



Fragment of a Horse and Rider (from a Lion Hunt Sarcophagus)

Date

c. 270-280 CE

Primary Maker

Unidentified artist

Medium

marble

Description

The Ackland sarcophagus fragment preserves the forepart of a horse, from the head to right leg, in high relief. The head is turned dramatically outward and down, the eye bulging in fright (the right bulges more than the left); the right foreleg is raised and tense, completely separated from the background. The thick forehead hair and mane

are deeply carved, as is the fringe on the hoof, the strands connected by small struts. The horse wears a saddleblanket of lion skins from which two heads are brought over the shoulders and tied in front with a Herakles knot, from which hangs a bell or amulet. The horse's open mouth creates a fiery impression and reveals a thick bit and detailed rendering of teeth and tongue; the plain left rein is connected to the relief ground and the right appears to be braided. The horse wears a leather harness with a pelta (Amazon shield) on the forehead and smaller peltas on the sides, evoking the idea of fierce hunters. The rider's left hand holds the rein tightly to right of the horse's neck, and, intact, his right hand would have been raised to strike down at the lion; part of the rider's drapery occurs near the break. The eagle-headed sword hilt projects beside his waist. The right forearm, raised upward, and some drapery from a missing figure at right appear behind the horse's head.

Dimensions

31 15/16 x 14 15/16 x 3 3/16 in. (81.1 x 38 x 8.1 cm)