



Incense Burner (Boshanlu)

Date

206 BCE - 220 CE

Medium

Glazed ceramic

Description

Low-fired pottery with a thick green or brown oxidized lead glaze was so popular during this dynasty that it became a symbol of the Han. It was primarily used for ceramics that were buried in tombs. The jagged spires of the lid represent a sacred Taoist Mountain. Smoke from the burning incense inside the vessel would have looked like clouds gathered around the peak. Common religious themes of the Han Dynasty are reflected in this censer's design elements, namely mountains and creatures, both real and mythical. These creatures included humans, tigers, boars, monkeys, horses, and dragons. The censer has three legs representing a crouching bear. The silver-colored iridescence on this piece is a result of its long burial, during which water has leached the glaze.

Dimensions

6 1/2 × 7 9/16 in. (16.5 × 19.2 cm)