

Next Vernon sent a little gem he found in a second-hand bookshop, a German printing-house calendar for the year 1939, which is dedicated to the Griffin:- **DER GREIF Eine Geschichte des Buchdrucker-Wappentieres mit einem Kalender auf das Jahr 1939**, by Konrad Bauer (Frankfurt am Main, 1938). It has chapters on the natural history of the Griffin from earliest times, its deeper meaning, its use in heraldry, and its adoption as a special mark of the printers' trade, all copiously illustrated. Here is a little selection as a taster (and see also No 53, page 6, for a modern version).



From an old Persian cylinder seal, 3000 BC.



Seal of Graf Friedrich von Brene, 1208



French woodcut from 1581



Colophon of Rütten & Loening by Hans Bohn

### “Swimming Dragons”

This turned out to be a reference to giant Chinese junks that the Admiral Zheng He (pronounced “Jung Hur”) used in his voyages round the oceans of the world, as reported in a Radio 4 programme by Tim Luard on 3<sup>rd</sup> June (see mention of the book, **1421**, in No 37, page 7, in which Zheng He is linked to Sindbad the Sailor. Luard referred to this book in his talk, but was sceptical of the extreme claims made in it.).

# Dragonlore

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Flint Flushwork Dragons making the letter M, from Ixworth St Mary, Suffolk



## The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

Welcome to new member Melvyn Jeremiah, who has a dragon courrant on his shield and an unicorn in his crest.

Midsummer Day, 24 June, is celebrated as the feast of St John the Baptist.

Some pieces on Timothy Noad's coin designs from Nos 54 & 56 have been quoted in **The Heraldic Craftsman** No 52, for June 2005.



The design on the cover is taken from an unusual new book, **Decoding Flint Flushwork on Suffolk and Norfolk Churches**, by John Blatchly & Peter Northeast (Ipswich, 2005) which reports on the interpretation of the numerous designs made by letting black flints in to carved stonework that decorate so many of the churches in East Anglia. Among the many monograms, religious symbols and trade emblems, this seems to be the only one with fabulous beasts, though there are a couple in which the letter S may be read as a serpent. The letter M may refer to St Mary, to whom the church at Ixworth is dedicated, but both St Michael the Archangel and St Margaret are known as dragon-slayers, and the authors suggest that either might be intended here. The close intertwining of the dragons' necks rather suggests the spinning dance of the dragonfly which concludes its mating ritual, that may well have been familiar to local folk in the late fifteenth century, when these decorations were made.

Thanks are due to June Marriage for kindly bringing this book to our attention.

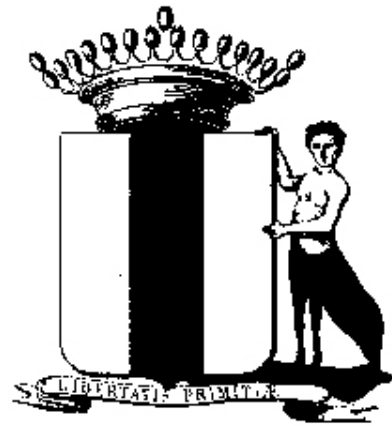
## A Happy Dragon



This smiling creature is taken from a complicated Giles cartoon celebrating Saint George's Day 1981, and reprinted in *Hogtown Heraldry* for May 2005. In it, there are a playing card King and Queen being told by the Jack, "George sayeth: 'Time-and-a-half plus danger money, or thine fair daughter hath had it.'" Very nineteen-eighties-ish! But the dragon is rather sweet.



appears as a delightful little logo in a simplified version (*right*). There are two cases of Sea-Lions, and one each of Sea-Horses, Centaur (oddly sejant, holding up the shield of Brielle – *left*), Pelican, Harpy and Winged Hart. There are numerous other heraldic beasts, of course. Lions abound, harts, hares and hounds are widespread, there are even a couple of whales and one handsome peacock. But the actual proportion of Fabulous Beasts in the whole is much smaller than in neighbouring countries.

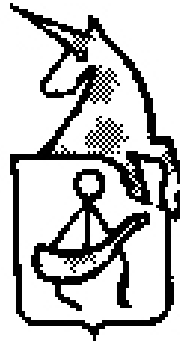


Since the book was published, there has been a wholesale reorganization of Civic Authorities in the Netherlands, as there has been in Britain, and Jan Keuzenkamp has kindly sent me copies of his drawings of all the new arms, many of which are based on combinations of the old arms of those municipalities that were merged

together to make the new ones. Here is one of them:- the Mermaid on the shield of Eemmond, a newly-named merger of four municipalities into one. Jan Keuzenkamp has apologised that his drawings are not as good as the official renderings, but at least fabulous beasts are still thriving in the Netherlands.

### More from Europe

Vernon Rolls has been busy, sending in first this woodcut from an Augsburg book of 1480 showing the genealogical tree of the House of Lusignan. Melusine herself is seen in her Fountain of Lusinia in the centre. On her right is Melior in her castle, with the sparrow-hawk, while on her left is Palatyne, seated on the Treasure of Elynas, on Mount Guygo, in Arragon (with dragons beneath). Above, arising from her loins in true family-tree style, are Uryan, King of Cyprus, Geoffrey with the large tooth, Anthony, King of Luxemburg, Oede, Comte de la Marche and Guyon, King of Armenia. (*opposite*).



### Some Beasts from the Balkans

Brian North Lee has let us have a look at a tiny book of his, called **Ogres & Bogies** with drawings by Rastko Ciric (Beograd, 1989), and though most of the thirty odd creatures portrayed are not really in our field of study, a few are worthy of note. Ciric is a master of animation, and his pictures attempt to illustrate the curious beings described in Serbian mythology. Here are a few of them.



**BUKAVAC /ROARER/ HURLEUR**

A monster with six legs and gnarly horns. Lives in lakes and large marshes. During the night he comes noisily out of the water, jumps on people and animals and strangles them.



**VAMPIRIĆ /VAMPIRE MOTH/ VAMPIRET**

Every vampire is inhabited by one or more vampire-moths who may leave their host by the way of the mouth. When killing a vampire you must be certain to kill the moth as well, for if he escapes he may continue to do evil to the living.



**CIKAVAC /SCREECHER/ PIAILLEUR**

A winged animal with a long beak and a baggy throat. It is hatched from an egg that is been kept under the armpit for forty days. It fulfills its master's every desire and gives him knowledge of the secret language of Nature.



**TODORCI /THE BAD FRIDAY RIDERS/ CENTAURES DE LA NUIT**

On the eve of Todor's Saturday there are processions of evil and merciless riders with tails, wearing white cloaks. With their heavy hooves they trample over anyone in their way.

## The Styrian Panther

We first reported on this fabulous beast in No 2, as part of a letter sent by John Davy from Vienna, where he was doing his National Service in 1947. It is worth quoting again:-

“Another strange beast seen here is the Styrian Panther, a scraggy green monster with horns, claws on its front feet and flames coming from its mouth. It is seen on the arms of the Austrian province of Styria (Steiermark in German). Scholarly opinion holds that it originated from a crudely drawn steer, a play on the name of the province which would explain the horns. The claws could be over-exaggerated cloven hooves and the flames a red tongue. I have not found any legends about this creature, which seems to exist only in Styrian heraldry.”

The arms of Styria have a white beast on a green shield, so perhaps the example John saw was a weatherbeaten version where the paint had run. A line drawing of it appeared on the cover of No 7. The only reason why it was called a ‘panther’ must have been the flames coming from its mouth, as the heraldic panther was also (mistakenly) depicted thus. We are now privileged to show a new drawing of this beast, kindly contributed by Carl-Alexander von Volborth, who also appended these few notes:-

*The heraldic panther is somehow associated with Pan and was probably once a Pantier (Tier in German = beast). It was good natured and the flames coming sometimes from all body-openings were supposed to illustrate the pleasant smell it radiated. Its voice was soft. Funnily enough, the Panther was the only beast the Dragon was afraid of. Whenever he heard the soft voice or saw the Panther approach, he crawled into his cave and played dead.*

(Here he shows his familiarity with the Bestiary legends, but he may not have been aware of the panther’s classical ancestry, as mentioned in our last issue. Of



course, the Greek *panthera* was not so much a fabulous beast as a creature of hearsay, from the Orient. Perhaps the legends reported in the bestiaries were themselves the product of an association with the god Pan, but one should bear in mind that the whole purpose of these books was to provide good Christian propaganda, with examples of God’s creative beneficence.)

## The Ipolyte

This strange creature from Mandeville’s Travels was mentioned in No 59 with the query whether it had ever been used in heraldry. Now Darren George has sent this picture of it from a Czech book, **Erbovník**, by Milan Myslivecek, where it is described as a “Kentaur.” Note that this beast is anatomically more logical than the common six-limbed version, and should perhaps be put to greater use. The heraldry of Eastern Europe does seem to have some surprises, and it appears to be flourishing, especially in the civic sphere where so many western countries are favouring the slick logo in place of a traditional coat of arms.



## Fabulous Beasts in the Netherlands

Sponsored by a bank, the book **Gemeentewapens in Nederland**, written and edited by Jan Keuzenkamp (‘s-Gravenhage, 1989), illustrated in colour some 728 civic arms, taken from 1917 sources and thus with a somewhat antiquated look to them. Of these, 51 contained fabulous beasts or heraldic monsters, often more than one, for instance where there was a pair of griffins as supporters. By far the most numerous, occurring in 22 cases, were double-headed Eagles, in whole or in part, nearly all black on gold and thus showing an ancient allegiance to the Holy Roman Empire or its successors. I have not counted those that were split lengthwise, so showing only one head, as one cannot be entirely sure that there was another head on the missing side! Arnhem has the same creature, but in silver on a blue shield. Next in popularity come Dragons, with eight, all but two of which are being slain by a mounted St Joris (St George) or by a winged St Michael, or in one case by an unusual winged female figure carrying various symbolic objects such as a pair of scales and a spear. The golden Dragon on a blue shield that appears on the arms of Beesel might



better be described as a Wyvern, but following usual continental practice, though shown with only two legs, it is still called a “draak.” There is also a single case of a Sea-Dragon. Griffins are almost as popular as Dragons, with seven appearances, four of them as supporters. There are four Mermaids and one Merman, all but one mermaid appearing as supporters. Two Unicorns are featured, one on a shield and one as a single supporter holding up the arms of Hoorn (*left*) which also