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Mythology

4/8/2019

### Medieval Bestiary Assignment

Choices: Eagle, Panther, Whale

The three animals I chose for this assignment are the eagle, panther, and whale. They each have very fascinating things written about them in the medieval bestiary . The eagle for instance is able to restore its youth by flying up toward the sun, dipping into water three times, and breaking its beak on a rock. The process the eagle takes in this writing is also paralleled to Christianity. The panther in the medieval bestiary is a gentle, beautiful, multi colored animal whose only enemy is the dragon. After it eats it will go back to its cave and sleep for three days. Once it awakens it gives a loud roar and a sweet smell comes out of its mouth that draws other animals to the panther. The only animal that stays away is the dragon because it fears the panther. Female panthers can only give birth once because the young tear at her womb with their claws preventing her from conceiving again. This myth was also connected to Christianity. The whale in the medieval bestiary is said to float at the surface of water for long periods of time so its back becomes covered in sand. Sailors, mistaking the whale for an island, land there to build a fire and cook their food. When the heat from the fire penetrates the whales skin, the whale dives to cool itself off drowning the sailors in the process. It also says that when the whale is hungry it opens its mouth emitting a sweet

scent that attracts small fish which swim into the whales mouth. This myth is also given relations to christianity.

Each of these animals and their myths were compared to the Christian religion. The different things the eagle did were compared to different processes in christianity. The panther was compared to Jesus Christ with how it draws the other animals to it, similar to how Jesus drew in many followers. The Whale was seen as the devil with how it dragged people to their deaths, similar to how the devil drags souls to hell.