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Opening extract from

Dragonology

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CHAPTER II.

DIFFERENT SPECIES OF DRAGON.
EASTERN DRAGONS.

It is interesting to note that, while legends of Western dragons portray them as vicious, bloodthirsty monsters, Eastern dragons are for the most part seen as benevolent helpmeets to mankind. The reasons for this most likely stem from the historical interactions that mankind has had with different species of dragon. Clearly some have been better neighbours than others.



Some species of lung *lay their eggs in running water.*



TIBETAN *Draco montana*

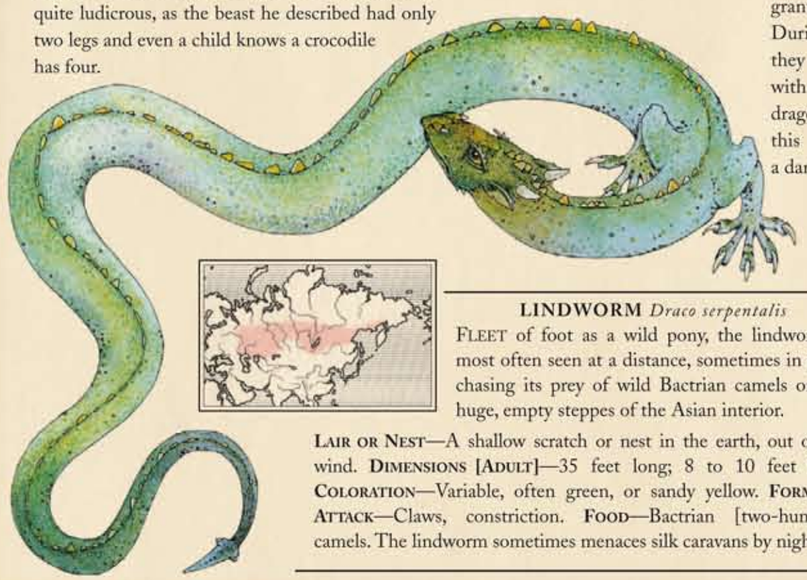
THINNER and redder than its counterpart, the Asian *lung*, the Tibetan dragon is a lover of high altitudes. Its main prey is the Himalayan yeti, a large mountain ape that has adapted to the cold conditions and rarefied atmosphere found in the higher mountains.

LAIR OR NEST—On the open mountainside in summer, in a shallow den of snow in winter. **DIMENSIONS [ADULT]**—40 feet long; 10 to 12 feet high. **COLORATION**—Almost invariably red. **FORMS OF ATTACK**—Biting, or else constriction. **FOOD**—Usually the large mountain apes known as yetis, sometimes yaks.



LINDWORMS.

For years it was thought that the explorer Marco Polo's description of a lindworm was actually a description of a Chinese crocodile. This notion is quite ludicrous, as the beast he described had only two legs and even a child knows a crocodile has four.



LINDWORM *Draco serpentalis*

FLEET of foot as a wild pony, the lindworm is most often seen at a distance, sometimes in pairs, chasing its prey of wild Bactrian camels on the huge, empty steppes of the Asian interior.

LAIR OR NEST—A shallow scratch or nest in the earth, out of the wind. **DIMENSIONS [ADULT]**—35 feet long; 8 to 10 feet high. **COLORATION**—Variable, often green, or sandy yellow. **FORMS OF ATTACK**—Claws, constriction. **FOOD**—Bactrian [two-humped] camels. The lindworm sometimes menaces silk caravans by night.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EAST & WEST.

Sadly, in the West, mummers' plays enacting the mutilation and killing of dragons used to be fairly common events at May fairs. In the East, dragons are granted a proper respect. During Chinese festivals they are often honoured with dragon boat races and dragon dances as shown in this scene depicting such a dance in Canton in 1884.





ASIAN *LUNG* *Draco orientalis*

LUNG are most often found near the rivers, streams and lakes that hide their underwater lairs. Females carry their eggs with them for safety, using the lairs to store the pearls and opals they hoard away. The number of toes varies across the various subspecies.

LAIR OR NEST—Usually an underwater cave or grotto. **DIMENSIONS [ADULT]**—40 feet long; 12 to 15 feet high. **COLORATION**—Blue, black, white, red or yellow. **FORMS OF ATTACK**—Horns, teeth & claws used defensively. **FOOD**—Mainly fish and birds, particularly roasted swan.





Japanese lung *have four toes, Indonesian three.*



Chinese or Imperial lung *have five toes.*



The lithe movement of this species has given rise to the erroneous belief that it too can fly.

CHINESE LUNG *Draco orientalis magnus*

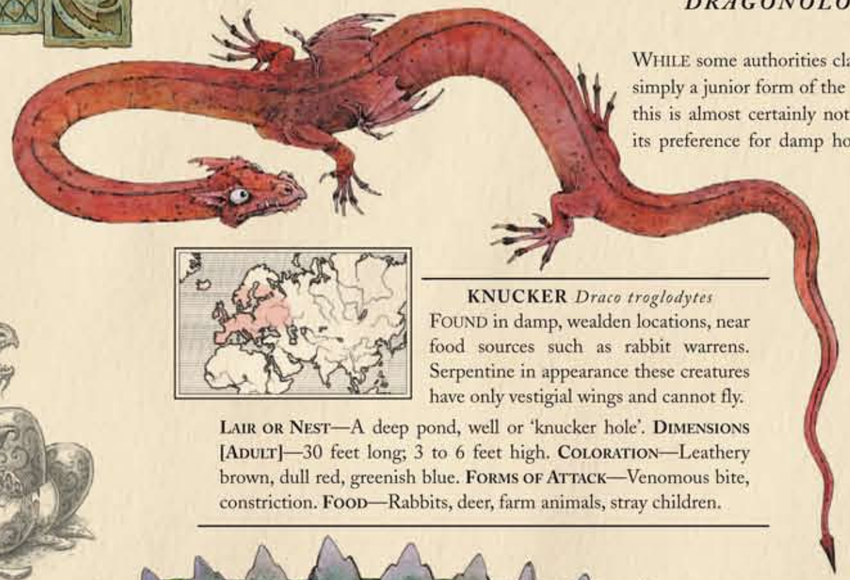
The lung's *egg was once thought to be a huge pearl.*

PROMINENT features of Chinese *lung*:
a. long, whiskery feelers *b.* stag-like horns *c.* mane *d.* five toes on each claw *e.* egg—usually carried in foreclaw *f.* large scales *g.* feathery tail

LONG associated with all kinds of water, Asian *lung* were seen as having power over rainfall and storm. It seems likely that the four legendary Chinese 'dragon kings' were highly impressive specimens.

DIFFERENT SPECIES OF DRAGON.
WESTERN DRAGONS.

While it is likely that all of these Western dragon species are closely related, the keen dragonologist will note a number of interesting differences between them. For example, while the rich flame of the European dragon is produced from a combustible venom [see Chapter III], that of the knucker does not ignite at all. Frost dragon venom, on the other hand, sprayed in a mist through Arctic air, has a corrosive action that is similar in almost every respect to the effects of frostbite.



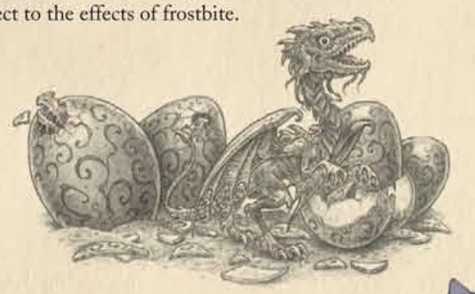
KNUCKER *Draco troglodytes*
FOUND in damp, wealden locations, near food sources such as rabbit warrens. Serpentine in appearance these creatures have only vestigial wings and cannot fly.

LAIR OR NEST—A deep pond, well or 'knucker hole'. **DIMENSIONS [ADULT]**—30 feet long; 3 to 6 feet high. **COLORATION**—Leathery brown, dull red, greenish blue. **FORMS OF ATTACK**—Venomous bite, constriction. **FOOD**—Rabbits, deer, farm animals, stray children.

WHILE some authorities claim the knucker is simply a junior form of the European dragon, this is almost certainly not the case. Indeed, its preference for damp holes and low-lying locations is in contrast to that of its larger cousins who prefer rocky, mountain areas. Also, although knuckers do hoard treasure, they will attack with venom rather than fire.



UNLIKE most reptiles, Western dragons spend much time caring for their egg-incubated young after they hatch, and a firm bond develops quickly between chick and parent.

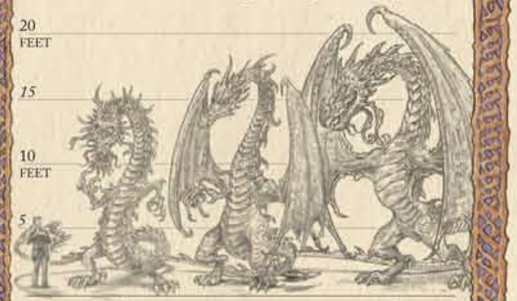


No doubt but there is none other beeste comparable to the mightie dragon in awesome power and majestie, and few so worthie of the diligent studies of wise men—Gildas Magnus, *Ars Draconis*, 1465.



PROMINENT features of the European dragon:
a. 'arrowhead' tail—hardened for use in fighting
b. thick spines *c.* large bat-like wings
d. clawed talons *e.* scales *f.* horns
g. fanged teeth *h.* eyes—all dragons have a truly phenomenal sense of sight

THE somewhat perilous science of dragometricity—or dragon measurement—has few living exponents. However, we can assert that adult wyverns are the tallest of dragons, standing some 20 feet *or so* in height, as may be seen in the following diagram.
a. Human *b.* Chinese *Lung c.* European *d.* Wyvern





EUROPEAN *Draco occidentalis magnus*
KNOWN to most people through their ability to breathe fire and their love of treasure, this species is now confined to a few remote areas. Effective at using language, they shed their skins triennially.

LAIR OR NEST—A mountain or sea cave in a remote area. **DIMENSIONS [ADULT]**—45 feet long; 13 to 17 feet high. **COLORATION**—Red, green, black or occasionally gold. **FORMS OF ATTACK**—Flame, tail, claws, horns. **FOOD**—Cattle, sheep, humans [the latter only if no other food available—due to bitter flavour].





FROST *Draco occidentalis maritimus*
ANNUAL Arctic—Antarctic migrators, frost dragons fly thousands of miles each year to ensure that they spend the greater part of the year in their favoured dark, winter climates hunting for food.

LAIR OR NEST—A sea-facing cave hollowed out from a glacier or iceberg. **DIMENSIONS [ADULT]**—40 feet long; 12 to 15 feet high. **COLORATION**—Pure white, or white tinged with blue or pink. **FORMS OF ATTACK**—Fearsome 'frosty blast', tail, claws, horns. **FOOD**—Giant squid, polar bear, orca, walrus, leopard seal.