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Coach Melton  
Mythology  
09 May 2024

Haughton High School  
Library  
4th block  
due by 2:30 PM 10 May

# DRAGON DAY

## Guided Reading Notes

For The Three Ravens Podcast. Three Ravens Bestiary #8: Dragons

&

Chapter 14 “Mythology” of Signs & Symbols of the World by D. R. McElroy

Website: [thethreeravenspodcast.com](http://thethreeravenspodcast.com) / Episode: [Three Ravens Bestiary #8: Dragons](#) (might not be accessible via BPSB system)

Spotify: Podcast episode. [Three Ravens Bestiary #8: Dragons](#)

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### Directions:

**Read over the entire document first. Pay attention to what you are being asked or told.**

**Listen to the podcast.**

**Replace all blanks with answers (quoted) from the audio.**

**Be precise. Refer to the appendices for spelling and pronunciations**

### Questions

1. What is the “classic idea” for a dragon?
  - a.
2. How do the English typically classify dragons?
  - a.
3. Where are dragons in the “hierarchy of mythical creatures”?
  - a.
4. The English word dragon comes via the French word \_\_\_\_
  - a.
5. The Normans (French invaders who conquered England in 1066 and subdued the Anglo-Saxons) considered the dragon \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a.

6. The French word for dragon ... has its roots in ancient Greek and Latin, specifically the term a.) \_\_\_\_ which ... was used across the classical world to describe any ... great big b.) \_\_\_\_
  - a.
  - b.
7. The Sanskrit word a.) \_\_\_\_ and the Indo-European root word b.) \_\_\_\_ predate the Greek and Roman word (from #6) and actually refer to c.) \_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
8. What idea do dragons have baked into their very earliest naming conventions in Europe?
  - a.
9. Sharp sight does have a tantalizing link to concepts like the a.) \_\_\_\_ and b.) \_\_\_\_ which are famous for petrifying people, literally turning them into stone with their sight, if not their breath
  - a.
  - b.
10. Both answers to #9 above are “first mentioned in the 14th century in the Wycliffe Bible as a substitute term for a.) \_\_\_, b.) \_\_\_, and c.) \_\_\_
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
11. In Pliny’s Natural History dating from 79 AD, what is listed as the natural enemy of the dragon?
  - a.
12. The power for special serpents to turn people to stone is explained by people \_\_\_\_
  - a.
13. Whether stone or ash, dragons have always been imbued with the basic power of changing a.) \_\_\_\_
  - a.
14. If you think about it in an “unromantic” way, the power transformation by the dragon is a a.) \_\_\_\_ for being poisoned by a snake bite
  - a.
15. One theory for the terrifying nature of dragons is that we, humans, have an understandable a.) \_\_\_\_ of snakes
  - a.
16. It also makes sense that dragons are generally associated with places in the a.) \_\_\_\_ with b.) \_\_\_\_; they live in deep, dark c.) \_\_\_\_, haunted d.) \_\_\_\_, the bottom of the e.) \_\_\_\_... all places where snakey creatures were seen to dwell and ... if you’re bitten by a poisonous serpent, you’re a goner...”
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
17. “... the idea of dragons is about as a.) \_\_\_\_ as anything in human culture.”
  - a.

a.

18. "Ancient Mesopotamia ... modern day Iraq where the very first human cities came into being, we get our first dragon of note, a.) \_\_\_\_, a hybrid demon creature whose name translates as the red snake". "He's got wings and other funky body parts. So he ain't just a snake." "...he has a big snake's tongue and scales, but lion-like forearms, eagle-like back legs with talons, and his skin is described as being covered in fish-like scales."

a.

19. True or false, the Mesopotamian "red snake" breathed fire.

a.

20. The ancient Babylonians named the constellation (that) we call Hydra after a.) \_\_\_\_

a.

21. The Mesopotamian "red snake" appears in a frieze (definition: a broad horizontal band of sculpted or painted decoration, especially on a wall near the ceiling.) on the a.) \_\_\_\_\_ of Babylon

a.

22. Other translations for the Mesopotamian red snake are a.) \_\_ \_\_ or b.) \_\_ \_\_, or in some translations, c.) \_\_ \_\_

a.

b.

c.

23. "... the idea with Musksuzu is was he was originally ruled over by the ancient god of agriculture, a.) \_\_\_\_ and was one of the b.) \_\_\_\_ dragons born from the three snaking rivers of Mesopotamia. Those are the two branches of the c.) \_\_\_\_ and the d.) \_\_\_\_"

a.

b.

c.

d.

24. "...one of these dragons was a.) \_\_\_\_, the venomous snake. Another was b.) \_\_\_\_, the great snake."

a.

b.

25. Who is the parent of Bashmu, Usmgalu, and Musksuzu, and what was it's title?

a.

26. What was the fate of Tiamat?

a.

27. What was the fate of Bashmu?

a.

28. What was the fate of Usmgalu?

a.

29. What was the fate of Musksuzu?

a.

30. What were the basic features of Bashmu, Usmgalu, and Musksuzu

a.

31. What serpent/dragon was the ancient Egyptian embodiment of chaos?

a.

32. What is the minimum and maximum length of the Egyptian primal force of darkness and disorder named in #31?

a.

33. Where does Apep live?
- 
34. What quote contradicts the stereotypical idea of Chinese dragons being winged and lucky?
- 
35. Provide quoted evidence to support the claim made in the answer to #34?
- -
36. The oldest records of dragons in the Far East come from a.) \_\_\_?
- 
37. What feature makes a pig dragon distinct from the familiar long, twisty, twirly Chinese dragons?
- 
38. In both China and Japan, “there’s a belief that all the powerful emperors contained a bit of A.) \_\_\_ in their ancestry
- 
39. True or false. Dragon bones were believed to have been ground up and used for medicinal purposes?
- 
40. What else is “completely believable” to have been traded along the ancient Silk Road along with food, dyes, and animals?
- 
41. What is the name of a winged snake figure that shows up in ancient Egypt about 3,000 years ago?
- 
42. Name some of the known variations of the ancient Greek myth of Apollo slaying the Python of Delphi: the story of the Arcadian and Syrian god, Hadad or Baal, defeating the dragon A.) – or b.) \_\_; the Hittite god Tarhuns defeating the dragon c.) \_\_\_; the Hebrew god, Yahweh defeating d.) \_\_; Zeus defeating the hundred headed god e.) \_\_; Hercules defeating the dragon f.) \_\_; and then there’s the tale of Thor’s duel with g.) \_\_
- - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -
43. What is one central thread that links a lot of the myths from #42?
- The deities are sky gods, gods of sun, storms, thunder, lightning and the dragons are almost sea creatures or dragons that have come from the sea
44. “... there’s quite a bit of symbolism there (in the answer to #43), isn’t there?” With this “idea of the sky having a.) \_\_ and b.) \_\_ over the oceans. Yeah, the general analogy is intended to be about c.) \_\_. The sky conquering d.) \_\_, the oceans. And you can take that a step further to talk about the sky symbolizing e.) \_\_ and the profound literally being above and the ocean representing the f.) \_\_ and mysterious, what’s literally below.”
- - 
  - 
  - 
  -

f.

45. Name and describe the two chaos beasts of the early Hebrew Bible.

a.

b.

46. On a symbolic level, these are stories about a a.) \_\_ power. So A god, the sky, or some sort of deific layer of rules, subduing some sort of primordial creature representing b.) \_\_

a.

b.

47. It is a universal theme that dragons are an enemy to a.) \_\_

a.

48. What are three suggestions that dragons appear in stories as a stand in for?

a.

b.

c.

49. Describe the dragon Ladon (A) and identify what other myth it's story alludes to (B).

a.

b. The Garden of Eden

50. Who eats at the roots of Yggdrasil, the Norse world tree, (aka a tree of knowledge) and is responsible for bringing suffering to all the animals that live within it?

a. Nidhoggr

51. What makes Jormungandr, the Norse World Serpent a unique dragon? What is it a symbol for?

a.

52. Where was the very first Ouroboros found?

a.

53. Where was the very first written reference in literature to a fire-breathing dragon?

a.

54. What does the dragon in the final third of Beowulf represent (4 ideas)?

a.

55. In his Historia Brittonum, Nennius sets down the tale of Vertigant's troubled castle-construction site which is attributed to the quarreling of two dragons, who turn out to be the White Dragon of the a.) \_\_ and the Red Dragon of the b.) \_\_ (or Wales), causing c.) \_\_

a.

b.

c.

56. In Norse mythology, which greedy dwarf slays his father, confiscates his treasure, forces his brother to live in poverty, and over time is transformed into a dragon that protects the treasure hoard? Said dragon is ultimately killed by the hero Sigurd.

a.

57. "... chaotic, evil, and sinful behavior becomes symbolic of the devil embodied by a.) \_\_. And then you have virtuous heroes who come along ... and slay them."

a.

58. These two quotes contain the logic the hosts use to equate dragonslaying with a.) \_\_. #1.) "Vikings have dragons in loads of their art, on their boats, on their figureheads. And so there is a link between paganism and savagery and warfare and belief butting up against the new Christian culture." #2) '... Romantic heroes, ... brave questing knights embarking out from civilization ... to strike out and overcome devilish dragons terrorizing the chaotic wilds.'

- a. Imperialism (defined as “state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas.”)
59. In addition to dragonslaying stories, “... the proliferation of ... a.) \_\_ stories that happen after the Norman invasion is arguably a way of telling the story of cultural takeover through the 11th to the 14th century.”
- a.
60. “... it’s fair to read a lot of those (Bronze Age) stories as a.) \_\_ for one culture beating down and subjugating a neighboring kingdom.”
- a.
61. The word Wyvern (“WHY-vern”) comes from the French and has a very similar root word meaning a.) \_\_
- a.
62. For what reason in the 16th century do we start distinguishing between a dragon, wyvern, and wurm?
- a.
63. The Melusine myth only helps demonstrate that dragons are a a.) \_\_ for change, turning people from one thing into another, often stone or ash, or some other sort of base matter. (something low, sinful, devilish)
- a.
64. a.) \_\_ is something the dragon can then spread, like a contagion.
- a.
65. What dragon is claimed by the Australian aboriginal culture?
- a.
66. Elenor finally arrives that, in her judgment, a dragon ought to be as big as a a.) \_\_\_\_
- a. .

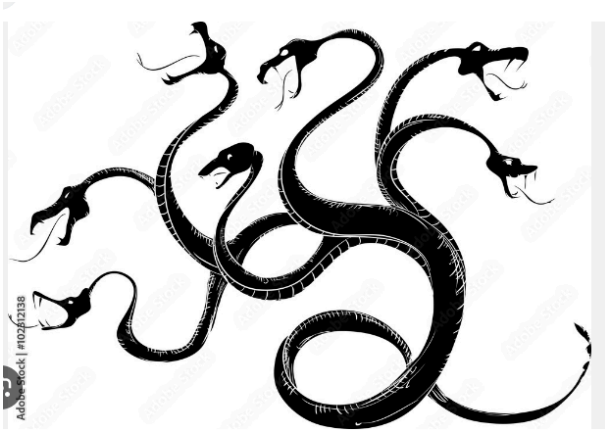
If you would like to read a transcript of the podcast emailed to me by the male host of the podcast, [click here](#)

**The following is excerpted material from Chapter 14 “Mythology” of D. R. McElroy’s book *Signs & Symbols of the World***

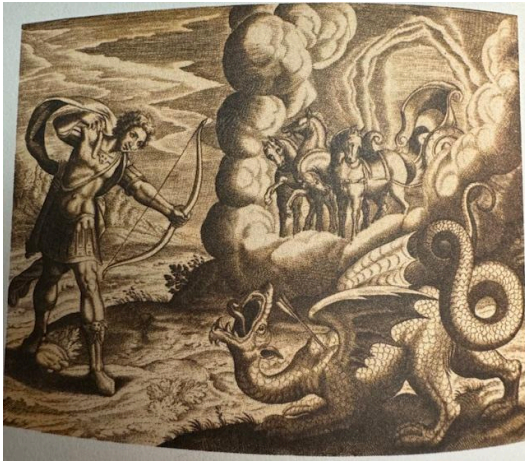
**Directions: Read the excerpt. Replace all blanks with answers (quoted) from the text. Be precise. Refer to the appendices for spelling and pronunciations**

## *Dragons*

These creatures are of particular interest in mythology, with cultures in all the corners of the world exhibiting some type of dragon deity or monster. The word “dragon” comes from the Greek *drakon*, meaning “serpent” or “great sea fish”. The Greeks had many dragonesque creatures, including the hydra ..., the python, ... and Ladon ... . Numerous dragons (with wings) appear as guardians of people, places, and things for the Greeks.



*Hydra*



*Illustration of Apollo killing the dragon Python, who guards the sacred site at Delphi*

Asian culture is also rich in dragon symbolism. The dragon is one of the twelve signs in the Chinese zodiac, and it is usually a symbol of strength, good luck, and honor. The prototypical Chinese dragon is the Lang, or Lóng, a beast defined as specifically having nine anatomical features: the head of a camel, the horns of a stag, the eyes of a demon, the ears of a cow, the neck of a snake, the belly of a clam, the scales of a carp, the claws of an eagle, and the paws of a tiger. This description makes the Lang very distinctive and easy to identify. The Imperial Lang (reserved for emperors) features five claws instead of the usual four, which serves to distinguish it from the typical Lang. The Golden Dragon, a requisite at Chinese New year celebrations, is carried by multiple men in sections - allowing for sinuous movement associated with it. Japanese dragons look similar, but they are considered water deities.



*Golden Chinese dragon (original image unavailable)*



*A Chinese New Year golden dragon dancing (original image unavailable)*

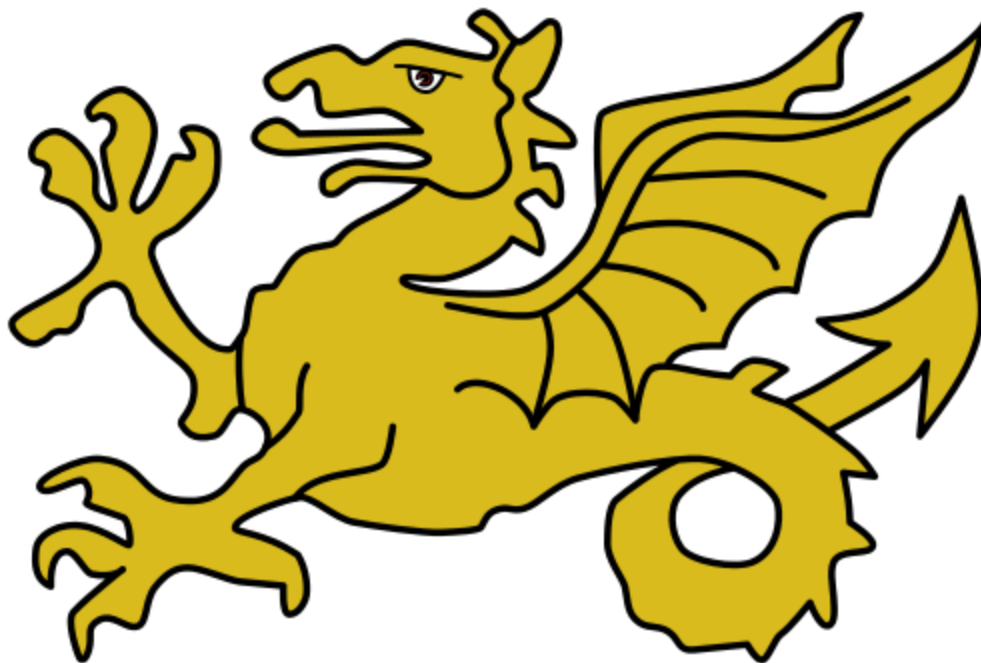
## ***European Dragons***

There are four main types of European dragons: “traditional” dragons, wyverns, drakes, and wyrms. Let’s start with “traditional” dragons. They are usually considered evil, they are reptiles with four legs and a pair of membranous wings, they can walk or fly; may or may not breathe fire; and they frequently hoard gold treasure, which they kill to protect. Famous dragons in literature include Smaug (*The Hobbit*), the dragon in *Beowulf*, and the dragon slain by St. George.





*A typical interpretation of a "traditional"  
European dragon.*



*The Golden Wyvern of Wessex*

## **Wyverns**

Much smaller than dragons, a wyvern has only two rear legs and a pair of wings. It is usually membranous but may be feathered. It may have a barbed tail that it uses as a stinger and has magical capabilities. It frequently breathes fire, and is considered generally less intelligent than dragons. The Golden Wyvern is the symbol of the House of Wessex (England) and is a common symbol in that country. The “dragons” in the *Game of Thrones* TV series are actually wyverns.

## **Drakes**

Drakes are very large and may be bigger than dragons; have four legs, but typically no wings; and their scales provide heavy, impenetrable armor. They are reclusive, but will fight aggressively to protect their den. If they have magic, it is usually limited to elemental abilities (control fire, air, water) which serve to distinguish one type of drake from another; intelligence is equal to that of dragons. Drakes are uncommon, the Fire-drake of Gondolin (*The Lord of the Rings*) being one example.

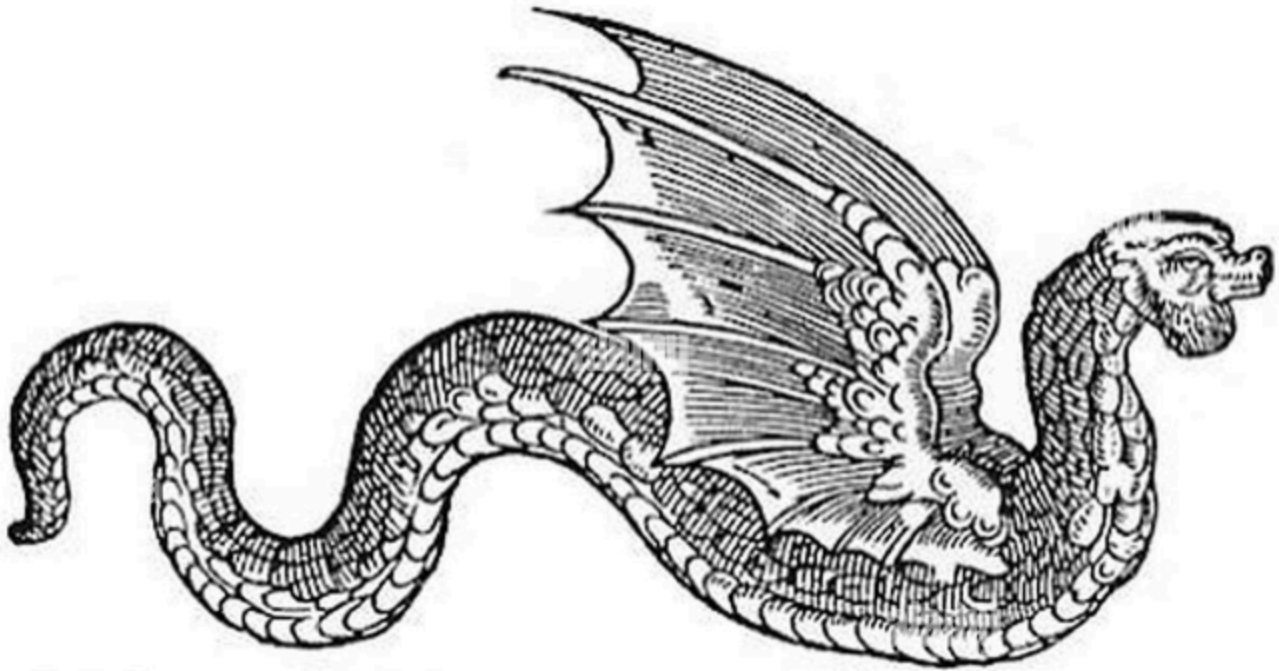
## **Wyrm/Wvyrms**

Wyrm may be huge or smaller and have no legs or wings. They are usually burrowing creatures and are considered extremely venomous. They are perhaps the oldest monsters, and universally feared as the serpent. The Python, of Greek mythology, is a wyrm that lives at the center of the Earth (of which Delphi was believed to have been the entrance). In the Rigveda, and ancient Indian collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns, Vritra, an asura (or power-seeking spirit), held the waters of the world captive until he was slain by Indra Devata, the rain God. Vritra (whose name means “enveloper”) is often depicted as a huge serpent.

## **Vishap**

In other cultures, the term “dragon” is used for creatures with very different features than those already discussed. In Armenian mythology, Vishgap is a dragon who controls the waters of the world; *vishapakar* are “dragon stones” or “water stones” which serve as a focus of prayer to water gods. Vishap is typically illustrated as a legless serpent with wings; as such, it can be termed an amphiptere (spelling varies), a creature whose name derives from British heraldry.

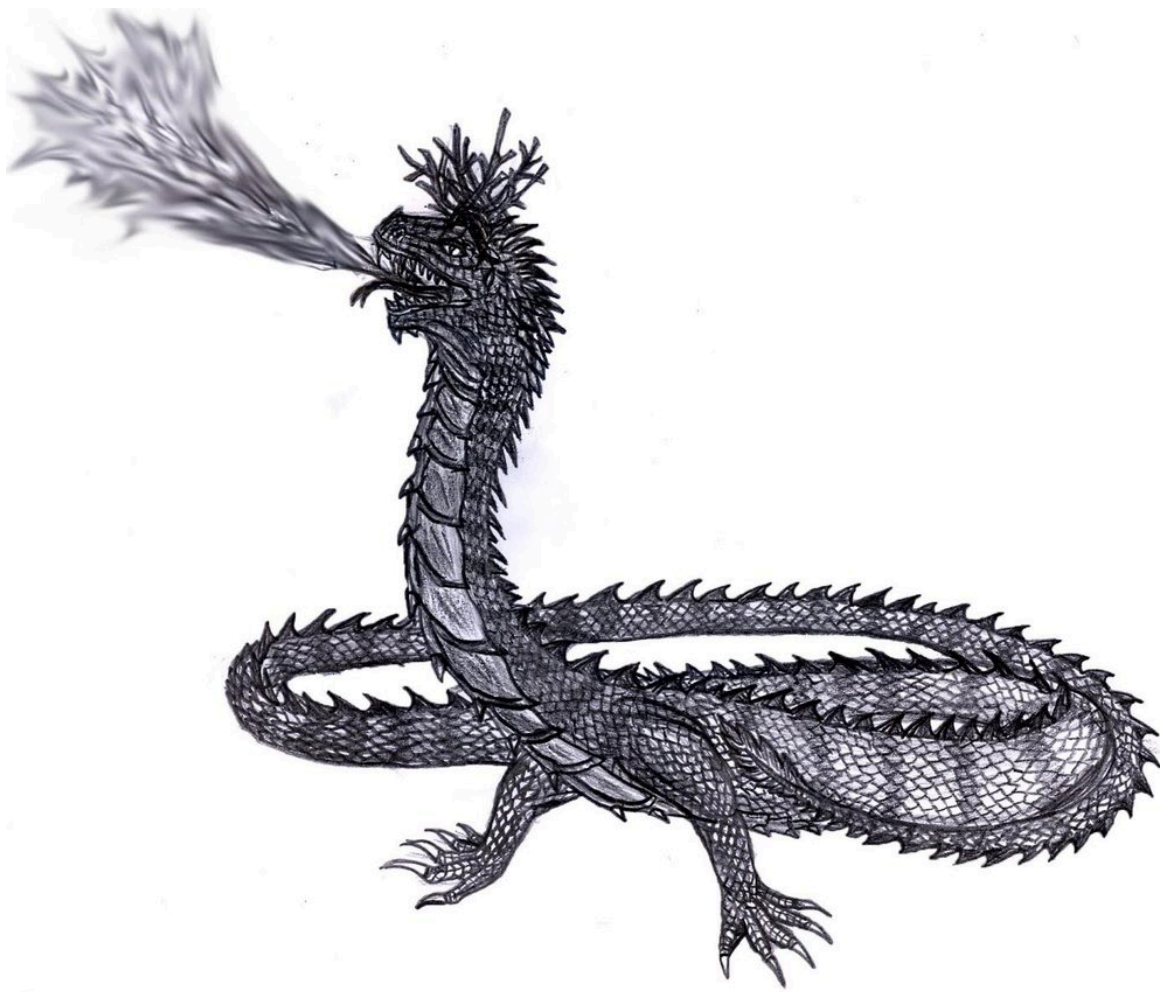




*Amphiptere* ("AM-fip-tear")

### *Nidhoggr*

Also written as Nidhogg, in Norse myth this is a serpent monster trapped beneath Yggdrasil, the Great Tree that connects the Nine realms. Nidhoggr eats the roots of the tree in an effort to escape; if it does, it is one of the signs of Ragnarok, the battle at the end of the world. Usually described as a lindworm - a serpent with two legs, usually near the front of its body, and no wings. The lindworm was another popular device in British heraldry, likely derived from emblems used by Vikings and other Norse invaders.



*Lindworm*



*The Yggdrasil Tree with Nidhogg eating its roots.*

## Questions Part II

67. “Dragon”, “*draco*”, and “ *drakon*”, all basically mean a.) “\_\_” or “\_\_”.  
 a.  
 b.
68. The prototypical Chinese dragon is the a.) \_\_, or Lóng, a beast defined as specifically having nine anatomical features: the head of a b.) \_\_, the horns of a c.) \_\_, the eyes of a d.) \_\_, the ears of a e.) \_\_, the neck of a f.) \_\_, the belly of a g.) \_\_, the scales of a h.) \_\_, the claws of an i.) \_\_, and the paws of a j.) \_\_.  
 a.  
 b.  
 c.  
 d.  
 e.  
 f.  
 g.  
 h.  
 i.  
 j.
69. Delete the traits that belong to a traditional European dragon:  
 Evil                  reptilian                  legged                  winged                  walk or fly  
                                  fire-breathing                  not fire breathing                  greedy                  can speak  
                                  murderous                  intelligent                  logical
70. Which draconian species has two forelegs, wings, barbed tail?  
 a.
71. What is absent on a drake that distinguishes it from a traditional European dragon  
 a.
72. Wyrms are basically what?  
 a.
73. What main feature does a wyvern possess that a lindworm does not?  
 a.

Answers to the following questions can not be lifted literally from the podcast. Paraphrasing is expected.

74. Fill in the characteristic chart for common dragon-types. The first one has been done for you.  
 The material below WILL BE on your final exam!

Species	Winged?	Legs?	Fire breathing?	Barb-tailed?	Has other animal parts?	Associations
Trad-Euro	yes	4	possibly	no	no	Evil, treasure, greed, sin
Wyvern						

Wyrm						
Lindworm						
Amphiptere						
Drake						
Chinese						

## Named dragons in mythological history

- Musksuzu “moo-SKOO-zoo”: 1st dragon written about in human civilization
- Bashmu “BASH-moo”: “Venomous Snake” was a horned snake with wings and forelegs. It was also the name of the constellation of the Akkadians, which is similar to the Greek Hydra.
- Usmgalu “OOS-ehm-GAH-loo” “great dragon” a lion-dragon demon, it has been somewhat speculatively identified with the four-legged, winged dragon of the late 3rd millennium BCE.
- Nihon no Ryu “NEE-ho no RI-oo” also known as ryū or tatsu. It is a mythical animal that first appears in Japanese mythology in 680 A.D.. The dragon is a large creature that looks like a serpent, with koi scales, eagle claws, a camel's head, ox ears, and deer horns. It is revered in Japanese culture as a symbol of power, wisdom, and good fortune
- Wajet “WA-jæt”: goddess of serpents, the Nile Delta, and the land of the living. She is also the protector of Egyptian kings, and is known as “the Green One”. Wadjet is usually depicted as a woman or a cobra wearing the crown of Lower Egypt. In her cobra form, she is said to be the matron and protector of Upper Egypt. When Wadjet unifies with her sister Nekhbet, the Goddess of Upper Egypt, she becomes the joint protector and patron of all of Egypt.
- Nidhoggr “NEED-hog-er” also known as the Malice Striker, is a serpent dragon that gnaws at the roots of Yggdrasil, the tree of life. Nidhoggr is described as very powerful, malicious, and evil, with legendary physical strength and gigantic size. He is also known to chew the corpses of murderers and those who break oaths
- Lotan “low-TAN” also known as Litan, or Litanu, was a seven-headed sea dragon from Canaanite mythology. Not only was he a servant of Yam, the god of the sea, but also a child of the Leviathan and Tiamat.
- Temtem “TEM-TEM” possibly another name for Lotan
- Ilyanka “əl-YAHN-kə” Hittite serpentine dragon
- Leviathan “le-VI-ə-thən” In Hebrew mythology, a female sea monster created at the dawn of time representing the sea, 300 miles long, can breath fire described as having bright, flashing, dazzling eyes slain by Hebrew god Yahweh
- Behemoth “bə-HEE-məth” In Hebrew mythology, a male chaos beast, like a vast hippopotamus representing the dry earth and deserts
- Typhon “TI-fən” Greek monster with 100 dragon heads
- Ladon “LAY-d-ən” the serpent-like dragon that twined and twisted around the tree in the Garden of the Hesperides and guarded the golden apples.
- Jormungandr “YOUR-mən-GAHN-der” a giant, evil serpent in Norse mythology that encircles the Earth by biting its own tail. Its name means “wolf-serpent”. It's also known as the Midgard Serpent or World Serpent because it's so large that it wraps around the world of humans, Midgard.
- Fafnir “FAF-near” a dragon that guards the Nibelungs' gold hoard until Sigurd kills him. The story of Fafnir is told in the Völsunga saga
- The Rainbow Serpent: In Australian folklore, the rainbow serpent represents a deity, or god, responsible for giving life as well as creating and destroying nature, particularly in relation to water. It's believed that the snake travels from one



waterhole to another, blessing the people when happy and causing destruction when angered.

- Vishap “VISH-hap” In Armenian mythology, an amphiptere who controls the waters of the world

## Named deities appearing in the transcript that are not dragons

- Marduk “MAR-duck” Mesopotamia. The chief god of the city of Babylon and the national god of Babylonia; as such, he was eventually called simply Bel (Bal), or Lord. Originally, he seems to have been a god of thunderstorms.
- Ningishzida “NIN-juh-ZEE-də”: Mesopotamia. Originally a power of the netherworld, where he held the office of throne bearer, he seems to have originally been a tree god, for his name apparently means “Lord Productive Tree.” In particular, he probably was god of the winding tree roots, since he originally was represented in serpent shape.
- Tiamat “TEE-ə-maht”: a Mesopotamian goddess who represents the oceans, saltwater, and the sea. She is also the mother of the gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon, and is considered to be the primordial goddess of the sea. Tiamat is often seen as a monstrous embodiment of the chaos of primordial creation the
- Nergal “NIR-gall”) in Mesopotamian religion, secondary god of the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon. He was identified with Irra, the god of scorched earth and war, and with Meslamtaea, He Who Comes Forth from Meslam.
- Nabu “NAY-boo” (sometimes known as Tutu) is the Babylonian god of wisdom, learning, prophecy, scribes, and writing and was also responsible for the abundant harvest and all growing things
- Apollo “ə-PAWL-o” Greek god of the sun, music, light. Son of Zeus. Twin of Artemis
- Hadad “huh-DAD” was the storm and rain god in the Canaanite and ancient Mesopotamian religions
- Baal “BAH-all” Synonymous with Hadad, is a Canaanite-Phoenician god of fertility and weather, specifically rainstorms.
- Tarhuns “TA-hoon” Known as a storm god, Tarhun is often shown with a double axe and a triple thunderbolt, emphasizing his dominion over storms and natural forces. This visual motif highlights his significant role within Hittite and Luwian religious contexts.
- Yahweh “YAH-way” The god of the Hebrew Bible and that of the Isrealite people
- Zeus “ZOOS” Ancient Greek king of the gods, the sky, the weather
- Hercules “HER-q-leez” Ancient Greek demi-god, son of Zeus, strongest mortal on earth.
- Thor “THOR” Norse god of thunder, lightning, storms, war

## Terms for which a pronunciation and or definition might help

- Tutankhamun “too-tuhn-KAA-muhn” Although not considered a deity by modern scholars, he (also known as Tutankhamen and ‘King Tut’, r. C.1336-c. 1327 BCE) is the most famous and instantly recognizable Pharaoh in the modern world. His golden sarcophagus is now a symbol almost synonymous with Egypt. His name means ‘living image of [the god] Amun’. The Egyptians considered him a god-on-earth figure as with all pharaohs.
- Beowulf “BAY-ə-wolf” a legendary Geatish (of the peoples known as the Geats) warrior and hero of the Old English poem Beowulf.
- Nennius “NIN-ee-ə-s” or Nemnius or Nemnivus – was a Welsh monk of the 9th century. He has traditionally been attributed with the authorship of the *Historia Brittonum*, based on the prologue affixed to that work. This attribution is widely considered a secondary (10th-century) tradition.
- Vortigern “VOR-tə-gən” also spelled Vortiger, Vortigan, Voertigern and Vortigen, was a 5th-century warlord in Britain, known perhaps as a king of the Britons or at least connoted as such in the writings of Bede and Gildas. His existence is contested by scholars and information about him is obscure. [He is also the figure who is given credit/blame on opening the door to the Anglo-Saxon migration/invasion that displaced the Briton culture]
- Sigurd. “SEE-gurd” a hero of the Norse Volsung Saga who slays the dragon Fafnir.
- Metaphor a direct comparison between two unlike things without the use of a connecting word such as “as”, “like” or “than”. E.g. “Coach is a bear in the mornings before his Dr. Pepper Strawberries & Cream Zero.”
- Heraldry “HEH-rəl-dree” the art and science of using, displaying, and regulating hereditary symbols, also known as armorial bearings, to distinguish individuals, armies, institutions, and corporations. These symbols originated as identification devices on flags and shields, and have been used in Western Europe since the second quarter of the 12th century. The term “heraldry” comes from the officers who ran tournaments, called heralds.

To reward you for reading the entire document first as you were instructed to do so, you can find literally ALL of the answers to these questions [here](#).