

Basic Detail Report



Metate

Date

4th to 7th Century

Medium

Volcanic stone

Description

The jaguar imagery seen on this 4th to 7th century metate made of volcanic stone represents the soul of a shaman, who has shape-shifted to take on the form of a jaguar. The legs of the metate are composed of upside-down parrot heads, one atop the other. The placing of the parrot heads upside down is a reference to the underworld, where everything is said to be upside down. The interlocking geometric elements at the top of the jaguar's head are a reference to the shaman's control and power over the dualistic forces of nature. One of the roles of a shaman was to guide and protect the soul of the dead in its journey through the underworld.

Dimensions

12 3/8 × 11 5/8 × 30 1/4 in. (31.4 × 29.5 × 76.8 cm)