

# Four Unicorns Competition

**DESCRIPTIONS OF UNICORNS APPEAR IN LITERATURE, RELIGION AND SCIENCE ACROSS CULTURES AND CENTURIES.  
CHOOSE ONE OF THE DESCRIPTIONS LOCATED BELOW AND CREATE A UNICORN IN THE MEDIUM OF YOUR CHOICE.**

UNICORN #1: “THERE ARE IN INDIA CERTAIN WILD ASSES WHICH ARE AS LARGE AS HORSES, AND LARGER. THEIR BODIES ARE WHITE, THEIR HEADS DARK RED, AND THEIR EYES DARK BLUE. THEY HAVE A HORN ON THE FOREHEAD WHICH IS ABOUT A FOOT AND A HALF IN LENGTH. THE DUST FILED FROM THIS HORN IS ADMINISTERED IN A POTION AS A PROTECTION AGAINST DEADLY DRUGS. THE BASE OF THIS HORN, FOR SOME TWO HANDS’-BREADTH ABOVE THE BROW, IS PURE WHITE; THE UPPER PART IS SHARP AND OF A VIVID CRIMSON; AND THE REMAINDER, OR MIDDLE PORTION, IS BLACK. THOSE WHO DRINK OUT OF THESE HORNS, MADE INTO DRINKING VESSELS, ARE NOT SUBJECT, THEY SAY, TO CONVULSIONS OR TO THE HOLY DISEASE (EPILEPSY). INDEED, THEY ARE IMMUNE EVEN TO POISONS IF, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER SWALLOWING SUCH, THEY DRINK WINE, WATER, OR ANYTHING ELSE FROM THESE BEAKERS. OTHER ASSES, BOTH THE TAME AND THE WILD, AND IN FACT ALL ANIMALS WITH SOLID HOODS, ARE WITHOUT THE ANKLE-BONE AND HAVE NO CALL IN THE LIVER, BUT THESE HAVE BOTH THE ANKLE-BONE AND THE FALL. THIS ANKLE-BONE, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL I HAVE EVER SEEN, IS LIKE THAT OF AN OX IN GENERAL APPEARANCE AND IN SIZE, BUT IT IS AS HEAVY AS LEAD AND ITS COLOUR IS THAT OF CINNABAR THROUGH AND THROUGH. THE ANIMAL IS EXCEEDINGLY SWIFT AND POWERFUL, SO THAT NO CREATURE, NEITHER THE HORSE NOR ANY OTHER, CAN OVERTAKE IT.”

– CTESIUS, (4TH CENTURY B.C.), THE TWENTY-FIFTH FRAGMENT OF “INDICA”

UNICORN #2: “THE ORSÆAN INDIANS HUNT AN EXCEEDINGLY WILD BEAST CALLED THE MONOCEROS, WHICH HAS A STAG’S HEAD, ELEPHANT’S FEET, AND A BOAR’S TAIL, THE REST OF ITS BODY BEING LIKE THAT OF A HORSE. IT MAKES A DEEP LOWING NOISE, AND ONE BLACK HORN TWO CUBITS LONG PROJECTS FROM THE MIDDLE OF ITS FOREHEAD. THIS ANIMAL, THEY SAY, CANNOT BE TAKEN ALIVE.”

– PLINY THE ELDER (23-79 A.D.), ‘HISTORIA NATURALIS’

UNICORN #3: “AMONG THE MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON IN HIGH ETHIOPIA, THERE IS FOUND A BEAST CALLED THE UNICORN WHICH IS AS LARGE AS A COLT OF TWO YEARS AND OF THE SAME GENERAL SHAPE AS ONE. ITS COLOUR IS ASHEN AND IT HAS A MANE AND A LARGE BEARD LIKE THAT OF A HE-GOAT; ON ITS BROW IT HAS A SMOOTH WHITE HORN OF THE COLOUR OF IVORY TWO CUBITS LONG AND ADORNED WITH HANDSOME GROOVES THAT RUN FROM BASE TO POINT. THIS HORN IS USED AGAINST POISON, AND PEOPLE SAY THAT THE OTHER ANIMALS WAIT UNTIL THIS ONE COMES AND DIPS ITS HORN IN THE WATER BEFORE THEY WILL DRINK. IT IS SUCH A CLEVER BEAST AND SO SWIFT THAT THERE IS NO WAY OF KILLING IT, BUT IT SHEDS ITS HORNS LIKE THE STAG AND THE HUNTERS FIND THESE IN THE WILDERNESS.”

– MARMOL CARAVAIAL, ‘DESCRIPCION GENERAL DE AFRICA’ (1573)

UNICORN #4: “THE ONE OF THEM, WHICH IS MUCH HYCHER THAN THE OTHER, YET NOT MUCH UNLYKE TO A COOLTE OF THYRTYE MONETHS OF AGE, IN THE FOREHEAD GROWETH ONLY ONE HORNE, IN MANER RYGHTE FOORTH, OF THE LENGTH OF THREE CUBITES. THE OTHER IS MUCH YOUNGER, OF THE AGE OF ONE YEERE, AND LYKE A YOUNG COOLTE: THE HORNE OF THIS IS OF THE LENGTH OF FOUERE HANDFULS. THIS BEAST IS OF THE COLOURE OF A HORSE OF WEESSEL COLOURE, AND HATH THE HEAD LYKE AN HART, BUT NO LONG NECK, A THYNNE MANE HANGYNCE ONLY ON THE ONE SYDE. THEYR LEGGES ARE THYN AND SLENDER, LYKE A FAWNE OR HYNDE. THE HOOFE OF THE FORE FEETE ARE DIVIDED IN TWO, MUCH LIKE THE FEET OF A GOAT. THE OUTWARDE PART OF THE HYNDER FEETE IS VERY FULL OF HEARE. THIS BEAST DOUBTLESSE SEEMETH WYLDE AND FIERCE, YET TEMPERETH THAT FIERCENESSE WITH A CERTAIN COMELINESSE. THESE UNICORNES ONE GAVE TO THE SOLTAN OF MECHA AS A MOST PRECIOUS AND RARE GYFTE. THEY WERE SENT HYM OUT OF ETHIOPE BY A KYNG OF THAT COUNTRYE, WHO DESIRED BY THAT PRESENT TO GRATIFIE THE SOLTAN OF MECHA.”

– LEWIS VARTOMAN, ‘ITINERARIO’ (1576)