

## Resource 3b

## Unicorn Facts

### The first unicorns

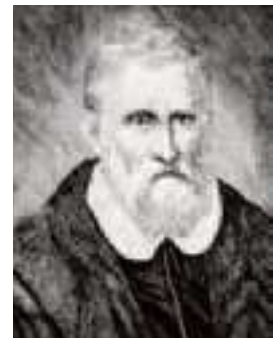
- The first unicorns were from Asia and the Middle East. According to legend, the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BCE) was the first person ever to see a unicorn.
- Chinese call the unicorn qilin
- They are like a horse, with a long horn from their head.
- They have shining scales like a dragon, multi-coloured in white, black, yellow, red and blue.
- They are powerful, wise, peaceful, and never fight. In fact, they walk so softly they will not even touch a blade of grass.
- They enjoy solitude



Unicorn from Apadana, Shush, Iran

### The European Unicorns

- European unicorns have a white coat, the body of a horse, or a goat, the tail of a lion, and a long, white, spiralled horn.
- They live deep in the forest and are rarely seen by people.
- They are powerful and peaceful.
- They do not cause harm to humans, although many humans hunt unicorns.
- They are very shy and hard to catch, but sometimes unicorns will come to girls for a hug.
- Some ancient books say they battle lions and elephants.
- They bring good luck; their horns can detect poisons and make water clean. This was a claim made nearly 2,400 years ago in Ancient Greece, by Ctesias, who was a doctor for a King.<sup>10</sup>
- An ancient Roman writer called Pliny the Elder described a unicorn in his book Natural History as "furious" and "hideous!" He said "This wild beast cannot possibly be caught alive."<sup>11</sup>
- A famous Italian explorer called Marco Polo claimed he saw unicorns when he travelled the world around the year 1300. He said: "They are very ugly brutes to look at!"<sup>12</sup>



Marco Polo



Confucius



Pliny the Elder

<sup>10</sup> American Museum of Natural History, 2016, 76.

<sup>11</sup> <https://historymash.com/2018/10/10/pliny-the-elder-on-the-unicorn/> Accessed 7 March 2019

<sup>12</sup> American Museum of Natural History, 2016, 77.