



Drakon: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds

Daniel Ogden

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Drakon: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds is the first substantial survey to be focally devoted to the "dragon" or the supernatural serpent, the *drakon* or *draco*, in Greek and Roman myth and religion. Almost every major myth cycle of the Greek and Roman worlds featured a dragon-fight at its heart, including the sagas of Heracles, Jason, Perseus, Cadmus, and Odysseus. Asclepius, the single most beloved and influential of the pagan gods from the late Classical period until Late Antiquity, was often manifest as a giant serpent and even in his humanoid aspect carried a serpent on his staff.

Detailed and authoritative, but lucidly presented, this volume incorporates analyses of all of antiquity's major dragon-slaying myths, and offers comprehensive accounts of the rich sources, literary and iconographic. Ogden also explores matters of cult and the initially paradoxical association of dragons and serpents with the most benign of deities, not only those of health and healing, like Asclepius and Hygieia, but also those of wealth and good luck, such as Zeus Meilichios and Agathos Daimon. The concluding chapter considers the roles of both pagan dragon-slaying narratives and pagan serpent cults in shaping the beginnings of the tradition of the saintly dragon- and serpent-slaying tales we cherish still, the tradition that culminates in our own stories of Saints George and Patrick.

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