

Basic Detail Report



Ballgame Yoke

Date
ca. 600-900

Primary Maker
Classic Veracruz

Medium

stone

Description

Ball courts have been found at archaeological sites throughout Mesoamerica beginning in Olmec times, and are a strong indicator of the dynamic and sustained cultural exchange that existed for millennia between the societies of ancient Mesoamerica. A very large number of the stone objects that have been identified as ballgame gear come from Veracruz. This yoke shows a high-status individual emerging from the mouth of a reptile. The same motif repeats on the ends of the piece. Given the mythological associations of the ballgame and its linkage to the journey of the Hero Twins into the Underworld, reptiles and other animals associated with the earth in ancient Mesoamerica are frequently depicted on ballgame paraphernalia. These stone objects may have been templates for more practical yokes made of wood or leather but it is also possible that extremely skilled athletes could have worn such massive equipment onto a field of play.

Dimensions

Overall: 4 1/8 × 12 × 13 3/4 in. (10.5 × 30.5 × 34.9 cm)