

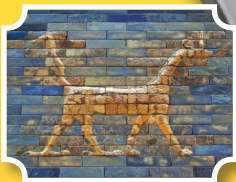
Dragon Legend

BABYLON



Babylon: Gates of Ishtar

In **575 BC**, King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon ordered huge gates built in his city. The artists who constructed the gates drew pictures of some animals they were familiar with—aurochs, a type of large cattle that is now extinct, and a dragon that looked like this.



Images of lions, another animal that lived in Babylon at that time, lined the walls of the street leading up to the gate.

Since the aurochs and lions are real animals, what real animal do you think the dragon represents? Maybe some type of dinosaur (such as the *Segnosaurus* on the front of this card) that roamed that area where Nebuchadnezzar lived? (You can also read more about King Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel in the Bible.)

Dragon Legend



NORTH AMERICA



North America: The Thunderbird

Ever heard of a “flying serpent”? Do you think it may have been a real animal?

In **1890**, *The Tombstone Epitaph* (a newspaper in Tombstone, Arizona) reported that two ranchers found a “winged monster, resembling a huge alligator with an extremely elongated tail and an immense pair of wings” in the desert near the Huachuca Mountains. According to the newspaper report,

“The wings were composed of a thick nearly transparent membrane and were devoid of feathers or hair, as was the entire body.”

Does that sound like any creature you’ve heard of before? Maybe some type of large *Rhamphorhynchus*?

Dragon Legend



MONGOLIA



MONGOLIA: Marco Polo



Did you know Marco Polo isn't just the name of a game you play in the pool? He was a real man who explored Asia and chronicled his travels in the late **1200s**. He described many of the animals he saw, including a dragon:

"Leaving the city of Yachi, and traveling ten days in a westerly direction, you reach the province of Karazan, which is also the name of the chief city . . . Here are seen huge serpents, ten paces in length [*about 30 feet*], and ten spans [*about 8 feet*] girth of the body. At the fore part, near the head, they have two short legs, having three claws like those of a tiger, with eyes larger than a forepenny loaf and very glaring. The jaws are wide enough to swallow a man, the teeth are large and sharp, and their whole appearance is so formidable, that neither man, nor any kind of animal can approach them without terror."

Wow! What kind of animal do you think that "huge serpent" was? Maybe something like a theropod dinosaur?

Dragon Legend



ENGLAND



ENGLAND:

St. GEORGE & the DRAGON

Saint George was a warrior who lived during the **AD 300s** and shared the good news of Jesus Christ wherever he went. One day, he visited a small town only to find a princess about to be sacrificed to a dragon terrorizing the town. Here is one account of what happened:

“ **A dreadful dragon lay waste the countryside till perchance a good knight passed by. I shall help thee in the name of Jesus Christ said Sir George to the king's fair daughter. Valiant in battle, he smote the foul beast, struck a mortal blow, rescuing the princess and saving her people.** ”

Do you think George may have fought something like a *Velociraptor*?

Dragon Legend



CHINA



China: Dragon Legends



Dragon legends play a big role in Chinese culture. Dragons even appear on China's twelve-year calendar cycle. Since eleven of these animals are common today (dog, rat, monkey, etc.), doesn't it make sense that the twelfth (a dragon) was a real animal, too? *The Travels of Marco Polo* describes some of these long and lanky "serpents," which included short legs and claws. He claimed the Chinese would use special methods to kill these dragons. Some of the dragons' body parts were used for medicinal purposes, and others were eaten as a delicacy.

Dragons are also featured on Chinese pottery, embroidery, and carvings.

The Chinese dragon is described as having "the head of a camel, the horns of a deer, fiery eyes and a long beard. Its ears are like those of a cow, its paws like the tiger's and its claws sharp like an eagle's. Its neck is serpentine; it has the belly of a frog and the scales of a carp."

What type of animal do you think the dragon really was? (A version of *Dracorex* is pictured on the front of this card.)

Dragon Legend



SWEDEN

SWEDEN: Beowulf & Grendel

Around **AD 600**, a man named Beowulf was king of the Getes (in southern Sweden).

According to one account, Beowulf fought three dragons that menaced his country. One of the dragons was called Grendel, and it is said of Grendel's claws that "every nail, claw-scale and spur, every spike and welt on the hand of that heathen brute was like barbed steel."

Beowulf fought and killed Grendel and its mother, and fifty years later, he fought another dragon—a fiery, flying serpent.

“The dragon began to belch out flame and burn bright homesteads; there was a hot glow that scared everyone, the vile sky-winger would leave nothing alive in his wake.” ”

Beowulf defeated this dragon, but died from the injuries he got from the fight. Do you think Beowulf may have fought a *Baryonyx*, like the one pictured on the front of this card?

Dragon Legend



ISRAEL



Israel:

The Bible & flying serpents

Many of the men who wrote books found in the Old Testament portion of the Bible described animals they knew about—lions, owls, donkeys, snakes . . . and dragons.

The Old Testament is primarily written in Hebrew, and one interesting word they used is *tannin*. In the King James Version of the Bible, this word is often translated as *dragon*. *Tannin* has a range of meanings, including “sea monster” (Gen. 1:21; Job 7:12; Psa. 148:7; Isa. 27:1; Ezek. 29:3) and “serpent” (Exod. 7:9). *Tannin* are fearsome creatures, living in remote, desolate places (Isa. 34:13, 35:7; Jer. 49:33, 51:37); are difficult to kill (Isa. 27:1, 51:9); are serpentine (Deut. 32:33); and have feet (Ezek. 32:2). The word seems to refer to large, fearsome creatures that dwelled in swampy areas or in the water. The term could include reptiles—such as dinosaurs—and mammals.

The prophet Isaiah also mentions a “fiery flying serpent” (Isaiah 30:6). This could be a reference to creature like a *Pterodactyl*.

Dragon Legend



INDIA

India:

Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great
was the ruler of Greece in **330
BC**. After he invaded India, he told of his
encounter with a great hissing dragon.

Alexander found "among many other animals a Serpent which lived in a cavern and was regarded as sacred by the Indians who paid it great and superstitious reverence . . . Now as the army passed by the cavern and caused a noise, the Serpent was aware of it. (It has, as you know, the sharpest hearing and the keenest sight of all animals.) And it hissed and snorted so violently that all were terrified and confounded. It was reported to measure 70 cubits although it was not visible in all its length, for it only put its head out. At any rate, its eyes are said to have been the size of a large round Macedonian shield."

Do you think Alexander may have seen something like the *Spinosaurus* pictured on the front of this card?

Dragon Legend



PERU

PERU:

Pottery with dragons

The Moche were a people group who lived in Peru from **AD 400 to 1100**. They produced many pieces of pottery and clothing that survive today. On those items, they depicted the animals they saw—birds, monkeys, spiders.



This piece of pottery is displayed in the Museum of the Nation in Lima, Peru, and depicts another animal they must have encountered frequently—a dragon! (Perhaps an animal such as the *Triceratops* pictured on the front of this card?)

Dragon Legend

GREECE





Greece:

ROMANS kill a dragon

Marcus Atilius
Regulus was a general in
the Roman army about **250 BC**. He
led the Romans in war against Carthage,
a city in Greece.

According to one historian, one day when Regulus and his men were fighting, "a dragon suddenly crept up and settled behind the wall of the Roman army. The Romans killed it by order of Regulus, excoriated it and sent the hide to the Roman senate. When the dragon's hide . . . was measured up by order of the senate, it happened to be, amazing, one hundred and twenty feet long, and the thickness was fitting to the length."

That's a pretty big animal, isn't it? What kind of big animal can you think of that might fit this description? Maybe a big sauropod dinosaur?