

Mosaic Depicting A Unicorn

Roman

5th - 6th Century A.D.

Mosaic

H: 128 cm W: 139.7cm

This mosaic depicts a horned horse or ‘unicorn’, the imagery of such creatures has existed since antiquity. On a beige ground, with vegetation around the edges. The equine form of the unicorn was mentioned by the ancient Greeks in accounts of natural history by various writers, including Ctesias, Strabo and Pliny the Younger. This mosaic is taken from a larger design which would have made up a decorative floor pavement.

Literature:

Egyptian, Western Asiatic, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities, Sotheby’s & Co, 1st December 1969, London, Lot 29.

JW. Einhorn, “Spiritualis unicornis : Das Einhorn als Beseutungsträger in Literature und Kunst des Mittelalters”, Munich, 1976, p85.

Maria Theresa and Pierre Canivet, « La Licorne dans les mosaïques d’Huarte-d’Apamène, ive-ve siècles », in Byzantion, vol. 49 (1979), 1979, p57-87.

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