

from a blood-red pool, labelled “Te Hoata & Te Pupu, Volcanic taniwha sisters.” We have met the Taniwha before (*see Nos 39 & 42*) but did not realize that they had such varied forms, living in lava flows as well as in rivers.

Roger Seabury gave us a Christmas present of a magnificent Jigsaw Book entitled *The Dragon Chronicles, The Lost Journals of the Great Wizard, Septimus Agorius*, containing six ready-made jigsaw puzzles illustrating a variety of Dragons in various imaginative settings, plus a couple of non-segmented pictures, each accompanied by an excerpt from the named Journal. Set in the days of Viking longships, these scenes are colourful and exciting, and show that fantasy artists now imagine dragons to be bigger than ever, these ones being at least forty or fifty feet tall, all but one spurting streams of fire from their mouths. The book comes from Australia, and the design is credited to Sonia Dixon. No other artist is named, so perhaps she did the pictures.

Another Christmas present, from my grandson **Joshua**, was a splendid calendar with a dozen paintings of fantasy scenes with Dragons, all in the finest Tolkien tradition, credited to the artist Ciruelo Cabral, coming this time from America. Also, my granddaughter **Alice** gave me a personalized drinking glass upon which she had enamelled a handsome black and red Dragon, beautifully crafted.

ODD STREAK from *The Daily Mail*, 18 January 2007.



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The Journal of The College of Dracology

Number 81 St Aidan's Day 2007



A Wyvern drawn for us by Brian Jeffs



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

We welcome our first cadet member, Emily Roads.

If 80 is a round number, then 81 is a square number. But whatever shape numbers are, all back numbers are again available, thanks to Roger Seabury, so for the price of the postage (up to seven issues for 100g) any member may now fill gaps in an incomplete collection of Dragonlore.

Not to be confused with St Aidan of Lindisfarne (*see No 63*), the Saint Aidan whose feast day falls on 31st January was an Irish monk who went to Wales as a missionary and there worked with St David, who later sent him back to Ireland where he founded his own monastery and eventually died in 626 AD. He is renowned for his love of animals and is reputed to have saved a hunted stag from the pursuing hounds by making it invisible, whether by using the same trick employed by “Mr One-Two-Three-Where’s-your Breakfast” as described by Kipling in his *Just So Stories*, or by more miraculous means, is not made clear, but to this day his emblem remains the fabulous invisible stag. Artists, try and draw that!

The Wyvern on the cover was drawn specially for us by Brian Jeffs, whose work is known to us through his contributions to the Critters Contest in *The Prairie Tressure*. One example is the Seaprong shown in No 69. Brian has offered to do a rendering of the arms of anyone who would like to contact him by e-mail on jeffsb@michigan.gov.

He has sent me a very stylish interpretation of my own quartered arms.

The latest *Prairie Tressure* (Issue 8) has more entries for another Critter Contest, including this **donkeyphant** drawn and submitted by Carl-Alexander von Volborth (*below left*) and the **prairie hippogriff** submitted by Darren George but drawn by Brian Jeffs (*right*).



FROM THE POSTBAG

Kevin Greaves sent a picture of a carved stone dragon that he came across in Budapest during his travels, drawn here after his photograph.



Leslie Hodgson frequently sends items of interest, not all of which get into these pages. A little while ago he provided pictures of some metallic decorative architectural features based on dragons, to be seen in Barcelona, in particular an iron gate at the Guell Pavilions designed by Antonio Gaudi in 1884. We are unable to reproduce these satisfactorily with our limited means, but it occurs to me that any of our readers visiting that Spanish city should be alerted to the treasures that lie in wait for them there. Not just decorative, but imaginative and forceful, these dragon shapes are truly inspired.

Leslie’s latest offering is in the form of postage stamps from New Zealand, boldly headed AOTEAROA, presumably the Maori name for that country. The 40c value shows a red monster splashing in the waves, labelled “Araiteuru, the North Island sea guardian,” (*next page*), while the \$1.10 issue has a pair of yellow siren-like creatures arising

crest and yellow beak. As a species, it is not unlike the Wyvern on the cover, which of course Emily had never seen. An expert dracologist would probably say that the Scythion is a species of the genuine antique dragon, with its serpentine body, two pairs of limbs (wings and legs) and what look like feathered wings rather than the bat-like variety seen on Brian Jeff's Wyvern. Its name may be related to the tribe of Scythians, swift horsemen who lived on the plains to the north of the Black Sea during the time of the Ancient Greeks, and who were noted for their remarkable gold ornaments, decorated with all sorts of figures, including fabulous beasts. Some think that the Scythians themselves were the inspiration for the Greek idea of Centaurs.

FEEDBACK

The “dog-headed fish of St Gall” was mentioned in connexion with the Onchu, in the issue No 79, page 6, and we have now come across a picture of it (*right*), from the Psalter

made around 900 AD in the Swiss town of Saint Gall which grew up around a monastery founded by the Irish missionary of that name. This type of windsock banner went under the name of ‘draco’ and was thus often supposed to represent a dragon, as in the case of the Saxon emblem depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, but here it may well have been the prototype for the Onchu, or even a derivative of it, seeing that Saint Gallus came from Ireland.

Darrel Kennedy's Opinicus (No 80, page 6) looks very like the crest of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, as shown in Wallis's 1677 book of “London's Armory” (*left*) and not at all like the one drawn by Heather Childs (*right*) for the same arms. (*See also No 50*)



Byzantine Dragons

Ben Elliott advised that a seminar on the topic of “The Evolution of Byzantine Dragons and their Slayers” by Dr Monica White from Cambridge would be given in the Arts Building of Birmingham University on the evening of Thursday 25 January, and it proved possible to attend. Dr White dealt with the hagiography of six saints who are renowned for their dragon-slaying exploits, in particular the three females Perpetua, a martyr from North Africa, executed around 203, Marina of Antioch (also known as Margaret) who was martyred under Diocletian, and Elisabeth the Miracle-Worker, the Abbess of the Convent of St George in Constantinople in the fifth century, but also touching on three male saints, Ioannikios, Theodore Teron and the well-known George. She noted that the female saints generally met their dragon challengers either indoors or close to buildings, and despatched them by relatively non-violent means, either by treading on their heads or showing the sign of the cross, whereas the males usually met their dragon foes out in the wilderness and had to fight them fiercely with lance and sword before they could be overcome. She also made the point that in the earliest accounts of these saints' adventures, the dragon-slaying plays a minor role, or is even non-existent, as in the case of St George, but as the centuries rolled by the dragons become larger and fiercer and even take over events that were previously part of another struggle, as when St Marina's fight with a demon whom she hit over the head with a hammer was transferred to her encounter with the dragon, the demon having been forgotten. Incidentally, it was good to hear that the dragon that she overcame was called Rufus.

Saint Ioannikios is interesting as being the only saint who is reported as having met more than one dragon. He was a hermit in Asia Minor in the late eighth to the mid-ninth century, and apparently had five encounters with dragons, all different. In the first, he made the sign of the cross over the dragon to kill it (We might ask why monsters are so afraid of the cross? Compare the stories of St Columba in Loch Ness as well as modern tales of vampires.); in the second, the dragon threw itself into a lake and vanished (after seeing the cross?); in the third encounter, the saint hit the dragon on the head with an axe; in the fourth it was killed ‘by an unseen agency’ and in the fifth, he sat

peacefully with the dragon and left without harming it.

Monica White's paper was a good example of an academic exercise, assessing the available literary sources, comparing and evaluating the evidence without speculation. It is a pity that the only picture she provided, an enamel of St Theodore spearing a dragon, is too dark to reproduce here.

After Dr White had given her paper, there was some discussion among the fifteen or so people present. I wondered whether, if the stories had become so exaggerated and distorted over the centuries, it was because people were so gullible as to believe them, and perhaps they were not entirely true in the first place. In the case of the multiple tortures said to have been suffered by St George and other saints, after each of which they had been miraculously restored, could it be that the tortures were only threats that people believed had actually been carried out? If that were the case, which to modern common sense seems likely, then what becomes of the hagiography? We come back to the difficult question, in what sense did dragons exist? One or two tentative answers were proffered: perhaps they were metaphorical, or the embodiment of inner emotions or even of external threats, such as St Margaret's suffering at the hands of a wicked tyrant tempting her to abandon her faith. No clear picture emerged, but at least the evening had been well worth the effort of attending. Our thanks to Ben for the tip-off.

Fabulous Beasts at the Brugge Congress

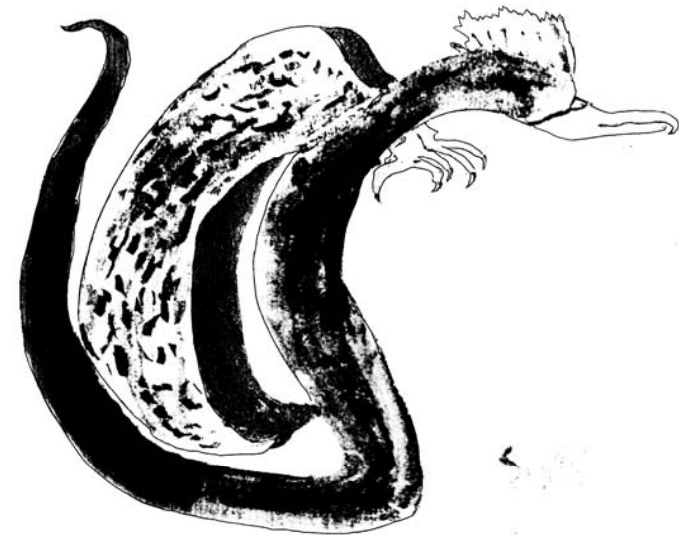
The Proceedings of the XXVII International Congress for Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences held in Brugge in 2004 have been published in a handsome volume entitled *Genealogica & Heraldica* (Brussel 2006), which includes a fair number of fabulous beasts among the many illustrations, mostly in colour. I counted about a dozen different varieties, of which the Griffin was far the most popular with ten appearances, usually in the role of supporter. Next came the Dragon, with four, three of which were being attacked by St George or some other mounted warrior, of which this early seal from the City of Moscow (*top right next page*) is a good example. Then there were two cases each of a Pegasus and a two-headed Eagle, with single showings

of a Basilisk, Martlets, a Mermaid, Sea-Hart and Sea-Hind (as paired supporters), Sea-Lion, Winged Beaver, Winged Deer (the same ones turned up twice!) and a Winged Lion.

The Martlets, derived from the arms attributed to Edward the Confessor, were on a pair of shields belonging to girls' schools named after St Margaret, grand niece of the Confessor, in a paper by Elizabeth Roads on Scottish academic heraldry entitled "Living Heritage," one of those that contributed to the overall theme of the Congress, Heritage for the Future. Most of the others were from the illustrations to the papers by our two Canadian friends, Claire Boudreau and Robert Watt, also showing how the past heraldic heritage may lead on into times yet to come.



The Scythion



This fabulous monster was painted by Emily Roads, and it looks even better in the original coloured version, with a deep blue body, golden brown wings, green legs, red