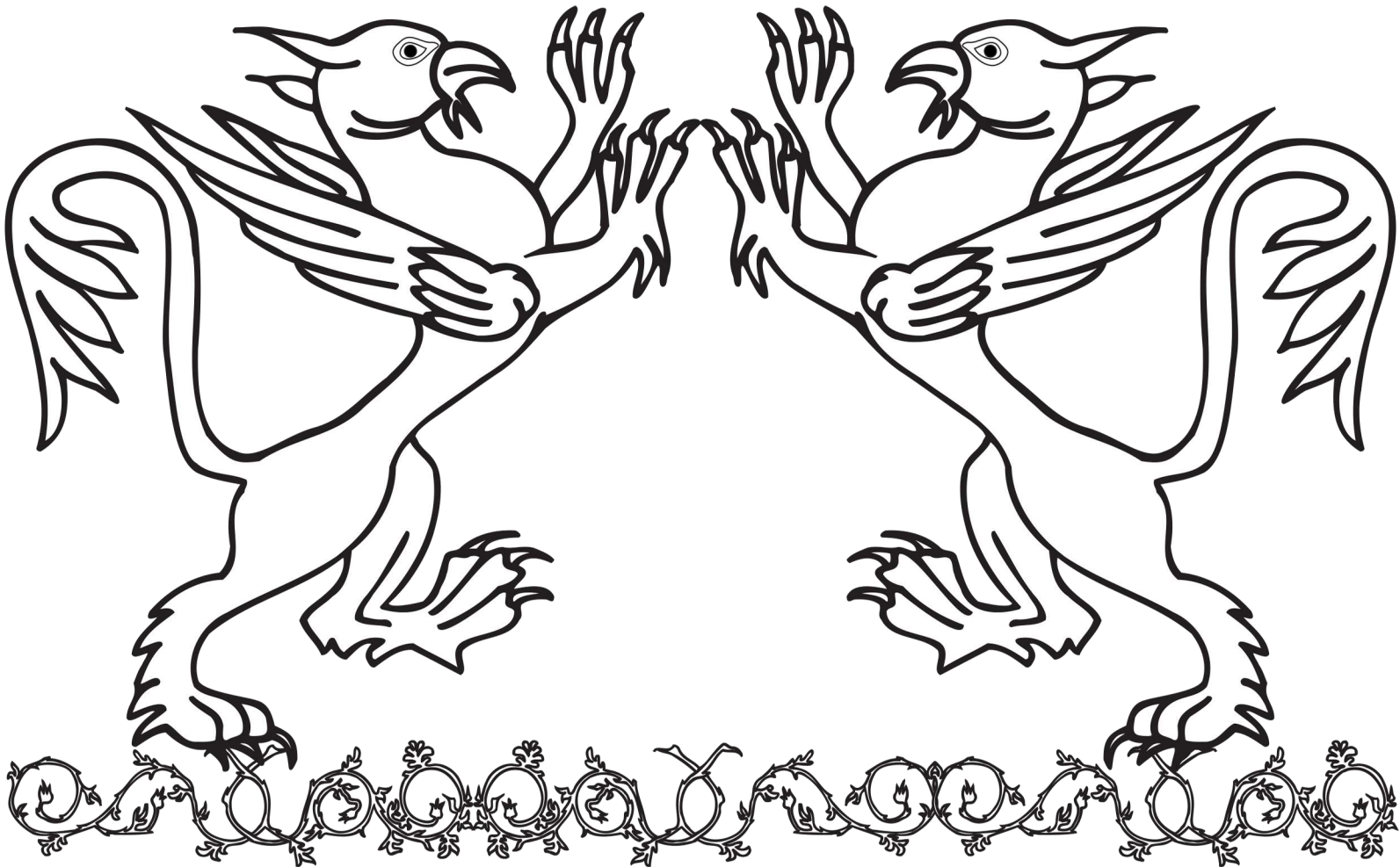
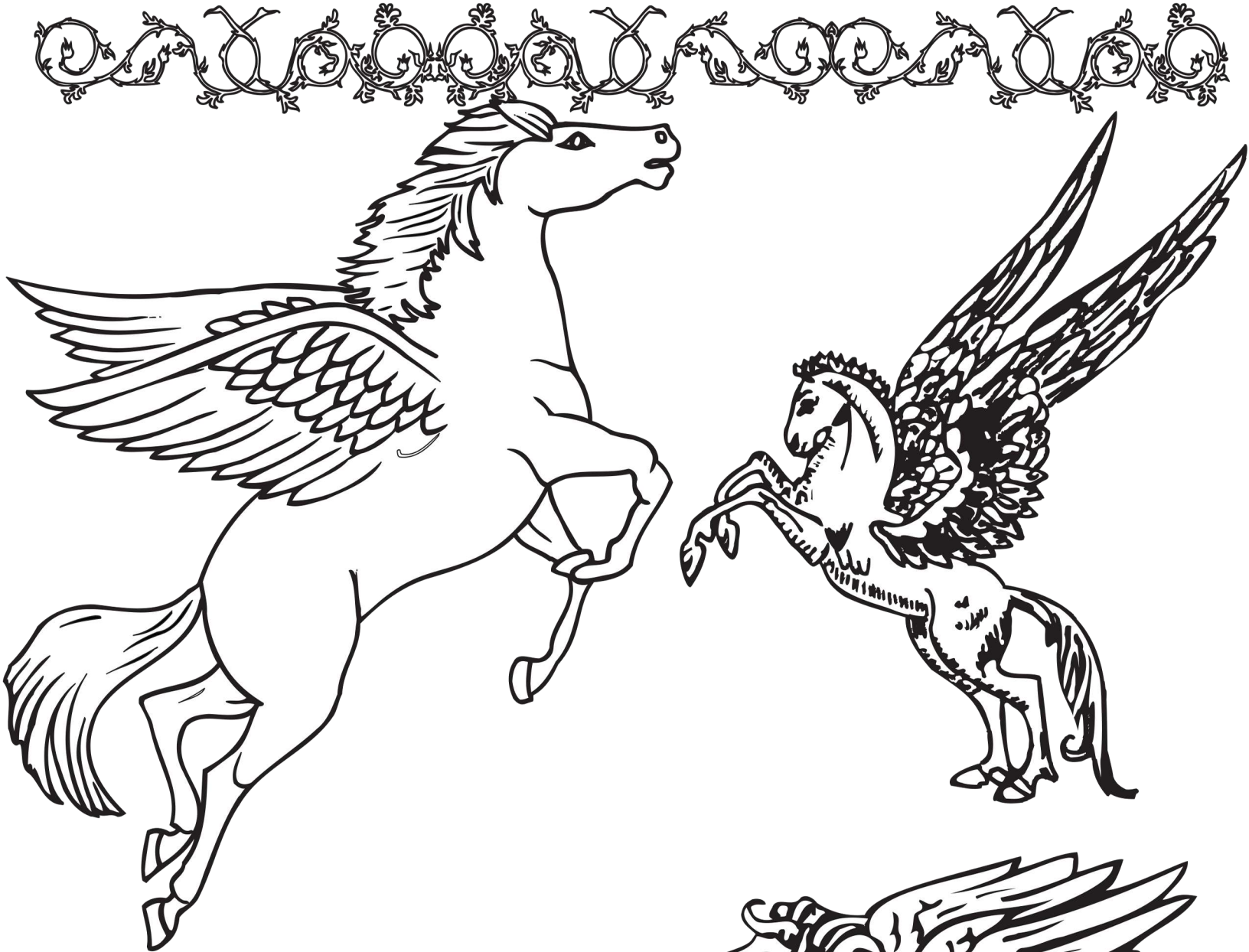




mythical Beasts

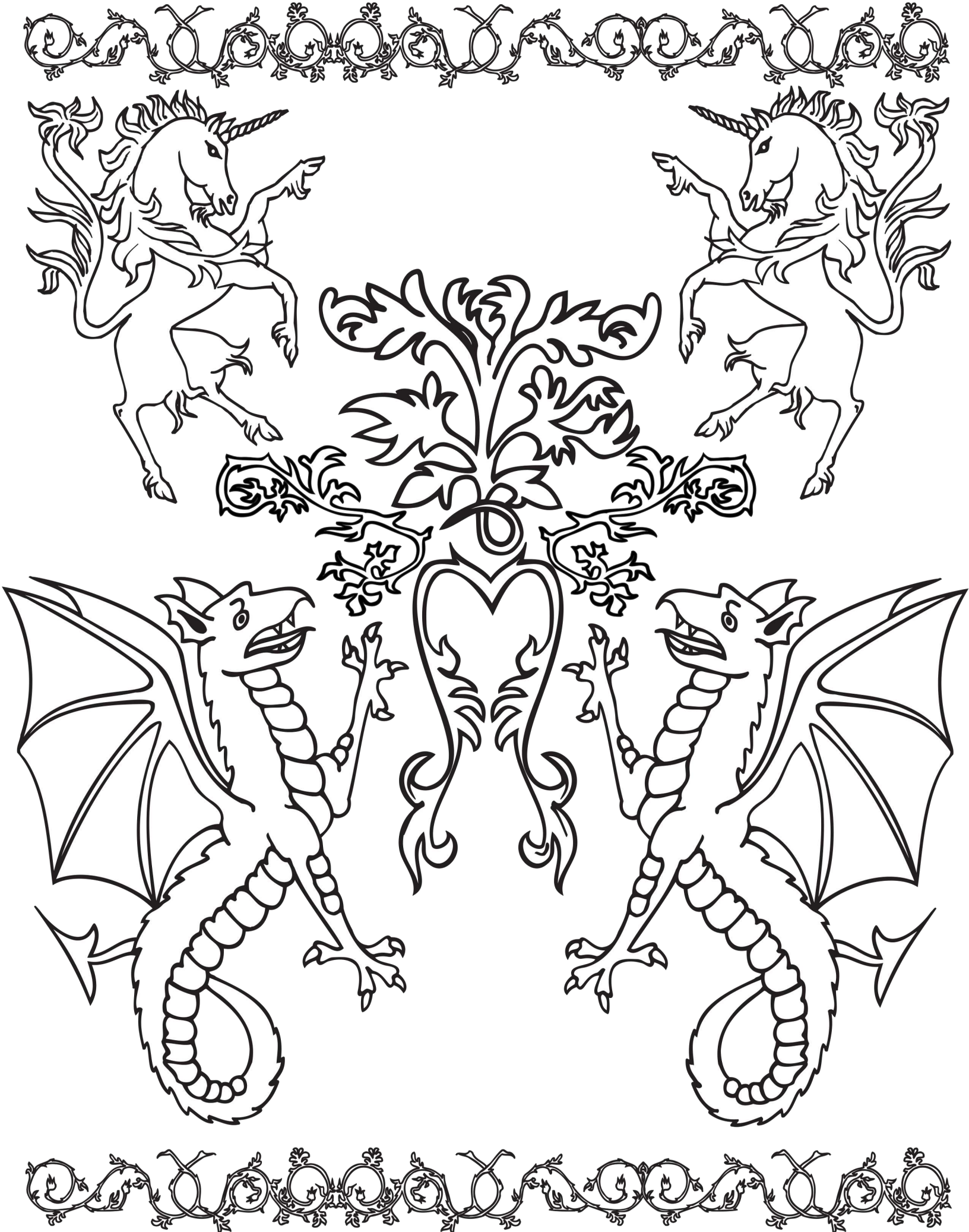




egasus, the legendary winged horse, is said to signify exceeding activity and energy of mind, whereby one may mount to honor.

It is also an emblem of fame. This beautiful horse of mythology is not an unusual symbol in heraldry and is used often as a crest.

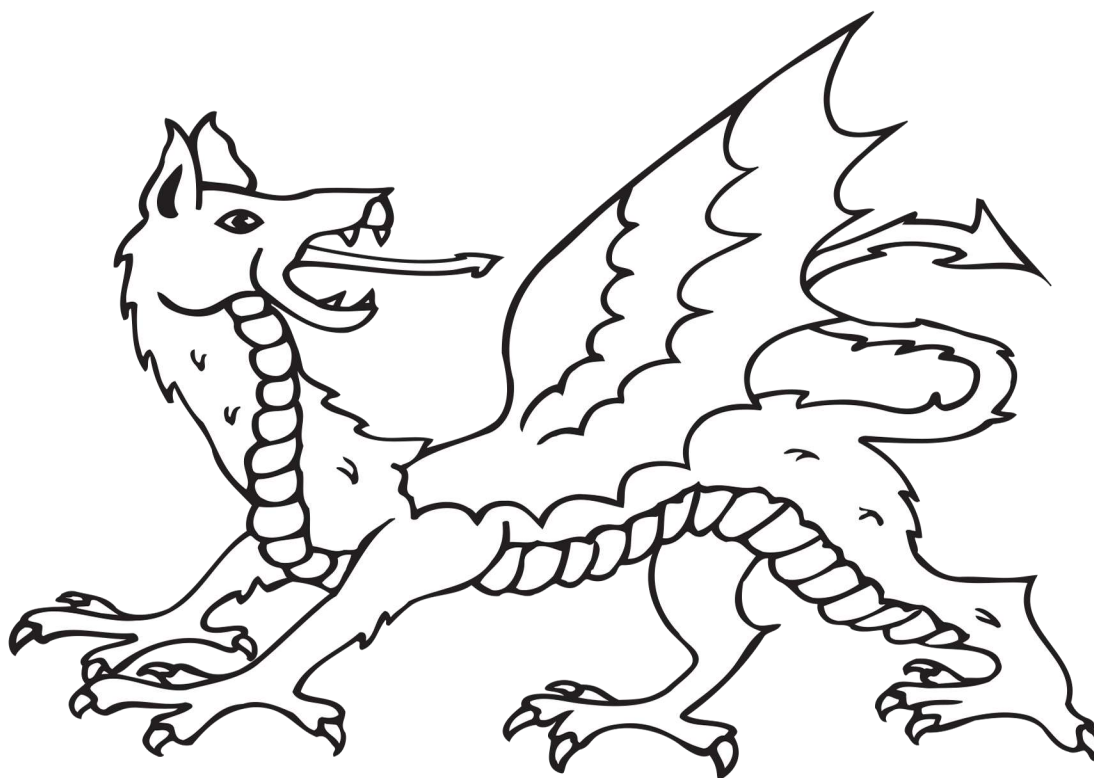








he Dragon is one of the most common mythical beasts in heraldry. It is depicted as a huge fire-breathing reptile with the claws of an eagle, the tail of a serpent, and wings like a bat. It is covered in scales and has a barbed tongue. In modern heraldry, great differences can be found in the way their ears are drawn, and in almost all modern representations the tail is barbed, though the dragons of the Tudor period in England invariably had smooth tails. If blazoned as a Chinese dragon, then no wings are shown.



ragons were perceived as powerful, protective, and fearsome, and they were valued for their warlike qualities. They were often protectors of a treasure, and from this they can be symbolic of a most valiant defender. They were also sometimes terrorizers of the people, symbols of satanic evil. One of the highest achievements of a hero in medieval legend was the slaying of a dragon, as in the story of St. George, where the victory over the dragon, was a symbolic victory of Christianity. Thus the dragon as a heraldic charge may signify the faith, strength and selfless courage needed to battle the overwhelmingly powerful, and evil dragon.



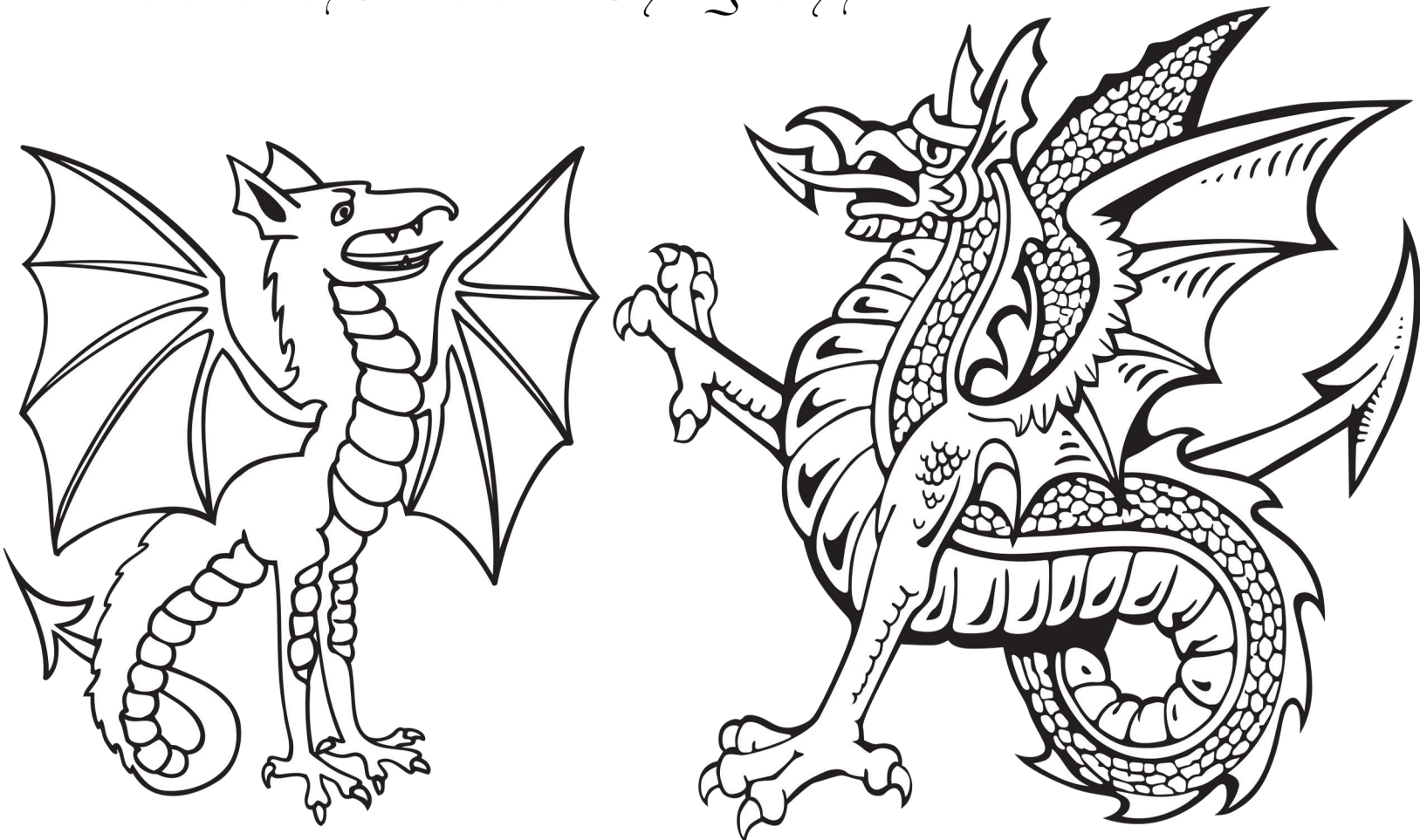


Uhe unicorn is a mythical beast, said to be famous for it's virtue, courage and strength. Its horn was believed to be a powerful antidote against poison.

According to legend, the unicorn could only be captured if a maiden was placed near a location the animal frequented. It would sense her purity and lay its head in her lap. During the middle ages, this was taken as an allegory of Christ's reincarnation, with the unicorn representing Christ and the maiden, his mother. Unicorns symbolize purity, elegance and charm. Up until the 17th century unicorns were believed to be real animals, in part due the existence of 'real' unicorns' horns, which have since been recognized as having been narwhale tusks. The heraldic unicorn has the body of a horse, the tail of a heraldic lion and the legs and feet of a deer. This beautiful symbol is a popular one in heraldry.



Yvern or wivern are mythical beasts with the upper part of a dragon, two legs and a body that curves into the tail of a serpent. It is usually depicted resting on its legs and tail, or just on the curve of its tail with its legs in the air, in a rampant position. The wyvern was supposed to have a keen sense of sight, which enabled it to guard treasures. The bearer of this symbol may have been a keen defender, or was thought to have slain a wyvern. Wyverns, like dragons, have the ability to breathe fire and can also be drawn vomiting flames.





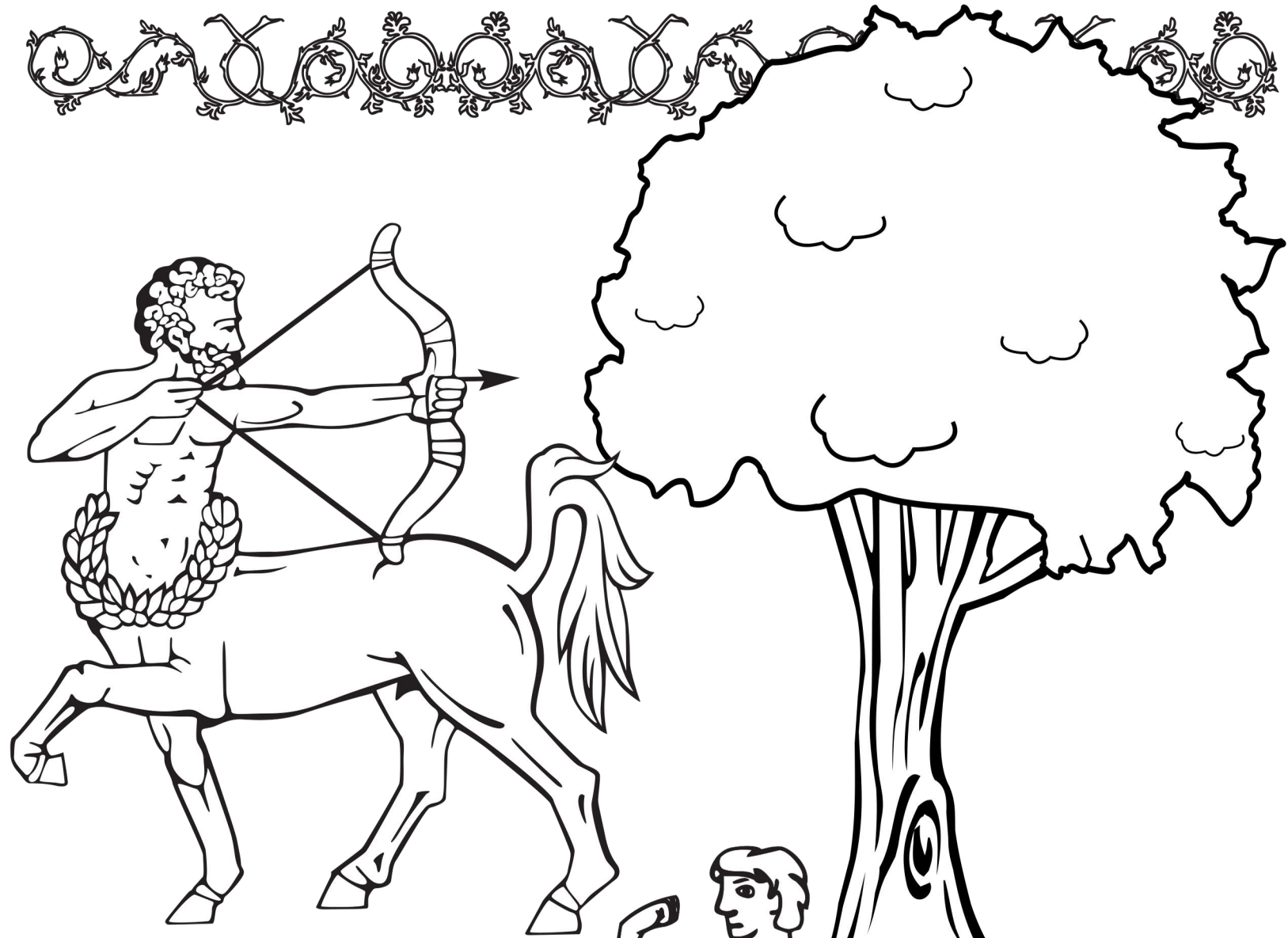
Griffins are mythical creatures, with the head, wings and talons of an eagle and the body and hind legs of a lion.

It is thus composed of the most royal of the birds and the beasts. The griffin was thought to find and guard mines of gold and hidden treasures. It is a principal device in heraldry, signifying valor, strength, vigilance, and perseverance.



The symbolism of the griffin was described by Alexander Nisbet in his *System of Heraldry* (1722) translated from Latin as: "The griffin represents wisdom joined to fortitude, but wisdom should lead, and fortitude follow." A distinctive feature of the griffin is that it has ears, which are large and stand up from its head. This is the only feature that differentiates a griffin's head from an eagle's. The griffin can be found in all the heraldic positions (segreant, passant, sejant etc.). A male griffin, for some reason, does not have wings: instead it is adorned with spikes at various points. The male griffin is a much rarer heraldic charge than the winged female.





Centaurs are well known creatures that are half man and half horse. A centaur carrying a bow and arrow is called Sagittarius. Both the Sagittarius and the centaur are quite common in heraldry. King Stephen is said to have assumed the symbol of Sagittarius because the sun was in that sign when he ascended the throne. The centaur is a symbol of virility and one who has been eminent in the field of battle.

