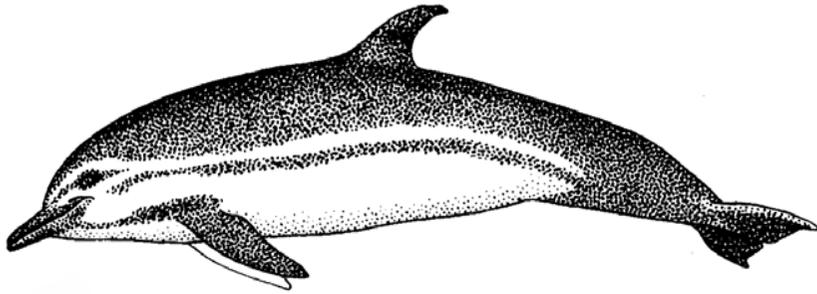
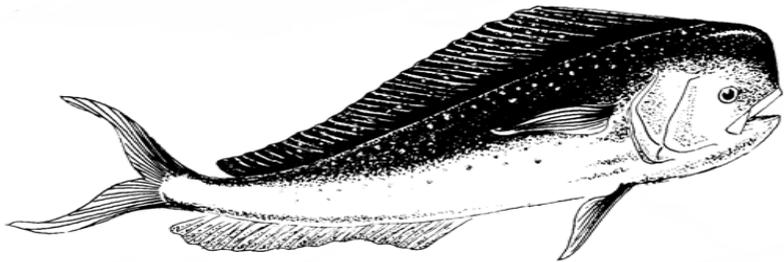


An Alphabet of Queries (5)

Is the Dolphin a Monster or just a Muddle? The King of the Fishes, as depicted in heraldry, is as much a hybrid as a Centaur or Griffin, and so qualifies as a Monster. The Greek poet Arion described how, when he was shipwrecked as a boy, he was rescued by a Dolphin and carried to dry land. This Common Dolphin, *Delphinus delphis*, was a popular motif in Greek and Cretan art, sacred to the god Apollo and taking its name from his temple at Delphi. It is a small whale or cetacean mammal with a smooth grey skin (darker above, paler beneath), horizontal flukes on its tail, a distinctive beak-like mouth and a triangular dorsal fin, as seen in this drawing by W. P. C. Tenison, from *A History of Fishes* by J. R. Norman (Benn, London 1931).



Another Greek, possibly Aristotle, gave a description of a type of fish that is often called a Dolphin or Dolphin-fish, also known as a Dorado or Lampuca (seen on the Maltese 10c coin), or Mahi-mahi in the Pacific, with shiny green and gold scales, vertical flukes on its tail, a long spiny dorsal fin, a prominent domed brow and no beak to its mouth, as drawn here by Erik Hesselberg, from his book *Kon-Tiki and I* (Allen & Unwin, London 1950).



This Dolphin is not a mammal but a true Piscean fish, *Coryphaena hippurus*. It is the fastest of all fishes, grows up to 5 feet long and can make spectacular leaps out of the sea when chasing its prey, the common flying fish, while appearing to change colour as it swims. The heraldic Dolphin is a compilation of features from these two creatures (*to be continued*).

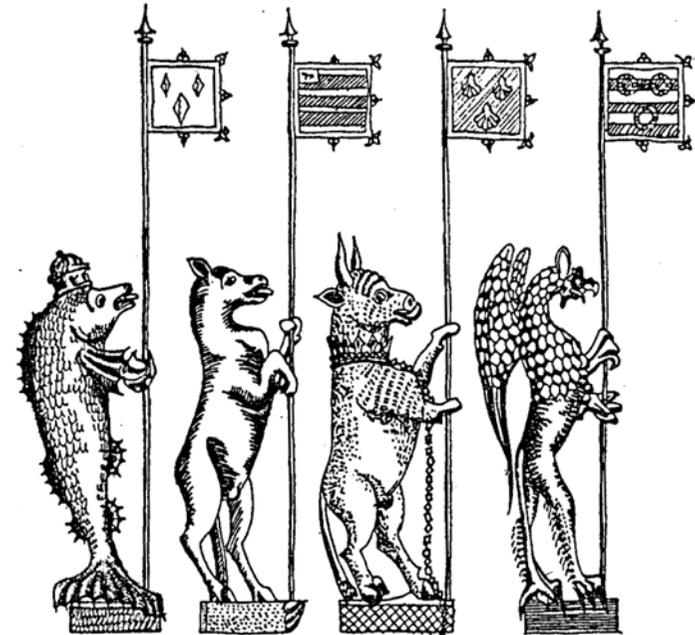
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The Heraldic Beasts of Naworth Castle

Left to Right:

THE DOLPHIN OF GREYSTOKE

THE HORNLESS RAM(?) OF DE MULTON

THE RED BULL OF DACRE

THE GRYPHON OF DACRE (possibly derived from De Vaux)

The Dacre Beasts, from an article on Naworth Castle by R. Donaldson-Hudson, in *History of Berwickshire Naturalists' Club*, vol. xxxiv, (1958).

The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

Thomas, Lord Dacre, of Naworth Castle in Cumberland was one of the outstanding men of his time. Born in 1467, he fought at Bosworth in 1485, luckily on the winning side, eloped with Elizabeth Greystoke in 1488 and then married her and acquired her inheritance. He was knighted in the Order of the Bath in 1503, and in 1518, after the battle of Flodden, in which he played a decisive part, he was made a Knight of the Garter. At his funeral in 1525 there appeared these four beasts (*see our cover picture*), each about six feet high. All four figures were carved from a single oak trunk which was felled in the early 16th century when the oak tree was already 450 years old. They were most probably made for a tournament or pageant some years before the funeral, and are the only things of their kind that have survived to this day although they appear to have been re-painted and given new metal vanes to hold after they were rescued from a terrible fire at Naworth Castle in 1844. Earlier this year they were put up for sale, and there was the possibility that they might go abroad. The Victoria & Albert Museum was planning its new British Galleries, and made an appeal to acquire the Beasts for its collection. This was successful and the Beasts are now installed there and will in due course stand at the entrance to the Tudor Gallery.

To take the beasts in order, the Dolphin of Greystoke (said by some to be a salmon, probably on account of its creamy colour, though the crown indicates the King of Fishes) is shown here holding a Dacre banner, though at present it has the Greystoke one. Next the “Hornless Ram (?)” is almost certainly a Lamb as the de Multon or de Mouton name and arms would indicate (but it has also been described as a Deer or a Unicorn, though no sign of a horn has been found): it is a pale fawn colour. The Red Bull of Dacre with its golden coronet-collar and chain holds the well-known Dacre arms of three scallops on a red field, and lastly the lively Black Gryphon, shown here with the Greystoke banner (*Barry of six Argent and Vert, three chaplets each with four red roses*) but now correctly holding the other Dacre arms with the lozenge-shaped cushions. The Gryphon is said to derive from deVaux, a family related to the Dacres, who gave their name to Vauxhall in London where Vauxhall cars were first made; these cars still use a Gryphon as their badge.

Like the Queen’s Beasts, the Dacre Beasts are not all fabulous, but in their new setting they are certainly worth a visit.



NEW DRAWINGS OF QUEEN’S BEASTS

The Queen’s Beasts have recently featured in a set of British Postage Stamps, issued in 1998 to celebrate 1650 years of the Order of the Garter (see the Review in issue No. 4). These stamps have new drawings by Jeffrey Matthews and show the ten beasts on a row of five stamps, two on each. First come the Lion of England and the Griffin of Edward III, then the Falcon of Plantagenet and the Black Bull of Clarence, next the White Lion of Mortimer and the Yale of Beaufort, fourth the Greyhound of Richmond and the Red Dragon of Wales, and last the Unicorn of Scotland and the White Horse of Hanover. Each holds a shield with the appropriate arms or badge.

Fabulous Creatures from Myth and Legend—and a few from Nature

This is the title of an essay by Arthur Mellanby, one of 24 in the book **Tribute to an Armorer** (Essays for John Brooke-Little to mark the Golden Jubilee of “The Coat of Arms”) edited by J. Campbell-Kease (London 2000). This book covers a great variety of heraldic topics by eminent authors; the one that concerns us here deals with 35 beasts that are little used in heraldry, some monsters and some real creatures about which fabulous tales are told. The Minotaur, for instance, is well known in mythology but practically unknown in heraldry (it makes no appearance in Von Volborth’s 1996 book); the beast that Mellanby shows is not the bull-headed man with which we are familiar from the Perseus legend, but a Roman concoction like a Centaur but with a bull’s body in place of the horse’s. He reminds us that Pliny the Elder listed seven types of Unicorn, only one of which, after mediaeval adulation, entered heraldic usage, and also takes note of another beast sometimes mistaken for a Unicorn, namely the **Rhynoceron**. He recounts some lesser known tales about the Elephant, the Wolf, the Boar and the Hart, and introduces us to several hitherto unremarked beasts such as the **Pygarge**, **Bonaze**, **Equicerne**, **Tarandre**, **Phattaga**, **Hippotame**, **Phagion**, **Vermante** and **Erodius**. Some of these, of course, may turn out to be unusual names for creatures we already know; I am sure, for instance, that the **Enydros** he describes is none other than the **Egyptian Hydra**. But Mellanby certainly knows his bestiaries and other ancient authors and should be welcomed for expanding our knowledge of dracology.



Pygarge



Bonaze



Equicerne



Tanandre



Phattaga



Hippotame

Some samples selected from Mellanby’s menagerie.