

Unicorns

Don't ask me why, but I just started collecting Unicorns a few months ago (like I need another category!) I suppose it's my interest in mythology and history. As far as the latter is concerned, I *do* see a lot of unicorns in heraldry. The royal arms of Scotland sports unicorns, and the throne of Danish royalty was even said to be made of unicorn horns! They've also figured fairly promptly in modern entertainment—novels, movies, paintings, and the like.

The Unicorn is a legendary creature. Though the modern popular image of the unicorn is sometimes that of a horse differing only in the horn on its forehead, the traditional unicorn has a billy-goat beard, a lion's tail, and cloven hooves, which distinguish him from a horse. Marianna Mayer has observed (*The Unicorn and the Lake*), "The unicorn is the only fabulous beast that does not seem to have been conceived out of human fears. In even the earliest references he is fierce yet good, selfless yet solitary, but always mysteriously beautiful. He could be captured only by unfair means, and his single horn was said to neutralize poison."

Unicorns are not found in Greek mythology, but rather in accounts of natural history for Greek writers of natural history were convinced of the reality of the unicorn, which they located in India, a distant and fabulous realm for them. Medieval knowledge of the fabulous beast stemmed from biblical and ancient sources, and the creature was variously represented as a kind of wild ass, goat, or horse. In heraldry, the unicorn was not widely used early on, but became popular from the fifteenth century. [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unicorn>]

My budding collection now sports 12 different covers, but there are already 10s, 20s, and 30s. I don't have any other stats on them. Surely, at least a few others must collect these mythological beasties!

