Public access description
This magnificent tomb figure is proof of the passion the Chinese have for beautiful pure-bred horses from the West. The intelligent and alert turn of the horse's head and the energy of its well-muscled body is testament to the immense skill of the Tang potter. Emperors of the Tang dynasty (618-907) kept their horses in special stables and parks that occupied large tracts of land around the Tang capital Chang'an (present-day Xian in Shaanxi province). Important tombs held models of these desirable animals.

Descriptive line
Tomb figure of a horse, earthenware with coloured lead glazes, 700-750, Tang dynasty, Chinese.

Physical description
The horse stands erect with head turned slightly to the left, on a small, thinly potted base. The bristling mane and tail are coloured a deep amber yellow, the cloth covered saddle is green, the parts of the under-saddle in dark brown and mottled green, brown and white, the harness and other applied, stamped trappings in dark brown. The body of the horse is in a straw-white glaze, unevenly mottled and tinged with the other colours.

Dimensions
Height: 76.0 cm maximum, Width: 84.0 cm, Depth: 28.0 cm

Museum number
C.50-1964

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O74107/figure-unknown/