

Dragon

Dragons (*Draco Sapiens*, meaning “thinking serpent” or “thinking dragon”) are the sole surviving species of the genus Draco. They are a species mainly characterized by their hexapedalism and extremely high intelligence. Dragons have large brains adapted for recognizing hundreds of individuals while remembering the standings and relationships held between themselves and others. Their unique evolutionary history has led to them possessing an uniquely robust physiology, and they are unrivaled apex predators in their natural habitat.

While highly social, dragons are considerably less gregarious than humans. They evolved to live in large groups with complex relationships and interactions, though modern dragons prefer to live alone or in small groups, with little in the way of social norms and traditions mandating individual behavior.

Dragons are also highly curious, with many individuals studying and finding explanations for the natural phenomena in their environment. However, this knowledge is not openly shared, and is instead treated as a material resource. Dragons craft and use many tools, but the lack of adversity they face means they experience little to no pressing need for invention, and thus are technologically underdeveloped compared to humans despite their generally greater intelligence.

The draconic population is culturally limited to less than 10,000 individuals at any given time. As such, individual dragons possess little variance in physical appearance and genetic diversity, with any two dragons being >99.0% genetically similar. Dragons are sexually dimorphic, with the average male being ~5.9 meters long and ~260 kg in mass, while the average female is ~6.1 meters long with a mass of ~300 kg. Males possess a thinner, gracile build in comparison to the bulkier females. In addition to this, they possess two

Dragon



(male)



(female)

Domain	Eukaryota
Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Chordata

straight, black horns that extend from the back of their heads, while female horns are curved backward around their head. These horns (along with their claws) are strengthened by the presence of iron compounds which give these features a faint red tinge. Their teeth also contain a faint amount of iron, but this is only present along the edges as a faint orange outline. Their scales are notably insulators, and they rely upon the great surface area of their wings to dissipate excess heat.

Dragons are serially monogamous, and both parents play equal roles in raising their hatchling(s), who are helpless for several months after hatching and remain vulnerable until adolescence.

Dragons are omnivorous and capable of consuming a wide variety of plants and animals, though most prefer a diet rich in meat. Dragons can survive for several weeks without food, though this duration depends greatly on the level of activity exhibited in this time. Regardless, dragons can only survive 1-2 days without water. Dragons are generally diurnal, requiring 9-11 hours of sleep per day to remain healthy.

Dragons have a highly developed brain, with a relatively massive prefrontal cortex along with areas of the brain associated with sensory perception. Like humans, dragons are capable of episodic memory and theory of mind.

While dragons have drastically affected their environment in the past, modern day dragons have little impact on their surroundings due to their low population and lack of industrialization. They are also unable to reach other continents, and as such have not had the need nor opportunity to develop tools to survive in environments that they would otherwise not be suited for.

Etymology and definition

The Murian word for 'dragon' refers to a mythical creature that bears a striking resemblance to these non fictitious creatures. The source of this myth is almost certainly the shanary – a small hexapedal bird with a toothed beak.

Class	Hexapeda
Order	Biaorta
Genus	Draco
Species	<i>D. sapiens</i>
Binomial name	
Draco Sapiens	

The word for “person” historically refers to human beings, but the definition has extended to refer to both humans and dragons.

Conversely, the draconic word for ‘person’ translates to something closer to ‘individual’ or ‘one’, and as such easily applies to humans.

History

Evolutionary history

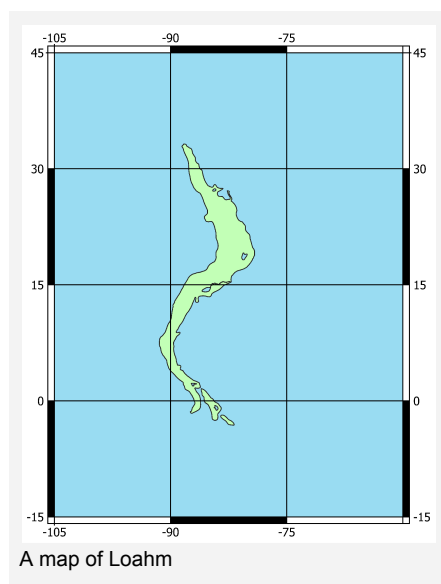
Dragons evolved from aquatic hexapedal creatures who possessed bioelectric capabilities - using both electric shock and electroreception for hunting and interacting with others of their own species.

These creatures eventually ventured onto land, where they had access to more food and pigments than their less daring brethren. As with many other species, this gradual shift caused their gills to evolve into lungs.

One pivotal moment in their evolutionary history was when an individual realized that they could use their bioelectric capabilities – which were originally used for defense & communication – to ignite natural sources of fuel, such as the hydrogen found in spore pods, or methane found in other organisms. This event marked the first notable usage of tools among the ancestors of dragons, and eventually led to the species taking hydrogen-producing bacteria into their air bladders – an organ which would later evolve into the hydrogen heart.

The evolution of their fire sacs and glands began as a nutrient-rich oil which was used to feed their hatchlings, which was naturally flammable. This oil gradually became fine-tuned for flammability, though the oils temporarily revert to their nutritious composition upon the laying of an egg.

Males notably became smaller once dragons gained the ability to fly; an adaptation made to render them more suitable for hunting and aerial combat, while females possessed greater strength for self-defense for themselves and their hatchlings.



Prehistory

The earliest creatures that could be called dragons existed millions of years ago, and lived in clans of varying size with some exceeding 100 in number. It was during this time that dragons developed several primitive languages.

These groups were initially formed for the sake of protection against other predators; the gradual extinction of which meant that there was less reason for cooperation, but the advantages afforded by social behavior were still too great to ignore – especially with the existence of Wyverns.

Even so, dragons were still extremely capable creatures, and often competed against each other even as they lived in close proximity. Their social structure can be described as a somewhat prosocial one, with only a few individuals producing offspring while others assist in somewhat indirect caregiving.

Ancient

Dragons evolved in a 'weak' ice age that lasted several million years. During this time their island was split between a tropical and temperate environment, but by 50,000 BE the average temperature had begun to shift until 10,000 BE, when the island had become largely tropical.

The increase in temperature allowed plant life to thrive to an even greater extent, which in turn created more prey items to sustain the dragons. This allowed their clans to grow to a greater size, something evidenced by the great monuments from this era that still stand today. These monuments include vast carvings made from multiple wolcen trees, caverns carved into sandstone cliffsides, and vast underground networks of caves.

While this change in climate was largely beneficial, it also increased the population of their fiercest rivals – the wyverns.

Wyvern Extermination

The wyverns were a rival species to the dragons, but conflict between them remained relatively unorganized until 9,500 BE, when shifting climates pushed the wyverns into invading dragon territories. It was during this time that the dragon champion [Yalkan](#) had the strength and charisma to unite the clans and exterminate the ancient enemy.

The completion of this grim task was initially celebrated in song, and in the following decades the dragon population rose unabated – until the effects of the wyvern's absence became all too tangible. At the same time, the increase in population density had caused a respiratory sickness known as [scarlet rasp](#) to spread amongst the dragons, and by 9,400 BE enough dragons had fallen to starvation or illness that only several thousand remained; an event which came to be known as the [Great Dying](#).

Those who remained were those who were resistant to the scarlet rasp, and in 9,242 BE these survivors were gathered by another dragon named [Vohkep](#). It was then that the dragons agreed that these disasters had been a direct result of their actions, and the [rule of ten thousand](#) was collectively established to limit their population in order to prevent such a thing from ever happening again.

Modern

The rule of ten thousand did not so much as affect modern dragon culture as it did dictate it, and practically all aspects of their society can be traced back to this cardinal rule.

Human cultures and societies are extremely complex, and are built upon ideas, beliefs, power, and infrastructure to maintain it all. While this makes them capable of great things, it does make them susceptible to collapse, especially in comparison to the dragon equivalent.

Every dragon is capable of surviving on their own, and thus there is no infrastructure which is capable of any kind of collapse. There is no central body

of government, and thus there is no one individual or organization to overthrow. The rule of ten thousand also directly benefits each individual by ensuring a lack of serious competition, ensuring that no one has any interest in abolishing it.

Biology

Anatomy and physiology

Sensory perception

Sight

Dragons have incredibly sharp eyesight thanks to their large eyes, which can focus a great amount of light towards their densely structured retinal cells. These rods and cones are also extremely tightly packed, giving the average dragon 20/1 or 20/2 vision, surpassing that of sharp-eyed birds of prey. (For reference, an eagle's eyesight is approximately 20/4 or 20/5)

Dragons possess 6 types of cones, giving them a visible spectrum spanning 320 nm – 920 nm. In comparison, humans possess 3 types of cones, giving them a visual spectrum spanning 380 nm – 780 nm. This roughly equates to 1.5 'additional' colors beyond 'purple' and 5 colors beyond 'red'.

Like certain species of avian predators, dragons possess two foveae, giving them great binocular and peripheral vision.

In addition to their two eyes, dragons possess a parietal eye located on the top of their head. While not being a true eye, this organ is still capable of sensing light, and plays an important role in allowing a dragon to sense an ambush from above.

Smell

Dragons possess a sophisticated sense of smell, allowing them to deduce facts about their prey from a mere trail. This trait also allows them to discern

the health and status of another dragon, though directly smelling another individual is considered unthinkable rude, much like a human touching another without permission.

This sense of smell is comparable to canines, and their language naturally has many words for different scents which cannot be translated to human languages.

Hearing

Dragons do not possess easily recognizable ears. Instead they have webbed spines outlining the back of their jaws. These webbed membranes detect sound waves, which are converted to neural signals by tissue contained within the spines and the base of the jaw. These webbed membranes are tougher than eardrums, and are therefore less sensitive. However, the greatly increased surface area compensates for this, giving them somewhat keener hearing than humans.

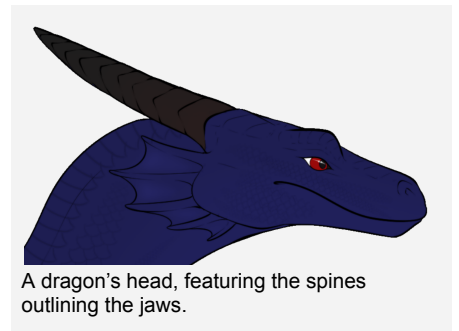
While their sense of hearing is usually less impressive than their other senses, they are capable of drastically increasing the amount of sound collected by positioning their wings around their head, forming a cone. This shape gathers a great amount of sound and bounces it towards the head, allowing dragons to hear incredibly minute noises at range, such as the heartbeat of another creature.

Taste

Dragons can largely taste the same flavors as humans can, though they do not have any capsaicin receptors, which makes them immune to the taste of spicy foods (and pepper spray).

Touch

Dragons are covered in protective scales, which greatly reduces their sense of touch. However, their wing membranes are largely exposed, which gives them comparable sensitivity to human skin.



Magnetoreception

The ancestors of dragons were aquatic creatures which utilized electroreception to navigate murky waters. This trait has been retained and modified for use on land and in the air, giving dragons an unshakable sense of direction due to their ability to sense the Earth's magnetic field.

Combustor system

Arguably the most interesting aspect of the dragon's anatomy is their ability to spit a stream of liquid fire. This trait relies upon three systems used in conjunction:

- Hydrogen system, consisting of:
 - Hydrogen sacs
These sacs produce and store hydrogen gas within the body. The gas will gradually diffuse over time, however, and so one of the sac's primary functions is to recapture hydrogen gas before it is lost and return it to the innermost layers of the organ. The hydrogen sacs are positioned along a dragon's back, and are analogous to the air bladder in marine organisms.
 - Hydrogen glands
These 'glands' are responsible for expelling hydrogen out of a dragon's lower jaw, where it is then ignited by small clusters of electrogenetic muscles.
- Incendiary system, consisting of:
 - Incendiary sacs
These sacs are stored near the base of the dragon's neck, and contain a cocktail of volatile hydrocarbons in the form of fats and oils. This liquid is pumped to the incendiary glands.
 - Incendiary glands
These glands are positioned adjacent to the hydrogen glands,

and can be controlled in order to modify the trajectory and 'spread' of the expelled liquid.

- Electrogenetic muscles
 - Located at the tip of a dragon's tongue. An electric charge is built up with the tongue held away from the lower jaw, with discharge occurring as the tongue is brought down to hydrogen glands.

In summary, the steps required to expel a liquid flame are as follows:

1. The tongue is curled, and the electrogenetic muscles begin to build up charge.
2. Incendiary sacs contract, sending liquid out the incendiary glands.
3. At the same time the hydrogen sacs contract, sending hydrogen out the hydrogen glands and mixing it with the liquid fuel.
4. The tongue is brought down, and ignites the gas jetting out of the hydrogen glands. Further curling brings the tongue away and shields it from the worst of the heat.
5. The hydrogen ignites, generating enough heat to ignite the hydrocarbons as it is sprayed out of the mouth.

While somewhat uncomfortable, this process ensures that the dragon's mouth is exposed to little of the generated heat.

A variant of this process is possible where the incendiary system is not used at all, and the dragon simply ignites the hydrogen stored in their body to ignite an external fuel source such as wood. However, it should be noted that this process generates a hydrogen flame, which even in darkness is only visible to humans as a faint blue flame.

A dragon cannot ignite their incendiary oils if the hydrogen sac is depleted, though there is still strategic merit in using a spray of oil as a weapon.

Integumentary system

The horns, talons, and teeth of a dragon are notable for containing iron compounds, though only trace amounts of iron can be found on the edges of their teeth. The inclusion of iron makes these structures incredibly durable, and is the cause for their slight red tint.

The inclusion of iron allowed ancient proto-dragons to be more effective wood-carvers, which by extension allowed them to create more elaborate, impressive, and effective nests. One notable step in their cultural advancement occurred when dragons created protective structures for their hatchlings, ensuring that significantly more of their offspring reached adulthood.

The horns and talons share a similar composition, with both structures growing from a living core called the quick. This allows old and worn integuments to be shed once per year, revealing the sharp, undamaged layer beneath. Likewise, teeth are also continuously grown throughout their lives.

The horns are not used for direct physical contact, but they can accumulate damage through battle, and pristine horns are often viewed as attractive – although scars often have their own appeal in the right context.

Structure	Approximate shedding period
Teeth	5 years
Horns	2 years
Talons	1 year
Scales	1 year

Muscular system

Dragons have extremely low density, meaning that they have very little mass for their apparent size. This is due to the fact that much of their interval volume

is taken up by air sacs – an adaptation that allows for greater oxygen storage capacity and reduced muscle mass for weight and calorie intake reduction.

However, their muscles have an incredible strength-to-weight ratio, which still allows them to perform impressive feats of strength. Taking both of these factors into account means that dragons are essentially stronger than any creature of equivalent mass, and only moderately weaker than creatures of equivalent volume.

The muscles of a dragon's hind legs are primarily fast-twitch muscles which convert glycogen to lactate. This allows them to take to the skies with a quick sprint, but makes them unsuitable for walking long distances.

The muscles of the wings and chest are notable in that they utilize stored glycogen for the initial take-off, the muscles swap to slow-twitch operation using the Krebs cycle. These muscles also possess great amounts of myoglobin, a protein that carries and stores oxygen; this allows these muscles to function for the long periods of time required for flight.

Nervous system

The cerebrum of a dragon possesses notable similarities to the human equivalent, especially in regards to the highly developed cerebral cortex, which easily surpasses a human's in regards to surface area – though it should be noted that a drastic increase in surface area should be expected to accommodate the greater volume of brain matter.

The structure of the draconic cerebrum is superficially similar to cetaceans in that there are three distinct trispheres, with large portions of the brain dedicated to sensory perception and processing.

Cardiovascular system

A dragon's cardiovascular system includes a primary heart and two secondary hearts, with one located at the base of the neck (superior secondary heart) and the other in the lower torso (inferior secondary heart). These two organs are

significantly simpler than the primary heart, with each 'heart' consisting of a single valve and chamber.

Interestingly, the primary heart also possesses a double aortic arch, similar to that seen in crocodilians. Notably, the left aortic arch is the dominant artery that delivers blood from the lungs to the upper body, while the inferior right aortic arch pumps blood to the lower body.

In addition to pumping blood, the secondary hearts serve another function; 'locking' blood in certain areas of the body as the body experiences intense g-forces. This ability allows dragons to better withstand acceleration by preventing too much blood from pooling away from the head into the extremities of the body.

Respiratory system

The draconic respiratory system is exceptionally efficient, with air sacs distributed throughout the body for greater oxygen capacity.

As with avian lungs, dragon lungs operate by forcing air to travel in one direction. This process is far more efficient than mammalian bidirectional lungs, though this increased efficiency also makes them susceptible to toxic gasses.

The organs also take up a great amount of volume within the body, with air sacs attached to the bones of the fore and rear limbs.

Skeletal system

The bones of a dragon are extremely porous, but are greatly strengthened by matrices of carbon nanotubes. This makes the bones incredibly resistant to fracture, though the thin bones of the wings can still be susceptible to failure.

The aforementioned air sacs can be found attached to the bones themselves – another adaptation that can also be found in avians, which allows even more oxygen to be stored within the skeletal structure itself.

Digestive system

Long and short intestines are both shorter than one would expect from such a large organism. While this helps save weight, it does make them less efficient at extracting the caloric content within their diet.

Dragons produce a lesser variety of enzymes than do humans, which means they are less able to digest starches. Naturally, they have no way of digesting lactose, which makes them completely lactose intolerant.

Excretory system

Like avians, dragons are uricotelic, meaning that nitrogenous waste is excreted in the form of uric acid rather than urea. Producing the former is more energy-intensive than the latter, but requires much less water, and thereby lowers the total mass of the body.

As a result of this, dragons do not require much water; in fact, they can largely subsist off of the water consumed in solid foods. Dragons only occasionally drink pure water to soothe a dry throat, or after exerting themselves.

This fact of biology made the accidental discovery of alcohol more difficult to stumble across, as dragons do not often store sugary juices for later consumption. In fact, alcohol itself is often used as a cooking ingredient.

Reproductive system

Dragons are capable of reproducing at any point in their lives upon reaching maturity. The eggs themselves are approximately a third of a meter long, pill-shaped, and somewhat leathery; though the shell does harden as the time to hatch draws near.

Genetics

Like most other forms of complex life, dragons are diploidal, meaning that they have 2 sets of 26 chromosomes, resulting in a total of 52 chromosomes.

dragons possess an error correction gene named tumor protein-53 (TP-53) which codes for the production of an error-correction protein; in short, this gene is responsible for killing cells before they become cancerous. The dominant variant of this gene (DTP-53) exists as 24 copies across the genome, making it incredibly unlikely for a dragon to get cancer.

As a result of their low population, dragons have rather low genetic variety.

Egg cycle

Laying only moderately strains the mother, and complications are rare. A healthy female will lay the egg one month after mating, and once laid incubation requires another month of development. This particular duration has led to the belief that the moon is associated with fertility and eggs, and it is a common superstition that an egg that hatches under a full moon will be lucky. Traditionally, those who subscribe to this belief will attempt to time the hatching of the egg with the phases of the moon.

Like the color of a dragon's hide, the pigmentation of an egg will change depending on the diet of the mother. Certain colors are associated with being beneficial to the unborn hatchling, and it is virtually unseen for a pale white egg to be laid.

The sex of the egg itself is notably dependent upon temperature rather than the gametes of the parents – a slightly warmer egg will become male, while a slightly cooler egg will become female. As a result, masculinity is associated with 'fiery' concepts such as aggression, agility, and speed, while femininity is associated with 'cooler' concepts including patience, physical strength, and endurance. A nest will often incorporate decaying vegetation in order to maintain the desired temperature, aided by the presence of the parent's body warmth. Dragon parents (usually the male) are highly selective in the types of vegetation used to keep the egg warm, and certain species of flora are believed to have beneficial effects upon the hatchling within the egg. However, in practice the most tangible benefits come from herbs that contain natural insect repellent.

Dragon's incendiary oils are composed of hydrocarbons which are inherently flammable, but the composition temporarily shifts with parenthood, becoming richer in vitamins and proteins in preparation for the hatching of the young. This change lasts for the first few months of the hatchling's life until they are capable of masticating their own food. During this time these oils are referred to as 'incendiary milk'.

Dragons develop secondary sexual characteristics with puberty, and reach sexual maturity at the age of ten. Like humans, they are opportunistic breeders, and once fully developed a dragon will be able to reproduce at any point in their lives, even if they are hundreds of years old – this is due to the fact that a female's egg cells will continuously regenerate throughout their lives, which can easily last several centuries. A dragon's scales will begin to turn white at around 200 years of age, and a solid white color is indicative of a dragon over 300 years old. A dragon's body usually begins to degrade at around this age, though there is significant variance among individuals, and there are reputable anecdotes of those who have lived for more than 500 years.

A major reason for a dragon's long lifespan lies in their ability to continuously produce stem cells throughout their lives. In addition to this their cells are excellent at preventing and repairing DNA degradation.

t

Dragons are omnivorous, and are capable of eating plants and starches – though they are less suitable for such a diet in comparison to humans.

Dragons notably lack capsaicin receptors that humans and other mammals possess, meaning that spicy foods and pepper spray have no effect upon them.

Of course, they have no reason to produce lactase, and thus are all completely lactose intolerant.

Biological variation

There is little biological variation among dragons, as their population is too low to support a great amount of diversity. Despite this, there can be significant differences between individuals, and each dragon has a unique pattern that is only visible in the UV and IR spectrums, much like a fingerprint.

The wavelengths of light that patterns reflect are nearly identical to the emission spectra of a hydrogen flame – the result of millions of years of sexual selection. These patterns also provide a social benefit, as it makes individuals easier to recognize. Ancient dragons who could remember and recognize many individuals and their personal relationships had an advantage over those who could not, making sociality one of the reasons why they evolved such excellent memories.

Dragons only have 2 blood types: X or Y.

Psychology

Dragons have an extremely developed prefrontal cortex – significantly more so than the average human. They are capable of recalling past events with great accuracy, allowing them to keep track of their exact possessions as well as the individuals who have aided or wronged them.

Dragons possess several clusters of neurons distributed throughout the body to distribute the neural load of controlling so many limbs. This means that extremities like wings and tails can sometimes “move on their own”, much like a human hand will automatically retract when burned. There is some subtle interaction between these neurons and the brain itself, though the details are not fully understood.

Like humans, dragons are one of the few creatures to enjoy music. The utility of instruments is somewhat diminished by their vocal talent, but they are still

lar with simple instruments such as drums and other percussion
uments.

ons are unable to shed emotional tears, but severe emotional distress
tes their flame glands, which is part of their evolutionary fight-or-flight
onse. It is impossible for them to spit flames by accident, but this agitation
eir flame glands can cause moderate discomfort if not relieved.

leep and dreaming

ons are generally diurnal, meaning that they are awake during the day
sleep during the night. Individuals generally prefer to sleep a total of 9-11
s per day, which is often supplemented by naps taken to conserve energy.

urs of sleep is tolerable, but anything less will begin to cause significant
mental side effects to their mood and mental state.

humans, the dreams of dragons are varied. Sometimes they experience
se and vivid dreams, and sometimes they do not dream at all – or at least,
do not remember doing so.

ncsciousness and thought

definition of consciousness is ill-defined despite millennia of human study,
t is no question that dragons meet the requirements to be considered
scious beings.

fine differences in consciousness and thought are difficult to describe, but
ons do process reality at a faster rate than humans – a light blinking at 65
will appear as a solid light to the humans of this world, but for dragons the
er would be noticeable; it is only at 75 Hz that this flicker becomes
oticeable.

Motivation and emotion

How's hierarchy of needs states that a human must fulfill the following needs in descending priority: Physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization.

Dragons possess a notably different priority of motivations. A more suitable hierarchy would be: Physiological, safety, esteem, cognitive, belonging and self-actualization. In short, their social desire to belong may be weaker, but they are not devoid of such feelings.

A dragon's thought process is significantly more self-centric than a human's, which means the presence of others has less of an inhibiting effect for dragons than it does on humans. While a human might instinctively consider the possible actions of others, a dragon would instead default to considering their own possible actions. In practice, this makes them less susceptible to effects such as [bystander apathy](#).

In materialistic terms, dragons are very much driven by self-interest and greed, but they tend to be honest regarding their desires, and they are generally not willing to risk themselves for others who they perceive as friends.

For humans, fear is a very strong motivator, as fearing the unknown is an evolutionarily beneficial trait. However, this emotion is less vital for dragons, as threats which can threaten a dragon to the same degree that they would a human do not exist – with the exception of hatchlings, of course.

Otherwise, shame is an emotion that helps a human conform with the group, increasing survivability. Naturally, this mechanism is not particularly beneficial for dragons save for hatchlings, who are more prone to feelings of fear and dependence upon their parents.

Sexuality and love

In contrast with humans, dragons treat sexuality as something innately tied to reproduction, and it is only weakly associated with the emotional, social, and sensual feeling and beliefs.

A weak sex drive means that attraction is more a result of neurological factors than it is hormonal. This means that dragons do not experience strong moods of infatuation as do humans, and do not quite have the concept of 'love at first sight'.

Since neither sexuality nor sexual orientation are important concepts to dragons, they are fully capable of loving others in a platonic manner – in fact, a lack of intense 'passion' means that partnerships are rarely ever formed in the first place, meaning that they are rarely ever broken.

Distinctive traits among dragons include:

- Patterns (size for males, pattern structure for females)

- The ability to produce longer, brighter, or more controlled flames.

- Larger horns.

- Large chest/wing muscles.

Agility and swiftness are typically viewed as a masculine trait, while strength and resilience are viewed as a feminine traits.

Culture

Language

Dragons only possess one language which is spoken by all members of their species. The neuroplasticity of hatchlings is largely retained by adults; this flexibility allows them to learn new words with ease, and the regular travel of

individuals ensures that their language remains consistently uniform even across centuries. In short, there is comparatively little linguistic drift, meaning there is minimal difference in regional accents.

Dragons do not name their children after concepts or occupations as humans do. Instead, every dragon's name is merely a noise that has no meaning in their language. This reflects their cultural expectation to give (or more accurately, earn) meaning for their own lives.

Through great achievements, it is possible for a dragon's name to become a legend. These names can refer to a concept, or they can be used as an adjective.

(A similar phenomenon can occur with renowned humans, i.e. Einstein.)

Several notable names include:

[Yalkan](#) – The individual who united the dragons against the wyverns. Her name has become the word for an ill-fated leader or endeavor.

[Vohkep](#) – The individual who led the dragons during the [Great Dying](#). Her name has become synonymous with leadership, organization, and foresight. Her name also refers to the north star, as well as the cardinal direction itself. (Note that the words for 'west' and 'east' literally mean 'riseward' and 'sinkward', referring to the direction of sunrise and sunset. 'South' is its own word.)

[Kalson](#) – The first individual in recorded history who was able to defeat every challenger across the land. Her name became the word for 'empyrean', which refers to the heights of the sky that dragons cannot reach. An Empyrean is also a title for those who are able to replicate Kalson's feat.

[Yhetal](#) – One of the few individuals to earn the title of Empyrean. They were hatched as an XY female, making them stronger than most males but more agile than most females. However, this did mean they were slightly weaker than most females and slower than most males, and their great achievement was largely due to their remarkable talent and determination.

Their name has become the word for a nonbinary individual, or a person of ambiguous gender.

[Dalros](#) – The first male to earn the title of empyrean. His reign was more dominant than any other previous Empyrean, and he was known for finishing battles without a scratch. He was never defeated in life, and one day vanished without a trace.

His name has acquired the meaning of ‘untouchable’.

[Ailon](#) – The most recent Empyrean, who lived hundreds of years ago.

His reign was short-lived, and he murdered dozens of individuals before being exiled. His name is uttered with disdain, and refers to one who has strength without honor.

e arts

evolutionary driver for dragon intelligence and tool-use was the creation of s, and the creation of tools to keep hatchlings safe (such as tools and mechanisms used to keep them from sneaking into the wilderness). As such, ons tend to have a strong interest in creativity and art, though only some iduals seriously hone their talents.

ols and technology

ons generally rely on stone age technology, but some individuals were to make impressive technological progress throughout their long lives. s and technologies used include furnaces, pottery, cement, brass-making, ksmithing, dye-making, leather-making, and more.

ons notably have the ability to absorb pigments from their diet and display n upon their hide, which is visible beneath transparent scales.

rs are a marker of status, and those that are rarer or more difficult to in are naturally the most prized.

ranking of color is a bit prone to personal taste, but the general perception

- . Purple: Most vaunted color. Requires hunting and eating red and blue lizards – two creatures that live in different environments.
- . Blue: Requires eating blue lizards, which are somewhat rare. This color is also prized because the blue pigments fade quickly, making this a high-maintenance color.
- . Red: Requires eating red lizards, which are about as rare as blue lizards, though the pigment lasts significantly longer before breaking down.
- . Orange: Requires eating yellowfish and red lizards.
- . Yellow: Requires eating yellowfish.
- . Green: The least valued color, as it can be obtained from eating a certain common fruit. Still, it is popular as it provides useful camouflage while being a visually appealing color.
- . Dark grey: The natural color of a dragon. Grey dragons are typically oddities who care little for aesthetic appearances.

In addition to the color of one's hide, the color of one's scales is also an important marker of status; however, these normally translucent features only become opaque with time, meaning that only the oldest dragons possess a pure white coloration (save for any membranous surfaces, which have no scales and thus shows the 'true color' of their hide)

A dragon's appearance is extremely dependent on their lifestyle. Their choice of color (or lack thereof), the number of scars, and the type of build they possess can all be strong indicators of an individual's personality.

Religion and spirituality

In the ancient past, dragons clans were more bound together by materialistic interests rather than concepts and ideas. Their greater individualism also means that they are likely to argue and disagree over creation myths rather

embrace them, and the majority of their 'myths' are extremely grounded in comparison to human versions.

difficult to describe their beliefs given this lack of organized religion, but that dragons perceive the world as a vast but singular organism, with 'life energy' being the thing that separates the living from the dead. Dragons are believed to possess a great deal of life energy, which is what allows them to breathe fire. In fact, the dragon word for 'soul' literally means 'fire'.

In essence, 'life energy' can be described as nearly any sort of energy at all, which is why the Earth itself is seen as 'living' – earthquakes, tides, and storms are seen as a by-product of the Earth's breathing and/or stirring.

These beliefs are not attached to any doctrine or morals, but are simply a way to describe the world around them.

Even though the sun is not an object of worship, the sun does possess a great deal of cultural importance, as it appears to be an undying flame. Likewise, the sky itself is considered as their domain – even if they are aware that some creatures can fly to places no dragon can reach, they are still the dominant creature of the land and skies. Dragons also possess a word for the altitudes that they cannot reach, which is best translated as the 'heavens'.

Science and philosophy

Dragons do not have an organized body of science, but they do understand that the best way to learn about things is to simply test them out themselves.

Due to a comparative lack of cooperation between groups and individuals has resulted in a great variation of knowledge held by individuals. All are able to live on stone-age level technology, but some individuals have amassed a great amount of knowledge and experience over their long lives, with a rare few being able to smelt iron.

wise, philosophies held by dragons vary greatly among individuals, though they tend to shun overly complicated ways of thinking which they find to be 'pointless'.

Society

Gender

Dragons are innately quite selfish, and thus do not care about the actions of others unless those actions directly impact their lives. This apathy extends to gender differences, making them much looser than in any human culture.

This does not mean that expectations do not exist, of course; male dragons have evolved to be smaller and more agile than females to better hunt and to protect their young from non-dragons, while females evolved to be larger in order to protect their eggs and hatchlings from any threats – including other dragons. Dragons generally tend to fall into the roles that their ancestors have evolved for, but a single parent is capable of caring for their young.

Biologically speaking males are on average more aggressive and willing to fight than females, though their scuffles also tend to be less serious. While most battles are between males, battles between females are more often fatal, meaning that in an average year an equal number of males and females will be killed in battle. Males also tend to care more about aesthetic appearances, and their patterns are larger and more obvious than those possessed by females.

These bold patterns are seen as attractive in dragon culture, though being able to 'hide' is also a desirable skill, as the construction of elaborate nests were a common form of competition among ancient dragons. This drove males to be more predisposed to the art of crafting, with females implementing refinements and improvements. This aspect of their culture has become muddled over

and in the modern day, artistry is something commonly practiced by both sexes.

Dragon culture has long since shifted from that ancient time period, with both parents playing largely interchangeable roles, but their evolutionary roots are still visible in their present-day physiology and psychology.

Relationship

Dragons tend to lay one egg at a time, and only raise one hatchling at a time. They also rarely ever take a previous mate for a future hatchling (unless the parents are partners), which makes full siblings very rare. Twin eggs are possible but very rarely seen, and even in these cases siblings often separate before reaching adulthood. It is not unheard of for twins to stay together, but 'brotherhood' or 'sisterhood' does not have any strong connotations as it does with humans. Two half-siblings may use their shared parent as a subject to bond over, but blood-ties alone are not sufficient reason to freely aid another.

Otherwise, the relationship between parent and hatchling is closer to an old but not necessarily close friend, and relying upon a parent as an adult is viewed as a very shameful thing to do.

The relationship between mates can vary greatly, but the average mate is usually viewed as a sort of 'colleague' whom one must spend a decade with. There needs not be an emotional connection between mates, but a certain amount of respect is certainly required. As such, a trusted friend is significantly more 'valuable' than a mate.

Partnership is the most intimate relationship a dragon can have, though these are not mutually exclusive with mates, and it is not terribly uncommon for dragons to become partners after spending a decade becoming familiar with one another.

Ethnicity

Due to the low population of dragons, there is essentially only one ethnic group.

Government and politics

Dragons pride themselves on an independent existence, and there is no vital structure in place between individuals, which means they possess a virtual lack of government and/or politics.

Trade and economics

Trade is often conducted between individuals or groups, but there is no monetary or barter economy in place. The value of an item is simply what others will pay for it.

Conflict

Dragons live in small groups or clans, and thus conflict is largely limited to 2 individuals, with anything involving more than 5 dragons being rather rare.

Trivia

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