## M0007717: Collins: "Some 12th Century Animal Carvings", fifth page

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UNICORN WITH HEAD IN VIRGIN'S LAP: MS. 22, IN WESTMINSTER CHAPTER LIBRARY

When his eyes become dim, and his wings heavy, he flies up to the sun to scorch himself and then is rejuvenated by plunging into water. The story which our MS. represents is that of the parent eagle forcing his young to gaze at the sun. Two eaglets obey, but the third which fails is pulled out of the nest by the scruff of the neck. Our readers will be glad to know that a coot is ready to mother the rejected bird. The carving on the doorway at Ribbsford, Worcestershire may represent the eagle with three young ones. One is held in the parent's talons. The carving is very flat, and the sun is not shown.

The caladrius in a decayed carving at Alne is perched on the body of a sick man and gazing on his face. By the direction of the bird's gaze, he prophesies whether or no the sick are to recover. If the bird turns his gaze away, the omen is most unfavourable. The caladrius, a perfectly white bird, is a symbol of Jesus Christ without spot or stain, who came to save both Jew and Gentile. But He had to turn away from the former. The miniature shows the bird foretelling the recovery of a king, who is

leaning on his elbow and almost turned away. The caladrius is found in the courts of kings. The subject may also be found on a voussoir

at St. Margaret's, York.

The MS. illustration of a mantichora shows a fearful and spirited beast striking down a man. The name is akin to the Persian for maneater. The Bestiaries say that the mantichora is a native of India. It has triple rows of teeth

fitting alternately, the face of a man with blue-grey eyes, and the body of a lion, except that it is the colour of blood. Its tail has a scorpion's sting, and its voice is like reed pipes. It is very fond of human flesh. The carving at Kilpeck, Herefordshire, gives most of the details correctly, though the man is absent, and the tail is far too bushy for a scorpion's sting.

It is with regret that we must say that we have no certain twelfthcentury carvings of a wolf, such as we can see on the stalls at Faversham, Kent, or again of the unicorn. The Faversham carving shows the wolf either licking his feet to make him tread softly, or biting one foot if it has made a noise by treading on a twig. The



MANTICHORA STRIKING DOWN A MAN : FROM HARLEIAN MS. 3244 : BRIT. MUSEUM