

## An A to Z of Dragonlore (*sixth instalment*)

JUBJUB BIRD, a desperate but symmetrical creature invented by Lewis Carroll, mentioned in *Jabberwocky* but more fully described in *The Hunting of the Snark*.

KELPIE, a Celtic water spirit often described as half horse, half fish.

KERKOMA, a name given to the unseen monster that gnaws away at the roots of Malta and will one day topple it into the sea. It is said to have a bulbous body covered in rows of spikes or prickles like a cactus, a very long neck, a small head with large eyes and a big mouth full of blunt teeth.

KRAKEN, a huge sea-monster originating in Scandinavian mythology and believed to be real throughout the Middle Ages; when near the surface it was often mistaken for an island, but could be quite dangerous when vexed, seizing men or whole boats and bearing them down to the depths. Some suppose it to have been a giant squid.

KY-LIN, variously spelled, a Chinese mythical beast with some affinity to the Unicorn. The Ky was male, the Lin female.

LADON, a hundred-headed dragon from Greek mythology, guardian of the golden apples of the Hesperides and slain by Hercules.

LAIDLEY WORM OF LAMBTON, a giant serpent-like creature, one of Britain's rare contributions to dragonlore.

LAMIA, a female monster from classical mythology with the head and breasts of a young woman but with the body of a serpent, although sometimes described as having a four-footed body, the front legs lion-like and the back legs ox-like, in either case she was used to frighten children (a sort of bogeyman).

LEVIATHAN, a monstrous sea-creature mentioned in the Bible, perhaps a whale.

LION, the King of Beasts in its heraldic form is almost fantastic enough to qualify as fabulous, and it has contributed to the Griffin, the Chimaera, the Manticora and many other monsters.

LOCH NESS MONSTER, a legend kept alive by the tourist trade, and described and illustrated in 1975 by Sir Peter Scott, the artist and naturalist, as a form of extinct plesiosaur which he named and registered as *Nessiteras rhombopteryx* (which means "Ness monster with diamond-shaped fins") in order to protect it as a species in case one was ever found (though oddly the name is an anagram of "monster hoax by Sir Peter S.").

MAKARA, an ancient Indian sea- or river-monster with magic powers, but very like a crocodile to look at, though it is sometimes shown with an elephant-like head.

*To be continued...*

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# Dragonlore

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Sagittary arms  
attributed to King Stephen

Drawn by Dan Escott  
from Pinches, Royal Heraldry, 1974

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

Suddenly the world has woken up to the subject of our studies and there has been a spate of books about dragons and other monsters. First, two books from the world of heraldry:

**The Royal Heraldry of England** by J. H. & R. V. Pinches (London 1974) has some useful notes on the Beaufort Yale, the Welsh Dragon and the Stewart Unicorn as well as the Sagittary posthumously attributed to King Stephen, who lived before heraldry had become established but may well have used some kind of emblem or badge. Note that this is not a regular Centaur as it has lion-like feet instead of hooves, (see cover) though other renderings of Stephen's device show the usual beast.

**The Heraldic Imagination** by Rodney Dennis (London 1975) is a scholarly work with chapters on Human Monsters, Lions and Kindred Creatures, Fabulous Beasts, Eagles and Fabulous Birds, and Dragons and Fabulous Reptiles. It is copiously illustrated with many drawings taken from the little-seen records at the College of Arms, and others drawn by artists presently working at the College, and is an essential reference for all the strange concoctions of the Tudor heralds.

Next, six children's books of interest to all dracologists:

**A Dictionary of Monsters and Mysterious Beasts** by Carey Miller, illustrated by Mary French (Pan, London 1974) a paperback describing 81 varieties of monster from all over the world, and from the Centaur and Griffin of antiquity to the present-day Loch Ness Monster and the Sasquatch.

**A Book of Monsters** by Ruth Manning-Sanders illustrated by Robin Jacques (Methuen, London 1975) retells a dozen folk tales from around the world, each about an unusual monster. The author has also written books about Dragons, Mermaids, Magic Animals and many others.

**Arthur Rackham** edited by David Larkin (Pan, London 1975). Forty large colour plates of work by this master illustrator including one of Bellerophon and Pegasus defeating the Chimaera, and one of Sir Lancelot slaying a Dragon, besides others with a number of goblins and ghoulies.

**Mythical Beasts Coloring Book** by Fridolf Johnson (Dover, New York 1976) with beautifully sharp line-drawings of thirty fabulous creatures, mostly from classical sources, each with a brief caption giving the essential details.

**Gods, Men & Monsters**, from the Greek Myths, retold by Michael Gibson (London 1977) with brilliant illustrations by Giovanni Caselli, including a stunning Hercules with the Hydra, Perseus with Medusa, Theusus with the Minotaur and many others.

*(continued opposite)*

**A Middle-Earth Album:** paintings by Joan Wyatt inspired by Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Introduction and commentaries by Jessica Yates (London 1979). Thirty colour plates illustrating the adventures of the Hobbits, with a few odd monsters, but not adding a lot to the magical descriptions of the inspired story-teller.

Finally, six comprehensive and well-illustrated surveys for the serious scholar:

**Unicorns: Myth and Reality.** Two books with the same title appearing simultaneously — one by C. M. Stern (London 1977) and the other by R. R. Beer (New York 1977), both attempting to sort out the tangle of ancient reports of weird beasts, possibly species of rhinoceros, and mediaeval legends supported by the discovery of narwhal tusks, while giving due weight to religious symbolism and sheer romanticism.

**The Dragon** by Charles Gould and others, edited by Malcolm Smith (London 1977), a compilation from various early sources, illustrated in black-and-white, this deals with both Western and Eastern Dragons (Chinese and Japanese) with copious quotations.

**The dragon: nature of spirit, spirit of nature** by Francis Huxley with 155 pictures, 16 in colour (Thames and Hudson, London 1979) in the "Art and Imagination" series. An enormous wealth of imagery from all over the world, accompanied by an enlightened commentary and intriguing cross-cultural comparisons.

**The book of the DRAGON** by Judy Allan and Jeanne Griffiths (Orbis, London 1979). This truly sumptuous book, with 124 illustrations, nearly half in colour, deals with dragons under twelve headings, from the Cosmic Serpent, through its stages of development in the ancient world, the orient and the west, then its appearance in Alchemy, Cartography, Zoology, Folk lore and Heraldry, to its symbolic end in Slaying the Dragon. With a bibliography of 90 entries, this is a serious contribution towards an understanding of the matter of dracology.

**Dragons** by Peter Hogarth with Val Clery (Allen Lane, London 1979). As if the last were not enough, now comes along an even more magnificent volume with no fewer than 240 illustrations, again nearly half of them in colour, exploring the whole field of dragonlore under five main headings: Ancient, Classical, Mediaeval (strong on pictures of St George), Renaissance and Modern. This will have to be the definitive text book on the subject of dragons, and the final sentence of its profoundly humanist approach is worth quoting:

"The history of dragons is the stuff that man is made of; the study of dragons is the study of the human mind."