth, which gives this asterism its name “The Yawning Mouth” of the Night Mother. To draconic eyes the Milky Way is the span of the Night Mother arching overhead (see *Šúrir/Tsúhúr xaháStéxur* below) and this section is her mouth opening wide. Interestingly, at this current age the Sun is in this area of the sky during the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year and the Night Mother appears to “swallow” the Sun, making it dark. This effect has occurred for the last several thousand years and is therefore a “transitory” but interesting conjunction to the Shúna.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

- Sláya sa Húráwér* (parts of Scorpio and Ophiuchus): The “Blood Dribbles” are the stars which appear to dribble down from the Night Mother’s mouth like blood, giving them their name. Not all the Kindred Davis spoke with referred to these stars as *Sláya sa Húráwér*, so this might be a name only Bloody Face uses.
- Xnúyar* (dark space between Aquarius and Pisces): This is also not a “constellation” but a dark space in the sky which forms the “Celestial Sleeping Place.” According to Davis’ conversations with Moonchild, this refers back to either the *Shátsár* “Bunch of Celestial Eggs” or the Sun. The idea is that the Sun in particular makes a journey across the sky (and through the stars of the Zodiac) every year and this is the “empty place” where the Sun sleeps for a moment in its journey. During the current age this is where the sun is during the Spring Equinox so this story might refer back to when, due to precession, the Winter Solstice was here.
- Súhur* (parts of Aries, Triangulum and Perseus): The “Celestial Diving Hawk” does not appear to have any stories or legends but is just an interesting shape Moonchild pointed out to Davis.
- Sláya sa Šánir* (Andromeda Galaxy): The “Blood Spot” is the name of the Andromeda Galaxy which lies near the band of the Milky Way and seems to be part of the “bloody” complex of designations generally assigned to the Night Mother.
- Xiyer* (parts of Pegasus and Aquarius): This grouping is not a very widely recognized asterism, in fact only Black Honey mentioned it to Howard. She named this group after a particularly fearsome wolf which one bad winter refused to let her drive it off its kill and she had to kill it. Black Honey named these stars in honor of this tenacious (or foolish) wolf.
- Šúrir/Tsúhúr xaháSléxur* (the Milky Way): This asterism is the only Shúna-wide constellation as it is named after “the Night Mother,” the ancestral progenitor of the dragons. It is also described as “The Glittering Span” which is also a name for the Night Mother. The entire Milky Way is seen as this great being arching overhead in the night sky, the stars are her glittering scales as she winds around the world.
- Rárar* (Cassiopeia, Cepheus and Perseus): The “Ribcage” has no stories or legends, but is a widely recognized constellation among many northern dragons. Bloody Face told Davis that he originally heard the name from a dragon in Norway and the name is recognized across Scandinavia, Siberia and even North America.
- Séyur* (parts of Ursa Major and Draco): Interestingly, the Shúna do not see a draconic shape in the stars humans call “The Dragon” but instead see “The Celestial River” due to their winding shape as they twist through the sky overhead. This name does not appear to refer to any stories.
- Xélárar* (portions of Ursa Major, Boötes and Canes Venatici): The “Butterfly” seems to be at odds with the generally bloody and hunting-oriented nature of the draconic sky, but there it is nonetheless. This constellation is one which Moonchild picked out for Howard but Bloody Face and several of the others apparently did not see or recognize.
- Qxútsúwéth wisaNaír/Wášáwér sa Sihěš* (Ursa Major, the Corona Borealis and Hercules): There are two different names for this same group of stars, the “Celestial Pearl String” and “The Celestial Star-Dragon.” The first name is simply descriptive of how these stars appear, as a string of bright pearls, but the second name seems to refer to a well-known and extremely ancient story about a dragon named Sun Catcher, who was curious about what lay “beyond the *-hashasin* (observable atmosphere).” She constantly flew higher and higher, attempting to see what was “up there” until one day she simply wasn’t seen again. The theories vary from she simply flew too high and died, the Night Mother was offended by her and slew her, she got lost in the

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

darkness above the sky, or she found out there was nothing out there and flew to a far-away land in shame after boasting she would catch the sun if she needed to (thus her name). Another theory (held by several British dragons) was she flew higher and higher and got lost among the stars and eventually appeared among them, forming the Celestial Star Dragon.

Tsutháhér shuSriyur (portions of Cygnus, Aquila, Hercules, Ophiuchus, Lyra, and Draco): This sprawling constellation covers a section of sky which encompasses six human constellations. “The Charging Elk” appears as a huge star-made elk with its horns lowered and seems to be charging across the sky and is a very impressive constellation (and to me at least it looks more like what the Kindred say it is then the corresponding human constellations do).

Šátha sa Łusar (the dark patch of sky between Ursa Minor, Cassiopeia and Draco): The “Black Place” is another of the “constellations without stars” which the Shúna seem to enjoy. It has no story or legend and seems to be merely a descriptive title for this dark, relatively starless portion of the sky.

Xúšéhawér shuWášáwér (the various circumpolar stars): This area of the sky is called “the Always Circling Stars” or the “Always Encircling Stars” Davis believed that this name does not refer to the fact that these stars appear to circle around the star we humans call Polaris (which is a cycle way to short for dragons to really take note of), but in fact refer to the fact that these stars slowly ‘wobble’ across the sky due to precession and make a massive circuit around the sky over the 26,000 year precessional period. This circuit makes various stars “the pole star” throughout the cycle, turning across vast stretches of time and slowly alternating the appearance of the sky itself.

Xéryur (the Zodiac): The “Hunting Track of the Sky” is the name the Kindred give the stars of the Zodiac, in reference to the way the Sun and Moon move through these stars throughout a year and month respectively. “The Zodiac” is not a stable thing to draconic eyes as the sun’s movements change throughout a precession period but also because the stars that are in this area slowly change. Therefore the *Xéryur* is simply the area which the Sun and Moon pass, regardless of what stars are in that path.

Although the “Constellation Game” is fairly common throughout all land-dwelling Shúna, most dragons within a linguistic group will call *specific stars, nebulae and planets* certain names and often these particular names will have stories and tales attributed to them much like constellations do for the *qxnéhiréx*. Particularly named celestial objects which are either not on the above map at all or move through it so quickly that they cannot be accurately depicted are indicated below along with the human constellation they appear in, the reasons Davis recorded for their particular names and any stories or legends about them:

Asteroids (invisible to the naked human eye): There are several asteroids which are clearly visible to draconic eyes, most notably Ceres and Juno, the two largest asteroids in the solar system. There appears to be no name for specific asteroids and any visible rocky celestial bodies seem to be simply called *Rihu sa Wášáwér* ‘Small Stars’ or *Wáhín sa Wášáwér* ‘Wandering Stars.’

Betelgeuse (in Orion): Commonly called *Łalín sa Wášár* the ‘Rosy’ or ‘Flowery Star’ due to its slight reddish coloring.

Comets (periodic and haphazard): Comets have many names in Srínawésin, most of which focus on their physical appearance and unusually haphazard nature. The most common term for a comet is *-hašwar* which seems to have no other meaning than

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

‘comet.’ Other terms include *Šlisa sa Wášár* ‘Weeping Star,’ *Shuxu sa Wášár* ‘Spitting Star,’ *Šatha sa Wášár* ‘Misty Star’ and *Wáhín sa Wášár* ‘Traveling Star’ (not to be confused with the term the identical term above or *Wahínar* below).

Jupiter (planet): Jupiter’s Srínawésin name is *Wahínar* which Davis glosses as ‘Gorged’ or ‘Distended Stomach,’ obviously a reference to the huge size of the planet which must be clearly visible to the Kindred’s eyes.

Mars (planet): This planet is usually named either *Syehúr* ‘The Looper’ or *Sláya sa Swehír* ‘Bloody Red.’ The first name appears to refer to the enormous retrograde loops this planet undergoes while Earth is passing it by in their respective orbits of the Sun, making it look like the planet makes a gigantic hoop in the sky. The second obviously refers to the planet’s reddish color.

Mercury (planet): Mercury’s draconic name is *Thratsúr* which means ‘Darting’ or ‘There-and-Gone,’ an appropriate name due to Mercury’s high speed around the Sun and that it moves quickly across the sky.

Moon: The moon is a very important body to the Shúna for a variety of reasons and this can be seen by the large number of terms that are used to describe this silvery body as it waxes and wanes throughout its monthly cycle. Only the sun’s various names come close to the number of terms used to describe the moon, most of which have already been discussed in §7.8.2. **Lunar and Seasonal Names** above but the prototypical name for this celestial body is *-qsánir* which means ‘Celestial Changer’ (referring to its constantly altering shape). Additional names include *Rúrín sa Xúxur* or ‘Icy Celestial Egg’ and *Shusu sa Xúxur* ‘Cold Celestial Egg,’ both of which refer to the draconic creation story described in §1.1. **How Dragons Came to Be** above.

Neptune (planet): The planet Neptune was only recently discovered by humans for the simple fact that it is too far away to be seen by the naked human eye. The Shúna, on the other hand are barely able to pick this planet’s faint bluish glow out from the stars around it and only on extremely clear nights. The Shúna call this planet *Shuru sa Sukúthar* or ‘The Far Away Planet’ which is a fair description of it. They also appear to call it *Shusu sa Sukúthar* ‘Cold Planet’ as well as *Tséya sa Sukúthar* ‘Sleeping Planet’ because it moves so slowly.

Orion’s Belt (in Orion): These three stars were called *Xhítsar* by Bloody Face and *Xlétsar* by several other dragons Davis talked with. The word seems to derive from an *extremely ancient* (as in multiple draconic generational) way of saying ‘three, tripartite’ although this rare numerical reference seems to appear only in reference to these stars and not in common speech any more.

Orion Nebula (in Orion): This nebula is typically called *Šáqxér* which appears to have no particular meaning beyond the name of the celestial body itself. Davis still believed it meant something, but none of his sources ever mentioned knowing what it was.

Rigel (in Orion): This bright star is called *Susar* or ‘The Pair’ because this is actually two bright stars, which draconic eyes can separate out on clear nights.

Saturn (planet): This slowly moving planet was universally called *Xanxír* or ‘Yellowish’ by all of Davis’ sources. Apparently the heightened eyesight of the Shúna can pick out the yellowish color of the planet on clear nights, which leads to this name. *Shínyí sa Sukúthar* ‘Hooked Planet’ occurred on several occasions and this term seems to refer to the Saturn’s rings which are partially visible to the Shúna on a clear night and appear like little hooks on either side of the planet.

Sirius (Canis Major): The Shúna call this star *Sláhínar* which means ‘alternating colors.’ I believe this a reference to the fact that the star is a binary system and that to the

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Kindred's eyes it seems to alternate both in its brightness as well as in its colors due to the smaller star passing in front of the larger.

Sun: Off all the celestial bodies in the sky only the sun has as many terms used to describe it as the moon, most of which have been discussed above in §7.8.2. **Lunar and Seasonal Names** but the main root used to describe the sun is *-tsitsír* or 'Warm Celestial Thing.' Other names include *Qxéha sa Xúxur* 'Fiery Egg' and *Réha sa Xúxur* 'Flaming Egg' both of which stem from the draconic creation story above. Davis notes that *Qxéha sa Wáśár* 'Fiery Ember' occurs on several occasions (particularly by Artic Srínawésin-speaking dragons who called it *Qšéha sa Wáçár* in their dialect)¹¹ and a mostly nocturnal dragon named Owl Claw called it *Sánsár* 'Annoying Celestial Thing' at least once.

Uranus (planet): This distant planet is named *Harir* by the Shúna, a name which appears to have no translation or referent other than the planet itself. Just like Neptune, this planet has only recently been discovered by humans while the Shúna can see it quite clearly in the sky and with much greater ease than they can see Neptune. At least one dragon referred to Uranus as *Narha sa Syéstu sa Suhúthar* 'the Green and Blue Planet,' describing its watery green coloration.

Venus (planet): Venus' draconic name is *Wahałar* which seems to have no meaning beyond the name of the planet itself. I would hypothesize it means something akin to 'Bright' due to the fact Venus is the third brightest object in the sky after the Sun and Moon, but I have no evidence to back that up and Davis does not note a gloss for the root *wahał-*.

These are all of the star names Davis noted, although there are sure to be others, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere, which is not visible from the areas which Northern Latitudinal Srínawésin is spoken.

§7.8.5. Borrowed Words

Srínawésin rarely borrows words from other languages primarily because throughout most of its history there haven't been any other languages from which it can borrow from. Secondly, dragons tend to describe things in terms of *what they do* and since there is usually a draconic word for such things there is little reason to borrow a term from another species. Davis writes that both Black Honey and Born of Fire called planes *-raruwésin* or 'metal sky-things' while Bloody Face called almost any metallic object Howard had as simply *-raruqx* 'metal-thing,' regardless of its function, whether it was a lighter, a knife, a can of gas or a metallic camping cup. Since most of these objects have absolutely no use to a dragon it is unlikely they would create a more specific word for them even if they wanted to.

One exception to this tendency was a rather humorous episode when Davis introduced beer to Tear of the Sun. She instantly declared it to be wonderful and asked what it was called to which he said "beer." Tear of the Sun didn't speak English and had never really attempted to learn any languages of the *qxnéréx* so she did her best and called it *hírsu* which is made up of the closest sound she could make of its English name (*hír-*) and the Class IX Animate suffix *-su* indicating it was a liquid or animate. The news of the wonderful liquid rapidly spread and within a few moons other Sihá were asking him for it.¹² Several other names were attempted such as *-łayú sa haxúsu* 'bitter water' or *-washí sa haxúsu* 'sharp water,' but eventually all the British dragons were calling it simply

¹¹ Note the symbol 'ç' represents the strange 'rolled s' sound maintained in the Artic variety of Srínawésin but lost in the Northern Latitudinal dialect.

¹² He notes that his already stretched student budget was almost broken by the amount of money he spent on buying beer to give to dragons to make them more "cooperative." As an ex-college student I can sympathize although I wasn't giving it to dragons!

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

-*hirsu* ‘beer.’ Not only did Davis introduce what is most likely the first borrowed word into Srínawésin from human languages but he stumbled upon something which might have made draconic-human relations a little easier if someone had attempted it a long time ago!

§7.8.6. Euphemisms, Figures of Speech, Curses and Swearwords

All languages include euphemisms and figures of speech which often mean something entirely different than the literal meaning of the words which the phrases are made up of. Examples in English would be ‘you’re pulling my leg’ or ‘he has a silver tongue.’ In the first case it means simply ‘you’re joking’ or ‘you’re kidding me’ and has nothing to do with you actually physically pulling on my leg. ‘A silver tongue’ does not mean the subject literally has a silver-plated tongue in his or her mouth only that they are loquacious, endearing and charismatic. This section covers not only the way dragon’s use similar euphemisms in their own language but also how they use insulting terminology, which often is the same thing.

The Kindred’s euphemisms are, rather predictably, usually about hunting, stalking, killing, natural processes and other aspects of their world which they use to refer to other subjects much like the human examples above. A full list of any language’s euphemisms would be entirely impossible but there is a surprising number in Davis’ notes, so the Shúna obviously quite enjoy using them. The draconic euphemisms I have gleaned from Davis’ papers are below, all of which are presented in terms of speaking to or about another dragon:

Tsisrínawéxánits ni

“Twisting words up”

This indicates that the subject is joking, kidding, playing around and/or possibly lying.

Tsisruthawéqsuwéts tsinwáletséyax ni/tsiswéthawéqsuwéts tsinwáletséyax ni

“Hunting for rabbit in the lean season”

This phrase is used to indicate someone who is doing something in bad or poor conditions, either because they are a fool, don’t know any better or they are simply desperate. It also apparently has the connotation that even though a lot of work is going into something, there will be little reward for it.

Tsisrínawéreshuts ni

“Stirring/mixing words up”

An interesting phrase which means that one is thinking about what to say next, mulling over the best way to say something or otherwise thinking how to say something. It has a very interesting visual, similar to the English expression “turning it over in my mind.”

Tsišatharéqsuwéts ni

“Hunting for mist”

This term means that someone is doing something useless, foolish or which is essentially impossible to do, much like trying to hunt or grab the mist.

Tsiqseqsuwéts tsinšatharésin ni

“Hunting for something in the mist”

This phrase refers to the difficulty the Kindred sometimes have when it is misty and is related to the euphemism immediately above. The mist obscures the smells and sounds of possible prey and even impedes the incredibly acute draconic eyesight. This does not make it impossible to hunt but it makes it significantly more difficult and this phrase essentially means the same thing, something which is hard but not necessarily impossible or foolish.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Tsitsashalets innethéhayánáshnúthéqx ni

“Has a twisted mouth/lip”

A joker, a kidder, someone who makes puns and enjoys telling jokes.

Tsitsashaletéqx ithéhayánáqx innehášrúrésu ni

“His/her/your mouth has brambles”

This refers to someone with a sharp, cruel way of talking and is usually used towards a dragon the speaker has felt wronged by or otherwise insulted. It also can refer to someone who tells lies (which aren't automatically looked down upon by the Shúna, but if someone says this that means they *know* it's a lie and *that's* a problem!)

Xishuxúš qsinsíwayánáqx rísi!/Xishuxúš qsinsíwayánáqx híqs!

“Stop spitting into my mouth!”

I have never heard such a descriptive way of telling someone ‘stop telling lies!’ as this quaint little draconic saying which seems to imply something like ‘stop making me swallow your lies!’

Náwaxláqsíhúx áqxíhasax qxahasa nan!

“That prey-thing suddenly threw an iron-thing at me through the air!”

This phrase is one which is relatively recent and seems to be localized in Scandinavia, Europe, Britain and Russia. It is derived from a humorous story one Sihá was telling another about when she happened upon a group of humans. The Sihá in question—a female named Dawnglow—had just woken up from a long slumber and had not seen humans before and so was curious about what these little things were and what they were doing and her curiosity was understandably unwelcome. So they either threw a spear or axe or shot an arrow at her (she didn't know what it was exactly other than it was a *-waxláqx* or ‘iron thing’). She found this extremely funny (I doubt the humans did) and exclaimed the above phrase both when it happened and while relating the story. This phrase has since become a humorous way of saying someone did something surprising or unexpected (and usually futile as well!)

Tsiqxítsúqsáthits ríth/ Tsiqxítsúqsáthits hí!

“Swallow (your) tongue!”

This phrase essentially means to shut up or be silent. Note the first usage can be used jokingly with a friend; the second is highly insulting and should *never* be used unless you believe you can take on an offended dragon in a fight to the death.

Tsiqxarínsihéts sríhasés nisíwatsáhiwéqx nin!

“You're being like an ant in my scales!”

This means that the subject is being annoying, difficult or otherwise causing a problem to the speaker.

Xúxansírésunriwésu ulálinwésu nu...

“Flowers usually lure bees...”

This means someone is using something to their advantage or using a natural advantage for their own purposes. It can also be used to suggest that someone do something in this way. This phrase seems basically like the infamous honey vs. vinegar luring bees parable that my grandmother is so fond of telling me.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Xíhašěš ratúhasa'qs/xíhaše ratuhasés'qs

“He/she/you won’t turn away from me/I won’t turn away from him/her/you”

This phrase refers to a dragon who will not present his or her side towards the speaker, indicating a lack of trust and is used to mean “he/she/you don’t trust me” or “I don’t trust you” in the second case.

Tsixísarisets ni

“Biting at the tail.”

This simply means something or someone is being annoying, troublesome or otherwise difficult. It can also be used as *Tsisíwaxísarisa'n* “I’m biting at my own tail” to mean that one is doing thing in a way which are causing trouble to oneself or otherwise not very good.

Tsixánuwéx shiwéyásusawéx ni/tsixánuwéx shisáhesusawéx ni

“There are two female badgers fighting each other, there are two male badgers fighting each other”

This rather humorous phrase is used to refer to something which is better left alone or avoided. The various badger-related phrases which crop up in Davis’ notes indicates that the Shúna seem to have a very healthy respect for badgers, a remarkable feat, even for such tenacious and vicious little mammals.

The final element of this section is that of swearwords and cursing. There appears to be no such thing as what an English speaker understands as a “swearword” in Srínawésin, at least not which I have been able to determine from Howard’s copious notes. Terms such as *-sréhúš* ‘shit, feces’ or *-hanéš* ‘penis, male sexual organs’ simply do not have any sort of inherent negative, socially unacceptable or pejorative meaning to them any more than *-šawaha* ‘stone,’ *-háxusu* ‘puddle, pond’ or *-xniyaha* ‘dirt’ does to the Kindred. And there is a total lack of anything like English’s *fuck you*, *asshole*, *go fuck yourself* or Welsh’s *twill dy din* or other types of curses or swearwords.

The Kindred do have a fully developed system of insulting and discourteous terminology, it is simply different then the examples presented above. As written earlier in this paper, extremely explicit or over explained sentences are considered to be extremely rude and can be thought of the Srínawésin equivalent to lacing one’s sentences with swearwords among polite company. Certain terms such as *qsér* and *li* have an extremely condescending and insulting connotation to them which are thought of by the Kindred much like curse words and will illicit anger and deadly violence almost instantly (unless the speaker is *much* more powerful and dangerous then the listener). Additionally, an indirect way of insulting a Sihá (or now I suppose a human if they were to speak Srínawésin) is to refer to them as Class VI Inedible, indicating the speaker would not even deign to eat the listener, which is extremely insulting. For instance the exchange below:

Sáwxqsáthich?

Íš! Qsér qsahú!

Ššš! Tsiqxítsúqsáthíš li!

Did (you) eat it (a dead thing)?

Ugh! *Obviously* I didn’t!

Oh, shut up!

In the second sentence the speaker uses the highly insulting *qsér* enclitic while in the third sentence the speaker uses not only the insulting *li* enclitic but also refers to the listener as an inedible thing and is an *extremely* insulting reply. I created these sentences, but if Davis’ notes are based on reality a response like this would usually provoke a vicious and possibly lethal fight or at least be cause for not speaking to one another for a decade or two. Dragons for the most part prefer a little bit of creativity in their insults and are typically very inventive not only in their terminology but also in their complexity of insulting terms. Using an offensive term more then once in an exchange

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

is considered to be “lazy” and the mark of a fool (which is probably why they do not have such a thing as a set of specific swearwords) while interesting, insightful, cruel and complex insults are thought to be the mark of an intelligent individual and even an attractive feature in a mate. Dragons also appear to enjoy using poetical and lyrical forms in their offensive language (see section §7.10. *Xániwésin Poetry and Poetical Forms* immediately below) and—as counter-intuitive as it might be to a human—an insult which is vicious, lyrical, has poetic elements, is clever and complex can actually *stop* a fight as the speaker is obviously an intelligent individual and intelligent dragons are not something to be taken lightly, even by other dragons.

Davis’ notes include such exchanges as the following insults, which were spoken by Ash Tongue and Frost Song before their fight to the death which Howard was unlucky enough to witness:

Frost Song: *Ítsisa xíraha sa washíqx ítsisa xílayuyánéts nihúsa ithéhaqxítsúqx nisa tsixinix sa théhasrínawéhíšá qsihú!*
I can’t hear your words because your tongue is so swollen with the poison, you drink! (in other words I cannot hear you because you’re such a filthy liar)

Ash Tongue: *Anneshátsáxaruwéth’lá! Annesrušaréshá annesrušaréth’lá! Tsýúxrána innethéhahawáxaruth nitsúsa tsutséyar shutsitsír nusa nin!*
I hear that (you lay) rotten-eggs! I hear that (you eat) inedible and dead things! I will urinate upon your rotten corpse before the sun sleeps!

The latter insult is particularly interesting from a poetical standpoint. Dragon poetics will be discussed in the following section but Ash Tongue’s reply makes repeated use of the *anne-* past-tense object marker to give the utterance a repetitive, lyrical quality to it and there is a repetition of the *r* and *ha* sounds several times, which is one of the ways the Kindred prefer to make poetic forms (repeated *h* and *ts* sounds are non-italicized, repeated *r* sounds are in bold and repeated *x* sounds are underlined):

Tsýúxrána innethéhahawáxaruth nitsúsa tsutséyar shutsitsír nusa nin!

Ash Tongue ended up slaying Frost Song after a lengthy duel of almost an hour which was as Howard dryly put it “one of the most memorable and terrible things I have ever seen.”

§7.10. *Xániwésin Poetry and Poetical Forms*

“Poetry” and “songs” are two words that are least likely to come to mind to the average human when asked to think about dragons. In fact, if I asked the average person to make a list of one hundred words they think of when they describe dragons, I would be very surprised if either “poetry” or “songs” occurred to anyone. So, to my mind, either Howard Davis was very unusual in how he portrayed his fictional dragons or this is one of the best single pieces of evidence he gives that might make me consider the Shúna might actually exist. The draconic concept of *Xániwésin* is a difficult one, starting with the definition of the root *xáni-*. The term encompasses meanings such as ‘poetry, a pun, a joke, a turn of phrase, a wise saying, a play on words, words which say one thing but mean something else,’ as well as others. Unfortunately, Davis’ notes on *Xániwésin* are not very complete, I get the feeling that he was either not very interested or he was not yet able to understand the complexities of draconic poetry during the time he took those notes.

Unfortunately I am even less able to understand how draconic poetry is formed, I neither have had the experience with the Shúna themselves or the ability to get further information on this subject (or, I simply do not have the imagination of Davis, take your pick), so this section, by necessity will be

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

incomplete and rather general. Davis recorded several draconic poems and songs but he rarely provided a translation so untangling how they work has been extremely difficult and at times impossible. The best information I have on draconic poetic forms is a single paper within Davis' notes when he jots down a basic description of the various verse-forms used in Srínawésin and two songs he learned how to sing composed by Scatterlight (see 8.3. *The Song of the Moon by Scatterlight* and 8.9. *O Little Deerling, by Dawnglow* below). From that single fortuitous page Davis left behind, I have been able to gain a very basic overview of the way the Kindred compose poetry.

The most basic form of verse the Shúna seem to employ is *alliteration*, repeated sounds within a single sentence to create a repetitious, flowing sound. For instance, Icelandic Skáldic poetry used these forms (alliterating forms in bold):¹³

<p><i>Stinn sár thróask stórum,</i> <i>Sterk egg frömum seggium</i> <i>Hvast skerr hlífar traustar.</i> <i>Hár gramr lifir framla.</i></p>	<p>Severe wounds increase greatly, Strong edge cuts sharply Trusty shields for bold men. The high prince lives honorably.</p>
---	--

<p><i>Hrein sverd litar harda</i> <i>Hverr drengr. Göfugr thengill</i> <i>(itr rönd furask undrum)</i> <i>Unir biartr snöru hiarta.</i></p>	<p>Each warrior dyes clean Swords mightily. The noble ruler, bright, Rejoices in a bold heat. The fine shield is furrowed amazingly.</p>
--	---

The famous poem *Beowulf*, the first written instance of English in history, employs similar poetical forms, which were common throughout Germanic societies in Northern Europe (again, alliterating forms in bold):¹⁴

<p><i>Oft Scyld Scēfing sceapena prēatum,</i> <i>Monegum mæghum meodo-setla oftēah</i> <i>Egsode Eorle, syððan ærest wearð</i> <i>Fēasceaft funden; hē þæs frōfre gebād:</i> <i>Wēox under wolcnum, weorð-myndum þāh,</i> <i>Oðþæt him æghwylc þāra ymb-sittendra</i> <i>Ofer hron-rāde hyran scolde,</i> <i>Gomban gylðan; þæt wæs gōd cyning!</i></p>	<p>There was Shield Sheafson, scourge of many tribes, A wrecker of mead-benches, rampaging among foes. This terror of the hall-troops had come far. A founding to start with, he would flourish later on As his powers waxed and his worth was proved. In the end each clan on the outlying coasts Beyond the whale-road had to yield to him And begin to pay tribute. That was a good king!</p>
--	---

Besides the very Viking-sounding subject matter of both of these poems, Germanic and Skáldic poetry like that above made use of *initial-alliteration* primarily, i.e. rhyming between the *initial* sounds of word. Germanic-Skáldic poetry followed system of particular patterns which were variations on a theme: each line usually had four stressed words which were divided into two couplets with two stressed words in each. The stressed words in the first couplet both had to begin with the same sound (either a consonant, a consonant cluster such as *sc* above, or any vowel, which all alliterated with one another) as the first stressed word in the second couplet forming a pattern of a minimum of three alliterating sounds within a line. This can be illustrated by the very first line in the *Beowulf* example above:¹⁵

<i>Oft</i>	<u>Scyld</u>	<u>Scēfing</u>		<u>sceapena prēatum,</u>
	X	X		X

¹³ Sturluson, Snorri, *Edda*, North Clarendon, Vermont, Tuttle Publishing, 2002, p. 168-169

¹⁴ Heaney, Seamus, *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, New York, New York, W.W. Norton Company Inc., 2000, p. 2-3

¹⁵ Additional information on Old English metrical systems in poetry, as well as Germanic poetry can be found in Robert E. Diamond's *Old English: Grammar and Reader*, Michigan, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1970, p. 46-67

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

This system is opposed to the more common form in “Western” society, *end-rhyme*, such as a famous song:

*The Minstrel Boy to the war has gone,
In the ranks of death you will find him.
His father’s sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him!*

*The Minstrel fell, but the foemen’s chains,
Could not lay his proud soul under!
The harp he loved ne’er spoke again,
He tore its cords asunder.*

*“O Land of Song,” said the Warrior-Bard,
“Though all the world betrays thee!
One sword at least thy rights shall guard!
One harp at least will praise thee!”*

*And said “No chain will sully thee,
Thy soul of love and bravery!
Thy songs were meant for the pure and free,
And shall never sound in slavery!”*

This type of rhyming is common in many Latin-influenced societies (Roman poetry used end-rhyme poetry often), a category which most of Europe certainly falls. Srínawésin seems to use a type of alliteration but prefers to rhyme most in the *initial* forms, although it seems to also make use of *word-medial* rhyming, which is uncommon in European poetic forms for the most part (although see below for a similar Welsh example). An example of a single line from a draconic poem (which I am able to decipher) is:

Tsixéšé sa qxítsúwésu tsinseša sa xítsawésu išerná sa nunarésin nirúnáha nixahurúha’n.

The many strong winds whisperingly speak within the waving trees on the left side of the mountain.

This line exemplifies many of the concepts of “poetry” for the Shúna, at least as I can understand it. The first section of the line repeats certain sounds, many in the same places within the words:

Tsixéšé sa qxítsúwésu tsinseša sa xítsawésu
The many strong winds whisperingly speak

Additionally, the root sounds *qxítsú-* ‘to speak’ and *xítsa-* ‘tree’ also sound somewhat similar, and could possibly included in this rhyming scheme. The second half of the line shows the same pattern, only with differing sounds:

išerná sa nunarésin nirúnáha nixahurúha’n

Also, all of the adjectives are in the passive adjectival voice, giving repeated sounds in the *sa* particle! This type of poetry seems to be fairly basic, repetition of sounds in certain orders, although there does not appear to be any sort of stress pattern or syllable-count that I could discern in any of Davis’ recorded poems or songs. Interestingly, this poem seems to show a similarity to certain Welsh poetic forms, specifically a verse form called *cynghanedd*.

An example of *cynghanedd* can be found in the famous Welsh Poet Dafydd ap Gwilym:¹⁶

*Am aur o ddýn marw ydd wýf
Hudólion a’i hadéiws*

And

¹⁶ Loomis, Richard Morgan (translator and commentary), *Dafydd ap Gwilym: The Poems*, Binghamton, New York, Center for Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, 1982, p. 22-23

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

*Y bu'r báí wb o'r býwyd
Llaw'n o húd, llun ehédfaen*

Both these examples are the *Cynghanedd Groes* form of *cynghanedd*, whereby consonants in the initial part of a line alliterate with those in the second half. I am almost tempted to think that these Welsh verse-forms might have been influenced by Srínawésin in some way, after all Bloody Face often claimed he had had many dealings with the *qxnéhiréx* of Britain. Unfortunately there are several problems with this hypothesis. Firstly, it requires dragons to exist, and I am by far not quite in that camp yet. Secondly, the way Welsh verse-forms have evolved is not really understood, but it hardly requires recourse to borrowing from Srínawésin to Welsh. Thirdly, I am aware that my particular interest in Celtic languages in general and Welsh in particular makes it likely that there is a matter of bias in my interpretation. Fourthly, there is simply no enough information to make an informed judgment in either direction.

Although poetics seem removed from everyday life, one aspect of draconic poetic sensibilities which is used every day is the way in which dragons name themselves. As covered in §1.3.3.1. **Draconic Names** above, draconic names are highly personal and specific things, revolving around particular characteristics or actions of a particular Sihá, which differentiates him or her from all others. Names—according to the Shúna—should be interesting, specific, representative and above all else beautiful. The beauty in a draconic name involves two main factors; the semantic element and the lyrical element. Although names like *Bloody Face*, *Slit Belly*, *Tornheart*, *Rotten Teeth* and *Strips-Flesh-from-the-Bone* might not seem to be very “beautiful” names in terms of subject matter to a human, these are beautiful terms and concepts to a very predatory and violent species (to whom the blood of another animal is life itself). Draconic names often involve very violent and vicious imagery because they live in a very vicious world but many Shúna have wonderful names such as *Smoke Flower*, *Tear of the Sun*, *Ghost Song*, and *Suncatcher*. The ideal Shúna name must not only be beautiful in terms of imagery but also should obey the lyrical and poetic sensibilities of the draconic mind as detailed above, usually involving repeated sounds and syllables which give the name a chant-like or songlike quality to it when spoken in its true form (in Srínawésin). One particular lyrical name that Davis mentioned in his notes was the wonderful name “Afraid-of-Butterflies,” which in Srínawésin is:

Xwenxátirwíř uXélarwéshá (literally translated: “Butterflies always scare him”)

I have no idea how or why this particular dragon got his name (I’m fairly sure it is embarrassing and I’m not sure I want to know an embarrassing story about a dragon!) but it is not only beautiful in terms of its imagery and humorous in content, but it also obeys the poetic quality of the draconic mindset, with repeated uses of similar sounds, in particular the roots *xátir-* ‘to cause fear’ and *xélar-* ‘butterfly’ which are almost identical:

Xwenxátirwíř uXélarwéshá

Other lyrical names in Davis’ notes include (with alike lyrical elements in bold or underlined):

<i>Xútsusin šánSnáhusin</i>	Dawnglow
<i>Xúqxátsitsútsets</i>	Bone Digger
<i>Sláya sa Wanawéqx</i>	Bloody Claws
<i>Sewe sa Swéhésin</i>	Frost Song
<i>Sláyayáněř</i>	Blood Drinker

Although there is bound to be some amount of repetition of sound and syllable in any series of words in any natural language, when a dragon takes or is given a name about a particular distinguishing

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

feature or action he or she will reword or reorganize it so it will conform to these poetic elements and ideals as much as possible, leading to a name which is unique, interesting and lyrically pleasing.

Another way which the Kindred seem to form their poems is that of elaborate puns and verbal jokes, based on not only similar *sounds* but the way in which words are derived in the language (deriving a single word multiple ways, i.e. as a verb, adjective, nouns etc, within a single sentence) as well as synonymous words, affixes which sound identical or similar and other sound and word-plays.

An example of these forms was given above in **5.1. Overview**:

Šíháqsásin

(Ší+HÁQSÁ+sin)

(moving past a location present tense+THIN CLOUDS+Class VIII Subject)

Went past thin clouds in the air

Šiháqsásin

(Ši+HÁQSÁ+sin)

(beginning action aspect present tense+THIN CLOUDS+Class VIII Subject)

They are just beginning to be thin clouds (Lit.)

The thin clouds are just beginning to form

These two phrases are pronounced in nearly identical ways (as /s:ihaq^sasin/) but they can be understood in two ways, depending on context. In poems and poetic wordplays the Shúna seem to enjoy using such phrases repeatedly within several lines of the poem, each of which is identical but is understood differently depending on the *context* of the line, i.e. the other words in the line. One type of verbal pun used by dragons amongst each other takes advantage of the fact that sometimes the object infixes attached to true-verbs are sometimes pronounced identically with infixed verb *roots* and therefore can legitimately be understood both ways, leading to humorous results such as the question below:

Tsahutsaqséruts xax?

This question can be interpreted in two ways:

Tsa+hu+tsa+qséru+ets xax?

Were you smelling **that part of something else?**¹⁷

And:

Tsa+hutsa+qséru+ets xax?

Were you smelling **the honeysuckle?**

One last interesting note on draconic poetics and usage is that they have developed a very specific set of technical terminology to describe their poetic forms in a very succinct and specific manner, something that all Shúna prize greatly. The root *xáni-* seems to be a general and all-purpose term used to describe any sort of lyrical or poetic speaking without regard to its specific style, shape or realization. More specific terms describe certain ways in which a song or poem is recited such as:

łhi-

lullaby (soft, crooning song designed to be lulling and calming)

wánsa-

poem (without a tune and simply spoken)

¹⁷ Possibly a sexual reference?

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

<i>shéqxu-</i>	chant (similar to <i>wánsa-</i> but with a pulsing rhythm or cadence similar to a heartbeat) ¹⁸
<i>shíši-</i>	a song with a set of traditional and specific lyrics but whose tune changes (sometimes mid-song) depending on the singer's mood, inclination or interpretation of the song
<i>swéhé-</i>	generic term for any song (but requires a definite melody versus <i>wánsa-</i> and <i>shéqxu-</i>)
<i>qsláru-</i>	similar to a <i>shíši-</i> but in this case there is a specific and traditional <i>melody</i> and the lyrics change depending on the singer and what they want to sing about

Unfortunately, this is what little information I am able to present on *Xániwésin* although if I ever gain more information I would like to write a paper solely on this interesting aspect of the language.

§7.II. Non-Verbal Communication

All languages make use of non-verbal communication in various ways, some of which are fairly universal (to humans anyway) and others which are culture-specific. Americans famously prefer to be at arms' reach when speaking to others and typically only touch one another twice during a conversation: shake hands once when you meet and once when you part. In many Arabic countries, the speaking distance is much closer and both men and women kiss on each cheek upon meeting one another. Other things such as the sign for 'crazy' in American culture (pointing at the head with the index finger and twirling it around) means 'I will call you' in British culture. To humans certain actions, such as nodding and shaking the head, are fairly universal, I am not aware of any human culture that does not understand these motions. Smiling, glaring, laughing, hostility and other facial expressions are universal as well, even chimpanzees and canines recognize these expressions because they all come from a common mammalian ancestor.

The Shúna, who do not have a common ancestor with mammals, therefore their understanding of body language is extremely different than that of humans'. One thing that Davis notes specifically is how incredibly in-tune dragons are to one another's body language and the body language of *everything* around them. Not only do they use non-verbal communication to "speak" to one another, but they are very adept at reading the body language of other animals with frightening ease. Their incredible senses assist them in this, they can smell fear, joy, excitement and concern as easily as if a big sign was written on someone's forehead, they can hear the changes an animal's heartbeat, *feel* the way they shift their weight and even see tiny reactions in their skin and muscle flinches. They do not just *look at* the other beings around them; they *study them intently* and can read them like a book. Not only does this make it nearly impossible to lie to a Sihá (Davis notes several times that he did not tell Black Honey the total truth and she spotted it instantly) but they use this ability in the hunt; they almost read the minds of their prey and can predict when they might run, where they might run to, whether they might freeze or when they cannot detect the presence of the Sihá (which usually leads to a quick death for the unfortunate animal). Non-verbal communication is a matter of life-or-death to the Shúna and they are masters of its use among themselves and anything which they might want to eat—which is most anything.

Davis notes several types of specific body language the Kindred use amongst their own kind, motions and movements similar to a human nod, shrug or facial expressions. These include:

- 1) Flexing one's scales from head-to-tail is an *affirmative* expression, similar to a nod.
- 2) Flexing only the scales along the back in either direction is a *negative* expression, similar to shaking the head.
- 3) Repeatedly flicking the tongue out to taste the air is a sign of intense interest or concern.
- 4) Staring intently at another dragon is not seen as hostile or intrusive, but a polite gesture which indicates one is paying close attention to everything the other is saying (and indicating through body language). Sustained eye contact is a typical mannerism amongst the Kindred because they

¹⁸ Black Honey's own words

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

use fluctuations in pupil dilation, eye movement and other signs to get a “read” on who and what they are looking at. Howard notes that this tendency can be quite disconcerting as every Shúna he met *always* looked at him like a piece of meat. Sometimes a little too literally.

- 5) Never presenting the side or back to another and always keeping one’s front facing another is a sign of distrust (by not showing a side “open to attack”).
- 6) The reverse is also true; by showing the rear or sides of ones’ body this indicates trust and friendship.
- 7) Although acting as 6) above can also indicate contempt as if the dragon in question does not care if the other attacks.
- 8) A snort is a sign of both derision and a signal that one has heard the other.
- 9) Closing the eyes, laying down and “*tsuru-ing*” ‘pretending to sleep but really awake and listening’ is extremely rude and implies contempt and disinterest even though they are certainly still listening intently.
- 10) Davis notes that the “typical” conversation distance for a pair of Sihá is about one hundred yards or so, far enough so neither can attack without warning and close the distance before the other can somewhat ready themselves but close enough to smell and hear each other.
- 11) He also notes that the closer two dragons are when they are speaking indicates the level of trust and friendship they have with one another. The above distance is for strangers and enemies, several hundred feet closer and they are most likely allies while family members and mates in particular virtually wrap around one another and coil together while they are talking, enjoying each other’s body heat and their company, albeit for brief periods of time.
- 12) Attempting to give another a meal is terribly rude; it implies a lack of confidence in their ability to hunt. Only a mate will feed another dragon and then only in extreme circumstances and only as a last resort, even children will not feed their parents if they are sick or wounded in an effort not to insult them.
- 13) The Shúna bare the teeth out of anger or fear, and this is an extremely hostile sign, as is raising the tail and the wings to appear larger and digging one’s feet into the ground (to prepare to charge or take to the air).

Davis notes that dragons as a rule will not laugh; a draconic “laugh” is usually a huff or snort accompanied by a flexing of the scales. Neither will dragons smile, amusement can be inferred from a slight “sneering expression” (his words, not mine) as well as certain scents extruded by the body which humans appear unable to detect. Bloody Face—who had spend much time around the *qxnéréx*—could change his body language if he so desired, adapting “human” gestures such as smiling, narrowing the eyes, nodding and shrugging as easily as a human might take off a coat and put on another. Howard noted on several occasions how disturbing this could be as the big red dragon would laugh, shrug and roll his eyes and then when something caught his attention he would in an instant switch back to very Sihá-like behavior and then back again with hardly a pause. Due to their intent attention on those around them, even dragons who have not had dealings with the younger races will rapidly pick up their gestures and adopt them while speaking with them—if that is, they do not intend to kill them and eat them regardless of what they say.

At one point in his notes, Howard relates a particularly illuminating story which I always think of when I am attempting to understand the body language as well as the speech patterns of the Shúna. Davis seemed to be a fairly avid hunter and at one point he went hunting with Bloody Face and Moonchild. I do not know what he meant when he wrote “Yesterday, October 31st, I went hunting with my friends in the woods for deer,” I doubt he was going to leap on a deer and tear it to shreds like the other two and the two Sihá would probably not like the sound of a gunshot scaring away other prey, but regardless, he observed the pair hunting and recorded the following story.

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

The two tracked a herd of deer by scent alone (usually they would do this from the air but they stayed on the ground for Howard's benefit, something they enjoyed for the challenge) for several miles, easily keeping track of them from a distance of a mile or two. They constantly watched the way the wind blew and how it was directing the scents in the air and were just as cautious to keep downwind of their quarry as they were to move silently through the brush, which they both did surprisingly well for their immense size. The trio moved through the woods in utter silence, Bloody Face and Moonchild periodically looking at each other when the wind shifted and "discussing" the movement of the scents on the air by pointing at possible routes which would keep them downwind with their heads, directing each other's attention by pointing their ears and other non-verbal clues. Howard for the most part did not really understand these "discussions" but merely followed the other two until they came across the animals' trail and the droppings they had left. Moonchild came up to the trail first and looked down at it and then back at the other two, and Bloody Face moved up and examined the feces with a quick glance and a sniff.

Howard came up and looked at the deer scat and looked up at the other two:

"*Iháqsan násusréhúth rásye ihuxén násusréhúth xi?*" (Is it female deer feces or male?)

The two dragons looked down at him angrily for not only he had asked his question aloud, but he asked a question which should have been obvious "simply by smelling it." Dragons apparently cannot fathom how terrible our sense of smell is and asking a question which was so blaringly obvious would be like walking outside and asking one's friends if it was night or day. Bloody Face later told him a Sihá can not only tell the species and gender of an animal's droppings with but a smell, but can tell if they are sick or healthy, wounded, pregnant and *where they have most likely eaten the food they left as their droppings.*

Later, he repeated the mistake by asking the pair:

"*Tsiháqsawén tsihuxéwén rásye tsiháqsarén tsihuxérén'x?*" (Are there a few female and male deer or many female and male deer?)

This question could have been easily answered (so thought Moonchild, who said so later) by simply looking at the ground and the tracks the deer had left, answering the question with a look rather than disturbing the dragons' *thésúwanúsin* 'hunting silence!' All these aspects of the Kindred and how they deal with each other is at least as important as all the grammar of Srínawésin, not only do dragons use it constantly amongst themselves and particularly while they are hunting, but as Howard notes at one point:

"November 19th, I am lucky I spent so much time around Bloody Face and Moonchild before looking to speak with other Shúna. I hadn't realized how much I had come to understand their body language until speaking with Obsidian Claw for several minutes. I could tell in a glance I should leave, he didn't like me and if I stayed I would most likely end up being his next meal."