



Left: Lamassu
Iran 794 (1935)



Right: Dragon
of Marduk
Germany Demo-
cratic Rep. 874
(1996)



Lamassu

Feline Composite Creatures

By Greg Balagian

The imagination of the ancient world gave birth to a vast array of composite monsters that inhabited a world rich with myths and legends.

Composite creatures have a single constant form comprising two or more animals. There are numerous part-feline composite creatures. In this article I would like to focus on some lesser-known part-lion hybrids which are depicted on stamps.

The first one is the Lamassu, a creature from Assyrian mythology which is usually depicted as a winged bull or lion with a human head. A part-lion Lamassu bas-relief from Persepolis is displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the only stamp depicting it is from 1935, Iran Scott 794.

Another fantastic Assyrian creature is the Dragon of Marduk, a monster with a scaly body, serpent's head, viper's horns, front feet of a feline, hind feet of a bird, and a scorpion's tail. This creature decorates the famous Ishtar Gate in Babylon and it can be seen on a 1996

stamp from German Democratic Republic Scott 874 and a 2006 souvenir sheet of Iraq Scott 1710. It can also be seen on Iraqi stamps depicting the Ishtar gate, such as 1967 Scott 454, 2008 Scott 1745a, and 2009 Scott 1749-1751.

Leokampoi, a fishtailed lion and pardalokampoi, a fishtailed leopard, are creatures from Etruscan mythology that sometimes have wings. A Leokampoi can be seen on a 2001 stamp of Italy Scott 2429 depicting an Etruscan clam shell case with gold decoration.

Leokampoi also decorates the imperial scepter of Emperor Pedro II of Brazil on 1991 Brazil Scott 2346 [on the back cover] and 1998 Brazil Scott 2692, and the Royal Scepter of Queen Maria II of Portugal, 1992 Portugal Scott 1900.

The leokampoi is presented as a heraldic beast on numerous stamps of Philippines depicting coat of arms of Manila, on the stamp with arms of the East India Company, 1959 St. Helena Scott 156, and the common design type commemorating the 25th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, 1978 St. Helena Scott 317c. ♣

Right: Leokampoi
Philippines 252 (1906)

Far right: Leokampoi
St. Helena 317c (1978)

