



The modern legend of the Loch Ness Monster started when a local newspaper, *Inverness Courier*, on May 2, 1933, said that a couple declared they saw “an enormous animal rolling and plunging on the surface.”

The story of the “monster” became a media phenomenon.

Lake Loch Ness (lock is the Scottish word for lake) in the Scottish Highlands, is quite big and deep. Scholars (studiosi) of the Loch Ness Monster state that there are a dozen references to “Nessie” in Scottish history. One of the first dates back (risale) to A.D. 500, when local Picts carved (incisero) a strange aquatic creature into the stones (pietre) near Loch Ness.

In the 7th-century, in 565 precisely, Saint Columba, the Irish missionary who introduced Christianity to Scotland, was going to visit the king of the northern Picts near Inverness when he stopped at Loch Ness because he knew a beast was killing people in the lake. He saw a large creature that was going to attack another man, a local farmer, and intervened: he invoked the name of God and commanded the creature to “go back” quickly into the lake. The monster retreated and never killed another man.

Over the years, people went on speaking about ‘strange events’ at Loch Ness. Probably also Scottish myths about water creatures, like Kelpies and the Each Uisge (meaning ‘water horse’), contributed to Nessie legend.

A second apparition was during the works to build a new road along the shore of Loch Ness, in 1933. The monster, disturbed by the noises (rumori) and the drilling (trivellamento), appeared in the open again. In 1934, London surgeon R. K. Wilson took a photograph of the creature: there was a slim head and neck coming out of the surface (superficie) of the water.

In the 1960s, a research of the Loch Ness Investigation Bureau lasted (durata) about 10 years, reported that there were over 20 sightings (avvistamenti) per year. Also mini-submarines explored the depths (abissi) of the Loch with sophisticated sonar equipment.

In the mid 1970s underwater photographs showed a ‘flipper’ (pinna dorsale).

Actually (in realtà) there is no proof to suggest that the monster exists.

Ech-Uisge, Kelpies, and Water-Horses

In 1823, scholar and writer William Grant Stewart, published *The popular superstitions and festive amusements of the Highlanders of Scotland*, a collection of Scottish legends and superstitions taken from talking to friends in that country. One is about a creature known as the 'Ech Uisque' or 'Each-Uisge' or 'Each Uisk', which means 'Water-Horse', also known as 'Kelpie' or 'Kelpy'. According to the legends, they were beasts that lived in lakes and pools near the Scottish roads.

Stewart was not the first to speak about these creatures, but his description has become the best known definition for the creatures.

Stewart writes that the kelpie is a servant of the Biblical Devil: it drowns people suddenly, and does not permit them to pray before dying, so many souls go to Hell and the Devil. But the kelpie is very clever: it does not only take a passer-by, it attracts the people changing its physical appearance. It usually assumes the shape (forma) of a horse (and so it was called "Water-Horse") grazing (che mangia l'erba) on the side of a road. The passer by sees it, thinks it is from a farm nearby, and takes it to shorten the walk (abbreviare il cammino). As soon as the rider mounts, the kelpie throws him or her into the deepest waters of the nearest lake or pool.

