Colo Colo!

The Monster, ... The Legend, ... The Myth, ... And The Reality.

BY Vicente Hernández

Colo-Colo is de Futebol e Regatas, a Brazilian football team it also is the name for a historic tugboat of the Chilean Navy. And as many will say also a strange monster or cryptid creature that stalks the night. The word as many will tell you directly that the Colo Colo’s aspects differ slightly according to which region or actual zone of Chile you happen to be in.

In Mapuche the Colo Colo the more than legendary creature has been described in detail as a evil large size changing serpent form. It is described most commonly as almost a large snake creature, like in length of a large python with short legs and possessing large oversized sharp claws, similar to a long rat with scale type feathers. Some accounts describe it as having small wings or it has the ability to jump or fly short distances.

Whereas in the south of Chile, the Huilliche culture represents them as a long mouse with the head similar to a head of a rooster. The Colo Colo are born from an egg that was incubated by a “rooster”, and would feed by taking the saliva from sleeping people. Others believed or told tales of the creature biting onto the tip of a humans tongue and sucking the life force from them. And even tales of them sticking their long tongue up someones nose and drinking their blood...
and feeding on their brains. Or so were just a few of the many the tales my Grand Mother told to me as a small boy.

Commonly living in the darkest corners or cracks of houses; the malignant evil life threatening creature could be identified as living in the home by listening for an animal that cries like a new born baby. Or a foul smell with no real source to be discovered, often the smell was likened to a dead animal or human feces odor.

The victim of the creatures nightly attack was said to slowly die over a period of a week or two. And the unlucky person would show signs of dehydration or iron poor blood. They would at the end days be likened to a modern zombie. Describe as void of emotion and to just stand still in one spot for hours at a time.

The creature as many will surmise is a form of a The Basilisco chilote. This of course is a creature from Chilota mythology originating the Chiloé Archipelago, in southern Chile.

The Basilisco chilote is described as having the crest of a rooster and the body of a serpent. It is hatched from an egg that is incubated by a rooster and lives in hole which it digs under a house. It feeds on the phlegm and saliva of the people who live in the house, causing the inhabitants to dehydrate and eventually die.

To kill Basilisco chilote, you must burn the egg as soon as it is laid and kill the chicken that laid it, to prevent further eggs from being laid. Once hatched the only way to destroy it is by burning down the house where it lives. This myth is based upon myths of the Colo Colo and the basilisk, but borrows more from the tradition of the cockatrice which itself draws from the basilisk.

The beliefs of the Mapuche and their mythology, stories about the world and creatures born of the extensive and old religious beliefs, next to a series of common legend and myths that belong to the different groups that compose the Mapuche ethnic group (Mapuche, Huilliche, etc.).

In the mythology and beliefs of the Mapuche people, the machi “shaman”, a role usually played by older women, is an extremely important part of the Mapuche culture, even today and in parallel with Christianity. The machi performs ceremonies for the warding off of evil, for rain, for the cure of diseases, and has an extensive knowledge of Chilean medicinal herbs, gained during an arduous apprenticeship. Chiloeans of all origins and classes make use of the many traditional herbs known to the Mapuche. The main healing ceremony performed by the machi is called machiutin.

In European bestiaries and legends, a basilisk (English pronunciation: ‘bazlisk’, from the Greek βασιλίσκος, basilískos, “little king;” Latin Regulus) is a legendary reptile reputed to be king of serpents and said to have the power to cause death with a single glance. According to the Naturalis Historia of Pliny the Elder, the basilisk of Cyrene is a small snake, “being not more than twelve fingers in length,” that is so venomous that it leaves a wide trail of deadly venom in its wake, and its gaze is likewise lethal; its weakness is in the odour of the weasel, which, according to Pliny, was thrown into the basilisk’s hole, recognizable because all the surrounding shrubs and grass had been scorched by its presence. It is possible that the legend of the basilisk and its association with the weasel in Europe was inspired by accounts of certain species of Asian snakes (such as the King Cobra) and their natural predator, the mongoose.

Colo Colo

A cockatrice is a legendary creature, essentially a two-legged dragon with a rooster's head. "An ornament in the drama and poetry of the Elizabethans", Laurence Breiner described it. "The cockatrice, which no one ever saw, was born by accident at the end of the twelfth century and died in the middle of the seventeenth, a victim of the new science."

The cockatrice was first described in its current form in the late twelfth century. The Oxford English Dictionary gives a derivation from Old French cacatrix, from medieval Latin calcastrix, a translation of the Greek ichneumon, meaning tracker. The twelfth century legend was based on a reference in Pliny’s Natural History that the ichneumon lay in wait for the crocodile to open its jaws for the trochilus bird to enter and pick its teeth clean. An extended description of the cockatrice by the 15th-century Spanish traveler in Egypt, Pedro Tafur, makes it clear that the Nile crocodile is intended. According to Alexander Neckam’s De naturis rerum (ca 1180), the cockatrice was supposed to be born from an egg laid by a cock and incubated by a toad; a snake might be substituted in re-tellings.

Cockatrice became seen as synonymous with basilisk when the basiliscus in Bartholomeus Anglicus’ De proprietatibus rerum (ca 1260) was translated by John Trevvisa as cockatrice (1597). A basilisk, however, is usually depicted without wings.

Its reputed magical abilities include turning people to stone or killing them by either looking at them—“the death-darting eye of Cockatrice”—touching them, or sometimes breathing on them. It was repeated in the late-medieval bestiaries that the weasel is the only animal that is immune to the glance of a cockatrice. It was also thought that a cockatrice would die instantly upon hearing a rooster crow, and according to legend, having a cockatrice look itself in a mirror is one of the few sure-fire ways to kill it.

In the mythology and beliefs of the Mapuche people, the machi “shaman”, a role usually played by older women, is an extremely important part of the Mapuche culture, even today and in parallel with Christianity. The machi performs ceremonies for the warding off of evil, for rain, for the cure of diseases, and has an extensive knowledge of Chilean medicinal herbs, gained during an arduous apprenticeship. Chiloeans of all origins and classes make use of the many traditional herbs known to the Mapuche. The main healing ceremony performed by the machi is called machiutin. In European bestiaries and legends, a basilisk (English pronunciation: ‘bazlisk’, from the Greek βασιλίσκος, basilískos, “little king;” Latin Regulus) is a legendary reptile reputed to be king of serpents and said to have the power to cause death with a single glance. According to the Naturalis Historia of Pliny the Elder, the basilisk of Cyrene is a small snake, “being not more than twelve fingers in length,” that is so venomous that it leaves a wide trail of deadly venom in its wake, and its gaze is likewise lethal; its weakness is in the odour of the weasel, which, according to Pliny, was thrown into the basilisk’s hole, recognizable because all the surrounding shrubs and grass had been scorched by its presence. It is possible that the legend of the basilisk and its association with the weasel in Europe was inspired by accounts of certain species of Asian snakes (such as the King Cobra) and their natural predator, the mongoose.
Chile's most popular football club, Colo-Colo, was named after this warrior. The cockatrice was also able to fly with the set of wings affixed to its back. Like the head of Medusa, the cockatrice's powers of petrification were thought still effective after death.

The Chilote mythology or Chilota mythology is formed by the myths, legends and beliefs of the people who live in the Chiloe Archipelago, in the south of Chile. This mythology reflects the importance of the sea in the life of Chilotes. Chilote mythology is based on a mixture of indigenous religions (the Chonos and Huilliches) that live in the Archipelago of Chiloé, and the legends and superstitions brought by the Spanish Conquistadores, who in 1567 began the process of conquest in Chiloé and with it the fusion of elements that would form a separate mythology.

Chilota mythology flourished, isolated from other beliefs and myths in Chile, due to the separation of the archipelago from the rest of the Spanish occupation in Chile, when the Mapuches occupied or destroyed by all the Spanish settlements between the Bio-Bio River and the Chacao channel following the disaster of Curalaba in 1598.

The Colocolo (Leopardus colocolo) is a small spotted and striped cat native to the west Andean slope in central and northern Chile. Until recently it included the more widespread Pampas Cat (L. pajeros) and Pantanal Cat (L. braccatus), and some maintain these as subspecies of the Colocolo. Confusingly, when these are treated as subspecies of the Colocolo, the "combined" species is sometimes referred to as the Pampas Cat.

Little is known about the Colocolo’s hunting and breeding habits; however, it is believed to prey mainly on small mammals and birds. Guinea pigs are thought to form a large part of the diet, along with viscachas and other rodents, and inamous. Though some have suggested it is chiefly nocturnal, others suggest it is mainly diurnal.

Litters are relatively small, usually consisting of only one or two kittens, and occasionally three. The kittens weigh around 130 grams (4.6 oz) at birth. The Colocolo’s life span is between 9 and 16 years.

Zoological name: Oncifelis colocolo

Species: Wozencraft (1993) classified this species in the genus Oncifelis, highlighting the close relationship the pampas cat has with the other members of this genus (Geoffroy’s cat O. geoffroyi and the kodokodi, O. guigna). It has been known as a member of the Felis and Lynchailurus genera. In addition, the specific name pajeros has been used.

Seven subspecies have been described:
• F. (O.) c. colocolo Central Chile
• F. (O.) c. braccata Central Brazil
• F. (O.) c. braccata South Peru and west Bolivia
• F. (O.) c. garleppi South Peru and west Bolivia
• F. (O.) c. pajeros Central Argentina
• F. (O.) c. thomasi Ecuador and north Peru

The Chilean subspecies are more distinctly marked than the Argentinian individuals. The definition of the subspecies of many animals is the subject of considerable systematic controversy. Very few specimens of pampas cats exist, and classifications are sometimes based on much speculation.

Presence on the planet: Pampas cats, Oncifelis colocolo, have an expansive geographic range. In fact, they have been said to have a greater geographic range than any other South American cat. They are found in the forested slopes of the Andes in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. It included the more widespread Pampas Cat, the Paraguayan chaco, open woodlands of central, western, northeastern, and southern Brazil, the pampas of Argentina and Uruguay, and southern Patagonia.

Colocolo is also a symbol of heroic courage, bravery, and wisdom who fought and never surrendered to the Spaniards. Remembered as Ercilla’s 60-something elder widely respected by mapuche people, among his captains we can find headchefs whose names are part of Chile’s present geography: Pelcavi, Lema, Lincayún, Elicura and Orompelly, just to name a few. Chile’s most popular football club, Colo-Colo, was named after this warrior.
Colocolo (from Mapudungun "colocolo", mountain cat) was a Mapuche leader ("cacique lonco") in the early period of the Arauco War. He was a major figure in Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga’s epic poem La Araucana, about the early Arauco War. In the poem he was the one that proposed the contest between the rival candidates for Toquil that resulted in the choice of Caupolicán. As a historical figure there are some few contemporary details about him. Stories of his life were written long after his lifetime and display many points of dubious historical accuracy.

Club Social y Deportivo Colo-Colo is a Chilean football club based in the commune of Macul, Santiago. It competes in the Primera División, the top-flight football league in the country, from which they have never been relegated. Their home ground is the Estadio Monumental David Arelano. Colo-Colo is the most successful team in Chile. They have won a record 29 Primera Division titles and 10 Copa Chile. Internationally, they are also the most successful Chilean team having won the Copa Libertadores (1991), the Recopa Sudamericana (1992), and the Copa Interamericana (1992). Colo-Colo was ranked among the top 30 football clubs by the IFFHS in the 2007 All-Time Club World Ranking.

In 2009, IFFHS rated Colo-Colo as Chile’s top club of the 20th century and one of the top twenty in South America.

Colo-Colo was founded in 1925 by breakaway players of Magallanes led by David Arelano. They currently stand as being the most supported club in the country and have been managed by Blanca y Negro S.A. since 2005. They have a fierce rivalry with Universidad de Chile as both are the two most supported and successful clubs in the country.

Colo Colo is an historic tugboat of the Chilean Navy. Bow, McLachlan and Company of Paisley in Renfrewshire, Scotland built her for Chile in 1931. She was a steamship until she was reconditioned in 1971, at which time she was re-engined as a motor vessel.

She spent her service career in southern Chile. In 1987 she was withdrawn from service and preserved at the Chilean Navy Museum at Punta Arenas.

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