



## THE MONOPOD

One of the illustrations in our display includes the monopod, a small human figure with one giant foot at the end of its one leg, under which it supposedly sheltered from the sun. Monopods date back centuries and appear regularly in medieval books and manuscripts. They also appeared in C.S. Lewis' "Voyage of the Dawn Treader". Our monopod is from Sebastian Münster's, "Cosmographia Universalis" printed in Basle in 1572. In reality the monopod was probably just a man, seen from a distance, carrying an early version of an umbrella to provide shelter from the heat.

## HERE BE MONSTERS

Centuries ago the sea was regarded as a dangerous and unknown place full of all kinds of monsters. Medieval maps show them roaming the seas and unknown areas of the world were simply described with the words "Here be monsters". Even today the deepest oceans conceal many secrets from us and we have a lot to learn about the creatures that live there. Our display contains several sea monsters which would frighten even the

bravest of medieval sailors: giant serpents wrapping themselves around ships; seven headed monsters; giant man eating shrimp like creatures and scaly fish-man creatures that would not be out of place in an old episode of Dr Who. Although the monster exhibition finishes on the 1st September, the library will still be open until the end of October. Our final display of the year will be made up of "old favourites" including Bede's Homilies, a

manuscript older than the Cathedral itself; the Lincoln Chapter Bible; the Epistles of St Jerome, our earliest printed book and a fascinating 17th century book on space travel. New for the "closed season" this year will be regular bookable library tours. Details will appear on the Cathedral website later in the year: [www.lincolncathedral.com/education-learning/the-library/](http://www.lincolncathedral.com/education-learning/the-library/)

A PLACE TO...

# DISCOVER

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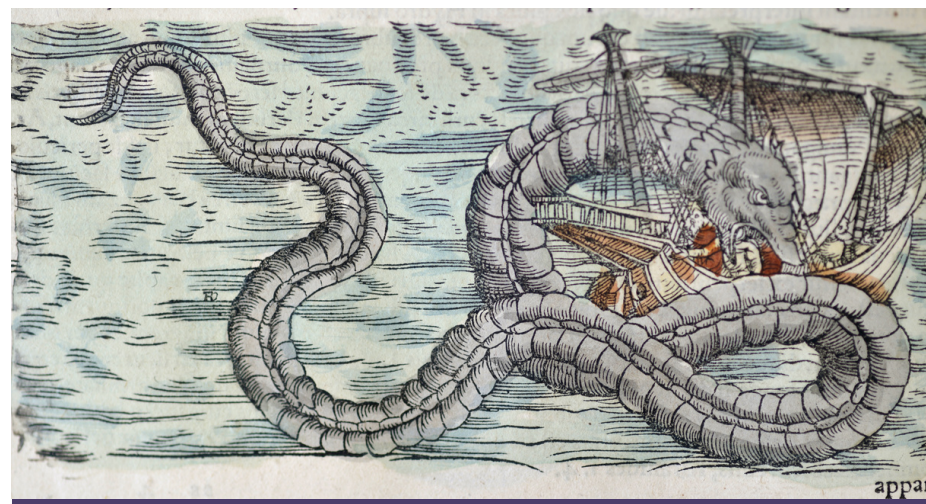
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## LINCOLN CATHEDRAL LIBRARY NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2018



## MONSTER SPECIAL

Our summer exhibition of manuscripts and rare early printed books entitled "Here be Monsters", has proved so popular that it has been extended and will continue right through until the 1st September, giving visitors a chance to see some of the strange creatures that existed in the imaginations of Medieval artists and writers. The books on display are filled with dragons and wyverns, griffins, headless men, cyclops, weird and wonderful human beings,

devils and a variety of sea monsters. Did medieval people really believe in these fabulous creatures which were supposed to live at the edges of the world, or did they have symbolic meanings? From the earliest days of manuscript writing, monsters and strange creatures have decorated the margins of the pages, quite often seemingly unrelated to the text that they accompany. Serpents and dragons are often intertwined around the decorated and illuminated

capitals. To the modern reader, these monsters are a fanciful flight of fantasy, but to the medieval reader they most likely represented evil or sinful behaviour or even people who did not conform to their Christian beliefs. Whatever they signified in the past, today we can simply marvel at their strangeness and beauty and the artistic talents of the artists who painted them.

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INSPIRING PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS





## DRAGONS V WYVERNS

Many of us have heard the story of Saint George and the dragon. On display at the moment is our 1487 copy of The Golden Legend, a compendium of the lives of the saints, translated by William Caxton. It is open at the life of St George whose slaying of the dragon was symbolic of the struggle between good and evil. In Western Medieval art and literature, dragons were depicted as fierce creatures,

being a physical representation of the destructive power of Evil. In the East, on the other hand, particularly in China, dragons represented power, strength and good luck. We all imagine what we think a dragon would look like but they could easily be confused with other very similar creatures called wyverns, which possessed the same characteristics. So how can you tell the difference

between a dragon and a wyvern? Basically it all depends on the number of legs. The wyvern had two legs whereas true dragons had four. Dragons and wyverns decorate many of the Cathedral's misericords in St Hugh's choir and if you look closely above you in the cloister as you walk towards the library, you might spot some more creeping out of the stonework.



## A FISHY TALE

As well as the thousands of books collected by Michael Honynwood, the library's greatest benefactor, the library contains hundreds of short pamphlets. Many relate to the English Civil War which had such an effect on Honynwood's life but many seem to be totally random and in some cases rather odd. One such pamphlet is called "Strange news from Ireland: or a true and perfect relation of a famous fish

taken at Kingsale". Printed in London in 1677, it tells the story of a monstrous twelve foot long fish caught at Kingsale in Ireland. The fish is described as having the head of a man with long black hair, the face of a lion, the front legs of a bull and the back legs of an eagle. Round its mouth were three long sharp horns with which it injured one of the men who had caught it. The man became terribly ill and his

friends doubted that he would survive. Once the fish itself had died it was kept for all to see in the town of Kingsale "where it now remains for the wonderment of all its numerous beholders". Unfortunately there is no illustration of this amazing fish. We will just have to use our imaginations.



## LET THIS BE A WARNING

In Medieval art and literature the entrance to Hell was often depicted as the jaws of a huge monster with a wide, gaping mouth, devouring human souls, and was intended to frighten people into living good lives. Inside Hell were many tortured souls from all walks of life. No matter how rich and powerful they were, nobody was above judgement. Often devils are shown carrying the souls towards the jaws of Hell, before throwing them into the fiery depths. This image is taken from our early 15th century copy of Richard Rolle's, "Emmendatio Vitae" a treatise on repentance, which is currently on display in the Medieval library.

