

An A to Z of Dragonlore—Supplement (*part three*)

MONSTER MOSQUITO, a terrifying pest of North America, as if real mosquitoes were not trouble enough.

MUŠHUŠŠU, another rendering of the name of the Sirtush, the weird beast shown on the Ishtar Gate at Babylon and sacred to the God Marduk.

NATIKA, a monster from Lake Okanagan in British Columbia.

NIDHOGGR, a dragon from Norse mythology that gnaws at the roots of the World Tree.

OGOPOGO, another name for the Natiaka lake monster that has inspired many a rival in other Canadian lakes; it is depicted on the badge of HMCS OKANAGAN as a type of red wingless serpentine dragon rising from waves.

PELUDA, an amphibious dragon from France with quills like a porcupine that terrorized the local countryside until slain by a valiant youth using a combination of bravery and ingenious wit, in the best tradition of such tales.

PIASA, the man-eating dragon-bird of Illinois, known from cliff carvings above the Mississippi River, recorded by an early missionary but since destroyed.

PORLOCK, a small seaport in the western extremity of Somerset, known as the place whence came the man who interrupted Coleridge as he was composing *Kublai Khan*, but now a name given by J. K. Rowling of Harry Potter fame to a fantastic beast described by her as “a horse-guardian found in Dorset, England, and in Southern Ireland. Covered in shaggy fur, it has a large quantity of rough hair on its head and an exceptionally large nose. It walks on two cloven feet. The arms are small and end in four stubby fingers. Fully grown Porlocks are around two feet high and feed on grass.

“The Porlock is shy and lives to guard horses. It may be found curled in the straw of stables or else sheltering in the midst of the herd it protects. Porlocks mistrust humans and always hide at their approach.”

PORPENTINE, a fearfully quilled fretful creature mentioned by Shakespeare.

PYRALLIS, a kind of miniature dragon like a firefly that lived in the copper-smelting furnaces in Cyprus, feeding on the flames.

QINGU, a monster created by Tiamat in Mesopotamian mythology and eventually defeated by the God Marduk.

RAVEN-BEAR, a red-and-white Canadian hybrid representing their “First Peoples” once known as Red Indians and Eskimos, it was produced to play the part of supporter to the arms of the newly-created Canadian Heraldic Authority.

RE’EM, a giant biblical ox, sometimes translated as a Unicorn.

SASABONSAM, a hairy monster described by the Ashanti, it sits in West African forest trees catching the unwary with its dangling legs.

.To be continued...

Professed in 1998 by Ralph Brocklebank

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Geflügelter Seelöwe

A Winged Sea-Lion drawn by Carl-Alexander von Volborth (1996).

The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

Every heraldic artist will have to deal sooner or later with dragons, griffins and other fabulous beasts, and many have been mentioned in these pages and identified whenever possible. Now it is time to introduce a few outstanding artists that have not previously been featured.

One internationally celebrated name in this field is Carl-Alexander von Volborth. His first work to appear was the pocket book **Heraldry of the World** (Blandford, London 1973) which has been translated into eight languages (the English edition was edited by Hubert Chesshyre, then Rouge Croix Pursuivant) and it illustrates over twenty heraldic monsters including two pages devoted to fabulous beasts and a splendid pair of red Wyverns supporting the arms of the Duke of Marlborough.

His next book, the magnificent **HERALDRY: Customs, Rules and Styles** (Blandford, Poole 1981) has six pages on the Fabulous Creatures of Heraldry illustrating 51 beasts altogether, including some unusual hybrids (such as a goat-headed cock) as well as two dozen others that appear in passing, with dragons, unicorns and griffins aplenty. In another splendid volume, **THE ART OF HERALDRY** (Blandford, Poole 1987), the first part deals with Heraldic Design and shows *inter alia* a fish with bird's wings, a Styrian panther, a demi-centaur crest, mermaid supporters and a demi-wyvern crest from Edinburgh. The second part covers Heraldic Art and Craft over the Centuries, and gives examples of the treatment of dragons and griffins from different periods as well as a Russian two-headed eagle and a Scottish unicorn from the 20th century, while the third part is an International Exhibition of work by forty-four Artists and Artisans during the last hundred years; this section is rich with wyverns, dragons, mermaids, Pegasus and Pelican, griffins and unicorns in a great variety of styles.

Most recently, von Volborth has produced a book entirely devoted to our topic, though not yet in an English translation: **FABELWESEN DER HERALDIK IN FAMILIEN- UND STÄDTEWAPPEN** (Belser Verlag, Stuttgart/Zürich 1966) that is "Fabulous Beings of Heraldry in Family and Civic Arms." It has no fewer than 248 figures of heraldic monsters, almost all in colour and very helpfully captioned (*one of these is our cover picture, a hybrid creature that is often used as a symbol of tri-service military power on land, sea and air*); there is also an introductory essay for each category of beast. He deals first with those that Heraldry has adopted from Classical and Mediaeval Mythology, and then with those creatures mostly hybrids, that have been concocted for heraldic purposes. Most of the figures shown are linked by date and place to their origins. The book is full of delightful

surprises and is a real joy to browse through, while its standards of scholarship are as high as its artistic merits. The bibliography lists 53 works.

Another heraldic artist of international repute is Jiří Louda who, apart from designing a whole series of armorial postage stamps for Czechoslovakia before that country was divided in two, produced a handy book of **European Civic Coats of Arms** (Paul Hamlyn, London 1966) all illustrated in colour. Of 320 arms shown (shields only), thirty-three have fabulous beasts in them, including 12 two-headed Eagles, 7 Dragons and Wyverns, 6 Griffins or Griffin's heads, 2 Salamanders and one each of Basilisk, Dolphin, Gallic Cock with two heads, Mermaid, Styrian Panther and Winged Lion. His beasts are lively with credible personalities and are representative of European heraldry.

Heraldic Art & Design by Anthony Wood (Shaw, Crayford 1996) is a handbook of techniques for those who would seek to emulate his superb standards of artistry and craftsmanship, and illustrates in passing a winged lion (his own crest) and divers wyverns, griffins, panthers and unicorns and a quite outstanding dragon in a full-page colour plate as the crest in the arms of Lance Krzywicki, "made as lifelike as is possible for a mythical creature" — strictly a wyvern in our terms though continental Europeans do not distinguish between two- and four-legged dragons. This one is anatomically unusual as his legs are coming from his shoulders and his wings from where his hips would be, on a very serpentine body. In some drawings of the Welsh Dragon the wings sprout from the shoulders but then sweep back and rise up about half way along the back, so that in silhouette they look as if they start there, and this effect may have misled Wood here. The anatomy of dragons needs a proper examination, something still to be done.

The Heraldic Art Source Book by Peter Spurrier (Blandford, London 1997) deserves a mention. The author was Portcullis Pursuivant and then York Herald and includes clear new drawings of over eighty fabulous beasts, one third in colour, with all the Tudor curiosities recorded by Rodney Dennys (1975), each with a brief description, as well as a general introduction to heraldry and heraldic art. He gives in passing one of the most cogent available arguments in favour of having and using a coat of arms.

Coats of Arms by Andrew Stewart Jamieson (Pitkin, Andover 1998) is superbly illustrated and all in colour. It includes Griffins, Sea Dragons, Unicorn, Yale, Salamander and the Teutonic *Jungfraunadler* (better known as a Harpy) all rendered in his distinctive style.