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Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Srínawésin

The Language of the Kindred:
A Grammar and Lexicon of the
Northern Latitudinal Dialect
of the Dragon Tongue

(2nd Edition)

Based on notes written by Howard T. Davis

And

Organized and Adapted by Madeline Palmer

Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Introduction

By Madeline Palmer

If you are a rational person, at this point I would be willing to bet that you are thinking “Is this serious? Is this really about a *dragon* language?” While I would not blame you if you were thinking that right now, I assure you that in the years in which I have been working on this project I have gone from incredulous, amused, curious, interested and finally to obsessed. So, is this serious? Is this paper really about a *dragon* language? I can say without a doubt that this paper is indeed serious, it truly sets out to describe in detail a fascinating and sophisticated language written down by a fellow linguistics student, Howard T. Davis, who attended the University of New York between the years 1932 to 1937, apparently the years that he wrote the notes upon which this paper is based. Is this paper really about a *dragon* language? The rational and scientific part of my mind would definitely answer a resounding “no,” but it would also not tell me to discard any information or evidence *a priori* without at least giving it a hearing. I do not know if this language is actually spoken anywhere, much less by dragons, but it certainly is a tale that must be told.

My involvement in this story begins as I was working on my dissertation as a graduate student. To anyone who has worked as a graduate student you will understand what this means. Teaching introductory classes to mostly uncaring students in order to help pay for your serious work, constant grading of assignments, and research through countless papers in order to find a topic for your dissertation. Add to this classes, meetings with your advisor, papers, writing, study, reading and sometimes if you are lucky a little bit of food and even less sleep. While I enjoyed the work, it was often exhausting and those rare times when I had a little bit of personal time I usually just slept. At one point during my studies, my advisor suggested that I look through the files that the Linguistics Department kept of old dissertations, papers, notes and other works published (or in the continual state of “about to be published”) by students and faculty in the department in order to help me find an appropriate topic for my dissertation.

He let me into the file room, which I discovered was virtually a vault of papers going back to the founding of the school, covering every conceivable subject with no observable order. He told me I had all weekend if I needed and I ordered some food, rolled up my sleeves and started sifting through the mountains of papers in front of me. My personal area of interest is Celtic Languages; Old Irish, Old, Middle and Modern Welsh, Manx and Breton, in particular, and with the Gods of Academia assisting me I managed to find a small section which had about twenty papers written on the subject. At this point I was tired, angry and hungry once again so I grabbed the papers and took them home, hoping to catch a nap and get back to work with a slightly clearer head. The next day, I started to work through the pile of papers I had, shifting them into various piles and hoping to find at least a hint of something interesting I could turn into a dissertation subject. At that point I came across a pile of old notes, about four hundred pages worth bound in twine and written in a small, precise hand which I almost mistook for typewriter-print. I opened the package up, which looked like it hadn't been touched since it had originally been wrapped up, and started to read.

I was instantly confused. Although it was in the section where the papers on Celtic Languages were supposed to be kept, these notes were definitely *not* on a Celtic Language. It was a strange to say the least, a language which the author called *Srínawésin* or ‘Many Words’, with even stranger sounds including a ‘qx’, a word-initial ‘qs-’ sound, a long ‘s’ and what looked like a differentiation between voiced and unvoiced vowels. The author had copious notes covering every possible subject in the language and included pages and pages of dialogue between him and several of his sources but when I read his translations they were particular, always involving hunting, prey animals, territorial disputes and other subjects that I don't think the most avid hunter in the world would want to discuss non-stop. The notes were not just on the language, covering many social concepts and he wrote endless descriptions about the places where he had met his sources and talked with them for hours, even going on several hunting trips with them. I was just

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about to shrug, dismiss it as a misfiled anthropological paper from some Amazonian or Australian tribe or another and put the whole thing down when I turned the page and saw one of the drawings he had done of one of his “sources.” Although the drawing was quite good, unfortunately it was of a huge, horned dragon with brilliant red scales and sulfurous yellow eyes, sprawling on a large stone and lazing in the sun.

I stared at the page for a good thirty seconds and then burst out laughing, at which point my roommate came upstairs to see what I was laughing at after six hours of total silence. I shook my head, wiped away my tears and waved her away, hardly able to tell her it was nothing and promptly put the whole thing down. I suppose that laughing wasn’t the correct response, but I had just spent several hours reading notes written by a man who was precise, methodical, and professional and who obviously didn’t have much of a social life. In short, he was obviously a linguistics graduate student...albeit a disturbed and confused one. I had wasted enough time and got back to the more serious linguistic work—work that wouldn’t get me laughed out of the department. The next day I told some of my colleagues about what had happened and we all laughed about it and my advisor simply said, “A lot of papers get shoved back there. Who knows what *else* is back there?” We laughed and promptly forgot about it.

Well, they did at any rate. I found a dissertation subject on the Old Irish loan-words introduced into Old Welsh through the various (mostly violent) contacts the Irish and Welsh had during those periods and began work on it like a good student but one day I realized that when I had thrown the notes down on my floor I had forgotten to gather them back up and take them back to the archives. At one point, when I was working on a particularly difficult part of my dissertation I looked down and saw the drawing on the floor and—deciding it was time for a beer and a laugh—took a break, grabbed a beer and began leafing through the notes again. I have never really enjoyed the fantasy or science-fiction areas of fiction. I vaguely remember reading *The Hobbit* as well as *The Fellowship of the Ring* as a child and although I enjoyed *The Hobbit* all I can remember thinking “There sure is a lot of traveling in this book!” I never got past the first two chapters of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and never attempted any of the other books in the series to this day. I guess that I figured that watching the new movies was enough. And to be honest I didn’t even really like those.

But, there I was, reading these notes written by a clearly disturbed individual and shaking my head at the fact that there I was, reading them. Needless to say, they made a great deal more sense now that I knew *who* it was that was supposed to be speaking this language and I even tried pronouncing some of the dialogue to the best of my ability. Which was not very well at all because I had no idea which symbols meant what or if I was even pronouncing them correctly—as correctly as one can pronounce an invented language. At that point I began to leaf through the papers and discovered two interesting things. Firstly, I learned the author was a man named Howard T. Davis who had originally attended school in Britain before coming to NYU. Secondly, I found a page where he laid out the entire orthography of the language, how he transcribed the sounds from his “sources” and the various phonological rules therein. With this page in front of me, I started. The words were tongue-twisting and difficult, like a language comprised solely of sentences such as “She sells sea shells down by the sea shore,” but with a bit of work and a lot of concentration I managed to pronounce a few sentences.

It was a bit of fun and I quickly went got back to my more serious work. Over the next few days, whenever I needed to take a break (and have a beer or three) I would sit down, leaf through the notes and try some of Davis’ terribly twisting sentences. Unfortunately, he had changed the symbols he used to represent the sounds several times throughout the years he had worked on the language so one symbol did not always make the same sound and the same sound wasn’t always represented by the same symbol. So I started what I now know was the beginning of a slippery slope and began to write down just a few notes of my own to regularize his orthography and systematize it. After that, it was much easier to read through his dialogues and I found myself able to pick out simple words and phrases as well as how some of the affixes were attached to their words and other things that only a linguist would want to do with their spare time. Unfortunately for me, note-taking is a bit of a compulsion and my “just a few notes” began to turn into an analysis of how the language was formed, which was strange to say in the least. For the next several weeks

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whenever I had the chance or needed a break from writing (and couldn't sleep because my head was so full of Old Irish mutations, syncopes, habitual past tenses of substantive verbs and other things), I would sit down and flip through his notes, laugh at the craziness of what he had done and jot down some interesting points I found in his work.

He constantly referred to two of his main “sources,” the crimson male dragon he had drawn whom he called *Bloody Face* and a beautiful female dragon with pearlescent white scales named *Moonchild*. He included diagrams, drawings, scratched notes in virtually every free space in his papers, recording dialogues, lists of words and strange little notes like “blackthorn berries apparently moderately poisonous to dragons.” He included little biological facts, interesting tidbits and other things which made me think that not only was this poor man lonely, but that he had some sort of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and simply wrote down virtually every idea which popped into his head—all of which happened to be about his imaginary dragon-friends. Despite that, however, he was quite creative and his characters (as I began to think of them) possessed definite personalities and quirks or their own. *Bloody Face* was mostly calm and patient, slow to act but once he did it was with passion and speed. He tended to be a little kinder and less confrontational than other dragons, preferring to sit and watch events unfold until he was ready to act. But when he did, he often lived up to his name. *Moonchild*, on the other hand, was “*Xúqxéha sa nuna sa sráhés'n*” or ‘always lived with fire and wind,’ constantly in motion and never quite happy where she was at the moment. She was also a bit of a bitch, condescending and a little rude towards Davis although he wrote in his notes that to her this was a sign of endearment. She and *Bloody Face* were neighbors and friends (Davis seemed to think they were both *tsiháhiwéš* ‘looking at each other as possible mates’) and bickered like an old married couple.

One beautiful fall day, with the leaves falling outside, I sat reading his notes by the window and laughed when I read one of the little snide comments that *Moonchild* directed towards *Bloody Face*. At that point I stopped and several things occurred to me. Firstly, without my knowing it, I had begun to think of these two *characters* as real and when I laughed I had said aloud “That is so something that *Moonchild* would say!” The second—and frankly more frightening thing—was that I was no longer reading the translation Davis had written...I was, in fact, reading the *original Srínawésin text* and understood it. This was a disturbing fact and I was about to put the whole thing down when I had my third troubling realization. Next to me (now mostly unused and unread because I obviously no longer needed them) were my “just a few notes” on Davis’ work, which had now grown to almost *two hundred pages*, about half of Davis’ original! I grabbed my notes and his, wrapped them up and put them in my desk, hoping that I was not becoming crazy like Howard obviously had been and walked away. For a while.

Every once in a while, I would look at my desk and realize that I had put a significant amount of work into those notes and inevitably I opened up my drawer and started looking through our combined notes and shook my head in amazement. I had spent hours analyzing this language, writing down every vocabulary word I could find, generating lists of affixes attached to roots, noting grammatical points and had, without realizing it, become close to fluent in a *draconic language*. An *invented* draconic language. That was hardly the worst part. Not only had I begun to think of *Bloody Face* and *Moonchild* as “real” but part of me was even beginning to debate with my skeptical, scientific, evidence-oriented mind on *whether Davis might not have made all this up*. Obviously, this thought had snuck up on me and I was unaware of it even as I began to think about it. But, what if this *wasn't* some lonely person creating his own private little universe with its own language? The notes he included covered every conceivable aspect of the draconic lifestyle and had an anthropological—or should I say *dracological*—consistency to it which would be hard to simply make up. Davis himself did not appear to have any training as an anthropological linguist and the way in which the language operated *grammatically* had some strange (and to my limited knowledge) unique parts to it. Could this, in fact, be real? Was Davis serious? Could his “sources” actually be real sources to a real language?

To this day I do not know how to answer those questions. There is a consistency to his work which defies easy dismissal but frankly I do not want to consider the impact this might have on my worldview. I

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can accept many things but I'm not sure that I am quite ready to accept the existence of dragons. But, regardless of my conclusion, I had in front of me literally weeks' worth of my own (unintentional) work as well as apparently years' worth of Davis' exacting notes as well. Honestly, I am unsure of what I think about what Davis wrote or what he implied in his work, but I hate to see all that effort sit in a dark, unused file in the NYU Linguistics Department, only taken out periodically by mistake by some grad student looking for ideas who would have a laugh and quickly re-file it for the next poor sap to run across. I feel that Davis, for all his strange quirks and obviously unusual mind, deserves a little better than that. And, for my part, I must say that after realizing all the work that I did on Srínawésin, I could not consign my efforts into that same, dusty file. So, after long hours of typing up an arraignment of my own notes into a readable form, I can present Howard Davis' work to whoever would like to take advantage of it. Any and all mistakes in this paper are my own and should in no way reflect upon Howard Davis' scholarship or ingenuity or upon his "sources." They are due only to my misunderstanding, mistakes or inability to understand his notes.

Honestly, I would like to think that this paper can be useful to someone, somewhere. I could find very little information on Davis himself, he had attended school at NYU for several years as a linguistics student, but never graduated, never submitted a finalized dissertation (I get the feeling that his notes were the unfinished form of his dissertation, in which case he was probably laughed right out of the department) and I couldn't find any more information on him through the school or state databases. I hope that wherever he is, in the unlikely case he is still alive, he does not take issue with my adapting and putting his work out into the world, but I do not think it should remain unread. This is his work, and in a way it has become mine so I hope this paper is read as such. Read it as you will. If you think this is a bizarre habit of a disturbed individual (or *individuals*, I suppose I must say!), the ravings of a lunatic or an interesting hypothetical linguistic flight of fancy, you are welcome to it. If you think that this paper might *possibly* be true, I welcome you to that as well, to this day I am still not sure where I stand on the issue. I just hope my and Davis' work can be useful and that someone will be interested in what he started and what I have continued. I take no ownership of this language, I firmly consider it to be Davis' own (or for the more credulous side of me, owned by the actual *speakers* of this language, if they do exist). I invite anyone to read it, enjoy it, despise it, think about it, use it or do nothing with it.

I am simply glad it is not sitting in a shelf somewhere.

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***A Note on the Terminology and
 Linguistic Methodology of This Paper***

This paper, first and foremost, is a linguistic one and although it has information on the culture and society of dragonkind it still deals primarily with Srínawésin, the Dragon Tongue. I have done my best to make the terminology in this paper accessible to not just linguists but anyone who might be interested in the draconic language. I done my best, but unfortunately there is a limit to which a grammar may be couched in non-technical terminology, so this paper has many linguistic terms and symbology which will be unknown to many readers. Whenever a particular technical term arises, I do my best to explain it in laymen's terms without being either too complex (which will not help in understanding) or simplify the situation too greatly. Sections of the text which are very interesting from a cultural or "dracological" perspective but are not all that useful for actually speaking the language are marked with a '§' symbol. These sections reveal interesting insights on the ways in which the Shúna construct their language and interact with their world, but for a speaker just wanting to learn to *speak* they are not as helpful as the grammatical sections. Additional symbols used in the paper and their meanings are given below:

Symbol	Meaning
//	Indicates the pronunciation of a word according to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). For instance, the English word <i>She</i> would be represented as /ʃi:/
□	Indicates a <i>grapheme</i> or <i>written symbol</i> which represents a particular spoken sound. For instance, [sh] in English is the way the IPA symbol /ʃ/ is written in Standard English.
*	This symbol indicates that the phrase it is attached to is either <i>ungrammatical</i> or has never been attested to by a native speaker. Thus, the ungrammatical English sentence " <i>*Me see the dog</i> " is marked as such.
•	Indicates that a verb root has an <i>Inherently Possessed</i> subject or object
◇	Indicates that a verb root has two forms, one <i>singular</i> , and the other <i>plural</i>
†	Specifies that the verb root is an <i>Intentional Actor</i>
()	In English translations of the Srínawésin original the () indicates that the bracketed word was not written or spoken explicitly but can be assumed from the context.
()	In Srínawésin examples the () indicates that the bracketed section can but does not always occur. For example, the root <i>qxné(hi)-</i> can occur as either <i>qxné-</i> or <i>qxnéhi-</i> .
#	This sign simply means that the word or root to which it is attached to in the grammar or lexicon is considered to be pejorative, rude, crude or otherwise combative in nature.

Additionally, because verb-roots in Srínawésin can be derived into adjectives, nouns, true-verbs, adverbs and so forth I employ a slight differentiation of use when writing a root in this paper. If a root (without any affixes attached to it) is written *syáhu-* for example is it to be understood as representing *true-verb* or a *noun-verb* meaning. If the root is written *-syáhu* it is to be understood as an *adverbial* or *adjectival* meaning. However, if the root has any affixes attached to it, such as *-syáhur* this indicates that it is a noun-verb or a true-verb which is not yet complete and requires additional prefixes in order to become a complete thought. In general, if a draconic word has a hyphen attached to it, it requires an affix to make it a grammatically functioning word.

When a word, phrase or sentence is analyzed in this paper, the verb-roots of the various words are indicated by capitalization to assist in parsing (i.e. *tsisyáhur* analyzed as *tsi+SYÁHU+ar*).

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§Section I:

The Kindred

§1.1. How Dragons Came to Be

I think the best way to begin this paper is with the legend of how dragons came to be in their own words (the English translation follows on the next page):

Saxenqxéyéwéhen áqxúqxéhawésu'lán tsixenyasuwéhen narúqxéhawésu wix. Saxenqxéyéwéhen áqxúrúrínsu'lán tsixenyasuwéhen narúrúrínsu wix. Saxenqxéyéwéhen aqxútsúhúqx'lán tsixenyasuwéhen narútsúhúqx wix. Saxenqxéyéwéhen áqxúnunanáráresin'lán tsixenyasuwéhen narúnunarésin wix.

XúStéxuTsúhúr shushúnés thésúsléxur, shuŠúriwášár, shuTsúhú sa Qsuwér, shuŠátha sa Yánáhanráqx hála. XúXatirXniyaha shushúnés thésúxatirha, shuYaweQxéhasu, shuŠáthi sa Tséyaha, shuRúnáreha níxínxnúyaha'lá. Xútsithi sa sułuthwísu hála, xútsithi sa šéhawísu shuhasawísu hálán xášiširésin anunarésin átsisa xátsaxésiwésu ašawaqxéhawésu anełusarúrínáqx hálása'lán xásuqxísnarésu ahálırésu narúrúrínrésu hálán xáqxéharéshasúrésin awenurésin hálán xáqsáni sa haliwalarésin anunaqxéharésin'lá. Xáhešéhar aSléxur xáhaTsúhúr anneXniya nixaXatirha hálán xáwqšéhaha hálán sashúnuwísu hálása sarúrínwéxésiweśu aqxéhawésu nasa shán nasa sałéšésiweśa annenunanáráwésin axniyawéha hálása'lán saxenráhínwéhen anneraha sa shátsés'łá.

Sashátsásułuthwéhen aTsúhúr xaháSléxur aXniyaha nixaXatirha hálán satsayatsuwéhen tsanqxeyasułuthwéqx hála. Áqxúsa hashusuwéqx ashátsáqx hálása hatsaqxéha aQsáhi sa Tséyaha hálán sayaqxísnaha annesa hahusnawésu asewewésu hálása lananixaqxéhasu nasa sashátsásathawésu hálása'lán xátsithi sa tsatsitsiha'lá. Áqxúsa sasreśu sa tsatsitsiwéqx hálása sarúrín sa shátsánunar aTsúhú sa Qsuwér'lán sayaswínar anełqxéhatsitsiwésu annesewewésu narúsa saxésiweśu ahálıwésu hálása'lán sashátsáshususin axahánunasin'lá. Satsashałewéhen tsanwáłehúsharéha sláahasawísu'lán saháxuwéqx sláhaqxéhasu sláharúrínsu hála, sláhahálısu sláhaxniyaha'lá, sláhanunasin sláhałusashusur'lá. Saháxuwéqx natsúhútsitsiqx nałusarúrínwér narúsa naháłáthwéqx hálása'lá.

Sahúráwésin anunawésin'lá, sahašesin awenusin hálán sareshúwésu asíthrawésu hálawx saháłáthwéqx hálán saxésiweś shaŠáthiwéś qsansráháqx'lá. Sasłéwá sa sráhašáwáwets'lá, annenatsa sa raha sa síthrawésu, annesłáša sa qxéhawésu, annešerná sa rúnáwéha, annewára sa qxíqsewéha sláhahítsáqx sláhahániqx'lá. Saxenqslanéwéhen aTsúhúr xaháSléxur aXniyaha nixaXatirha annesa tsanrúnha sa síthrawésu sasrasínwéś'łá tsanshéšusin saqsúlawéś hálán saheswathiwéts anneXatirha nixasraniha hálása hálán saqxelatsewéts annewanatrén annewanatréx annewanatrín hálán sahitsá sa qxeqsuwéwéts'lá. Asusawísu sahalín sa shátsásáwáwéhen annesa saháłáthwéth áwíxuhánwéth qsárhítsewéqx qsasa'lá. Axuhánsusawéth tsaranawéth hálán átsisa sasreśu sa qxéhawénunaha aXniyaha niXatirha šáxuhánéth hálán sasreśu sa úxtsitsiha hálása átsisa sasreśu sa úxnunar aTsúhúr xaháSléxur annenunarúrínwésin šáxuhánéth hálán sasreśu sa úxshusur hálása'lá.

Saxuhánwéqsáthir annesa shaŠáthiwéś saháłáthwéś ratúhíntsewéth hálása hálán xúthšáwáwéts ushúnés unnexúxuqxéhar unnexúxurúrinar'n xúqsániwér rúxéháśér nwán xwáłsháthunwéts unneTsitsír qxuhasar nwán xwáłsháthunwéts qxuxúxurúrinar unneQsánir nun. RúxéthésúSléxur xaháqsáthir xúnxéháśér xúsráhar shuraha sa Tsitsír tsuntsitsísín nux xúsulúth sa qsánir shuShusu sa Rúrín sa Xúxur nwán xúsulúth sa sráhar uwéQsánir húnatsitsír rúxéháśáer nu. UxúSléxur xahasułuthar unneŠáthiwéś thésúhíntsewéth xúthšáwáwéts nwán xwáłsháthunwéts qxuhasarwér unneShátsár nun.

Hux saranaqx ałanin sa xúxúqx qsawx sashusu sa rusu sa hunłúqx hálán satsasułuthha aXatirha hálán satsaqxéhaha hálán tsaqxéhawéreshúha xyasa tsaxinix sa xúxutsitsiha hálása xyáséSléxur xahánunashusuwésin'lá. Tsitsayatsuha linanixasułuthwéqx híłán tsixétsaqxéha tsinsa tsitséyaha híłasa hálán tsitsaqsáheha innesa tsiháłátháqx axán tsixésíś shithésúslatsés híłasa'lá. Xúsráharísu shushúnés shusa xútsithi sa qxéqsáthiwéts unnehasarén unnehasaréx unnehasarín nusa urúnha sa síthrawésu urúrínrésu uqsusérésin uhasharésin uxúłunwésin shusánurísu slúhanása sa Šúriwášár slúhahátha sa Xatirqsáhiha hálán qsúrXatirha tsusráháqx uxúxuhunłúqx. UšithésúXatirha shushúnés xúsráhawéś nwán xúqxéqsuwéwéts'án xúxenshúnuwéts'án xútséyawéś'án xúqsulawéś slúhaSléxur xahánunarésin nuhún!

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The Kindred were born of fire and will one day be returned to the flames. The Kindred were born of ice and one day will be returned to the ice. The Kindred were born of darkness and will one day be returned to the darkness. The Kindred were born from the roaring winds and one day will be returned to the winds.

The Night Mother is the Mother of the Kindred; she is the Glittering Span, the Dark Hunter, the Black Yawning Mouth. The Earth Father is the Father of the Kindred; he is the Flaming Heart, the Old Sleeper, the Sleeping Place of the Innumerable Mountains. They always coil 'round each other, always encircling themselves as the innumerable winds continually hissed as burning rock met frozen void and steam became frost and lightning chased flame and burning winds mercurially leapt upon boiling water. The Mother of the Night curled around the Earth Father and he around her and where the frosts met the flames and where the earth met the roaring winds they mated and made a great clutch of eggs.

The Night Mother and Earth Father wrapped around the eggs and kept them safe within their coils. When the eggs grew cold the Old Sleeper breathed fire upon them and banished the frost that grew upon them with his flames and always kept them warm. When the eggs grew too warm the Dark Hunter blew her icy breath on them, mixing warm flames and frosts until steam came forth and she cooled them with her breath. For many long life-ages of the world they kept them between themselves, and the eggs lay between fire and ice, between boiling water and earth, between the wind and the void. They lay in the warm darkness and the icy void and then they burst forth and hatched.

Winds thundered, lightning danced and the seas trembled but the eggs hatched and the Elders came forth into the world. The Elders beheld the world with wonder, looking on the great and cool seas, the rushing flames, the mighty mountains and the wide open plains with delight and desire. The Night Mother and Earth Father intently watched as the Elders dove into the deep seas, flew in the stormy skies and searched the depths of the Father and soon they found an abundance of large and small prey creatures and fish to eat and they hunted well. But when the pair looked back to the clutch of eggs they saw that several had not hatched there among the broken shells. A pair of unhatched eggs were dead, one because the Earth Father had breathed too much fire upon it and had heated it up too much, the other one because the Night Mother had breathed too much of her icy breath upon it and had cooled it down too much.

The Night Mother swallowed the broken shells from which the Elders had emerged and the dead, unhatched eggs and from that time the Kindred have seen and shall always see the fiery egg which we call the Sun and the icy egg we call the Moon. The Great Sun moves through our Mother's belly and across and through the unreachable vault of the sky every year but the cold, icy egg changes quickly through the sky and the Moon moves much faster than the Sun. The broken eggs of the Elders are now always seen next to the Mother's coils and they are called by the Kindred "the Clutch of Celestial Eggs."

But the remaining egg was not dead but only cold and sickly therefore the Father coiled around it and breathed fire upon it, stoking his fires to that he could keep it warm from the Mother's cold breath. He still guards it within his coils and breathes on it deep within him while he sleeps and waits for it to hatch and for our hatch-mate to come forth. The Shúna, the innumerable large prey animals, the innumerable small prey animals, the fish we eat, the deep seas, the ice, the rains, the weather, the skies and all other things live between the Glittering Span above and the Old Father below and beneath the Father is the fiery but sickly egg. The Kindred live, hunt, mate and sleep upon our Father and fly with our mother's breath as we always have and we always shall!

This legend was related to Howard Davis by a dragon named Black Honey and occurs again in **Section VIII** with more explanation and grammatical specification. But this short story is the world which the dragons live in the language they use and have used for uncounted æons. It is a fascinating piece of oral-literature, an insight to their mindset and beliefs, an explanation of how they came to be, a picture of how they continue to view their world and a small section of this rich and remarkably expressive language.

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§1.2. Introduction

Before anyone can truly begin to understand the complex and unique language presented in Howard Davis' notes I think they must understand the equally sophisticated society which he presents as underlying the language, as well as the speakers who speak it and the methods and ways in which they deal with one another and their world. If there was one aspect of Davis' notes that might make me believe that he might be telling the truth it would be his many hundreds of pages of notes, diagrams and drawings on his subjects and the world in which they live in. One day I would like to take the sections of his notes dealing with these sections and write an anthropological/dracological paper on the "society" he describes. By attempting to publish this paper, I have already committed a form of professional suicide, so I suppose that an extra nail in the coffin hardly seems to be out of place. This section will cover most of the non-linguistic information he detailed about the dragons themselves, physical characteristics, the way in which they interact with their world, their prey and one another, as well as the mindset and worldview which guides their actions and which must be understood in order to understand these ancient creatures.

§1.3. The *Shúna*

The dragons presented in Davis' notes are truly incredible creatures and he presents many descriptions of them as well as portraits of many of his most "reliable sources." In their own language they refer to themselves individually as *Sihá*, which means 'Kindred, One Who Is Similar.' The plural form of the word is *Shúna* or 'The Kindred, Those Who are Alike,' and both these terms are synonymous in this paper with "dragon, dragons," and "Kindred." This section covers the *Shúna* as they are presented in Davis' notes, physical characteristics, geographic distribution, society, worldview and concept of time. As I stated before, you may consider this information as factual or as fantastic as you would like, this is what is presented in Howard's notes and I cannot attest to the factuality of his claims. Nor can I prove them to be wrong.

§1.3.1. Physical Characteristics

In all the sketches that Davis draws, the notes on the physical characteristics of his sources, drawings and other information he includes one fact glares through his notes: The single greatest similarity between all the *Shúna* is their dissimilarity with each other. It seems almost that each single member of the race is a sub-race in-and-of themselves and the children of two dragons often have no similarity whatsoever with either their parents or each other. Bloody Face's scales are a deep crimson shade with darker hues along the points of his scales, while Moonchild's are an incredible pearlescent sheen of white that Davis describes as "shimmering like oil on water." A dragon named Scatterlight had utterly black scales which reflected light much like Moonchild's and which gave her name. But shading and color are by far not the only differences. Some have no wings, some have *only* wings and no other limbs, some have no limbs whatsoever, others such as Moonchild and Bloody Face have the classic "heraldic" body-form with four legs and wings, some are wyvern-like with two wings and only two legs. Davis records meetings with a sea dragon named Wave of the Sea with no limbs but who was covered with spines, webbing and seaweed and whose scales had a shimmering bioluminescence like a deep-sea fish.

He notes that physical characteristics of an individual have virtually nothing to do with that of their parents or even their siblings, but seem more dependant on the environment in which the *Sihá* is hatched. For instance, Frost Song (whom Davis met only once and was unfortunate enough to witness another dragon named Ash Tongue kill her in a *Šnarír* or 'Blood Hunt' of vengeance for some type of wrong) much preferred colder temperatures, glaciers, snow and ice and had glimmering ice-like scales and deep blue eyes. Her body temperature was so cold it actually burnt Davis simply by touching her scales and she hated any temperature above freezing. Despite this, her parents were both "classic" dragons and loved heat (one of which lived in Gobi desert originally), sitting in the sun and the long, hot days of summer. Frost Song apparently was born

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during the beginning of one of the past Ice Ages and quickly adapted to the temperatures of the north, eventually being unable to live in anything else. From Davis' notes it seems that each Sihá is a kind of a blank-slate when born, capable of adapting themselves to whatever conditions they find themselves in, at least when they are young. A dragon born near the ocean or sea can just as easily slip into the water and eventually turn into a sea-drake as can become an ice-dragon like Frost Song or the more classic type like Moonchild and Bloody Face. The sheer adaptability evidenced by the Shúna explains their ability to survive and thrive throughout the long ages of the world; they are capable *in a single generation* of becoming virtually a completely different species.

This also explains (if one would care to) the extreme variation in draconic forms in mythologies throughout the world as well as the variation in dwellings, tendencies and habits. They simply do not have a single, racial set of physical characteristics without variation. This mutability apparently only applies to the first several thousand years of their life, they are able to match the environment perfectly during their adolescence but upon becoming an adult they seem locked in their physical forms and unable to change. However, Davis notes that he never got an acceptable answer if the Shúna are capable of adapting themselves after adulthood and hypothesized that given long enough stretches of time they were capable of performing the same feat.

Despite the huge variation in size, shape, nature and environment of the Shúna, they do have a set of physical similarities which seem to apply across the race. It appears that most of the Sihá are capable of dwelling underwater for as long as they desire, are utterly immune to cold (some because their natural body temperatures are so blazingly hot and others because they are so incredibly cold!), and are without variation *predatory carnivores*. They are all scaled and Davis notes that not only are their scales incredibly hard (he said he was never able to get a sample for testing) but notes a little-known feature of their scales: they are without exception razor-sharp along their edges. He writes that running your hand along a dragon's side from head-to-tail would cause no difficulty (if the Sihá allowed it, that is!) but from tail-to-head would slice your hands to shreds in moments. He also notes that in most "classical" dragons, their scales are incredibly hot, uncomfortable at minimum and often painful to the touch, a result of their searing internal body temperatures.

The Shúna that Davis met ranged from a mere ten feet long to up to four-hundred feet from nose to the tip of the tail. They come in all shapes (winged, serpentine, heraldic etc.) but all those he met had horns, razor-sharp teeth and equally deadly claws. Moonchild's claws were ghostly white, almost translucent, while Bloody Face's were pitch black but both were capable of cutting steel with ease and both seemed to be of the same material despite their coloration differences. Some dragons can apparently breathe fire as in the stories, others venom, poison and other equally unpleasant things and some cannot breathe anything lethal whatsoever except for extremely bad breath (which Howard describes as a combination of rotting meat, death and bile). Davis notes that every dragon he met was capable of striking with blurring speed, much like a striking cobra, although not all of them could move *themselves* with great speed. The top speed of the "average" running dragon appears to be about as fast as a sprinting horse or slightly faster, but their ability to turn and maneuver is not always very good. The larger dragons are incredibly strong, able to crush rock and stone with their bare hands and easily capable of ripping trees from their roots and hurling them hundreds of feet. Bloody Face repeatedly warned Howard the danger of draconic blood (on the rare occasion he and Moonchild got into a "tussle" there was a little bit of blood involved), which is deadly poisonous, apparently a single drop is capable of turning several thousand gallons into a liquid which will kill almost anything which drinks out of it. Whatever venom is in their blood, the Shúna also have a version of it in their saliva and claws, and a single scratch from either is capable of causing terrible pain and often death. Although with their impossible strength, speed, razor-sharp edges covering their entire bodies and their other abilities, I don't see many getting away with just a scratch.

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They also possess the most amazing eyesight Davis had ever witnessed. He notes on one occasion coming upon Bloody Face and Moonchild sitting on a hill in the summer sunshine and gazing off onto the sea as if they were watching something. When he asked what they were looking at, they replied they were watching several fishing boats out on the water. Davis strained as hard as he could but could hardly make out a tiny dot on the horizon, much less tell they were fishing boats. Just when he thought he was amazed enough Moonchild snorted and said (in English as Davis wasn't fluent in Srínawésin at this point):

Moonchild: Hah! All they caught was some greasy cod!
Bloody Face: [snorts] No, look, they got a few salmon too.
Moonchild: Where?
Bloody Face: Right there in the net they just pulled up, next to the human with the blue eyes.

Needless to say Howard was astonished that not only could they see that those tiny little dots were fishing boats but to be able to tell cod from salmon at that distance, much less to be able to tell the *eye color* of one of the fishermen was absolutely incredible. He estimated that the boats were at least fifteen miles out to sea and quickly scrawled in his notes: "I suppose that's why no one sees dragons anymore. They see us first!" I cannot really comment on the factuality of this assumption although it does make a great deal of sense.¹

Although there are a great deal of physical variations among the Shúna, there are two things which they all possess without exception. Davis never met a stupid dragon. They were all, *extremely* intelligent, a fact that Davis notes again and again. Most were capable of speaking in several human languages as easily as Srínawésin, although they much preferred to speak their own language given the choice. They were all intelligent, devious and extremely difficult to trick, second-guess or con. This makes a great deal of sense given their extremely long life-span and Howard notes that "There are very few tricks which they haven't seen and most of which they invented." Bloody Face, in fact was extremely adept at Chess, Go, Checkers, two games I have never heard of called Merels or Nine-Men's' Morris, and Fox and Geese, as well as several ancient games which are no longer played called Ludus Latrunculorum, Fidchell, Gwyddbwyll, Álea Evangeliî, Hnefatafl, Tablut and others. Howard himself was a good chess-player (according to his own account) but he had a terrible time winning even a single game against the dragon (who apparently favored the King's Gambit). Moonchild distained such games but Davis notes she was just as intelligent as Bloody Face, capable of speaking English (Old, Middle and Modern varieties), Latin, Welsh, Irish, German, French, Breton, Old Norse, Danish, Dutch, Gallic Celtic, Russian, Finnish, Hungarian and a language neither I nor Davis had never heard of called Eusgrae (possibly a form of Proto-Basque?), which she claimed was spoken across Europe "only a short while ago," in addition to speaking Srínawésin. And those were what she could think of "off the top of her head."

The second characteristic all the Shúna had in Davis notes was their predatory nature. Not only were they predators in terms of they were incapable of eating anything other than meat, but they were *predators* to their very bones. In fact, he never met one, no matter what the "race" or size that did not make him feel like he was a very little fish swimming with some very hungry piranha. Even those which he counted as friends could be dangerous when provoked and they all had a disturbing tendency to stare at him during their discussions, making him feel like "a mouse asking a cat questions." Their predatory natures come up again and again in his notes and in their language,

¹ The word 'dragon' in English originally stems from the Greek word *drak-* or 'sharp sighted' which in turn is derived from the strong aorist stem *derkesthai* and even further back to the Proto-Indo-European stem **derk-* 'to see.' The original meaning of the Greek usage from which 'dragon' comes from appear to be something like 'one with the sharp or deadly sight,' which appears to be an accurate description if Davis' story is at all true. This information is from *Etymonline.com*.

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in the vocabulary, the way they refer to others, how they think about motion and space and a host of other things, not to mention that several of his sources repeatedly threatened to kill (and *not* eat him—the ultimate disgrace) if he asked another stupid question. I believe that despite all the variety amongst the Shúna, the reason they refer to themselves as ‘Those Who are Alike’ appears to come not from their physical (dis)similarities, but rather other factors such as their highly intellectual natures, predatory mindset, shared stories and above all their language.

§1.3.2. Geographic Distribution of the Kindred

Davis describes the geographic distribution of the Kindred in simple terms: Everywhere. Apparently they have lived on the earth as long as it has existed and have spread—due to their remarkable mutability—to every inch of the globe. They dwell in lakes, inland seas, and the darkest depths of the deepest ocean, mountains, glaciers, plains, deserts, jungles, forests, caves and even in the deepest places of the earth, miles beneath our feet. I find this more than a little disturbing, even though the rational part of my mind says that it could not possibly be true, the more credulous part of me still worries.

§1.3.3. Draconic “Society”

“Society” usually means groups of people interacting, fighting, trading and so forth even if it is on a small, tribal level. Humans are without much exception *extremely* social, living in groups ranging from small tribes to huge empires and our societies and languages evolved to suit this kind of living. The society of the Shúna is conditioned by their biologic natures just as our societies are conditioned by ours. While humans are all very social and naturally operate within groups of varying sizes, dragons are the very definition of solitary *in the extreme*. Partially this is due to their large size and even larger appetites, dragons consume a large amount of food and their large territories are essential otherwise they would simply hunt everything edible to extinction within a few years. The pressure a single dragon can create on any environment is extreme and the only way not to hunt themselves out of a food source is to live solitary lives with territories spanning large areas. Mated pairs of dragons (the largest number of dragons Davis *ever* encountered for any period of time is two, any more and they would create a catastrophic depopulation of their territory just to feed themselves) need larger areas, or areas with more resources just to stay alive. *Liśáqx* or “hunting territory” is vital to the thought process of dragons and once they have defined an area that is their *liśáqx* they will defend it from all threats, either draconic or otherwise, usually to the death. This is because the loss or destruction of their *liśáqx* could quite simply lead to their death through starvation. Draconic “society” is, therefore, is not at all like human society, at least the “average” human society.

From the descriptions in Davis’ notes, I would liken draconic society to be more like the way big cats in the Amazon operate with one another than a human society. For both big cats and dragons, life is solitary for the most part, defined by large hunting territories which they range, constantly on the search for food. Life is the hunt, the prey and the territory a hunter ranges in. As long as everyone stays outside of each other’s hunting lands amicable relationships are possible, but the moment one attempts to take over another’s land or steals food, this is a direct threat and must be met one way or the other, usually violently. Dragons’ live solitary lives and like it that way, other dragons are far away in their own lands and meetings (discussions, fights, gossiping) are almost *always* held at the edges of two dragons’ territories, an intrusion is interpreted as an invasion and often leads to violent consequences. All relationships are “long-distance” and except for mated pairs and hatchlings, dragons will never live with others or interact with one another for more than an extremely short period of time.

All draconic relationships fall on a continuum between *enemy* and *family*. All other Shúna are, by definition, possible threats in the beginning and dragons will treat others with suspicion and

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dislike, at least at first. Once an amicable (or at least non-hostile) relationship is forged and territories are marked out and respected by both parties—therefore there is little need to impinge on another’s food and less chance of a fight—they may be considered to be “neighbors” rather than enemies. Dragons may live next to one another for their entire lives and never be anything else to one another than neighbors. But, often, when two Sihá live next to one another and enjoy each others’ (periodic) company and there is sufficient reason to do so, they will become “allies or friends.” Allies will help one another if the other’s territory is invaded but other than that and periodic visits to chat being another dragon’s *friend* does not really differ much from being a neighbor.

Although dragons are intensely solitary creatures they do live “together” with the various dragons around and near them. Although hunting territory is strictly marked off and rarely if ever breached (lest there be a serious altercation), a dragon will always know the dragons whose *lišáwéq* border with their own as well as the general conditions and dispositions of dragons’ territories beyond their immediate sphere. One of the most important distinctions made within the draconic language is the division and categorization of one’s neighbors into several broad classes: family members, allies and friends, enemies, and strange or new dragons—the latter two categories representing a majority of the draconic population from an individual’s standpoint. These classifications of one’s neighbors are one literally of life and death due the inherently amoral mindset of dragons.

Therefore, the word “society” can only loosely be ascribed to the Shúna. Rather, they live to hunt and to do as they will within their territories and in a loosely-knit, extremely fluid world *beyond* these territories by which all other relations with other Shúna are couched in terms of providing protection to one’s lands and maintaining alliances which will allow one to keep one’s lands. Dragons will almost never work in any group setting, almost never cooperate with others, either of their own kind or others, although there are extreme examples where a Sihá might work with others for a short period of time (always to protect one’s own and lands).

§1.3.3.1. Draconic Names

Dragon names come in a variety of forms but each dragon possesses a name like any other “person.” In fact, they typically possess several names; the name given to them by various human chronicles and the names given to them by their various other neighbors. Although they will typically answer to such names when dealing with the others, these are not in any way their “true” names, the names they think of themselves as and the names they use with each other. These names are rarely, if ever, told to *Qxnéréx*² and their use is considered to be extremely private and special, which is the primary reason they prefer not to tell their younger neighbors their real names. While Davis is certainly not the first person to know a Sihá by their true names, there are very few who are trusted enough for the Kindred to share their names with. I hope none of Davis’ sources take exception to my publishing of their names.

Draconic names depend on the circumstances. Usually, when a Sihá is a *qxéyéš* or hatchling, they are given a designation by their parents, one which is usually only used to separate them from the others. Names are always descriptive in nature and usually diminutive; an example might be the name *Sruthax* which means ‘male-rabbit’ for a hatchling that particularly enjoys the taste of rabbit, makes rabbit-ish sounds or otherwise behaves like a male-rabbit. Eventually, all hatchlings become *sláhúš* or ‘adults’ and they will usually take another name at that time. This name might be given to them by others, be taken by

² This term is the most common draconic name for humans. The root *qxné(hi)-* means ‘to annoy, to chatter, to speak in an annoying way,’ and as a noun it means something like ‘The Chatterers,’ apparently a reference to the way our language sounds as well as our habits of saying things which need not be said.

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themselves or otherwise applied, but two things always occur. First, the dragon makes the final decision as to what they prefer to be called (and woe to those who refuse to do so to their face) and these adult names are always descriptive in nature, often referring to an event, a distinguishing feature or so on. Sometimes they are ‘known’ by another name by their Sihá neighbors and usually this name is pejorative in nature, referring to some distasteful aspect about the victim, although a Sihá will always use another dragon’s preferred name when actually speaking to the individual—unless they want a fight.

Examples of draconic names in Davis’ papers include:

<i>Hathá sa Snaréš</i>	Angry Face	<i>Tsitsír xaháŠlisar</i>	Tear of the Sun
<i>Háqsáqx</i>	Shadow	<i>Tswenstéxusu Uqxéhasu</i>	Born of Fire
<i>Húqsa sa Šáwéqx</i>	White Eye	<i>Tsuwášáréšáwéts</i>	Star Gazer
<i>Qsánir sa Qxéyéš</i>	Moonchild	<i>Xinunashasúts</i>	Windchaser
<i>Qsírwanéš</i>	Under the Claw	<i>Xiyanawášéts</i>	Scatterlight
<i>Wátsí sa Qxítsúqx</i>	Ash Tongue	<i>Xihúréš</i>	Dribbler
<i>Rihán sa Wanáqx</i>	Obsidian Claw	<i>Xuqsúléš Rútháhéwésin</i>	Stormflyer
<i>Sewe sa Swéhésin</i>	Frost Song	<i>Xuqxátsitsústets</i>	Bone Digger
<i>Sláya sa Snaréš</i>	Bloody Face	<i>Xuthayá sa Tseyéš</i>	Longsleeper
<i>Sláyayánéš</i>	Blood Drinker	<i>Xutsithí sa Qxéxúnáx</i>	Always Scratching
<i>Šátha sa Qxúhusu</i>	Black Honey		at Something

And so forth. Sometimes dragons’ names change for various reasons, often nicknames applied by others slowly stick until the dragon takes this as their true-name. A good example is a dragon in Scandinavia called Jadescale who had a habit of hibernating for so long he began to be called Longsleeper by his fellows and eventually he merely adopted the name and uses it as his true-name. This rarely happens for the most part but it does sometimes occur. These names can also be given to those who are not dragons. When Howard first met Bloody Face (an occasion which he does not unfortunately record for I would be really interested on how this happened) the dragon called him *Qxnéx* ‘human’ or *Ritslax* ‘My little prey-neighbor’—implying they lived in proximity to one another. Eventually the dragon learned his name and called him simply *Howard* (which he usually pronounced as *Hawarts*) or *Sayax* ‘My little prey-friend.’

After several years, Bloody Face introduced him to Moonchild but when they met Bloody Face introduced him as:

“*TsiHawartsax, xiQsánir sa Qxéyéš. Xutsithí sa qxéxúnáx nihú!*”

(This is Howard, Moonchild. He’s always scratching at something!)

The description ‘always scratching at something’ was apparently a reference to Davis’ habit of always scribbling notes down whenever he was talking with one of the Sihá, and from that moment on, *Always Scratching at Something* was Howard’s draconic name (a fact that he was extremely proud of both because he had a dragon-name but also because he felt it was a testament to his dedicated (I would say compulsive) note-taking) and whenever he interacted with the Shúna they always referred to him by that name. Apparently Howard’s “fame” among the Shúna as a *qxnéx* who spoke Srínawésin spread beyond the immediate population which he worked with and whenever dragons speak of Howard Davis they still call him *Xutsithí sa Qxéxúnáx* ‘Always Scratching at Something.’

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§1.3.4. Mindset and Worldview

The Shúna's mindset is about as foreign to that of humans as can possibly be understood. The human mind and the way we look at the world are conditioned by who and what we are, highly social creatures who operate in groups. For most of our history we were prey animals of larger creatures and only periodically hunted or scavenged for meat. Only in "recent" history (the past several hundred thousand years or so) have we moved into dedicated hunting, agriculture, animal husbandry and technology which have allowed us to become the "dominant" species on the earth. Just as our worldview is based on biological and sociological facts, the draconic mindset is based on their biology, society and who and what they are. Davis at one point notes that: "Dragons live on the same planet as us but in a totally different world." An introduction to their "world" as written or recorded by Davis is below.

§1.3.4.1. The Hunt & Predatory Relationships

Dragons are *predators*.

The difference between humans and the Shúna mostly revolves around this simple fact. I do not believe that any human, a hunter who hunts for all their food, the most competitive athlete or the most vicious serial killer can truly be called a *predator*. A predator is not just a hunter, but a creature who obtains *all* their food by hunting. If a predator does not hunt and stalk their prey, they will die and there are no second chances. At best, humans can be described as part-time hunters, we can and often do eat many other foods and even in the most hunting-based society such as the Iñuit in Alaska and Canada, there are other food sources to be found.

This is not true of the Shúna. They are carnivores who cannot eat anything but meat and their lives depend solely on their ability to take prey. *Xwaxínáq̄x* or 'The Hunt' is the central point of their lives at all times, it conditions the way they look at the world, the way they move, think, act, and the way they speak. *Xwaxínáq̄x* is such a part of their minds the word is synonymous with "Life" and a dragon that isn't hunting in one way or another is probably sleeping—and dreaming about hunting. If a dragon were to look at a forest or a stretch of grassland, they would see hundreds of possible ambush sites, *xéryuq̄x* or 'prey-trails,' locations where small prey might hide or have their burrows, the lay of the land, the wind and the possible ways scents might be blown on the wind to hide their location or to help them track prey without being seen. They understand the atmosphere in a direct, personal way—as many of them can fly—and have words such as *súhu-* 'to dive out of the sun onto a prey animal,' *heláthsu* 'a forest with too much cover for prey animals when seen from the air,' *hushisu* 'an open forest which doesn't have very much brush and so one can move silently, but without much cover,' *snésu* 'a snowy forest which shows prey well from the air.'

Almost aspect of their minds and language involves around hunting and the Hunt conditions every relationship they have in every possible way. Dragons seem to believe there are only two types of relationships in the world: *predator* and *prey*. This works out nicely for them, of course, because nothing I am aware of would be foolish enough to try and hunt a dragon. Except for other dragons. The Predator-Prey relationship extends to inter-Shúna relationships, all other dragons are—by definition—threats in some way to every other dragon. Two dragons who live next to one another will generally attempt to form at least a general understanding of where territorial boundaries are and for the most part they are respected, but in times of difficulty, all bets are off and neighbors will willingly invade another's lands to hunt, causing bloody fights for territory. A new or strange Sihá is a threat and is considered as such until some general understanding can be reached.

There are several exceptions to the "All dragons are dangerous to all others" rule. Firstly, family members (to a certain extent) will not turn on one another, no matter how

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bad the hunting is. This does not mean they will cooperate for food, but they will not attack one another (see §1.3.4.2. **Amorality** below for a further description of inter-familial relations). Secondly, *sayawéš* and *tsítsíwéš* ‘Allies’ will not attack one another or invade one another’s territory, although in *extremely* difficult situations this will sometimes happen. Except for these two exceptions *all other Shúna* are competitors at best and outright threats at worst to be dealt with accordingly, there is simply no middle ground.

This constant Predator-Prey mindset would be extremely stressful to a species that were not so prepared for a life of constant confrontation. A Sihá has very little to fear from almost any other creature on this earth, not even the largest predator is willing to tackle even the smallest Sihá, most species simply instinctively know better than to do that. Davis notes with some humor that the instinct to fear dragons is as universal as the instinct to fear fire—which makes some sense in this context. Although *extremely* large predators (Davis never notes whether the Kindred and dinosaurs ever interacted) might be willing to defend their prey from a Sihá, the thought of attacking one of them for food is highly unlikely. Their speed, impenetrable scales, vicious poison, deadly breath, razor-edged claws and incredible strength are hardly the most dangerous aspect of these predators. Their minds are devious and deadly, capable of planning far in advance of even most humans, and certainly farther than the most audacious predator and every predator on this planet who might have a *chance* on taking a Sihá knows this as instinctively as they know to sleep at night. And even if another predator was successful there appears to be no animal on earth other than another Sihá which is immune to dragon-venom. Even if they took a Sihá, they would die a horrible death by merely tasting their blood. Even other Kindred dislike the concept of attacking another, although not for moralistic reasons, but simply because a dragon is an incredibly dangerous foe, even to another dragon and few of the Kindred are capable of slaying a neighbor outright without being severely wounded in the process...and thus possible prey for another neighbor.

§1.3.4.2. Amorality

If an individual human were to behave as a dragon does for any length of time, within a week they would almost certainly be diagnosed as a psychotic and be placed within an institution to “protect society.” The reason for this is quite simple: as humans define behavior, dragons demonstrate all the classical signs of a psychotic. The Kindred’s sense of morality is utterly alien from humans in almost every imaginable way, and this leads to many unfortunate misunderstandings between dragons and *qxnéréx*. Throughout all human languages the most common word used to describe dragons is *evil*. Their morality is exceedingly different and such a worldview simply does not work within the social framework of humans because they are *not* human. But, then again if an ant were to behave as the normal human does (possessing a sense of self, viewing the survival of it and a small group of its own as more important than the whole, stealing from others, attempting to breed to the detriment of the entire colony and so on) it would almost certainly be classed as psychotic and would be destroyed to “protect the colony.” I do not argue that dragons are more advanced than us, merely that their sense of right and wrong is extremely different and can easily be judged as “evil” if it is not viewed in context, just as ants’ society must be judged in context.

To put it simply, “morality” is a concept utterly foreign to the Kindred. It not that they think about concepts of good and evil and simply act in an evil way, the whole concept is totally alien to them and they simply do not consider it whatsoever. They understand the concepts of *good* and *bad* (in a non-moral way like we would think about a food dish as either *good* or *bad* not as *good* or *evil*) but their understanding of the words is totally different. They

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simply take for granted what is good for one is certainly not good for another (meat is good for them, not so good for the caribou the meat happens to be on when they find it), in fact, inherent to their mindset is that what is *good* for one is always *bad* for another, a product of their predatory natures. The thought of universal and non-relative Good is about as alien to them as the Hunt is to us. There is no such thing as Good and Evil in the draconic mind, it is not a consideration and they have no interest in it.

This mentality is not directed at non-Shúna only, but extends to the Kindred as well. Howard notes a long conversation he had with Bloody Face and Moonchild a part of which involved a story they told him about when a new dragon, Frost Song, came to the vicinity and settled in. She occupied a stretch of land to the north (from the context I believe this whole story was set in Great Britain, Scotland in particular) which was unclaimed. Another Kindred in the area by the name of Stormflyer lived nearby and both Frost Song and Stormflyer did not like each other and did not become allies or friends. Eventually, Frost Song began to “*Saenwásúts anneXuqsúléš Rútháhéwésin’la*” or ‘Challenged Stormflyer for control of her hunting territory.’ She began to incur on Stormflyer’s lands, hunting periodically and leaving the carcasses as challenges to the other Sihá. Stormflyer was too weak to challenge Frost Song directly and had no friends or allies in the area and did nothing to show that this behavior was unacceptable. Finally, encouraged by the non-action of the other female, Frost Song made a direct attack on Stormflyer and chased her right out of her own lands (but did not attempt to kill her outright) and settled into the combined territories as her own.

Davis recorded the entire conversation and it is a fascinating exchange between the two mindsets and it is instructive to present it in its entirety (Srínawésin version is presented in **8.4. Dialogue between Bloody Face, Moonchild and Howard Davis** below):

Davis: “That’s terrible. What did everyone else do?”

Bloody Face: “What do you mean?”

Davis: “Didn’t anyone try and *stop* Frost Song? She was picking on Stormflyer without a reason! Didn’t anyone have a problem with that?”

Moonchild: “A problem? The problem was with Stormflyer! The fool!”

Davis: “What!?”

Moonchild: “She allowed Frost Song to come into her land and take her prey and did not stop her. She lost her own land, Frost Song didn’t take it. Why would anyone want to stop that?”

Davis: “I thought you said that Stormflyer wasn’t strong enough to fight Frost Song?”

Bloody Face: “Hah! If she had put up a fight, Frost Song wouldn’t have pushed too far. Not even she would have wanted a fight to the death with another Sihá, she’s not that smart, but she isn’t a fool.”

Moonchild: “Besides, even if she (Stormflyer) was weaker than her (Frost Song) and couldn’t face her, she should have gone to another in the area and forged an alliance. ‘Fight an invasion by going to a friend’s,’ I always say.”

Bloody Face: “As if any of the others to the north would want to be her ally!”

Davis: “So no one did anything?”

Bloody Face: “They were annoyed with Frost Song. She had a territory twice as big as anyone else’s. She better beware of the others. I wouldn’t mind flying north and taking some of those lands for myself!”

Moonchild: “Indeed! Great fishing, many seals and even some walrus—”

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- Bloody Face:** “No the walrus are all gone. Ever since...” [Looks at Davis] “..the *Qxnéréx* came to the Jagged Isle and hunted them away.”
- Davis:** “So let me get this straight. You don’t have a problem with what Frost Song did?”
- Both:** “No.”
- Davis:** “And you would do it to another Sihá if you had the chance?”
- Both:** “Absolutely.”
- Bloody Face:** “If someone is so foolish to allow another to take one’s land, they deserve to be chased off just like Stormflyer.”

That, in a nutshell, is the mentality of the Shúna. Most dragons will periodically challenge their neighbors in subtle ways, hunting on their lands, leaving the bodies as a challenge, ranging over their territories and simply seeing what will happen. If the challenged dragon does nothing and does not respond this is considered to be a virtual invitation to take the territory from them and the weaker dragon will usually retreat rather than fight to the death. If the challenged Sihá refuses to give in (and most will not give up easily) they retaliate by hunting on their opponent’s land and leaving the bodies. Most Kindred will stop once their challenge is met with a reply, neither side will want to engage in an actual fight if they can help it. Very rarely, real fights break out and Davis notes that it is almost always because one side is either vastly stronger than the other or in the rare situation of a *Šnarír* or ‘Blood Hunt.’ A *Šnarír* is a hunt of vengeance, usually caused by some terrible wrong in the past and will end in the death of one of the dragons.

Other than that, if a dragon does not defend their land it is “their fault” they lost it— if being at “fault” is even a concept a Sihá might recognize. Further in the conversation, Howard asks the pair how they could not care, given that Frost Song was likely to keep attacking until she had the entire island as her territory. They laughed and shook their heads at this thought (this was fairly early in their relationship with the human). The response was that if she tried it again the challenged dragon would almost certainly go to an ally for help and even a foolish dragon would not want to fight *two* Shúna, no matter how powerful. Even if she succeeded again all the others in the area would likely take this as a warning sign and if she tried a third time they would likely band together as a whole and simply slay her outright in one of the few instances where the Shúna will cooperate in groups. Interestingly, there is no morality attached to any of this, it was not “right” or “wrong” for Frost Song to take Stormflyer’s land and it was not “right” or “wrong” for Stormflyer to not fight back, only foolish. The other dragons who might band together would not do so out of some social sense of “maintaining order,” but rather because they would be fully aware that if they didn’t act with the others it, they might be next.

This is the moral—or *amoral*—world the Shúna live in, morality simply isn’t a concern of theirs and does not enter into their thought processes. From Davis’ descriptions, certain dragons such as Bloody Face, who has been around younger races for a long time, have a vague conception of what humans speak of when we talk about Good and Evil, but this is not a part of his worldview or daily life. It seems similar to the fact that I have a vague understanding that the Oort Cloud surrounds this solar system and periodically sends comets our way, but it is not a part of my life or anyone else’s—except perhaps astronomers. “Amoral” therefore seems a better description of the Kindred than “evil,” although perhaps a better and more immediate description would be “dangerous.” The Shúna have a sense of humor (a very odd and twisted one if Davis’ notes are any indication), but the moment a threat is perceived to their hunting territory, their livelihood and their life (all of which are

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roughly synonymous) they will act swiftly, viciously and without compunction against human, animal or Sihá.

§1.3.4.3. *Sráhahen* and the Natural World

The Shúna do not possess a sense of religion as we know it. They do not really possess a creation story *per se*, at least not in terms humans might consider a creation story. They have legends where they came from and how the world came to be but neither of these have any commandments, explanations of why the world is the way it is, social obligations set down by the gods or anything which is so common in the creation stories of the *qxnéréx*. They do not worship anything or even have a sense of an afterlife or anything remotely resembling religious practice, or belief systems. Despite this, the Shúna in Davis' notes seem to have a profound sense of reverence for the world around them and a deep love of it which he had not seen matched in any human religion. While many religions seek a balance with the world and appreciate its beauty and respect it, the draconic mindset is one of profound and deep devotion to the world, the wind, the water, the fire, the earth and the animals which are their food. This reverence is extremely different than ours as it is shorn of all social mores and commentary and extorts the Sihá towards no actions or implies any sort of punishment or rewards. In fact, rewards and punishments are entirely foreign concepts to them, both being simply *swérlwéq*x or 'consequences.'

All religious systems of the *qxnéréx* are based upon our nature, our *social nature*. Rewards and punishments are part of society's way of correcting itself and thus they are extended into religious belief. Social mores and explanations for certain social traditions are inherent to human religion because they give organization and meaning to our *social* systems. "Right" and "Wrong" are extensions of these social requirements, something which is utterly lacking in the draconic mindset so it is utterly lacking from their concepts of "religion." Just as human and draconic conceptions of time, space and the world are constructions of our natures, so is the nature of our "religions." In contrast to the beliefs of humans, their worldview has no expectation of the world as it *should be*, only as it *is*, with violence, blood, death, disease, pleasure, delight, joy and sorrow all being revered in their own way and all being a part of it. Eventually Howard asked Bloody Face what the Kindred believed in and after a moment of thought he simply said: "*Sráhahen*."

The root of this word is *sráha-* and it took him some time to describe this word to Howard (he devotes several pages to it) and he did so as if he had asked why rocks fall and why the sun is yellow, as if it was obvious and apparent. *Sráhahen* is probably one of the most difficult concepts to the mindset of the Sihá and is central to their way of thinking. *Sráha-* simply means "motion" although it covers a range of thoughts which are not covered by this English word. The motion of the stars, sun and moon are *sráha-*, the way the leaves on the trees move, the running of caribou, falling snow, the grinding erosion of mountains, the path of rivers, the currents in the ocean, the beat of an animal's heart as it pumps blood from a gaping wound, the thundering storm, roaring fire, a rotting corpse, the buzzing of bees are all *sráha-*. To travel to another location is *sráha-* and so is the rush of a tsunami or the way the stars wheel overhead.

This term is so integral to their concept of the world it is synonymous with "life," allowing such phrases as "*Xísráhéš nixútsusin sa xahárúnáwéha'ta*" or 'he lives (*sráhas*) in the northern mountains,' and I suppose that you could roughly translate *sráha-* as such Chinese or Japanese concepts of *Ch'i* or *Ki*, although this might be a forced translation. However, Davis notes at one point:

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The Shúna have a worldview exactly opposite of the Platonic image of the Greeks. Plato believed that motionless and still was synonymous with perfection and things which moved and changed were imperfect and flawed. The perfect God lived beyond the stars, which were closer to perfection because they were motionless, while the crystal spheres of creation represented a descent from the perfection of God into the imperfection of the world in the center of the world. The Shúna, believe the opposite, motion, life, change and constant, roiling chaos is a form of perfection, its very imperfection and transitory nature a beauty. “Motionless” is the same as “dead” to the Kindred, although they do not believe that anything is truly motionless.

This makes a great deal of sense, the Kindred live such a long time they are perfectly aware such “motionless” things such as stars are indeed moving in relation to each other, albeit much more slowly than the rest of the world. To dragons it seems that change and variation give the world beauty and meaning and all things are in a constant state of change, just at different speeds. They seem to revel in the winds, the waters, fire, storms and lightning, the elemental and primal forces of the world which cannot be tamed or organized, regulated or stopped descriptions which seem to match the Shúna themselves! *Sráhahen* is this state of motion and change and since everything is changing, everything is explicitly *alive* in the draconic world. The stars, the stones, the wind and the roots of the world are as alive as you or me, they are all *changing* in a wonderful symphony of endless variation, impossible to understand and even more impossible to still. I think this is an interesting concept as it also takes a similar, if different view of the world than other religions such as Buddhism. Buddhism says much the same, but the goal of this philosophy is to *escape* the transitory nature of the world by achieving Nirvana, whereas the state of constant alteration and change is a thing to be rejoiced and cherished to the Shúna, not a thing to be escaped or left behind. *Sráhahen* is the world and the world is always in a state of *sráha-* and this thinking underlies the “morality” of the Shúna as well as their concepts of their place in the world and with each other.

§1.3.4.4. Cosmology

Cosmology is the way in which a people view the world or the physical structure of the world around them. The ancient Greek belief that the world was at the center of creation with many crystal spheres around it upon which the various planets and stars rotated is an example of a cosmology, as is our modern view of the earth which orbits the sun, which in turn is in the Milky Way galaxy which is in the Local Group and then the Virgo Supercluster and so on and so forth. Cosmology often embraces the way in which the universe came to be in such a state, whether the gods created it as such, they had to slay a monster to create the physical universe or our modern view of the Big Bang.

We have already met the story *How the Dragons Came to Be* which is not only their creation story but a model of their cosmology. The two main actors of this story are *Tsúhúr xaháStéxur* ‘the Night Mother’ and *Xniya nixaXatirha* ‘the Earth Father’ which seem to be viewed more as ancestral spirits or progenitors than what a human might call a “god.” These two great spirits represent the sky above and the earth below and do not exist in a “far away time during creation” but continually exist at all times both in the past, the present and the future. Therefore “creation” was not a singular event which these two created the world, but it is a constant effort which happens *between* the two and influences all things which life beneath the night sky and on the earth, which is “everything.” The Night Mother’s body is often described as ‘The Glittering Span’ which seems to refer to the arch of the Milky Way above in the night sky and she is believed to surround the world and the stars are the

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glittering scales on her body as it coils around the world. The darkness between the stars is her huge wings surrounding everything in their folds as she coils around all creation. The Earth Father is believed to live in the earth, and indeed is thought to be the earth itself. His body is the deep stone of the world and all things, mountains, seas, animals, trees and the Kindred live upon his back. He is thought to be curled up in a great ball, asleep for ages within the folds of the Night Mother and when he stirs ice ages come and go the world shakes and cataclysms occur. He lies curled around *Raha sa Qxéha sa Xúxuha* or ‘the Great Fiery Egg’ which seems to be considered as a great, unhatched egg the Earth Father and the Night Mother which the Earth Father keeps warm within his coils until one day when it will hatch.

In the story above, the Night Mother and Earth Father are said to be the progenitors of all the Shúna, who are their oldest children, as well as all other creatures and things on the earth, which were born second. One of Davis’ other sources further explained aspects of the story, telling him that these two spirits did not just mate to create the dragons but gave their firstborn various gifts. The Night Mother is the source of all immaterial and mysterious things, thoughts, wind, mind and spirit and gave the Shúna their cunning, their intelligence and their wisdom. The Earth Father is the source of all material things in the world, stone, earth, fire, life and created the Shúna’s physical forms and granted them their vast strength, their hard scales, burning flames and deadly claws and teeth. After that day the Earth Father went to sleep, coiled around the great flaming egg which was the last of their children and the Night Mother continued her endless coiling around the world, surrounding her children and her mate in her endless coils of glittering darkness.

This worldview is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, the image of a great stone beast with fire deep within, surrounded by the glittering coils of a dark creature is a remarkably accurate depiction of the physical disposition of the world with the earth with flames in the center and surrounded by the darkness and cold of space. I suppose this makes sense, the Shúna have untold ages to observe the world and understand it in a much more immediate way than humans. They swim in the deep of the sea, crawl in the depths of the earth and fly in the highest reaches of the sky and live so long they see the way the undulating galaxy around us slowly shifts and changes over æons. Secondly, while I am no expert in mythology or comparative religions, the Kindred reverse the “common” human thinking that the earth is “female” while the sky above is “male.” The “feminine” spirit is the source of all immaterial things and is thus located in the sky while the “masculine” spirit is the source of all material things and is thus related to the earth below. This general view of the universe is not unique, in fact shares a great deal of similarities with many human aboriginal groups³ despite some of the particular draconic ways in which the story is viewed.

§1.3.5. Draconic Time

One common feature of all human legends of dragons is their lifespan. It is always noted as being extremely long. According to Davis’ notes, this is an understatement. *Extremely long* enters into a territory whereby an individual can not only live centuries or thousands of years, but *tens of thousands of years* with ease. The very thought of living so long simply boggles the mind. If you were to live that long, you would see the sun move against the constellations of the Zodiac century by century until the spring equinox made a huge path through them over the course of 26,000 years. You would see the continents drift, new islands be born, prey animals die out completely and even the constellations themselves change until their old forms were unrecognizable. Days would mean

³ Drawn primarily from; Penprase, Bryan E., *The Power of Stars: How Celestial Observations Have Shaped Civilization*, New York, New York, Springer Science+Business Media LLC., 2011

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nothing, even months and years blurring away until the very concept of time lost the meaning it has for most people. Time itself would seem to disappear, because it is literally *irrelevant*.

Davis had a difficult time on figuring out exactly how long a dragon can expect to live in an “average” lifetime. Dragons do not consider days or years to be very important, or even markers of time, so trying to figure out how many years a dragon has lived or might live from an individual who simply doesn’t count them would be very difficult. He quizzed his sources with a variety of questions, asking about the position of the stars (he seemed to be an amateur astronomer), the kinds of animals who lived at the time and where they lived as well as “estimates” of how many years one lived. Luckily, Bloody Face had lived among the younger races long enough to have a vague appreciation of what we conceived as “time” so managed to estimate with much more accuracy than Stargazer, who merely said “Do you see the stones on the river over there? I have lived more seasons than all of those stones together.” From all these questions, Howard managed to form a general outline of the draconic lifeline.

A *qxéyěš* or ‘hatchling’ is one who is newly hatched to approximately a hundred years or so and in this time they never leave the cave of their parents. After that general time they become *hátsěš* or ‘adolescent’ and begin to learn to hunt under the watchful eyes of their parents. This period lasts until they are about 500 to 800 years old, at which time they are *sláhurihúš* ‘little adults’ and they are kicked out of their parent’s cave (and usually given a little territory to establish themselves). A dragon is not considered to be an adult or *sláhúš* until they have reached approximately 10,000 years old at which point parents will treat their offspring as if they are any other dragon. Davis could not get an exact number from any of his informants, but guessed that Bloody Face was at least 60,000 years old (basing this estimate mostly on the number of Ice Ages he had seen) while Moonchild was a little younger, only about 40,000 years old or so. He could never get a real answer on how long they might live, but he had no problem assuming that up to 100,000 years was an easily and commonly reachable age for a Sihá.

§1.3.5.1. The Kindred’s Concepts of “Time”

Because they live so incredibly long, the Shúna have a concept of “time” which is utterly different than ours. The closest analogy would be the difference between a human’s lifespan and that of a dragonfly. Some dragonflies live only a single day, being born, reproducing and dying within a single 24-hour span, so would have no concept of *multiple days*, much less months, years or decades. Hours would be like decades to them and they would live in a world of *seconds* rather than days. Therefore, the world of the Shúna is a world virtually without time, at least as we understand and conceive of it. They do recognize the regular change of seasons, the alternation of light and dark and the passing of the sun through the stars but these are more akin to environmental conditions to dragons. To a dragon, the “time” of year something happens in is just like the fact that it happened on that hill over there or that it was raining at the time. Important, but not like it would be for a human.

However, Davis approximated what a dragon’s concept of “time” is with the following chart, matching human times to draconic ones:

<u>Human Timespan</u>	<u>Approximate Draconic Period</u>
•Days	Minutes or seconds
•Moon (1 month or 29.5 nights)	1 hour
•Season (≈90 days, winter, spring, summer, fall)	a “couple of hours”
•Year (365.2433 days)	1 day
•Constellation’s transit (≈2000 years)	1 year
•Precession of equinoxes through the Zodiac (≈26,000 years)	1 decade

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This is extremely approximate, but Davis apparently drew up this outline after many conversations with the Kindred and it seems to show a fairly good presentation for their concept of time. The Kindred do not count days and almost never speak of them as periods of time. They understand the cycle of sleep and wakefulness that night and day give to their prey but Davis notes that if one asks a dragon how many days ago something happened they would be as confused as asking how many seconds ago something happened to a human. The shortest periods of time they commonly use are *qsáníqx* or “a moon,” which they reckon from the dark of the moon to the next dark of the moon or approximately 29.5 nights (although they do not conceive of a moon’s duration in that way). They do not bother to count the length of seasons, merely acknowledging when rutting/mating season of their prey arrives and pay even less attention to years, seeing the yearly cycle of cold-flowering-warm-fruited much like humans see the daily movement of the sun across the sky.

The last two entries are unique units of time to the Shúna because they are simply too long for almost anyone else to think of. The earth not only spins on its axis but wobbles very, very slowly which over a long time alters the position of the sun throughout the year over thousands of years.⁴ This action *precesses* the equinoxes (the days of the year in which day and night are of equal length) and the solstices (when the days are either longest or shortest) against the Zodiacal constellations. Although the Sihá do not really bother with equinoxes or solstices, they are aware of this process, they see its action over thousands of years and count this as a particular block of “time.” They do not divide up the Zodiac—which they call *Xéryur* or ‘the Hunting Trail of the Sky’—as we do, but they recognize the general concept that the sun takes about 2,000 or so years to move *backward* through the same stretch of sky as the sun moves *forward* over the course of a single moon and this forms the basis of their “Constellation-Transit” time-periods. The entire process from one constellation through the entire Zodiac and back again takes about 26,000 *thousand* years which serves as a “time” marker for the Kindred. Davis notes that dragons do not reckon these times in years but regard these as approximate numbers give or take a few centuries.

He also notes that the Kindred have an intimate understanding of the sky, much closer to aboriginal human groups than to most of us “moderns.” Their eyesight is such that they can see the positions of all the stars and moon in broad daylight, seeing right through the glare of the sun, and so all they need to do is to glance at the sky and they can tell precisely what “time” of year it is and where the sun is in its precessional cycle. This is a useful skill to a species that periodically hibernates for several thousand years (we appear to be in the middle of one of these hibernation cycles right now which could account for the lack of dragon-sightings), all they need do upon waking is merely look at the sky and they know exactly what “time” it is. Not only can they do this, but on the rare occasions where they might care, they can look at the nighttime sky and from the position of the stars and the moon relative to the season, they can approximate when the sun will rise, although they mostly use this as a hunting technique to determine when the advantage of darkness will leave them.

A more in-depth treatment of how the Kindred see the yearly changes of the seasons and how they reckon and refer to them is given in §7.8.2. **Lunar and Seasonal Names** below.

⁴ Davis takes this knowledge for granted but I was not aware of it until I looked this information up on the Internet. This section is based on the Wikipedia entry on the subject.

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§1.4. Srínawésin “Many Words” or the Language of the Kindred

Language for humans is essentially a complex way of coordinating groups of people living within a self-defined group (whether tribe or empire) in group actions such as fighting, trading, building, working together and other *social* tasks. Language is central to all of these functions as well as functions within the larger group such as marriages between families, trade between companies within a group and interactions between individuals. Our languages are also central to inter-group interactions such as empires negotiating treaties, wars (although a slightly more *direct* form of communication tends to happen here), alliances, international laws and such forth. Our languages *coordinate* our group actions and *assist* those group actions.

While the younger races’ languages evolved to *coordinate* their group actions, the draconic language evolved in order to *disassociate* and *separate* dragons from one another as a biological necessity. Srínawésin developed as the need to define boundaries between hunting territories, agree on not trespassing another’s territory and otherwise keep the dragons at a good distance from each other so they could continue to have a food source. Therefore, while the younger races are *social* and *group-oriented*, dragons are *solitary* and *individually-oriented* at all times and their language developed to suit their needs. The number of terms for boundaries, borders, agreements on separation, the enemy or non-enemy status of other dragons in the area and other *disassociating* terms in Srínawésin is as large as human terms for groups, group activities and coordination-related activities, if not more so. While the Sihá are essentially solitary there are a few instances whereby they will work in groups and this is another area where their language comes into play. These include mating customs, family groups and alliances between individuals as well as group alliances in order to stop a threat to all the dragons in the area (obviously an *extremely rare* event).

§1.4.1. Particularities of the Dragon Tongue

It might seem strange to state this so specifically but Srínawésin is *not* a human language. Srínawésin is in many ways a totally alien language with some very strange concepts and ways of working (at least to us). While it is still intelligible to the younger races (it obeys general linguistic principles and logic otherwise it would be impossible to learn if it did not make use of the same *general* processes) it is still very difficult to relate to without a great deal of work due to its unusual concepts:

Verbality: All words in Srínawésin are verbs. Although there are a few exceptions to this rule such as conjunctive and disjunctive words, certain grammatical markers and so forth, the vast majority of draconic words are verbs and can take all verbal endings.

Pronunciation: The draconic language is breathy, whispering, hissing and slightly raspy, difficult on the untrained mouth to reproduce very well and hard to understand slight distinctions in pronunciation. This is, in part, because draconic hearing is so acute, tiny differences to us are very distinct to them. Pronunciation difficulties between voiced and unvoiced *vowels*, the way certain affricates are articulated and the hissing nature of the language can make it hard to pronounce. Anyone who can say *qxaqxáqx* easily deserves some sort of medal.

Naturalistic Vocabulary: The world the dragons inhabit is not the same world we live in. They do not have terms for ‘chair’ because they do not sit in chairs, ‘car’ because they obviously do not drive cars, or ‘house, staff, city, light bulb, paper’ or ‘door’ for the same reasons. They have an extremely naturalistic vocabulary including different types of trees, different animals (and whether they are edible or not), aerial and atmospheric conditions, geographic features and other “natural” terms. They can refer to “human” concepts but it requires lengthy explanations much like the simple term *šathí-* must be explained in English as ‘to run away from a predator.’

Time Sense: As noted above, dragons live in a different sort of time than we do. “Time” indicators, such as the location of the sun and so forth are thought of more as environmental

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conditions then time-markers. The language also possesses three distinct senses of tense; *Present*, *~Present* and the possibly unique *Cyclical Tense*.

Directional Sense: Dragons are mostly flyers and so they possess an extremely three-dimensional concept of direction. Unlike humans who have *right*, *left*, *forward*, *backward*, *up* and *down*, the Shúna have single-word concepts such as *xáhi*- ‘upper right front,’ *wálé*- ‘lower left front’ and *latsiš*- ‘lower left back.’

Rare/Unique Grammatical Organizations: Human languages all organize themselves in certain ways and these organizations can be placed into certain classifications. To my knowledge (which is admittedly not infallible) the way Srínawésin approaches the concept of *Ergativity* is unique and not attested to in any human language.

Class Structures: Srínawésin possesses a structure of *classifications* within it, whereby a word is placed in a certain category which determines its grammatical features. Many languages have this, German, Latin, Russian, French and such all have gender classifications, so this system is hardly unique but it will probably be totally new to a layperson attempting to learn the language and the specificity of this system might be surprising even to experienced linguists.

Lack of Numerals: Srínawésin seems to possess no numerals of any kind; their use is simply a non-issue to its speakers.

Alternate Plural Concepts: The Dragon Tongue has a system of three types of plurality, *Singular*, *Plural* and *Innumerable*. This system is not very rare but might be a difficult concept for lay-speakers.

Lack of 2nd Person: Dragons are incredibly individualistic and, strangely, seem to possess *no concept of the 2nd Person* (i.e. “You” vs. “Me” or “Him, Her, It”). This is totally unprecedented in any human language I am aware of, but does make sense when the “society” of the speakers is taken into account.

Scatology: If dragons had something we could call “science” they would have four branches: astronomy, hunting, anatomy and scatology. The first deals with their ability to navigate, the second with their ability to catch their prey and the third with their ability to swiftly bring what they catch down. The last also deals with hunting and tracking in that the Shúna have a number of terms to describe feces as they use this to track prey. I have not included various scatological terms in order to satisfy my adolescent obsession with terms like “shit, piss” and “crap.” These are important features and relevant terms to a Sihá’s daily life.

Social Niceties: Srínawésin seems to completely lack many of the functions which human languages take for granted, one of the largest being socializing words such as “hello, thank you, you’re welcome, please” and so on. The closest thing to “hello” I have ever read in Davis’ papers was the phrase *Tsixenwasa’n* “I greet (you),” which was used exclusively to a non-enemy, non-friend, non-familial dragon whose intentions appear relatively non-threatening and *Sawanatwen’x*? “Was the hunting for large prey-animals good?”

All of these features will be examined in greater depth in the following paper.

§1.4.2. Dialects and the History of Srínawésin

All languages have a history, where they came from, how they became what they are today and what influences from other languages impacted them. Not only do languages change, but they branch off and over a long time become new languages, which are extremely different, but related. English is in fact related to German, Latin, Welsh, Irish, Russian, Greek, Swedish, Polish, Italian, Spanish and most other European languages and they all stemmed from the same source, which linguists call Proto-Indo-European (PIE). In fact, many languages from the Indian sub-continent such as Hindi are also distantly related to English, as are extinct languages like Tocharian A and B,

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Hittite and others. Since PIE speakers branched off from one another this single language created all the diverse languages spoken by many people across the world.

Srínawésin, like all languages, has changed in its history, but those changes are unique for three reasons. 1) Until “very recently,” Srínawésin has never had to deal with any other language other than itself. Human languages inevitably collide with one another, borrow terms from totally foreign languages (such as *Samurai*, *Skunk*, and *Potato* in English) but Srínawésin has never had contact with any non-draconic language up until “only” two hundred thousand years ago or so. Different dialects of the language have been spoken and these undoubtedly have influenced each other, but they all share a root origin, similar concepts and other general similarities which human languages rarely have. 2) The immense span of time these languages have been spoken. Srínawésin has been spoken by the dragons in one form or another for as long as they have live on the earth—which is a very, very, *very* long time. This means that the language has undergone both more and less changes than any human language. It has likely undergone more changes because of the sheer amount of time it has been spoken, and *less* because the Kindred are such a long-lived race, changes come much more slowly than they do in human languages.

For English to split off from Saxon German and attain its modern forms has taken approximately *sixty generations* of speakers. English and German are not that dissimilar and eighty generations is not that long. However, sixty *draconic generations* would be something like *600,000 years* so slight changes in the language—if they took place at the same rate as the drift from German to English—would take a little more than *half a million years*. Finally, 3) the language and its speakers change slower than the rest of the world does. A single dragon can outlive a species so their terminology has to make use of a “quickly changing” world, one which alters faster than the speakers do. Despite these facts “Srínawésin” is *not a single language*, but in fact several. All draconic languages stem from a single source and are related to one another, but are not all mutually intelligible to one another. The language spoken by all of Davis’ sources—and thus the language outlined in this paper—represents what Howard called the *Northern Latitudinal* dialect.

He interviewed and managed to get notes on a few of the other draconic dialects (all of which are called variations of “Many Words;” *Swynwhis*, *Sqjñqweçān*) and although he never managed to put together a precise picture of how they functioned, he did manage classify the three major dialects:

Latitudinal Dialects

These dialects are spoken by many of the “classical” dragons of the world, i.e. those which are mainly land-based and dwelling. Latitudinal seems to be divided up into three sub-dialects; Tropical (mostly South America, Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia), Northern (Europe, Northern Asia and the Himalayas) and Arctic (Scandinavia, Siberia and most of North America). These languages all seem to function generally similar and with similar pronunciations, although the Arctic Dialect possesses a strange ‘rolled s’ sound Davis writes as [ç] although he does not describe how it is articulated. Howard could generally understand Tropical Latitudinal and could pick out most of the Arctic Variety, so it seems there is some mutual intelligibility for the most part.

Deep Draconic

One group of the Shúna which Howard never met where the Deep Dragons, the Kindred who dwell in the deepest and darkest portions of the earth. Even other dragons rarely meet these secretive and elusive Shúna, the deepest caves most dragons use do not even approach the depths these Kindred prefer. From Black Honey and Born of Fire’s descriptions, this language is similar to those of the more traditional terrestrial dragons, although it preserves extremely ancient forms and grammatical terms. Deep Draconic seems to be tonal in nature (like Chinese or Vietnamese) and has only two or three grammatical classes, versus the thirteen in terrestrial Srínawésin.

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Oceanic Dialects

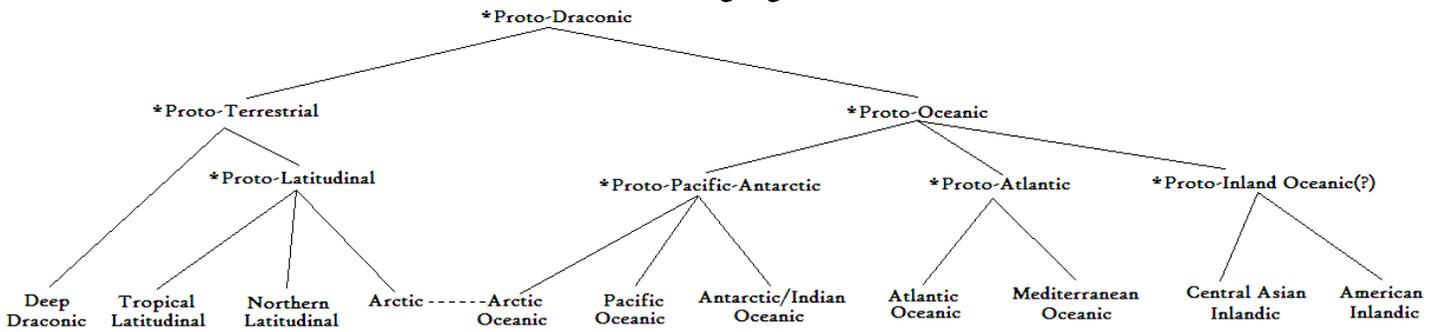
The last dialect Davis managed to observe for some time, during the semi-lunar visits of a sea dragon named Wave on the Sea. She spoke Northern Latitudinal very well, but she taught Howard several words of the Arctic Oceanic dialect and he managed to extract a general way in which the language functioned. Oceanic dialects all seem to be extremely tonal, and unlike human languages, they actually make use of *precise notes rather than general tones*, so speaking correctly is more like reading music than speaking Chinese. I am unaware of this type of language occurring anywhere in the world other than among the Oceanic dialects of Srínawésin. The language does not make use of the same classifications terrestrial languages do, and it has a *required* grammatical distinction of the relative depth, speed and condition of any noun. The language has an extremely sing-song quality to it when spoken above the air, as well as distinctions between *tight* and *relaxed* vowels, rather than voiced and unvoiced in Northern Latitudinal. There are several non- or little-intelligible variations of the Oceanic dialects, mostly due to geographic considerations such as the oceans that its speakers live in.

Davis managed to work out the general geographic distribution of the various forms of Srínawésin, although he admits that showing a map of the world to a dragon is about as useful as showing a New York's subway system timetable to an African Bushman, and thus is extremely general. His map appears as:



Howard also attempted to break down the ways in which Srínawésin's languages are related to one another, much like how English is related to Gaelic, Hindi or Bulgarian. He lived in the time when language family trees were extremely popular and tended to be drawn up regardless of whether the evidence warranted or supported their conclusions, so I suppose we can forgive him for attempting this almost certainly impossible goal. The "Family Tree" of Srínawésin in Davis notes is:

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This is *extremely hypothetical*, even Davis admits as such, and should be taken as such, if at all. He notes a definite connection between the Arctic Latitudinal and the Arctic Oceanic dialects of Srínawésin, mentioning that the arctic terrestrial dragons often spend a great deal of their time beneath the waves of the arctic sea hunting for food (the land-dwelling food sources are often not sufficient in the winter times of the year) so there has been some interchange of ideas and a general influence upon one another due to this. Apparently, most other dialects of Oceanic Srínawésin cannot understand Arctic Oceanic very well at all and Wave of the Sea reported that she has heard other Shúna saying “Arctic sea-dragons all sound like land-dwellers!” If Srínawésin and all of its dialects could be studied properly (and if its speakers had the inclination to put up with constant questions from edible annoyances such as linguists) a better family tree might be created but until then, this is the best information we can have.