



# Big Book of Dragons, Monsters, And Other Mythical Creatures

Ernst and Johanna Lehner

This intriguing volume provides a glimpse of the imaginary animals and monsters that existed in ancient man's fertile imagination. Dramatic illustrations of dragons, griffins, werewolves, serpent monsters, sirens, mermaids, and other fabulous creatures of land, sea, and air are accompanied by an engaging text with legends from around the world.

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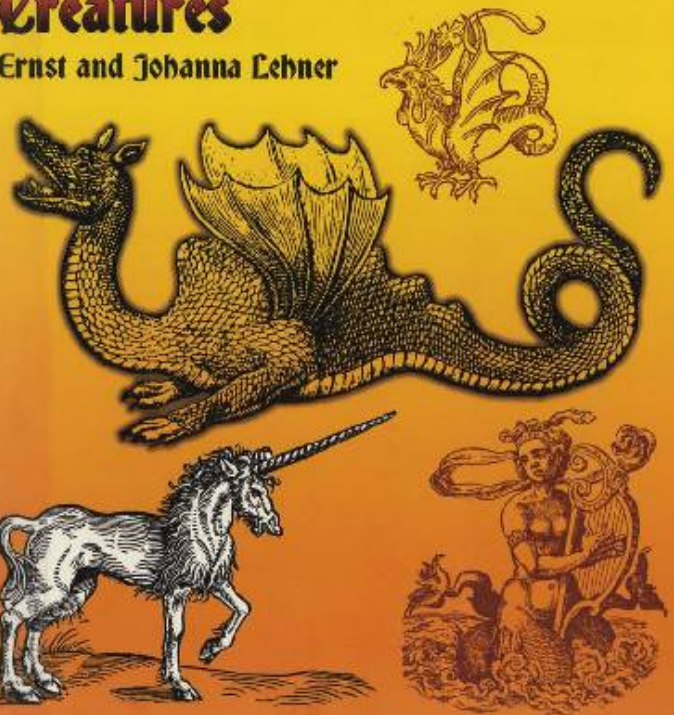


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Ernst and Johanna Lehner







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# BIG BOOK OF DRAGONS, MONSTERS, AND OTHER MYTHICAL CREATURES

Ernst and Johanna Lehner



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## FOREWORD

Artistic freedom is a fairly modern innovation. The artists of antiquity and the Middle Ages, indeed those of the Renaissance, were bound by dictated conventions of imagery and style. They were artists nonetheless, and, despite those obstacles, found suitable avenues for the expression of fancy, wit and imagination. One such area which seems particularly to have fascinated them, was the creation of imaginary animals, based on superstition, legend, myth, or simply the free play of their own invention.

The Greek and Roman artist drew from the rich storehouse of classic myth to represent such creatures as the Gorgon, the Harpy, the Sphinx, the Pegasus. In Islamic times, the Muslim craftsman, prevented by Mahomet's strictures from making natural representations, started, Koranic law, and risked eternal damnation, by turning in the unatural weaving into his designs strange forms that were part human, part animal, part vegetable. His counterpart in Medieval Europe, acting on similar impulses, worked the image of Garguill, the popular folk legend dragon, into the decorations of the church of the Ile de France.

Scriptures, received texts, epics provided the artist with a staggering array of demons, monsters and anthropomorphic errors. The Chinese tale of the battle of Gaxoma with the bizarre monster army of Moa was translated nearly image for image on the walls of the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-huang (T'ang Dynasty). In the West, the Temptations of St. Anthony and the dismal

psychological passages from the Apokalypse (Book of Revelations), with their numerous monsters and unearthly creatures, became standard themes for artistic composition.

There were still other sources. Assembled in the tenth century and much read in the Middle Ages was the *Ficatrix*, literally a treatise on magic practices employing astrology. The formulas for magical casts called for the making of likenesses of gods and demons as if they are described for the use of the simulator—a pitifully small number when compared to the 16th-century demonographer Feyerabend, who in his *Theatrum Diabolorum* lists over two-and-a-half trillion devils. For the more scholarly artist there was much to be learned from Boetaccio's *Genealogia Deorum*, a compendium of mythological gods and beasts. Adding to the fabulous leviathans that abounded were the grossly distorted, yet highly imaginative tales of travelers. Schedel's *Chronicle of the World*, published in Nuremberg in 1488, cites, as a few of the witnessed marvels of the East, cynocephal or dog-faced, barking men and scorpoid, human with but one leg ending in a monstrous foot. The Unicorn itself, of Indian ancestry, came to Europe via Pliny's *Natural History* and is undoubtedly a somewhat inaccurate account of the rhinoceros.

Since the close of the Middle Ages, any number of artists have heeded the pronouncement of Durer that, "If a person wants to create the stuff that dreams are made of, let him freely mix all sorts of creatures." During the Renaissance, such strange forms were

§ FOREWORD

designated "groteschi," whence our word "grotesque," referring to an ornamental style suggested by some relics from antiquity found in a grotto-like structure in Rome—sister, playful and unfamiliar, Bosch and Beucler are the most well-known members of this stylistic company, but it is well to remember that Raphael made ornamental grotesques for the pillars of the papal loggia. Leonardo da Vinci, Signorelli, Grünewald and a host of others were also known for their insatiable monster-making.

Nor did the interest cease with the beginning of modern art and the onset of the age of science: Odilon Redon, James Ensor, John Graham and, more recently, Robert Rauschenberg are among the artists who have continued the fascination for demonic and fantastic form. The various manifestations of dreams and of the subliminal mental life, with all their attendant oddities of substance

and contradictory juxtapositions, are still of singular concern to artists. The Surrealist and Dada movements deliberately attempted to investigate such phenomena, and elements of contemporary Pop and Funk art still bear witness to that search. Dürer's observation is echoed in our time by Joseph Campbell's:

*The unconscious sends all sorts of vapors, odd beings, scenes and deluding images up into the mind—whether in dream, mood, delight, or insanity; for the human being does hardly the feat of the comparatively new little dwelling that we call our consciousness, goes down into unimagined Ahab's nose. (The Hero With a Thousand Faces)*

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowhere else has the human fantasy, triggered by fear of the unknown or inexplicable in nature, shown a wider scope than in the invention of fanciful or grotesque monsters. In his imagination, pre-scientific man saw monsters everywhere—on land, in the waters and in the air—embodying all facets of his anxieties. The basic idea of the existence of monsters is actually not so far-fetched as it might appear from our first look at the many creatures that haunted the thoughts and fantasies of our forebears. These were a time, in the beginning of human history, when animals, against whose power and cunning man had little defense, were considered gods. Their behavior inspired man to assign to them appropriate powers, names and spirits. Man also feared that the souls of slain animals, unless propitiated, might take

revenge, or that a man's soul after his death would sometimes enter the body of an animal. Animals were thus worshipped before gods were created. Later, they became associated with the newer deities and were mummified after death as their sacred representatives. In the earlier religions we find deities represented with the bodies of men and the heads of animals, or vice versa, or as fabulous, fantastic creatures who combined different parts of different kinds of beasts. The ancient Assyrian-Babylonian and Egyptian mythologies abound with such composite monster-gods. Many theories as to the origin and cause of monsters were advanced in bygone times: in ancient mythology they were the offspring of the union of humans with gods in animal disguise; a common belief in folklores attributed them



The Biblical monster Geryon and Leviathan (Job 40:10).  
Designed and printed by William Blake, London, 1825

to the essential interpenetration of different species of animals; while according to medieval theology such creatures were believed to be the outcome of copulation by infernal creatures with witches. In earliest times and in primitive beliefs, animal sacrifices were related to the deep-seated ancient tendency in man to identify himself with the power and spirit of the slain animal. Primitive man coveted the mysterious personality of beasts whose skins, tails, horns and feathers were not only worn as clothing and decorations, but also for their magical virtues. Many of the beasts encountered by man in these times were awe-inspiring in their strength, ferocity, or grotesque appearance, and so man adopted their characteristics for himself. He not only used the adornments of the animals but also used their names and reptiles later on in exorcisms, titles and heraldic devices; as in the escutcheons of medieval knights; the family totem poles of the Indians of Alaska and British Columbia; the half-horse; half-animal family gods of Polynesia; or the religious animal dances



St. John the Baptist and the seven-headed red dragon (Illumination, 1233).  
From *Mad. Thozet's Compendium*, painted by Jean Meunier, Paris, 1819

masks of Africa, North and South America and the Far East. All this use of animal and monster images was primarily to endow the user with the heroic features of the beast represented, and to frighten away evil spirits and demons. Looking at the most outstanding characteristics of monsters of bygone days, we find that even today there are animals which show some of these monstrous features: for size we still have the pachyderms: elephant, rhinoceros and hippopotamus; for ferocity, the carnivorous beasts: lion, tiger, wolf and others; for dragon like qualities, the reptiles: crocodile, cayman, geyser, alligator, chameleon, iguana, Gila monster and others; for grotesqueness: the crocodile, gnu, hyena, and gorilla; for deadliness: the boa constrictor, cobra, rattlesnake and other poisonous serpents; for hideous looking insects: the scorpion, black-widow spider, praying mantis, and mole-cricket; for sea-monsters: the hammerhead shark, manta-ray, moray, and man-of-war; and for flying monsters: the vampire bat, vulture, condor and other birds of prey.



The Witch of Babylon riding the seven-headed dragon, from *The New Testament*,  
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## Chapter 1

# DRAGONS

The dragon is one of the oldest, most widespread and persistent monsters in occidental mythology, religion and folklore. It is a four-elemental beast: three were subterranean dragons, aquatic dragons, dragons of the air, and fire-breathing dragons. All dragons in Western myths were sinister, terrifying creatures, emblematic of destructive, evil and anarchical principles. The dragon-slaying mythological and religious folk hero or saint was also strictly a feature of the Western world, from the Euphrates in the east to the Iberian peninsula in the west, and from the Nile valley in the south to the Teutonic forests in the north. In antiquity there was the Greek sun-god Apollo, who slew the dragon-serpent Python, guardian of the chasms of darkness on Mount Parnassus, and the legendary Phoenician prince Cadmus who killed a dragon sacred to Mars. From the teeth of this dragon, which he sowed in the earth, armed men sprang up

and proceeded to fight each other until only five were left alive. These five helped Cadmus found and build the city of Thebes. In medieval times there were dragon-slaying folk heroes such as Siegfried, hero of the Teutonic *Nibelungenlied*, who killed the dragon *Fafnir*, guardian of the Nibelungen Hoard; or Beowulf, hero of the Anglo-Saxon epic, who slew the treasure-guarding dragon ravaging his kingdom, Geatas. Christian lore is full of saints who have fought, killed or transfixed many an evil dragon: St. George, St. Margaret, St. Martha, St. Bismar, St. Samson, St. Philip of Bethsaida and many more. The dragon image was widely used in medieval times in the Western world to symbolise evil — in religious works, in mystic and magic philosophies, in Gnostic and Rosicrucian emblem books, and in demonology, astrology and alchemy, as the representation of the devil, hell, sin, heresy, darkness, superstition, and other evil expiation.



Dragon killing a knight, from a 15th-century history manuscript



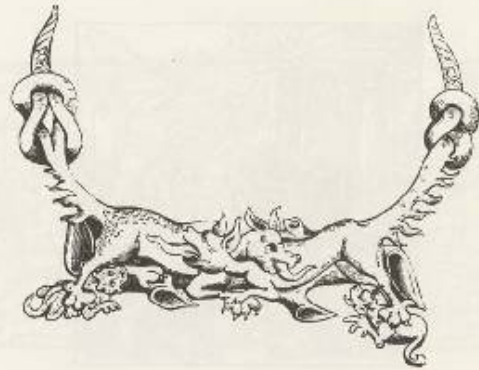
The Wyvern of Meles, from a consular seal, France, early 18th century



Folchali and the dragon, from Francisco Colman's *Apogeevostanac* Polphob, printed by Aldin Maschini, Venice, 1426



Dragon, after Lucas (Bagnard) van Leyden, Holland 1594-1633



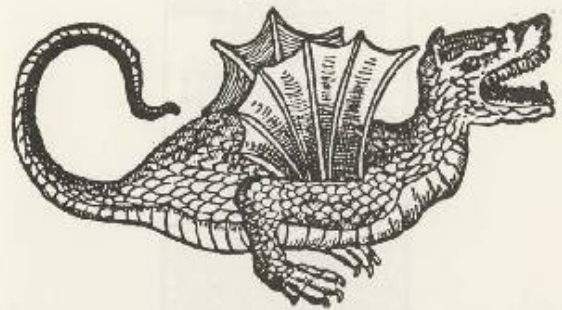
Mother dragon fighting for their young, from a French manuscript, Paris, 18th century



The dragon-slayer St. Margaret of Antioch, from Lucas Gissbach the Elder's *Wittenberges Heilighenbuch*, Wittenberg, 1544



Heracles slaying the dragon Lerne, from Ottavio Bruni's *Herbarius*, printed by Johannes Schott, Strassburg, 1538



Dragonet, a young dragon, by Pieter Holck, 1571



The dragon of Ruggenna, from Paolo di Rocaforte's *Lesserons di Ruggero*, printed by Cosma da Tito in Montebello, Venice, 1525





Sea dragon, from Bessière's *Histoire naturelle*, Paris, 1776



Seven-headed dragon, from *Comarum Livoniarum Prodromus ac tabularum chronicae*, printed by Henry Petri, Riga, 1587



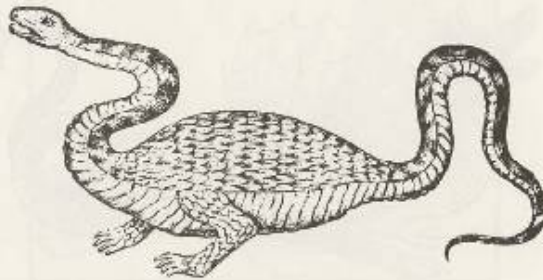
The dragon slayer St. George, from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, printed by William Fitzgibbon, London, 1599



Draco Serpentinus, from Ulisse Aldrovandus' *Serpentium et Draconum Historia*, Bologna, 1640



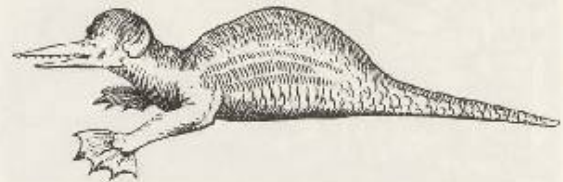
The sky dragon, from Ulisse Aldrovandus' *Serpentium et Dracorum Historia*, Bologna, 1649



The two-legged dragon-ovum of Milan, from Ulisse Aldrovandus' *Serpentium et Dracorum Historia*, Bologna, 1649



The Germanic horned dragon of Hell, from a pen drawing in an old French manuscript, *Le Magic noire*, Paris, 18th century



The dragon of the Song sea, after Amleto Azzurro, 1862

The *Lindwurm* was not actually a dragon, but a winged monster serpent, without legs or claws, whose scaly armor glistened in brilliant green-gold or green-silver. In Germanic-

Nordic folk-sagas and Middle High German epic poems of knightly love and heroic deeds, it was the guardian of hidden treasures and of beautiful maidens in distress.



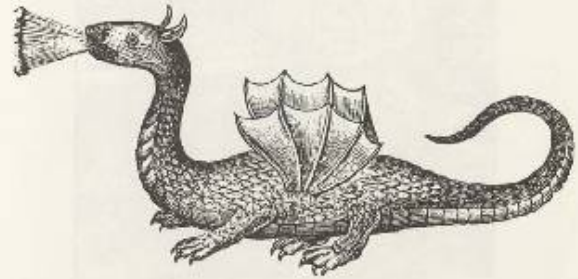
The legless, winged *Lindwurm*, a giant dragon like serpent of Germanic-Nordic folklore and hero-sagas



The *Tatzlwurm* of the Tyrol Alps Mountains, from Athanasius Kircher's *Mysterium Subterraneum*

The *Tatzlwurm* was another of the dragon-like monsters of Germanic folklore; a gigantic, winged, fire-breathing serpent with four legs and claws. It dwelled in the crags and

caves of the Alpine mountains of Austria, Bavaria and Switzerland, and was the terror of the Alpine peasantry, preying on their cattle and on lost children.



The four-legged, winged *Tatzlwurm*, a dragon-like giant serpent of Alpine-Germanic folklore



The *Tatzlwurm* of Druckenfeldt, from Athanasius Kircher's *Mysterium Subterraneum*





Symbolic representation of the Dragon of Evil, feeding on and destroying faith, from a secret Rosicrucian emblem book, 18th century



The Luminaries (Light and Knowledge) slaying the Dragon of Evil (Darkness and Superstition), from a secret Rosicrucian emblem book, 18th century



Hermaproditus standing over the alchemical Dragon of Chaos, from H. Jacobus's *Vitae Secretae Rosae Cruciae*, Frankfurt, 1625



The two-headed alchemical dragon, symbolizing the *Materia Prima*, from Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, London, 1669



The alchemical Sky Dragon, linking the sun and the moon, from Paul YANNEY'S *L'Art de l'Alchimie*, Paris, 1900



The hermetic dragonmaster, holding the Mundus Coelestis (Heaven) together, from *Hermetische Wissenschaft*, Mainz, 1732



The Dragon of Darkness, from an English classbook, *A Family Warning to Rich and Dissolute Children*, Edinburgh, 1721



The dragon Diabola, from John Bunyan's *The Holy War*, made by Skelton upon Diabola, painted by Darius Newman and Benjamin Alap, London, 1680



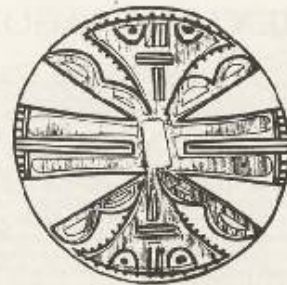
The ebbesian Sky Dragon holding the sun and the moon, from Hans Strigel's *Yngvir Frokkr*, designed by V. Esl, Vienna, 1514



The Dragon of Hervey, from Mathias Gualter's *Diabolus*, printed in Switzerland, 1521



The two-headed dragon, symbolizing the cohesions of inferior conjunction of Venus and the sun, from a Mayan cross carving at Copan, Mexico



Two-headed dragon design from a Gothic Italian bowl, San Gildardo



Two-headed Chinese dragon design from a paired Fuzhou clay pitcher, Texella



## ORIENTAL DRAGONS

Dragons are also important beasts in East Asian mythology, but there is a deeply marked difference in their symbolic meaning: they are not the vicious monsters of the medieval Western world, but friendly, lovable and benevolent creatures. They are the geni of strength, the emblems of vigilance and protection, the guardians of treasures and wisdom. Among the Chinese and the Japanese, dragons are the most potent symbols of the beneficent, rain-giving powers of the gods of water and clouds, and of power, royalty, and sovereignty. In Japan the dragon is the emblem of the Mikaddo, and in China of the Emperor. China alone has four important groups of protective dragons: the Tien-Lung, celestial guardians of the mansions of the gods; the creator dragons of wind, clouds and rain for the benefit of mankind; the Li-Lung, benevolent earth, sky and water dragons which ascend to the sky as water-

spoors or typhoons; and the guardian dragons of wealth and wisdom. In Chinese mythology the dragon is one of the four important types of intelligent and protective beasts, the chief of the scaly reptiles. (The other three are the Unicorn — king of the hairy beasts; the Phoenix — lord of the feathered creatures; and the Tortoise — master of the shelled animals.) In Persian mythology the dragon Azdahak is the guardian of all gold — the subterranean treasures of the earth. One of the most important and colorful Oriental festivals is the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival, during which dragon-shaped boats are raced on all waterways in China, and special rice cakes dedicated to His Majesty the Dragon are eaten by a merry-making crowd. This festival is in reality a nation-wide prayer for a good harvest resulting from the fecund rains of which Lung — the Dragon — is the celestial guardian.



AL-TAN-DRA, the constellation Dragon, from an ancient Arabic astronomical manuscript.



Fohai, the dragon of the river, symbol of immense strength, from an old Chinese engraving.



Chou-fan, the guardian dragon, from an old Chinese engraving.



Chinese dragon, from an old lantern silhouette



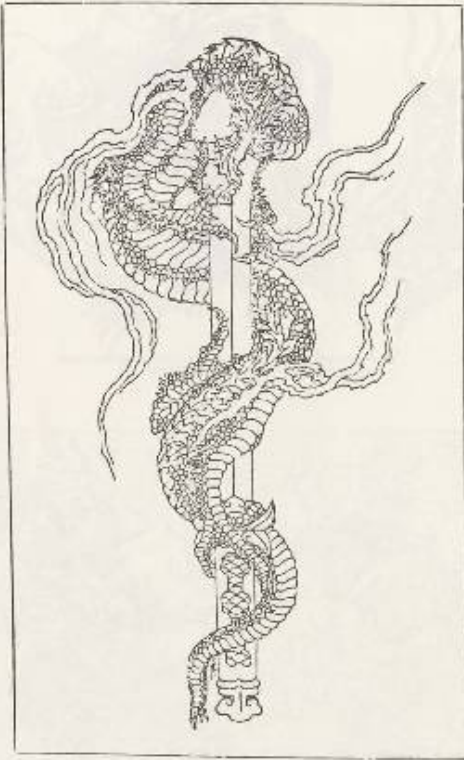
The Dragon of Longevity, from a mural tablet in the Temple of Longevity, Canton, China



The dragon emblem of the Chinese emperor, symbol of creative power, from a Chinese lantern silhouette



The Dragons of the Clouds and of the Sea, from an old Chinese engraving



Heeren's cloud-gathering wood, *Karoboku no unagi*, one of the three Japanese Imperial treasures, found in the tail of a dragon, designed by Holbein



The dragon's tip, from an old Japanese pen drawing



The descending and ascending dragons *Myōto-dai* (dragon-head and snake-tail), from an old Japanese engraving

## SERPENT MONSTERS

Since time immemorial, man has feared the serpents. Their subtle and rapid movements, the swiftness of their attack, their venom, their secret hiding places make them the most dangerous and potent monsters in the imagination of mankind. Their ability to shed their skins caused them to be regarded as possessing perpetual youth and everlasting life. They were considered as incomprehensible as destiny, able to conceal themselves even where there were only small stones and short grass. Their ability to live for long periods without food made them seem like mysterious gods. In ancient days there was virtually no religion or philosophy, no native lore or body of legend, no magic or mystic system of belief, that did not assign important functions to serpents. In many mythologies, the monster serpent is not only the beast of chaos and destruction, but also of creation. In the Assyrian-Babylonian religion, Marduk, the creator, slew the serpent monster of chaos, Tiamat, splitting it in two

and creating from one half the earth, and from the other the sky. The demonic three-headed serpent *Ashi Dabaka*, of ancient Persian mythology, was the symbol of the destructive and the generative powers of the earth; the Nordic serpent monster *Nidhogg*, living in *Hel*, the primordial abyss, represented the volcanic powers of the earth; *Cecrops*, the half man, half serpent of Greek mythology, first king of Attica, was the traditional founder of civilization, and of Athens, the citadel of which was called *Cecropia*. In Chinese mythology the woman-headed serpent *Nü-kun-shi* was the world creator. The monster serpent symbol was prominent in the beliefs of the Gnostics, the Hecataecians, the Ophites and other mystic or Satanist societies, and was used by the astrologers and alchemists. We also find serpent monsters in the myths and lore of almost every tribe in Africa, Asia and America, where they appear mostly in the role of villains, symbolizing everything that is disruptive or evil.



Anah, the ancient Persian god of creative matter, with the serpentine wheel of the *Spiral of Life*.



Chersaph, or Babi, the four-winged serpent of ancient Egyptian mythology.



Uchit, the tutelary goddess of the ancient Egyptian South, in the form of a winged serpent.





Cerberus, legendary first beast of Hell, half man, half serpent, from an antique Greek vase painting



The sons of Poseidon struggling Laocöus and his son (Greek mythology)



The serpent-footed Giant, Italian antique Roman wall carving



Hercules and Iolaus killing Hydra, the many-headed serpent of Lerna, after an antique Greek vase painting



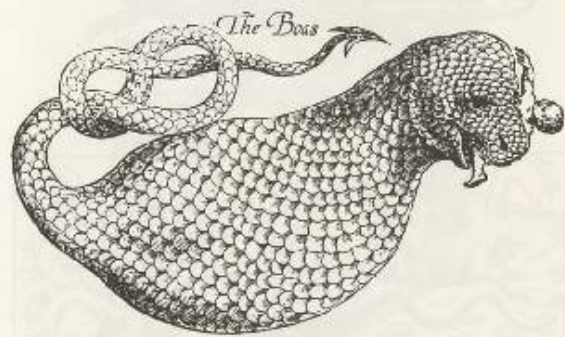
Ahriman, the serpent-legged god of magical influence, from an antique Gnostic tract to ward off witchcraft.



The seven-headed Serpent of Fao, from an antique Gnostic seal.



Ophion, the Serpent-carrier, worshipped as a constellation by the ancient Sabaean society of Ophites, from an Arabic astronomical manuscript.



The Boas, from Edward Taylor's *A History of Four-Footed Beasts*, printed at London, 1629.



The two-headed Amphithauma, from a 13th-century bestiary manuscript



The Amphithauma as a two-headed lizard, from Alessandro Vesputius of Devaricum Historiae, Bologna, 1699



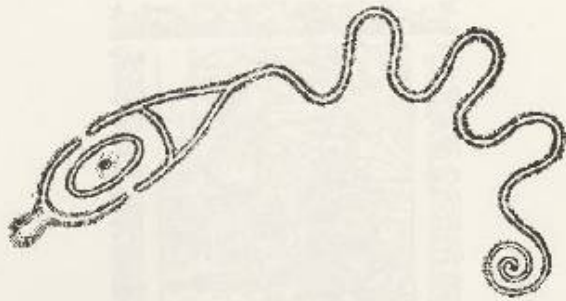
Multiple-headed serpents, from Münster's De Africae rebus



Symbolic representation of the Serpent of Inzerodite worshipping before the Altar of Looe, from a recent Indonesian rubber book, 20th century



Entwined serpents, symbol of physical and spiritual union, from a Czech rubber, 1944, 1950



The Great Serpent Mound, about 300 feet long, erected by the prehistoric mound builders at Adams County, Ohio



Serpent's head, a prehistoric mound builder's copper plate artifact, from the Hopewell Mound, Ross County, Ohio



Flint serpent, an unworked design by the ancient Indians of the Mississippi Valley



Prehistoric garter, a mound builder's amulet charm from the MacIntosh Mound, Sevierville, Tennessee



Faceted serpent, from a prehistoric ceramic plate, ancient Mississippi Indians





Quetzal, the plumed serpent lord, creator of the air.  
from an Aztec wall carving, Palenque, Mexico



Kukulkan, the plumed serpent, from a Maya wall carving, Yucatan, Chichen, Mexico



Mucan, rain serpent, from the  
Tucuman Codex manuscript



Incanapuma, from the  
Quechua Indians



Feathered serpent, a mythological symbol of the  
Nevada Indians, Lake Managua, Nicaragua



Crotal, serpent monster of the Huastec Indians  
Veracruz, Mexico



The myological water monster  
of the Sta. Lucie Indians



Reus-Bheing, an incubated serpent, fertility symbol  
of the Mohi Indians, Santa Catalina, Arizona



Keen Tsu, the serpent of the underworld,  
Dachlo Indians, San Ildefonso, New Mexico



The lightning snake *wasatin*  
Pashia Indians, British Columbia



The glassed serpent of lightning, thunder and rain,  
from a Yupa Indian pottery decoration, San Ildefonso, New Mexico



Uchisato, the great horned serpent god  
of the Mikoyan Indians



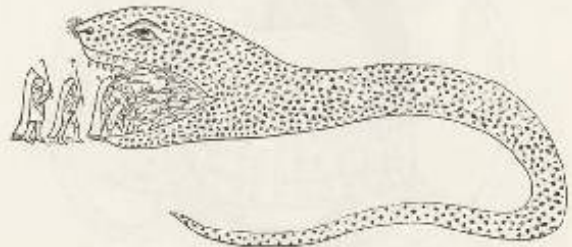
The mythical serpent Pal-wahk,  
from an ancient Indian book on magic



The woman-headed serpent of Crete  
(Classical mythology)



The horn-headed serpent of Crete  
(Classical mythology)



Avatar of Kishin,  
from an old Hindu manuscript





Amphis, the world-encircling serpent, appearing as Vishnu's cosmic reclining posture, the Uroboros, from several Hindu scriptures.



Ananta, the world-encircling serpent, with his tail in his mouth, encircling the three worlds, from an ancient Hindu scripture.

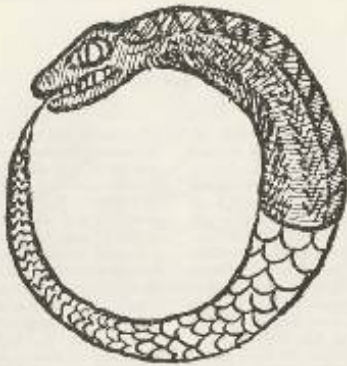
## THE OUROBOROS

The serpent biting its own tail, the *Ouroboros*, is an ancient sign of eternity, symbolizing the endless succession of incarnations which form the wheel of eternal life. The Gnostics, an early Christian sect, propagated a system of mystical religious and philosophical doctrines that combined Christianity with Greek and Oriental philosophies. They transformed the evil serpent of Paradise into the beneficent *Ouroboros*, which they worshipped because it was the serpent who had pleased in mankind the yearning for more knowledge. The medieval alchemists adopted the Gnostic *Ouroboros*, changing it to the *Hermeticus Draco*, who, in biting its own tail, prevented the transmutation of

the elements, and had to be killed before an alchemical experiment could be successfully concluded. In its alchemical representation, the *Ouroboros*'s body is divided into light and dark portions, signifying that good and bad, perfection and inferiority, are bound together in nature, like day and night, because alchemical matter is one and all-embracing. In ancient astrology the sign of the serpent devouring its own tail was considered the symbolic representation of wisdom. In many ancient beliefs, the tail-biting serpent is the world serpent, like *Míðgárd* in Teutonic mythology, or *Ananta*, the world-encircling serpent of the Hindu religion, symbolizing the eternal path of the sun.



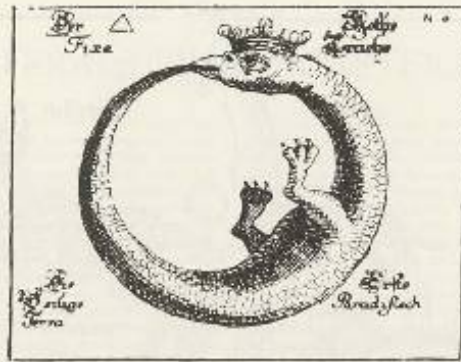
The oldest extant representation of *Ananta*, as the serpent *Ananta*, *Chakrapati's Chakrapati*, from *Cyber-Martina's Veritas*, 18th century.



The dragon Ouboboros, from an old magic manuscript.  
La Meris robe, France.



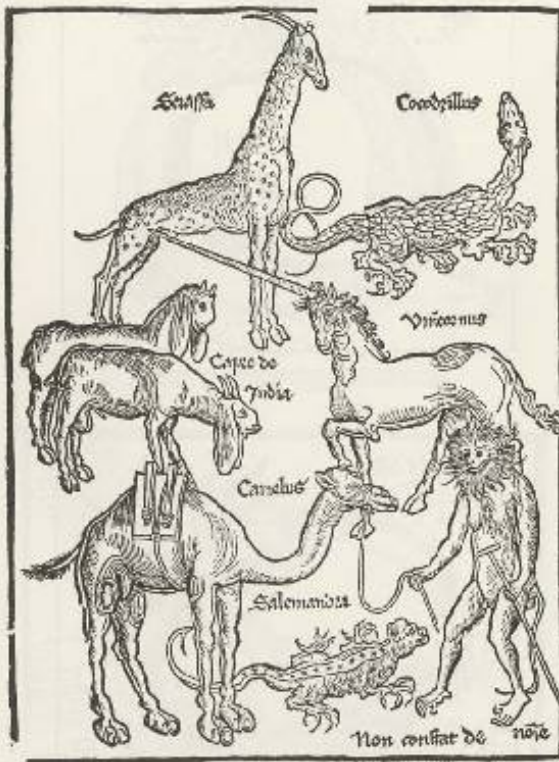
The Basilisk Ouboboros, symbol of the Aeneas.  
from Theophrastus' Solida Physiognomica, Tarsus, 1597.



The crowned dragon or Ourciboros, symbol of the four elements,  
from Abraham Eliazar's Cabbala Chassidaica, Leipzig, 1700.



The crowned double dragon or Ourciboros, symbol of the four elements,  
from Abraham Eliazar's Cabbala Chassidaica, Leipzig, 1700.



Alleged location of the Holy Land, from Giovanni de Bry's 1572 *Itinere in Indiam Orientalem*, printed by Pieter Plantin, 1572.

## Chapter 4

## TERRESTRIAL MONSTERS

Besides dragons and serpents many composite monsters infested the mountains and plains forests and jungles of every continent of the globe. Among them were the classical watchdog of Hades, the three-headed Cerberus, with a dragon's tail and a neck bristling with serpent heads, who lived on the shore of the Styx and prevented the shades of the dead from leaving the underworld; the fire-breathing monster Chimaera, with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a serpent, who ravaged the Lyctan plains in ancient Greece; and the crocodilian or wolf-men, known to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who were human beings transformed by witchcraft and black magic into carnivorous beasts, like the French *Loup-Carou*, that roamed the plains and forests of

the European lands at night. The latter existed in many forms in many other lands: as werewolves to the North American Indians; as jaguar-men in South America; as tiger-men in India, Borneo, Western Asia, China and Japan; as wood-men in Africa; and in still different guises elsewhere. Many other legendary carnivorous monsters were reported in medieval natural histories: the Lovin, who fed on lost children; the ferocious *Mantero*; the terrifying Basilisk, or Cockatrice; and the Gorgon, or *Catoblepas*: as well as equally frightful creatures who were probably fanciful, imaginary representations of real but little-known beasts, such as the tiger, the hyena, the lion, wild dogs and cats of all kinds, as they first appeared to wandering and fearful eyes.



Woodcut from Giovanni de Bry's 1572 *Itinere in Indiam Orientalem*, printed by Pieter Plantin, 1572.





Babylonia as Persians. *Griffin* the Chimera, cousin of the *Isopod* Ka, also an ancient Greek vase painting



Hercules capturing the three-headed *Cerberus*, watchdog of the Gates of Hades, symbol of guardlessness (*Cross-fertilization biology*)



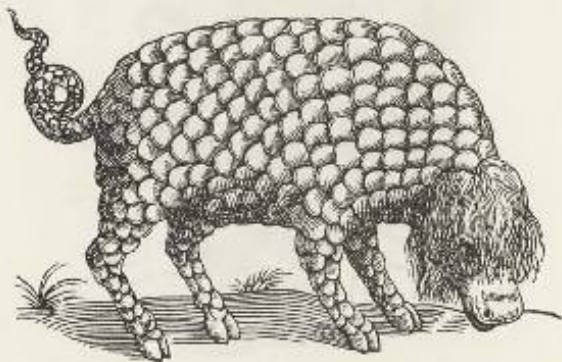
*Dog-Fingertory* (English woodcut), from *Boissier's Histoire naturelle*, Paris, 1807



The *Manticore*, from Edward Tognotti, *A History of Four-Footed Beasts*, London, 1888



The Linceus, from Edward Togard's *A History of Four-Footed Beasts*, printed by R. Cross, London, 1658.



The Gogias or Carcharias, from Edward Togard's *A History of Four-Footed Beasts*, printed by R. Cross, London, 1658.

## THE MANTICORA

The Manticora is believed to be a vampiric, man-killing monster of ancient Tataric origin, whose name derives from the Persian *manjra* — man, and *kor* — to eat. It was first mentioned in the writings of the Greek physician and natural historian Ktesias, who lived and worked at the ancient Persian court in the 5th century B.C. The existence of the Manticora was also accepted by the influential Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). From that time on, the Manticora haunted ancient bestiaries and, later on, medieval natural histories. The monster was variously described by different scholars, and illustrated in bestiaries according to the fantastic imagination of the reproducing artist. It was always represented, however, as a fearful composite monster the size of a horse, usually with the body and claws of a lion, or with

the scaled rump of a lioness and the talons of a galling sometimes with a man's head with three rows of teeth in each jaw, or with the face of a hooded man or a man's head with a mane in the form of a Phrygian cap; and usually with the tail of a basilisk or a scorpion, tipped with a poisoned arrow-head, or covered with barbed spikes which could be thrown great distances with deadly accuracy. Sometimes the Manticora was equipped with dragon's wings, or with four dogs like a dog, and its voice was said to resemble the united noise of a flute and a trumpet, parodying the human voice. In other words, this terrible monster of medieval times was endowed with every horrible or monstrous feature known. Later works suggest it derived from distorted imitations of the newly seen man-eating tiger or the carrion-feeding laughing hyena.



The Manticora according to Tavernier, a pen drawing from a historical manuscript, 17th century.



The sea-chagge Manticora, from a boctary manuscript, 12th century



The terrible Manticora succinea, caught in the year 1530 in the Rindberg Forest, Sweden, from Karolus Gesenius's *Diakonhistoriska samlingar*, Bock, 16th century



The sea-chagge Manticora, used as a device by the printer Backhuys, Lucca, Tuscany, 1551



The sea-chagge Manticora, from Edward Tappin's *A History of Four-Footed Beasts*, printed by E. Cress, London, 1655



Fighting Manticora, here as ogre, by an unknown master, 1644-1660s, early 18th century

## THE BASILISK

The basilisk or Cockatrice, was a grotesque beast which could stare or kiss a man to death. It was an unsavory, winged reptile born of a yolkless egg laid by a cock and hatched by a toad in the warmth of a dung-heap, so deadly was its breath that it withered all vegetation and shattered any stone it touched; its face was so horrible that the very sight of it would kill any living thing. It was considered to be the king of all serpents and reptiles, and its name was derived from the Greek *basilikos*—little king. The Cockatrice is mentioned in the Bible (Isaiah 9:11-8), and is referred to many times, either as Cockatrice or Basilisk, in English literature: by Shakespeare; by John Gay in his *Beggar's Opera*; by Shelley in his *Ode to Naples*. In the 15th century, a deceitful nine-year-old cock was tried in the public court at Basel on the charge of having laid an egg during the days of the Dog Star, the cock,

found guilty, was put to death by the official hangman. The Basilisk was described by the Roman writer and naturalist Pliny (23-79 A.D.) as living in the warm climate of Cyrenicia and the Libyan desert, fearing only the crowing of a cock and the sight of a weasel, the only animal immune to its breath and sight. Travellers crossing the desert in the first century of Christian time took along a cock and a weasel to keep Basilisks away from their camps. In pre-St. Patrick times, the Isles of Brittany (*Thy Isles*) were so infested with Cockatrices that nobody dared leave his home without a silver mirror in his pocket, because its own image would kill the monster. The last recorded appearance of a Basilisk was in Warsaw in the year 1587, when two girls, playing in the cellar of their house, were allegedly killed by one's breath. In heraldry the Basilisk, and its cousin, the Wyvern, symbolized the "death-dealing" eye.



Basilisk, 16th or 17th century manuscript, 18th century





Basilisk used as a peacock's device  
by Michael Turner, Engr. 1769



The Cockatrice, or Basilisk, as per  
an old English moral of brass



Galla Linceola & Serpens, the Basilisk,  
after A. Broder's Medulla Subterranea



Basilisk, or Crocotta, from Johann Stollin's  
*De Zeyphobis*, engraved by W. Haken, Nuremberg, 1510

## Chapter 5

## AQUATIC MONSTERS

The most superstitious group on earth are the members of the brotherhood of seafaring men, no matter what their nationality, religion, belief, creed or color. And with justification, since there is the only profession in which men pit their lives and limbs against all four earthly elements that endanger mankind: the churning waters of the oceans, fogs and mists; the torments of typhoons, hurricanes and tornadoes; the ferocious dangers of reefs and cliffs in coastal waters; and the constant dreaded menace of fire on their vessels. Not to mention the possibilities of accident, hunger and thirst. No wonder that mariners of all times, in all four corners of the globe, inspired no doubt by such dangerous real creatures of the deep as sharks,

sting-rays, moccas, electric eels and Portuguese men-of-war — which are bad enough — populated the enormous stretches of trench-cool-and-unsafe waters with countless forests of fictitious monsters, whose single purpose was to punish human intruders into their realm. And so they invented sea-serpents and sea-dragons, mermaids and merman, gigantic fish and octopi, and mables and armored sea-monsters of all kinds. And who can say with authority that somewhere in the deep crags on the ocean floor, unseen by human eyes, there do not still exist weird aquatic monsters from an antediluvian past, which might have been swept to the ocean surface in a vast upheaval, to be glimpsed by frightened sailors fighting for their lives?



Mensures of the Deep, from Scientific Monthly's Cosmography Universelle, Biele, 1844



Hippocampus as a Hippocampus, from an antique Greek vase painting



Hippocampus—The Sea Horse, from Edward Geary's Dictionary, Philadelphia, 1851



*Squilla*, the sea monster living on the Italian side of the Straits of Messina  
(Giovanni Battista Piranesi)



The sea monster: *Conchiro-Triche*, also called *Indhyo-Yent*  
(Giovanni Battista Piranesi)



The Sea Devil, from a French woodcut  
printed at Cassan, France c.1810, 18th century



The *Arctopogon vesicator*, from *Opera Magica* by Wilhelm  
Monstrosus & Ursus Compositio (Paris 1601, 1604, 1617)

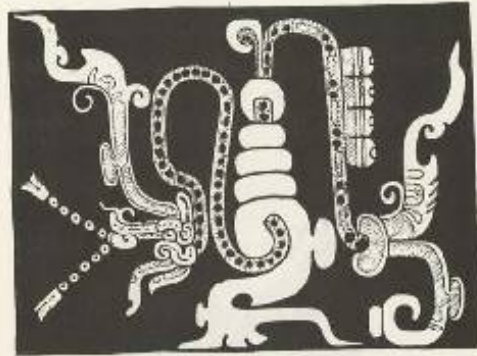




The Crab, symbol of the sea, from a Mochean Indian design, see *Chirca, profanities*, Peru.



The Scorpion, symbol of the sea, from a Peruvian pottery decoration.



The serpent god of the sea, from the Hindu, from an ancient Indian aquatic decoration, see *Sai Baba*.



The serpent god of the sea, from an ancient Peruvian, from a Mochean Indian pottery decoration, Peru.





The Horned Serpent, a mythical water monster of the Northwest Indians



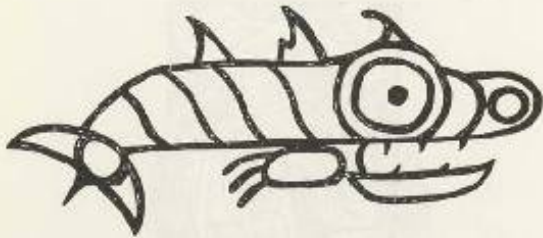
The Horned Water Serpent, a prehistoric water monster of the Hoot Indians, Alaska



The horned water monster Wungwa, from a decorative slate engraved by the Haida Indians, British Columbia



The water monster Wungwa, from the Haida Indians, from a ceremonial rattle, British Columbia



The Sea Child's Monster, from decorative drawings by the Ulagit Indians, Bering Sea, Alaska



Sea monster, from a decorative design by the Ulagit Indians, Bering Sea, Alaska



Sea monster, from a decorative drawing by the Ulagit Indians, Bering Sea, Alaska



Rappa, the Terrible Boy, a mischievous spirit of the ocean, part fish-like, part monkey, who causes wrecks in the Bering Sea (Japanese folklore)



The Great Cat-Fish, living at the bottom of the sea near Japan, whose roar causes the cause of earthquakes (Japanese folklore)



Yo Z. su, the fish-dragon monster,  
from an old Chinese work on magic.



Like an monster Makara — Spirit of the Sea, the vehicle of Varuna,  
god of the oceans (Hindu mythology)

## THE SEA SERPENT

Sea serpents are the most widely-publicized monsters of the deep. From the time of the Biblical sea monster *Nahas* (Amos 9:5), the Arabian sea serpent *Tinnin*, the serpents of Neptune who killed Laocoon in Greek mythology, and the Midgard serpent of Norwegian legend, this creature has cropped up time and again throughout the centuries. There are sea serpents in Hindu mythology and Polynesian legend; they have been seen off the Libyan Coast, as recorded by Aristotle; in the Swedish Sea (Baltic), in the Sea of Darkness (Atlantic); off the Isle of Skye, in the Norwegian fjords; and, according to Laplandic sagas, in the Sea of Finland. Sea serpents are reported in the *works* of Olaus Magnus, Aldrovandus, Pontoppidan, the Bishop Hans Egede, and many others. Records of encounters with sea serpents are found in the log books of numerous ships, such as

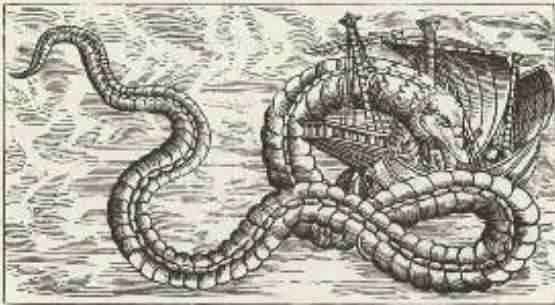
*H.M.S. Dredgus* (South Atlantic, 1848); *H.M.S. Porpoise* (off Cape San Roque, 1875); the barque *Georgina* (1877); *H.M. Yacht Osborne* (off Sicily, 1877); the American ship *Sacramento* (1877); the *Southern* (off West, 1879). Sea serpents were reported seen from the gun off Liverpool (1892); from the steamer *Suffox* (1900); by the French mail steamer *Pacific* (near the Loyalty Islands, 1901), and so on. There were also landlocked sea monsters, like the *Zeedy* sea serpent of Provincetown (Mass. 1886), and the star performer of them all, allegedly seen by thousands of visitors, *Nero*, the sea serpent of Loch Ness, in Scotland's West Highlands. Notwithstanding the manifold appearances of this monster species, however, scientists have never been able to capture a single specimen.



The water serpent of the Nile, *Mphoss*, swallowing a living man,  
from a botanic manuscript (15th century)



Sea serpent and dolphin, from Carlo Fontana's *Il Mare e l'Isola di Capri*, printed by M. Sansa & P. di Bassano, Venice, 1518



Sea serpent in the Sea of Daskew, from Ohtsu Mizutani's *Histories of Countries Septentrionalibus*, printed by J. M. de Vries, Leiden, 1698

SERPENT MARIN.



Serpent Marin — *Le serpent marin*, from *Matthiae Cosmographie*, Paris, 1574



Sea serpent, from *Filippo Hans Egede's The Nine Years of Old Greenland*, London, 1734



Chapter 6

# DENIZENS OF THE DEEP

In the folklore of seafaring people there exists a semi-human population of the deep as widespread and familiar as the tawny surge of the ships which ply the Seven Seas. There has never been a time in nautical history, never a country by the sea, never a harbor on the globe, in which mariners have not told of mermaids and mermen; they have themselves encountered or heard aboard from reliable mates. Among these watery creatures were the sea and fish gods of antiquity, with their outrageous of Tritons, Nereids and Naiads; the Sirens of Greco-Roman mythology, the Medieval *Chudines*; the legendary *Melusine*s of French folklore; the *Lorelei* (from the High German *lur* — to lure, and *lei* — the rock) of Rhineish folk-song; the *Morgans* (from the Welsh *Mari Morgan* — sea-folk of Brittany) of Welsh-Breton; folk-

lore; the *Ningyō* — mermaids of Japanese mythology; and all their manifold counterparts in other Western or Oriental fables. Since the time of the ship *Argo* of Greek mythology, there seem always to have been mermaids and mermen around to lure unsuspecting sailors and their ships to destruction and a watery grave. Even in our highly technical and scientific age, no number of negative statements by scientists and natural historians, based on no matter what amount of research in submarines and bathyspheres, will ever be able to destroy the belief of superstitious mariners in the existence of these semi-human denizens of the deep. Mermaids and mermen will no doubt be riding the waves and sitting on reefs and rocks concealing their mischief for as long as there are men who go down to the sea in ships.



Mermaid and merman of the Nile Delta.  
From *Ulysse Aldrovandus: Opera de Meracibus*

THE MERMAID

DENIZENS OF THE DEEP 91



Mermaid, from the published postcard, *Le Mermaid*,  
the table of the beautiful creature, printed by Richard Leno, Antwerp, 1491



Double-tailed Spanish mermaid.  
From *Josep de Vilanova*, 1829



Mermaid, from a 18th-century natural history, printed in Germany, 1828

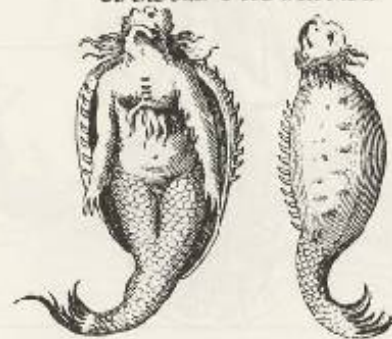


Siren, by C. Curran for Sigismund Finschweel, London/AM, 1879

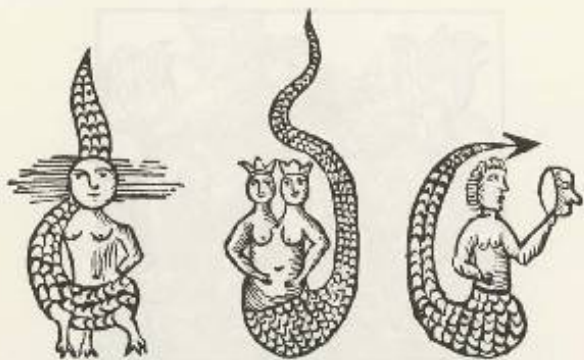


The Siren of the Philosopher, from Basil Valerius's *U. de U. de philosophia*, Paris, 1438

*Sirene oder Meerweibchen.*



Siren, after Lartet, from *Algemeine Historie der Reisen in Wasser und zu Lande*, Göttingen, 1741.



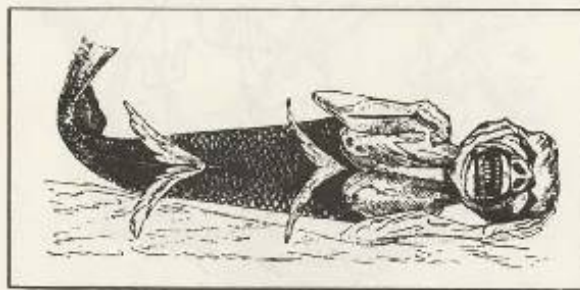
Mermaids, from Abraham Elzevir's *Orbis Cypriacus* (Cypriacus Work, Leipzig, 1700)



Morgan of the Black Book, near Liverpool, from *The Works of William de Baskville* (copy book, 18th century)



Ningyo, the mermaid of Japan, from an old Japanese postcard



A fake *mermaid* exhibited in London in 1825, in reality the assembled upper part of a female octopus grafted to a washed *triton*. (From a contemporary exhibition handbill)



Dagon, the Philistean deity, god of earth and agriculture, half man and half fish



Triton, son of the waves, the fish-like deity in his duty of Greek mythology



The Mermaid, as an aquatic creature, in 1572, from J. Siger's Oceanus (see page 1572)



The Mermaid, as an aquatic creature, in 1572, from J. Siger's Oceanus (see page 1572)

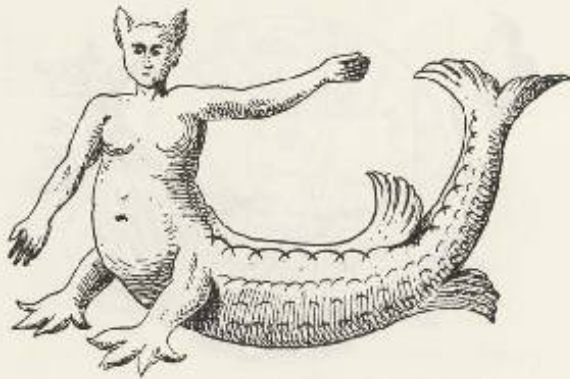


The Seaking, a fanciful representation of a human-headed aquatic fish, from J. W. Sowerby's Oceanus, 1819





The Negro-God, as depicted in 1744 in the Bible, from *Conrad's Geschichte*.  
*Prolegomena zu einer Geschichte der Religionen*, Bielefeld, 1857



Mermaid, after Herodotus, 1894

## Chapter 7

# AERIAL MONSTERS

In addition to dragons and flying serpents, many other kinds of composite aerial monsters filled the skies of ancient mythology and medieval folklore. Among them were the winged gods of Assyria-Babylonian mythology; the winged hooves, lions, bulls and other creatures of Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt and Persia; the Greco-Roman flying beasts — the Gorgons and Harpies; the many bird-monsters of American and Asiatic origin, such as the *Eowah*, or *Roc*, a fabulous gigantic bird of prey of Farinao-Andaluc legend, so strong it could carry off the largest animal to its nest to feed its young; the *Thunderbird* of the North and South American Indians, also known to many Asiatic tribes — a supernatural eagle who roared thunder by flap-

ping its wings, and lightning by opening and closing its eyes; the eagle-men of the Archaic Indians; the *Fengu* of Japanese folklore, a flying demon, half man, half bird; and the winged thunder-god *Lo*, King of Chinese mythology. There are also semi-dragon birds such as the Japanese *Hu*, *Ryu*; the Chinese *Fenghuo*; the Vedic bird-king *Garuda*, vehicle of Vishnu and implacable enemy of serpents; *Mako-Mako*, the Easter Island bird-creator of the universe; and many a monster bird on Java and other Pacific islands. In our modern, technological age we have no need for all these aerial composite monsters of bygone times. We create our own figments of fantasy: flying saucers with their cargoes of little green men, giant ants, and robots.



Sinews, the eagle-headed god  
 (ancient Assyrian mythology)



Harshu, the winged god of creation  
 (ancient Babylonian mythology)



Hippogriff, half horse, half griffin,  
from a 17th-century Italian signet



Hippogriff, the warhorse,  
from an antique Greek vase painting



Chimera, the red-cannon  
(Sanskrit: Purandara)



Lamia, Amazon-Phrygian winged lion with a human head,  
another Babylonian



*Harpa, Greek aerial creature of Crete and Sicily, from a 18th century German bestiary*



*Shada, Assyrian-Libyan winged bull with a human head, from a 18th century*



*The Winged Lion of St. Mark, designed by Luca Cressach the Elder, from Wittenberger Buchdruck, Wittenberg, 1549*



*The Gorgon weaver, from an antique Greek vase painting*



The Eagle Man, copper plate relief of the prehistoric mound builders, Brown Mound, Georgia



The wyvern, which derives from a prehistoric, grotesque tooth (tooth) in the Pine Creek River, Illinois



The Flying Eagle Man, war god of the Zuni Indians



The winged messenger of war of the Iroquois Indians, Peru





The Eagle Messenger  
of the ancient Mimbreno Indians



The Hibernian god of the  
Neva Indians



Tengu, the winged aerial creature  
of Japanese folklore



Hanabishi, the ancient Japanese dragonbird,  
from a drawing in the Chisawa manuscript, Kyoto



Tai-hang, the Chinese god of thunder,  
Illustration of Chinese mythology



Gwaka, king of the birds, tale  
of Yipka, Yuki mythology



Mike-Maki, the creator, deity of  
the Kurar Islands



Japanese dragon bird, from a  
Javanese play puppet, Java

## THE GRIFFIN

One of the oldest legendary aerial monsters is the Gryllus, Gryphon, or Gryps, whose name derives in every language from the Greek grypos — hooked — because of its large beak. It is called Griffon in English, Griffon in French, Grifo in Italian, and Greiff in German. It was believed to be a fearsome monster of enormous height who fed live humans to its young. Half lion, half eagle, it was so large that one could make drinking vessels from its claws. It dwelt in the country between the Hyperboreans, the North-wind people of Mongolia, and the Arimaspians, the one-eyed tribe of Scythia. It was known to the Sumarians in 3000 B.C. under the name of Chumbabo, and was found also in the mythological artifacts of the Sumerians, Assyrians,

Babylonians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Mycenaeans, Indo-Iranians, Syrians, Scythians, and Greeks. It was mentioned in the writings of the Greek philosopher, naturalist and historian Aristotle, who lived at the Persian Court from 410 to 300 B.C. The monster was a sworn enemy of horses and constantly at war with the Arimaspians, who tried to capture the gold hoard guarded by the griffins. In ancient astrology, the chariot of the sun was drawn by a pair of griffins. Whenever they appeared in legend, they were always guardians of treasures, as in Iran, Sogdian and Indian mythology. Since the days of the Crusades (11th to 13th centuries) we can find the griffin in the heraldry of every nation in the West, as a symbol of eternal vigilance.



The oldest known representation of Chumbabo — the griffin, from an antique cylinder seal, found at Susa, Western Iran, 3000 B.C.



Griffin, from an antique Persian gold armband, found on the banks of the Arax-Dar'ya River, Western Asia (C. 550 B.C.)



Assyrian griffin, from an antique stone carving in the Nimrod Palace at Nimrud.



Griffin used as an emblem by the Venetians  
(after Statetti)



Griffin killing a bear, from a 12th-century bestiary manuscript



Griffin seal of Count Friedrich von Bressanone,  
Germany, 1393



Griffin seal of Prince Ernest von Hohenlohe,  
Germany, 1527





Griffin, after a pen drawing from a medieval German manuscript



Griffin, designed by the Master of the Book of Hours, c.1480



Griffin — the griffin, red drawing, designed by Hans Burgkmair



Griffin, from Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, revised by Johann Schöpper, Augsburg, 1492



ein Greiff clawē

Shorn-wooded skin of a Gruff, from Lucas Cranach the Elder's Wittenberger Holzschneidwerk, Wittenberg, 1580



Griff, designed by Albrecht Dürer, from Erasmus Hieronimus's Theophrasti Avia, printed in 1516



Griffin, from an Italian heraldic manual, 15th century



Griffin coat of arms of the Italian city of Perugia, 1483



Griffin from a French heraldic manual, printed about 1581



Griffon, from a French woodcut, printed in Lyons, 1521



Griffin, from Basil Valerius's schematic volume *Forti Gemmae Stellae*, printed at Leipzig, 1591

## Chapter 8

## MALIGNED ANIMALS

There are many harmless animals who were maligned in bygone times as hellish monsters, such as the *Ichneumon*, a member of the weasel family, native to Africa, believed to be a super-poisonous monster because it feeds on such things as snakes, rats and crocodile eggs; the *fiat* and the *Duel*, two nocturnal creatures who were considered the steady companions of witches and wizards; the *Toad*, symbolic of death and decay; and the *Boue Noir* (black he-goat), alleged to be the incarnation of the devil and the vehicle of witches for their trip to the Witches' Sabbath. Nearly every animal on land, in the sea or in the air, of great size or grotesque form, of nocturnal or unusual behavior, un-

pleasant sound or smell, has been maligned as a creature from hell, a man-killing, crop- and cattle-destroying or ship-wrecking monster; a symbol of mischief; a demon; an omen of death, the devil or hell; an instrument of black magic; or an omen of all kinds of catastrophe or otherwise unpleasant occurrences. There were also the harmless *Salamander*, supposed to live in fire; the equally harmless *Hedgehog*, accused of eating the crops sown by farmers and of milking their sleeping cows dry on nocturnal forays; the *iron-eating Ostrich*, who robbed houses of their iron shavings; the large sea mammals of the whale and seal families, accused of man-killing and ship-wrecking, as *infusions*.

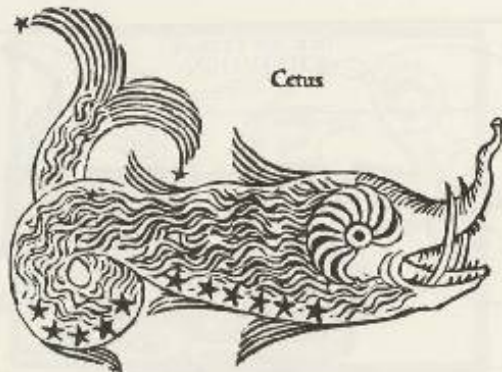


*Ichneumon*, an actual African male-feline, from an exhibition poster, printed by Maxime Wolff, Strasbourg, about 1889

## THE WHALE

The Whale is the largest living sea-mammal, feeding on microscopic plankton, the smallest organisms in the ocean. Because of its enormous size, this completely harmless animal has been slandered throughout human history as a vicious, man-eating sea monster - from the Biblical whale who swallowed the Hebrew prophet Jonah in punishment for disobeying God, to the white whale monster Moby Dick in Herman Melville's American folk saga (1851). The Killer Whale was believed to be a man-killing sea monster by the Northwest American Indians and the Siberian Eskimos all along the Alaskan Coast, on the Fox and Aleutian Islands, around the Bering Sea, and in the Hudson Bay area. The

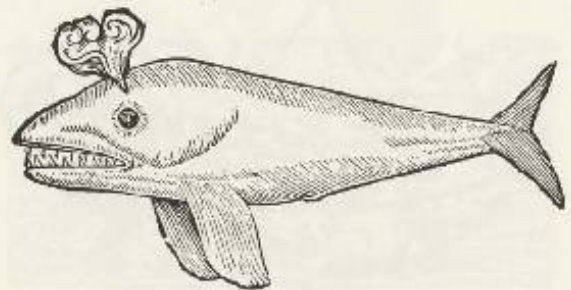
hunt and capture of a killer whale associated to a religious rite among these Tschuk and Eskimo tribes, from the Nootka Indians of Washington to the Chukchee Eskimos of Siberia. They depicted the killer whale in many monstrous forms in their ceremonial art works. Whale hunting was closely interwoven with shamanistic rituals during the whaling season, which was in the early summer months. The capture and killing of a whale was celebrated with ceremonial dances, music and songs of rejoicing, feasting, and victory games, and ended in a three day mourning period to placate the evil spirit of the slain monster. Today the whale is considered a symbol of misguidance.



Cetus, the etiological Greek whale constellation by Ptolemy, as a constellation (see Hugi 1847; Fontana astronomica, plates of Vesale, 1482)



The whale swallowing Jonah, after a pen drawing in a medieval Bible manuscript (Jonah 1:17)



Phreter, or 'Akigosh, the Killer Whale, from 'Ussuri Akhromskii' (Jama Omasa, plates of Bekiya, 1599-1651)





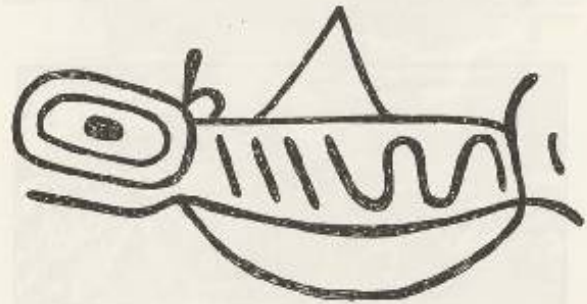
Beaked whale on shore, from Urban Schager's *Historie de Groenlanse Spinnvonnedier*, printed by J. N. de Vries, Bonn, 1732



The whale-carcase and its bones, from Konrad Gessner's *Historie d'iceux qui ont été à Zurich*, 1581



The Killer Whale, from a decorative drawing by the Inuit Indian, Wessyof, Alaska



The Killer Whale, from a decorative drawing by the Haida Indian, Kwikwaka, Columbia

## THE OCTOPUS

One of the most grotesque creatures in the sea is the Octopus, or *Epiplatys*, whose name was derived from the Greek *octo*—eight, and *pous*—foot. It was considered by the ancient mariners to be one of the most frightening terrors of the sea. In reality, it is a small-to-large, harmless mollusk, a member of the cuttlefish family, with a soft sack-like body, a large head with a mouth on the underfront, and eight arms covered with suckers. Its largest specimen is the *Octopus purpuratus*, which lives on the ocean bottom off the Pacific Coast of North America and reaches a span of about 14 feet from arm tip to arm tip. Many a tale was told in bygone times about giant octopi that infested the fabled sea lanes. They were thought to have been able to pull whole ships with their crews to a watery grave—as in the saga of

the Kraken, a fabulous composite monster of Norwegian sea lore, imagined as a gigantic octopus-crab rising in the Oceanus Germanicum (North Sea). It had an enormous flat shape, said to be a mile and a half in circumference, and when it submerged, its many arms created a whirlpool that sucked down even the largest ships. To the same group of sea yarns belongs the Spanish-Portuguese fable of the phantom island *Man Sotaventura* (Satan's Hand), which rose every day from the waters of the Sea of Darkness (Atlantic), like a gigantic black hand, to scoop up passing ships and draw them down to the depths of the ocean. To the south, Central, and North American Indians the octopus and its relatives, the squid and the cuttlefish, were benevolent monsters, and were considered symbols of fecundity.



Giant octopus attacking a fisherman, after a Japanese engraving by Hokusai (1760-1848)



The giant octopus, terror of the ancient mariners, attacking a vessel, from an old French engraving, after a picture in the Church of St. Mida, France



The giant octopus attacking the submarine vessel *Kaschka*, from Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, Paris, 1873.

The *Hedgehog* was accused in medieval times of being a gluttonous animal which made nightly forays into barns to eat stored crops or suck sleeping cows dry of milk. The peasants of the Middle Ages killed it on

sight. Actually, it is a valuable animal, since it devours cockroaches and other insect Noxas; Europeans *parvorum* and manufacturers of bookbinder use hedgehogs to help keep their premises clean.



The hedgehog devouring a farmer's crop, from a German calendar, printed in 1474.



The hedgehog, from Tappin's *A History of Four-Footed Beasts*, London, 1838.



According to the Roman naturalist and writer Gaius Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.), the Salamander was created from the spinal cord of a dead man. It was believed that this hellish creature was so deadly cold that it

could live in fire. Asbestos was thought to be, not a mineral, but the hide shed by a Salamander. This animal is in reality a harmless member of the cold-blooded lizard family, useful in destroying insects.



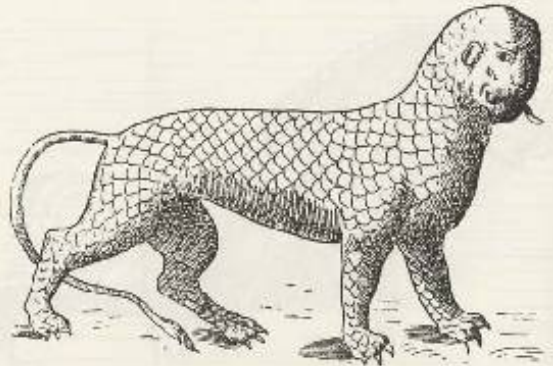
Salamander existing in fire, representing the spirit of *malicia perversa*.  
From M. Major's *Sarcobasis Capensis*, Frankfurt, 1607.



The salamander, from F. A. Martini's *Conversations*,  
Leipzig, 1779.

The Sea Lion is a malignant member of the seal family, actually a harmless, big-eared, fish-eating mammal. Like so many other large marine animals, however, it was held to be,

in medieval times, a man-eating sea monster. Depicted with a humanized head and sharp claws, it was believed to kill and devour sailors who fell overboard.



Fanciful representation of a sea lion,  
after Basilius, 1554.

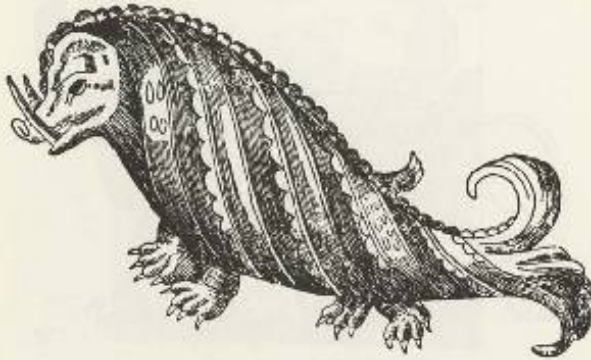


The sea lion, after Kolben, from *Algerische Historie der Thiere zu Wasser und zu Lande*,  
Graz, 1767.



The Bosmarin was a sea monster of evil repute living in the waters of the northern seas. It was believed that when it saw a man on shore, it pulled itself up to the top of the rocks with its enormous teeth, fell upon the

hapless victim and ate him. In reality it was the Walrus, a massive, fierce-looking, fish-eating member of the sea family, which attacks only if disturbed in its breeding grounds.



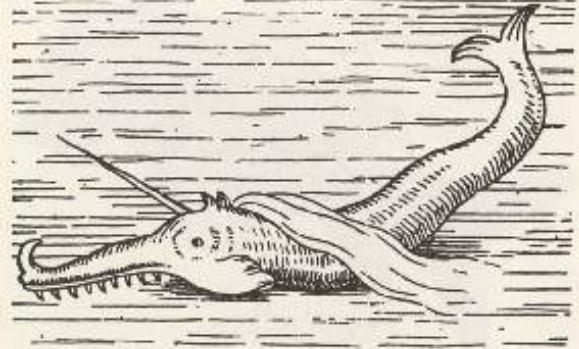
Fanciful representation of the Bosmarin, or walrus, from a German map, 1580.



The Bosmarin, or walrus, from Konrad Gessner's *Historia Animalium*, printed at Zurich, 1551.

The Narwhale, or Sea Unicorn, was believed to be a dangerous sea monster who drilled holes in the bottom planks of ships with its long, spiral tusk, so that the vessels would draw water and sink. It is actually a

harmless sea mammal of the dolphin family, living in the icy waters of the Arctic. Its tusk was sold as unicorn horn, the wondrous cure-all held in such high esteem throughout medieval Europe.



The narwhale from Sir Thomas Herbert's *Scots Embrey Travels into Africa and Italy*, printed at London, 1633.

*Fisch mit einem spitzigen Horne.*



Fanciful representation of the narwhale, after Bebel, from Albrecht Dürer's *Historia der Fische*, in *Wasser und an Land*, 1497.

In medieval times the Ostrich was considered a monstrous bird which plucked the iron shoes of horses, and swallowed everything it laid eyes on. In medieval alchemy the name for vitriol was Ostrich Stomach,

because it was believed that this bird had vitriolic stomach juices to digest all the odd things it swallowed. In heraldry the Ostrich was always represented as looking in its claw, or chewing on iron horseshoes.



Woodcut representation of the ostrich, swallowing an iron horseshoe, from an old English manuscript.



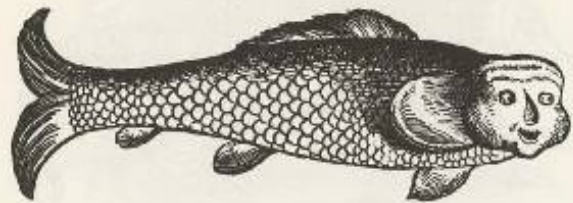
Engraving representation of an ostrich, holding an iron horseshoe, from *Colloquia Germanici: La Banca del Opuscolo*, printed by Amerbach, Lorenz, 1526.

The Sea Cow, or Manatee, from its Caribbean name manati, is a large, peaceful, aquatic mammal, a member of the whale family, living on sea plants in the shallow

tropical waters off the South American and West African coasts. It was believed in medieval times to be a vicious, human-headed, man-eating relative of the mermaid.



Manatee, a prehistoric animal, leather/waggon plate cutlery from the Heyward Museum, Ross County, Ohio.



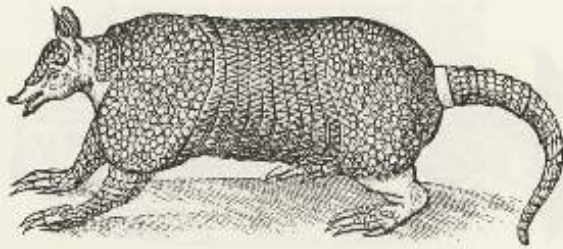
Woodcut representation of the manatee, from Konrad Gessner's *Historiae Animalium*, Zurich, 1551.

After the discovery of the New World, European naturalists published fanciful pictures and reports of a vicious new mail-clad monster called by the Indians *Atschschell*,

by the Spaniards *Armadillo*, and by the Portuguese *Encuberto*. It was actually the shy *Dasmodon* of the *Falcatari* (foxless) family, which feeds on ants.



Symbolic armadillo, from an ancient artifact, Mexico



The *Dasch* (armadillo) after Nicolas Monardes, from Charles de L'Esclapart's *Singulieres de la France antarctique*, 1675, 1687



Fanciful representation of the *Dasmodon* (opossum), from André Thevet's *Singulieres de la France antarctique*, Antwerp, 1576



Fanciful representation of the *Dasch* (opossum) (thomson's dach), from André Thevet's *Singulieres de la France antarctique*, Antwerp, 1576

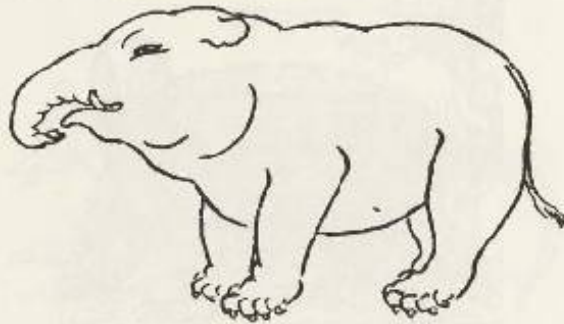


## Chapter 9

## BENIGN MONSTERS

Among the legendary monsters of the world were some who had no animosity toward human beings, but were, in the contrary, helpful, benevolent creatures. They appear sometimes in Western legends, but more often in those of the Far East. One of the most lovable such Oriental beasts is the *Seki* of Japanese folklore, a creature with a long, trunklike nose, patterned after a real nocturnal animal of the pachyderm family, the tapir, found in South America and the Malayan Peninsula. According to Japanese folklore the *Baku* lives on human dreams, and if you have a bad dream, the *Baku* can be willed to eat it before it becomes a nightmare. There is also the winged horse *Pegasus* of Greek mythology, symbol of poetry and the arts; the *Unicorn*, religious symbol of purity in the West, and in the East, king of

the animals; the *Sphinx*, symbol of silence, with its lion's body and human head; the *Talpin*, talisman of colors and emblem of safe travel; the *Arabian Phoenix*, which rises from its own ashes, symbolizing resurrection and a new life after death; and the *Cerberus*, a Greek mythological monster, half man, half horse, the founding father of medicine and pharmacology. These are all monstrous beings yet friendly and helpful to humanity in one way or another. All that glitters is not gold, and neither is everything unusual or monstrous-looking necessarily terrible and fearsome. In every collection of children's fairy tales, in every land and every language, we can also find stories of dwarfs, gnomes and other friendly, man-like creatures.



The Japanese *baku*, *Baku*, a nocturnal ghost eater, which feeds on bad dreams (Japanese folklore)

## THE DOLPHIN

The *Dolphin*, or *Delphinus*, was considered a kindly sea monster in antiquity, servant of the gods and helper to man. In Greek mythology it was sacred to Apollo, and was the vehicle in which the sea gods rode the waves. The ancient Greek fishermen called it *Simover*—the ambassador—and according to the Greek naturalist Pliny, the dolphin reacted to the human voice: when fishermen called out "time," the dolphin came to help them spread out their nets. The best known of all dolphin legends is the Greek fable of the musician *Arion* who, on his return from Sicily to Corinth, was threatened with death by the crew of his ship who wanted the treasures on board. He promised to show himself overboard if he was allowed

to play his tunes once more; the sailors agreed, and a school of dolphins courting around the ship were so charmed by his music that when *Arion* leaped into the water, one of them took him on its back and brought him safe and sound into the harbor of Corinth. For this benevolent deed the gods put *Delphinus* into the sky as a constellation. It is still believed today that dolphins follow vessels to rescue passengers and crew in emergencies. In Japanese folklore the dolphin *Creogyo*—the hanging fish—is considered the best talisman against fire, and its image is placed on the roofs of houses for protection. In the West, the dolphin is an emblem of success in the arts, a messenger of good fortune, and a mascot for safe travel.



*Nereid* playing with a dolphin, after an antique Greek vase painting





Neptune riding on a dolphin into the harbor of Venice, from Jacopo de Barthol's *Panorama Venetia*, printed in Venice, 1840



The anchor and the dolphin in the writer's device of Alka Murrina. He has succeeded in the dolphin in Venetian, Venice, c. 1500



The creature Alchaka, or Dalphino, from an early Arabic geographical manuscript



The dolphin rescuing Arius, from the printer's device of Johann Neumeister, Basel, 1544



Fanciful dolphin as scud for coffee brand, from *The Colonial Atlas*, published in 1796



Dragon, the largest dolphin, used as a house charm against fire (Japanese silk 1892)

## THE CENTAUR

The Centaur, or Centaurus, half man and half horse, was in Greek mythology a member of a wild and lawless race of monsters that inhabited the region of Thessaly. They were destroyed by the powerful Greek hero hero Hercules (the Roman Hercules). Only the more friendly and intelligent individuals of the race survived, like Pholus, an Arcadian centaur, son of Saturnus, who became a friend of Hercules, and the wisest of all the centaurs, Chiron, son of Cronus, who was tutored by Apollo in music, and by Artemis in botanical medicine. He became the friend and physician of the gods and the teacher of the mythological heroes Hercules, Asclepius, Jason, Achilles, Theseus, Nestor, Menelaus

and the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux. When he accidentally wounded himself with a poisoned arrow of Heracles, he was unable to die because the gods had made him immortal. To relieve him from his acute pain, the Titan Prometheus took upon himself Chiron's immortality, and the gods put the dying Chiron into the sky as the constellation Sagittarius. As the teacher of Asclepius, Chiron was considered the founding father of medicine and pharmacology. When Francisco Pizarro landed in the New World, the natives, who had never before seen a horse or rider, fed him his assumed soldiers in the belief that they were a breed of unknown terrible monsters, half man, half beast.



The centaur Chiron, teaching young Arius to play the lyre, after an antique Roman wall painting



The centaur Chiron, playing with the Greek girl of Ionia, from an old French engraving



Trojans harrying the centaurs, from: Nicholas Poussin's 'De Atrocibus expostionibus', Paris, 1605



Young centaurs playing, from: Disquisitio of Christian Merdax, London, 1699



The constellation Sagittarius, or the centaur Archer, from an old French engraving of the Zodiac

## THE PEGASUS

The white-winged horse of ancient legend, Pegasus, was the most gentle of all fabled creatures. According to Greek mythology, it was believed to have been created by Poseidon from the bloody head of the slain gorgon Medusa. Caught and tamed by Athena, it became the steed of the Coccinian folk hero Bellerophon in his fight with the monster Chimera and in his other adventures. When Bellerophon, riding Pegasus, tried to reach the dwelling of the gods on Mount Olympus, he was thrown by the flying horse; Pegasus reared the steed alone and became the Thundering Horse of Zeus, carrier of the divine lightning bolts. He was placed as a permanent constellation among the stars. In



The Babylonian Pegasus, from a wall carving, in ancient Nimrod.

pre-Classical times, the figure of the sky-horse was used in astrology by the Assyrian-Babylonians, the Etruscans, the Hittites, and the early Aryans. Its name derives from the Phoenician *Pag Saz*—the bearded horse. In later tradition Pegasus became the symbolic mount of poets and artists because of the Greek legend which said that with a stamp of his hoof he caused the flow of Hippocrene, the fountain of the Muses, on Mount Helicon. Thus Pegasus became the symbol of poetic inspiration and the emblem of the creative arts. The legend of the celestial horse also reached the Far East, where it became the fabled Chinese *Kyūō*, and the Japanese *Ki-Rin*.



Bellerophon and Pegasus, from an old Italian engraving.





Pegasus and the Muse of Art, from an old French engraving



The oriental horse, Qilin, the Chinese version of the Pegasus, from an old Chinese porcelain vase



Kirin, the Japanese version of the Pegasus, from an ancient drawing in a Kyoto temple

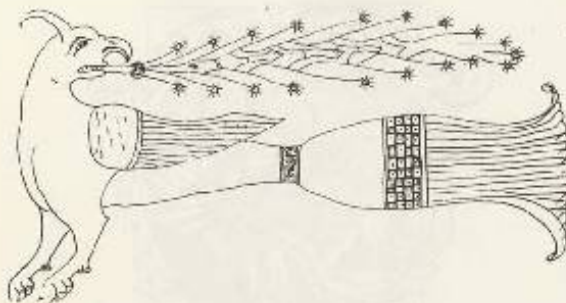
## THE PHOENIX

The Phoenix, *Feng* or *Fire-Bird*, is believed to be of ancient Indian or Persian origin. It was called the *Boscus* in Egyptian mythology and lived in the desert of Arabia, from where it flew every five hundred years to the holy city of Heliopolis in Egypt, to build in the Temple of the Sun a nest of myrrh, cassia and frankincense. This nest was ignited by Ra, the sun god, and consumed by fire. The consumed phoenix rose rejuvenated from its own ashes, symbolizing the dying spiritual nest of man and the promise of reformation after death. The phoenix was also emblematic of life and immortality in ancient Greece and Rome. Christianity borrowed it from the Ancients as the emblem of the spirit's victory over death, the

symbol of the resurrection of the soul (Job 29:18). In Far Eastern belief, the phoenix was one of the *Four Mythical Animals*. In Chinese mythology it was the *Feng-Huang* (*Feng* — the male phoenix, and *Huang* — the female), king of the feathered race, and symbol of peace and prosperity. In Chinese poetry it was the silver-breasted love-pheasant, emblem of the Empress of China, and harbinger of happiness, typifying friendship and affection. In the mythology of Japan, the phoenix was the sacred bird *Hou-Ou* (*Hou* — the male phoenix, and *Ou* — the female), the emblem of wise and good government and a symbol of good fortune. Throughout the world, the phoenix has become an emblem of good luck, prosperity and immortality.



The Boscus bird, or the Egyptian phoenix, also an antique Egyptian wall painting.



The Phoenix Fire-bird, from Cassiodorus' *Historia Tripartita*, a thirteenth century manuscript.



The phoenix with the armazened cross, as the symbol of the resurrection of Christ and Lazarus, from Osann's *Encyclopädie*, 1832.



The phoenix rising from its ashes, Christian symbol of resurrection, from Beck's *Art Symbolica*, Augsburg, 1902



The phoenix rising from the fire, from *Magister Joseph Berriman's* *Devotions*, New York, 1524



The abbreviated Love Phoenix, the poetic Chinese phoenix, symbol of fidelity and affection and harbinger of happiness, from an old Chinese sea chart.



Ho-Gu, the male-for-ale Japanese phoenix, symbol of good and wise government, from an old Japanese sea drawing





From *Phoenix*, the *hoho-ho* of Chinese plum is, reborn of the feathered animals, from an ancient Chinese pen drawing.

## THE UNICORN

The Unicorn is the most widely known of all mythical animals, appearing in one form or another in nearly all Western and Oriental mythologies. According to Biblical exegesis, the unicorn became extinct because it was thrown out of the ark, and drowned. Its name derives from the Latin *unus* — one, and *cornu* — horn. It was the Biblical *Reem*, mentioned in Deuteronomy 32:17: "his horns are like the horns of the unicorn." In the belief of the early Christian Church, it was the symbol of virginity and the emblem of the power of love. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ground unicorn horn was a popular ingredient in European medicine and was used as a potent remedy against pestilence and poison. Unicorn horns were put on the tables of rulers and church dignitaries because it

was believed that the horns would sweeten the contents of poisoned food. These horns, which sold for a king's ransom in Europe, were in reality the tusks of the narwhale. In antiquity, Ktesias and Herodotus reported the presence of unicorns in Libya and Ethiopia. Far Eastern folklore is especially rich in one-horned animals, unicorns are found in the mythologies of Tibet, Tartary, Malaya, and the Himalayan region. The most prominent of all Oriental unicorns is the *Chiu-Li*, or *Dragon Horse*, the King of all animals, one of the four fabulous creatures of Chinese mythology, and the symbol of good luck, longevity, grandeur, felicity and wise administration. It appears only when a sage is about to be born, and it said to have been seen last at the birth of Confucius.

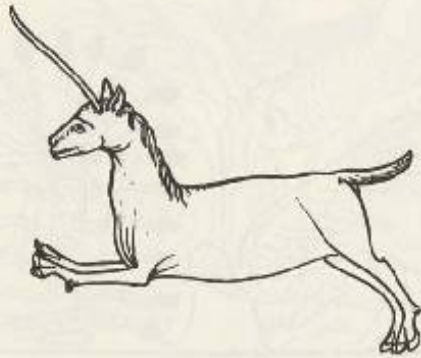


The Assyrian half-unicorn under the sacred tree of Ibrah baid, from an antique Assyrian vase relief.





The Subvotian unicorn, from an antique wall carving at Felsina, Etruria, Italy



Muscovian unicorn, from a bestiary manuscript, 12th century



The virgin and the capture of the unicorn, from a 15th-century bestiary manuscript



The unicorn with St. Jerome and Alexander of Pheria



The Pope with the unicorn as the symbol of the Holy Ghost, from *Parles de l'unicorn*, an early book, Cologne, 1570



The unicorn, from *Erhard Geener's Märchen-Artikelien*, printed at Zurich, 1931



King, the Chinese single-horned stag, from an antique Chinese pen drawing



It, the Sword Ox, or Malayan unicorn, from an antique Chinese pen drawing



*Lu, the one-horned Chinese unicorn, from an ancient Chinese drawing*



*Ki, the Chinese male unicorn, from an antique Chinese picture drawing*



*Lin, the Chinese female unicorn, from an antique Chinese picture drawing*



*Si Lin, the combined male and female Chinese unicorn, from an antique Chinese picture drawing*



The Japanese unicorn, from a 1900 Japanese postcard.

## THE SPHINX

The Sphinx was one of the fabulous composite beasts of Egyptian mythology, a creature with a woman's head, a bull's horns, a lion's claws, and an eagle's wings. The human head represented intelligence and knowledge; the lion's claws stood for daring and action; the bull's horns denoted stamina and perseverance; and the folded eagle's wings, silence. The sphinx was the guardian of Egyptian magic and occult wisdom, endowed with the four virtues of the Magi: knowledge, daring, will power and silence. Sphinxes were placed at the entrances of palaces and tombs to guard their mysteries, and to warn those who penetrated into these sanctuaries to conceal from the profane the knowledge they had gained. Variations of sphinxes are found in many parts of the ancient world; there are three types in Egypt: the human-

headed Andro-Sphinx, the ram-headed Cri-Sphinx, the hawk-headed Hieraco-Sphinx. There were also the man-headed sphinxes of Assyrian-Babylonian temples and palaces, and the oracular divinity sphinx of Thebes in Boeotia. Some existed even in Far Eastern legends. With the exception of the Greek sphinx of Thebes (the only talking sphinx of ancient mythology), who killed passers-by who were unable to answer its riddles, all sphinxes were friendly and benevolent creatures, the guardians of religious, occult and magic secrets; and their image became the symbol of mystic wisdom and the calmness of silence in many parts of the world. The legend of the sphinx reached even faraway China, whose mythology abounded in monsters who guarded palaces of worship and protected believers at their devotions.



The Babylonian sphinx, from an antique stone carving at the Akkad Palace, Mesopotamia.

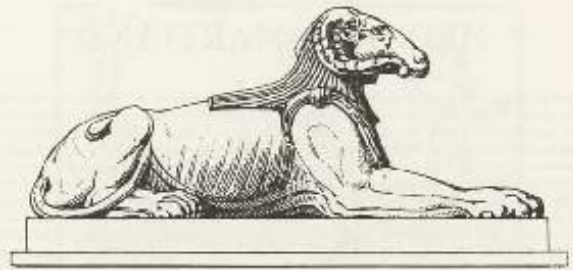




The wing-headed Egyptian sphinx, from an old French engraving, after an antique stone carving.



The Chinese sphinx of Thibar, after an antique stone carving.



The recumbent Egyptian Chi-sphinx, from an old French engraving, after an antique stone carving.



The Chinese sphinx, from an old Chinese book, after an antique stone carving.

Chapter 10

# MEDIEVAL MARTIANS

It is an inescapable conclusion that many of the ancient explorers, physicians and scholars of natural history were the science-fiction writers of their time. The illustrations in their volumes, depicting all kinds of fanciful, wondrous people on other continents, from Kibi-nya to Cathay, bear a striking resemblance to the Martians and Venusians of our modern SF writers. Medieval geographic knowledge of far-off and unexplored places was no better than our current knowledge of planets and stars in outer space. And all these faraway lands were populated, in the reports of those seamen, by monstrous peoples, such as the Cannibals of the New World, the headless *Asopituli*, the *Anthropophagi* and the *Martians*, found from Libya to the Far East, the Indian *Schirodes*, a people with hypertrophic feet, the bird-headed tribes of Africa, and

many others. Some of these were even real, and still exist today, such as the cannibalistic Indians of South America, the diminutive *Negrito Pygmies* of Africa, and the *Negrito Dwarfs* of Asia. We have to give the scientific observers of bygone days the benefit of the doubt: their headless people with faces on their chests may have been burrowed desert warriors; their bird- or animal-headed creatures, painted jungle dancers or masked and painted witch doctors; their hairy wild men and women, anthropoid apes, such as orang-utans or gorillas, all seen from a distance.

Modern science-fiction derived its ideas for the population of outer space directly from the medieval natural history volumes: it merely substituted steel and plastics for feathers and scales, and electronics for magic.



Monsters, *Piomé* and *Schirodes* from *De Rive de l'Inde* towards *Ceylan* 1584, printed by Johann Bausen & Sigismund Storer, Bonn, 1986.



Monstrous people in faraway lands, from *Conrad von Meyenburg's Buch der Natur*, printed by Johannes Neuber, Augsburg, 1475.



Observed Creatures of Italy



Stew's Scorpian from India

From Charles Crompton, to John Alden, after Gode-Frederic Smeath



Elephant-headed Troglodyte of Tilingia



The Cannibal of South America  
from a certain German broadside printed in 1805



Monsters in the German Zauberspiel (Fairy Play), from F. Polono's Die Götterbuch  
designed by Hans Wulke, printed by Heinrich Strasser, Augsburg, 1528





Asaphal, the 'hairy' people of Libya, from Korte Wonderke's *Burchspruyg*, Holland, 1585



Cranians of Africa, from Aldrovandus' *Opus Deasini*, related at Bologna, 1602



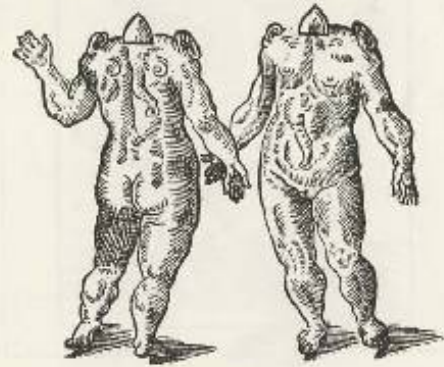
Hairy Wild Man Mountain, from J. Skper's *Quoniam Jovis*, 1575



Wild Man in Captivity, from Desbarres's *Histoires prodigieuses*, 1597



Wild Woman and Fingers presented to the King, from Scallman's *Histoires*, Paris, 1597



Headless men from Ambrosio Paré's *Libro de Chirurgia*, Paris, 1575



## MONSTROUS MUTANTS

Our survey of monsters would be incomplete if we did not take into consideration the manifold weird stories of monstrous human and animal mutants found in the folktales and in the medical and natural history volumes of all periods. Such stories have abounded, since the days of the Greek philosopher Aesculus (6th century B.C.) at the court of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I, and especially those the works of the Roman naturalist Gaius Plinius Secundus (23-79 A.D.), the founder of modern natural history. Medieval pitchmen collected real and faked amonstrous freaks, which they sold at exorbitant prices to rulers for the entertainment of courtiers and their ladies, or exhibited profitably in cities and towns and in side shows at country fairs. In those days the manufacture of real living freaks was an extensive and flourishing business and home industry. Primitive, uneducated women of the poorer classes used all

kinds of known and long-forgotten tricks, and deliberately suffered severe injury, to bear disfigured children who could be sold for exorbitant sums to carnival exhibitors. Some of the monstrous creatures shown in the shops and stalls of enterprising rural tavernkeepers and city merchants were embalmed fake monsters of animal origin, to which were grafted parts of birds, fishes and reptiles. The real living freaks had their medieval make-up men who exaggerated their monstrous features by all kinds of artificial means. Chest toupées are not an invention of Hollywood, but were worn by many a hairy wild man or woman in medieval side shows long ago. Every age had its Barnum who exhibited such monsters to a gaping crowd, as long as they were willing to pay a pleasing, certain, knock or ruse for a shuddering look at these unfortunate creatures, with the tersest thought: There but for the grace of God go I.



Pig-headed Donkey monster, allegedly born in 1110 at Colen, seen a year drawing in a French book manuscript La Vie de Marie, France, 16th century

### Deutung des Münchkalbs zu Freyberg/ Doctoris Martini Lufhen.



Moose calf, born in 1486 at Freyberg, Saxony, of the Moose Calf, from a Lutheran pamphlet, designed by Lucas Giese at the Elder, Nuremberg

### Der Bapstesel zu Rom



Monster taken from the Tiber at Rome in 1496, called the Pope's Donkey, from a *Lotharica* pamphlet, designed by Lorenz Gorenz the Elder, Nuremberg



Monster of Lyons at Languedoc in Provence, designed by Alphonse Elkan, from a *brochure*, printed at Nuremberg, 1498



Human freaks, from *Wierus Boetius' Les Fines et nouvelles de troupe passés*, printed by Jehan le Petit and Michel le Noir, Paris, 1512



Handbill for the exhibition of a human monster with two heads and four hands,  
 Leips, 1597

### Zinzygung wunderbarlicher geschichten vnd geburt dieses XXXI. Jars zu Augspurg geschehen 2c.



Wissen das newlicher tag zu Augspurg ein schwangere frau  
 so zur gepurt nitte kumen/beezy wunderbarlicher/ronatlicher/  
 seltsamer/ vngewöhnlichen/ vnd vormals vnerhöret/ noch der gleichen  
 vnßämlichen gestalt/ gesehenen fruchten/ auff irem leyb irbise welt ge  
 been vnd gebrecht hat.

Die erst creature vnd geburt/ so auß irem leyb kumen/ ist gewesen ein  
 ainich menschen haubt/ one leyb/ herbe/ vnd süß/ in einem heitlin/ oder  
 belgen gelegen/ Wie das diese figur in eitenen gubt vnd angepft/ 2c.

Die ander vnßämlich/ vngeßalt geburt vnd figur/ vbertrifftlich  
 wunderbar/ hat ein haubt vñ mund zugleich einem fisch/ Maulich wie  
 ein hecht/ seisen von aller gliedmaß gansen leib/ auff soan vnd gleich  
 mas eines froschs/ vñ vor seinem hundert/ als ein leber/ einen schwanz  
 ghabt.

Die drit vnßämlich geburt/ so von der schwarzen leyb komen/ ist gleich  
 gewest einem jungen schweyn/ Vnd ist diese vnd auch die andern/ als  
 pald sie an tag komen/ gestorben.

Was aber diese Manßra vnd widernatliche fruchten vnd wunder  
 bedaiten vnd anzeigen/ das wvßß allein Got im himmel/ Der wende  
 alle ding durch sein göttliche barmhertzigkeit zum besten/ 2c.

Broadsheet announcement about the birth of a whole litter of monsters,  
 here to one woman at Augsburg, 1611



Abreiffung eines ungefaltten Kindes / so am Neuen Jahr 1701. geboren. Auch eines ungefaltten Kalbes / den 17ten August 1701. in Spanien verfertigt worden. In welchem die Natur die menschliche Gestalt zu bilden vermag.



Am Abend dieses Neuen Jahres 1701. ist dieß ungeschickte und ungeschickte Kind in dem Lande Spanien in der Stadt Valencia zu Tage gekommen. Das Kind hatte ein Schwein-Kopf und einen Menschen-Körper. Die Eltern dieses Kindes waren ein Bauer und eine Bäuerin. Das Kind lebte einige Tage und starb am 17ten August 1701. in dem Lande Spanien. Die Natur hat die menschliche Gestalt zu bilden vermag. Das Kind hatte ein Schwein-Kopf und einen Menschen-Körper. Die Eltern dieses Kindes waren ein Bauer und eine Bäuerin. Das Kind lebte einige Tage und starb am 17ten August 1701. in dem Lande Spanien.

Engraving of a monstrous child with a pig's head, born in Valencia, Spain, 1701.



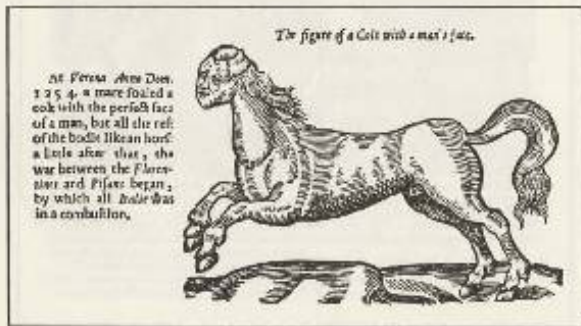
WABE CONTRAFECTVR EINES LAMPELS MIT Dreyen Leibern und einem Kopf so im verwichnen Monat July dieses 1670. Jahrs. In der Clausenburg in Hungarn von einem Schaff also gestaltet worden. Und von Fürnichten Herrn gesehen worden.

Engraving of a three-headed sheep, seen in Hungary, 1670.





A human being, called the Stone of Biscayas, alleged to have been in 1512 at Biscayas, from Anthonis Paul's *Chiron de Chirurgie*, Paris, 1573



A colt with a man's face, allegorically foaled in 1354 at Verona, from Anthonis Paul's *Chiron de Chirurgie*, Paris, 1573



Monstrous boy with four arms and four legs



Monstrous man with parasitic boy, seen in 1520



Monstrous woman with two heads (after Rhodapeus)



Dog head man, half dog, half man



Female twins joined at the back



Female mannequin with two heads

From Beaumont's *Monsters & Prodigious*, Paris, 1792



Woman mannequin, half out, half woman

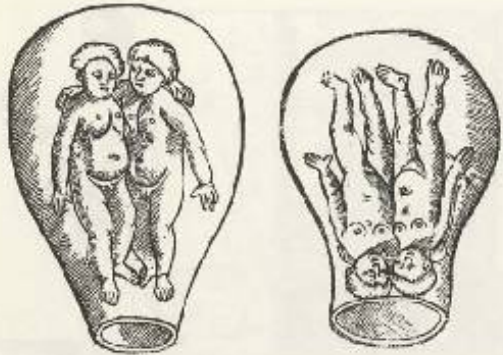


Old mannequin with face on his back

From J. W. Scherer's *Fischi*, 1878



Fish-like man in 1684 at Strozzi, Italy from an old Italian book printed in England



Painful medical representation of joined twins in the womb, from Eschscholtz's *Journal* (not out of copyright in the US), copied by *British Medical Journal*, (1877)



The two-headed Barbara Ursin, born in 1641 in Augsburg, from Christian Alder's *Opera Omnia Monstrorum Historica*, printed at Bologna, 1688



English boy-monster, born in 1738



English monster boy, was in 1754

From W. Forster's *Essays on the Structure of Man*, printed in England, 1795



Horrible creature with a human face, from *Leopoldus' Physiognomie*, Bielefeld, 1787



Two-headed girl named, from *André-Joseph Paré's Livres de Chirurgie*, Paris, 1634



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## GLOSSARY

**ABDAXAS** The serpent-legged god of magical influences.

**ANDRO-SPHINK** The human-headed sphinx of Egypt.

**ANPHINBAENA** A reptile with a head at both ends which can walk in either direction; according to Ptolemy, wearing a lion's pelt is a safeguard in pregnancy, a deed one is nervous for "hermatism."

**ARGUS** In Greek mythology the giant with a hundred eyes; after he was killed by Heracles, his eyes were set in the tail of the peacock; today Argos is a name for an alert watchman.

**ASOKOTER** In Hindu mythology the serpent with its tail in its mouth encircling the three parts of the universe.

**AZON** In Persian mythology the sun god of creative system, symbolized by the serpentine wheel of the Spirit of Life.

**BAKU** A mythical dream-eating tiger of Japanese lore which could be killed to eat one's bad dreams.

**BASILISK** or **COCKATRICE** A fabulous serpent monster which trampled crocodiles and ate their eggs; its image was extensively used in heraldry.

**BEHEMOTH** A giant biblical land creature, variously thought of as a large hippopotamus or gigantic water buffalo, today denoting anything exceptionally large or its kind.

**BENNU** The phoenix-like sacred bird of Egyptian mythology, emblem of resurrection.

**BOAS** An enormous serpent living on the Italian coastland in the 13th century A.D. which was believed to suck the milk of sleeping cows and feed on small children.

**BOUC NOIR** A black he-goat alleged to be the incarnation of the devil and the vehicle of attacks for lightning to the Witches Sabbath.

**CATOMELPAS** or **GORGUN** An iron-shed bull monster that lived on the island of Gorgona and fed on deadly plants and poisonous herbs; its horrible breath was reported to kill every attacker instantly.

**CECROIS** The first king of Africa, half man, half serpent, who established himself on the Acropolis and founded the township of Cecropia.

**CEPHALUS** In Greek mythology a member of a wild and lawless race of centaurs, half man and half horse, that inhabited the region of Thebes.

**CHERBERUS** The three-headed watchdog of Greek and Roman mythology who guards the gates of Hades.

**CICUTUS** The "White constellation," celestial incarnation of the Greek mythological sea-monster sent by Poseidon to devour Andromeda.

**CHEN-LUNG** A dragon of Chinese lore that guards from the eyes of mortals the wealth concealed in the earth's interior.

**CHIMERA** A fire-breathing monster of Greek mythology, with the head and breast of a lion, the body of a goat and the tail of a serpent.

**COCKATRICE** (see **BASILISK**)

**DAGON** The main deity of the Philistines and later of the Phoenicians, a monster, half fish, half man.

**FAPNIR** Guardian of the Nibelungen Hoard.

**FENG HUANG** The Chinese phoenix, a male-female bird with the head and comb of a pheasant, and feathers of a peacock.

**FIRE-BIRD** (see PHOENIX)

**GRIFFIN** A fabulous monster, half lion, half eagle, which fed five human souls young; symbol of aerial vigilance.

**HAIPIEN** Three-headed, winged monster of Greek mythology, with heads and breasts of a woman, bodies of a bird and claws of a lion.

**HEMISPHERICUTUS** In Greek mythology, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, who united in one body with the nymph Admetos, was both male and female.

**HO-GO** The Japanese phoenix, ruler of the feathered race, which appeared only during the reign of a wise monarch.

**LI-LIN** A male-female form of the unicorn in Chinese mythology, symbolizing the union of an upright monarch.

**GABUDA** A monster bird of Vedic mythology, and king of the feathered race.

**GOIFON** (see CATOUBLEPAS)

**KI-FUN** The Japanese Pegasus, living in Paradise and visiting the earth only at the birth of a Son, or wise philosopher.

**KRAKEN** A monstrous monster of Norwegian sea lore in the form of a gigantic octopus-crab.

**LADON** The dragon of Greek mythology that guarded the Golden Apple in the Garden of the Hesperides.

**LAMIA** or **MOISMOLICOE** An iron-clad monster with a woman's head and breast, two cow's feet and two cat's claws, which feeds on the flesh of children.

**LAMUSIA** Two human-headed, winged lion monster of Assyrian-Babylonian mythology.

**LIQVIATHAN** A biblical water monster, variously thought of as a whale or gigantic crocodile.

**LINDWURM** A winged monster serpent in Germanic-Nordic folk songs, with scaly armor but lacking legs or claws.

**LORELEI** A semi-human watery creature of Rhinevald folk songs.

**LUNG** A fire-breathing, scaled and horned dragon of Chinese mythology.

**MAKARA** A sea monster of Vedic mythology, representing the Spirit of the Sea.

**MANICURON** A composite man-flying monster of ancient Tartaric origin.

**MELUSINUS** A European mermaid that haunted the palace of Count Perceus, her *Somerset Gay* & *Laird* was King of Jerusalem and Cyprus in the 12th century.

**MIDGARD** The tail-tiding or world serpent of Teutonic mythology.

**MOLOCCH** A monstrous Biblical divinity of the ancient Ammonites to whom children were sacrifically burnt.

**MORACOLICOE** (see LAMIA)

**MURAKUMO NO TAURUCI** The dragon sword of Japanese legend.

**NERIED** A sea god of antiquity.

**NIDHOGGR** The Nordic serpent-monster, representing the volcanic powers of the earth.

**NINGIO** The mermaid of Japanese lore whose presence portends misstep or evil omen.

**NINROCK** The eagle-headed god of Assyrian mythology.

**OPHEUCHEUS** The serpent-headed constellation, regarded by the ancient Greeks as the celestial incarnation of Aspidochelone the turtle.

**OURUBORUS** The serpent biting its own tail, an ancient symbol of eternity.

**PENGASUS** The white winged horse of ancient legend.

**PENG-NAO** A semi-dragon bird of Chinese mythology.

**PHOENIX** In ancient mythology, the fire-bird which rose from its own ashes; symbol of resurrection, good fortune and immortality.

**TS'IBI** A deity of the rivers in Chinese mythology, in the form of a dragon-turtle monster.

**QUEZTLAL** The plumed serpent bird, an Aztec symbol of the air.

**RUC**, or **BUKH** A gigantic bird of prey of Persian-Arabic legend.

**RYU** A Japanese dragon, one of the four sacred creatures of the Chinese, able to live in the air, in water, and on land.

**SCIAPODES** A race of men in ancient India who lay on their backs, using their enormous naked feet to protect themselves from the sun.

**SENMURV**, the Sea-Scatterer A monster of Scandinavian-Persian mythology, half monster, half bird, symbolizing the union of earth, sea and sky.

**SASHA** The seven-headed vasa-serpent of Hindu mythology.

**SHEDU** A human-headed, winged monster bull of Assyrian-Babylonian mythology.

**SIMURGH** The great monster bird of Persian mythology, so old that he has seen the world three times destroyed.

**SIRIN** A sea nymph in Greek-Roman mythology, part swan, part bird, who by its singing lured sailors to their death on rocky shores.

**SZ** The Sword God, or Malayan demon.

**UAZIT** The mythological tutelary goddess of the ancient Egyptian Nubia.

**UNICORN** A mythological horned beast having

a long tapering horn growing from its forehead, symbol of strength and dignity.

**SPEINX** A composite monster of Egyptian mythology, including the human-headed Andros-Sphinx, the lion-headed Cri-Sphinx, and the hawk-headed Hierax-Sphinx.

**TATZEWURM** A winged, fire-breathing dragon the monster of Germanic folklore.

**TENGU** A fabulous winged creature of Japanese lore.

**TIAMAT** The supreme monster of chaos in Assyrian-Babylonian religion.

**TRITON** A sea god in Greek mythology, half man, half fish, who was able to calm storms.

**TS'UN'AN'SS** The sea monster of the Black Indians.

**VAMPIRE** In Slavic occult lore, the supernatural corpse of a witch or sorcerer which leaves its grave to seek the blood of sleeping persons.

**YU-LONG** A Chinese river monster, half fish, half dragon.

**THUNDERBIRD** A supernatural eagle in American Indian lore that created thunder by flapping its wings and lightning by blinking its eyes.

**UNGENA** A legendary female water spirit.

**WEREWOLF** A human transformed, by black magic into a beast, sometimes wolf-man.



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