



Male Figure

Date

ca. 1350-1521

Primary Maker

Aztec

Medium

basalt

Description

Macehualli are standardized sculptural representations of male figures found as part of Aztec offerings, particularly at the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan. They represent the ideal common man. This example has a typically rigid posture and stern expression, but it also has well-defined facial features and a particularly lively expression, which is emphasized by the unusual position of the hands crossed over the chest. The excellent carving skill of Aztec artists is evident, especially in the eyes, nose, and mouth, and in the detailed execution of the sandals and feet. This piece lacks the typical orifice in the chest area, which might have contained inlays of jade, gold, or other precious stones to indicate the heart, a feature present in most examples of this sculptural type.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 3/8 x 3 3/4 x 3 1/8 in. (26.4 x 9.5 x 7.9 cm)