

A RUSSIAN ICON with a nicely serpentine Dragon



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An Heraldic Chimaera painted by Carl-Alexander von Volborth



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts



In Number 36, 28 August 2003, we mentioned that St Augustine of Hippo was the author of the *Confessions* and *The City of God*, and that he died in 430 AD. In fact, after an eventful life, he became immersed in the study of philosophy and theology, struggled successfully with the truths of Christianity and came to be regarded as one of the four Fathers of the Western Church.

The three-headed Chimaera described by Hesiod has always presented a problem to artists. The heraldic version on the cover is one of the best solutions, from the splendid book that we have reviewed and often taken pictures from, *Fabelwesen der Heraldik*. It is a pity that it never came in an English-language version, in spite of our best endeavours. Apart from this heraldic interpretation, Carl-Alexander has drawn several other varieties of Chimaera, from a very naturalistic one to other more fanciful sorts (*below*). The monster itself is usually taken to be purely allegorical, as nobody could have supposed that such a creature could actually have existed. One materialistic attempt to explain its existence supposed that fossil remains of the three beasts, lion, goat and serpent, were all muddled together when discovered by a gullible Greek, who supposed that the various bones and skulls all belonged to one animal. I think that even the ancient Greeks had more sense than that. Some suppose that the three beasts symbolise three of man's weaknesses, respectively pride, stubbornness and duplicity, and that the legend of Bellerophon killing the Chimaera while riding Pegasus shows how he had overcome these failures in his own life. But this is mere speculation, which we try to avoid.



JOURNAL SCAN

Flagmaster 156 Spring 2016 (came in July) – actually in its inclusion, **FI GAZETTE 44** – has the Winged Bull supporter of the arms of Kensington and Chelsea, which is where the 27th International Congress of Vexillology will be held next year, the Flag Institute being responsible for its organization.



The New Zealand Armorer No 139 Winter 2016 (came in July) has some dragon carvings from the frontage of the Clocktower Building of the University of Otago in Dunedin (*right*) and two more, being preyed on by birds, also in Dunedin, on the exterior of the Presbyterian Church (*bottom*). They are the work of John Louis Godfrey, an English carver who was active in Dunedin around 1862 to 1867.



The White Lion Society Newsletter 70, August 2016 has a red Tudor Dragon and a black Imperial Eagle with two heads on the cover, part of a page of arms of the Knights of the Garter from a MS c 1580 in the Lichfield Cathedral Library.

A DISNEY “DRAGON”

A new film from the Disney workshop called “Pete’s Dragon” is not so much a re-working of an earlier film of the same name, but a totally new production with a new monster. But is it a Dragon? Instead of reptilian scales, it is covered in hair, so must be a monstrous mammal. Here are two views of it, one showing its Disneyfied face and the other its huge wingspan with somewhat bat-like wings.



The publicity for “Pete’s Dragon” also contained pictures of various other creatures, including this curious version of the **Chupacabra**, (*right*) said to be at first from Puerto Rico but latterly throughout the southern states of America. The name means “goat sucker” from its habit of attacking and drinking the blood of goats. Sightings are still common though the most recently caught one turned out to be a raccoon.



NOT ALL DRAGONS HAVE LEGS...

This one has wheels, the first dragon-named car we have seen (*below*). Previously we have had a number of inanimate objects named “Dragon” including a warship, a yacht, an aircraft, an armoured vehicle and a space-craft, but never a motor car. Perhaps there are more to come. This one is a 1936 Aston Martin Speed Model “Red Dragon” which competed in the Mille Miglia and the Le Mans 24-Hour Race, is being sold by Bonhams at the Goodwood Revival sale on 10 September and is expected to fetch up to £2 million.



WHICH WAY UP?

Brian Wright spotted this carving in Mardol Street, Shrewsbury, and recognized it as an ancient apothecaries’ sign. Traditionally, their trade emblem was a stuffed crocodile, but not all of them could get hold of the real thing, so this was an adequate substitute, even if the carver was more familiar with dragons than with crocodiles. Brian also sent the picture of the Russian Icon on the back page.



SOME MEDITERRANEAN MONSTERS

Roger Seabury visited Italy and came back with some gems. First is a welcome to Ravello and then a couple of Griffins from the ruins of Herculaneum. Next was a statue of a Centaur from the same site, and finally two pairs of Grotesques from a couple of majolica plates in the museum. Roger also attended the Helston Furry Dance in Cornwall and noticed this stylish design of Saint George and the Dragon (*below*) on the official handbook.



MORE MARVELS

Steve Slater visited Cardiff and found this unusual version of the local totem on a card which he immediately sent in to us. Unlike his usual friendly grin, this Welsh Dragon looks quite menacing, but is a masterful piece of modelling.

