

Thai chess piece

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: 62.365.6.2 

Type: bone objects; toys and models; ivory carving

Date of production: 19th century

Place of production: Thailand (Siam), Southeast Asia

Materials/Techniques: ivory, carved

Dimensions: height: 3.5 cm
diameter: 2 cm

Piece of an incomplete Thai chess set. Thai chess ('makruk') is a very popular game, similar to chess in Europe, also played with sixteen to sixteen pieces. There are strong similarities in both the rules and the appearance of the pieces; minor differences include the naming of the queen (Thai: 'met', meaning seed), the rook ('ruea', meaning ship) or the pawn (Thai: 'bia', meaning kauri snail). The latter comes from the fact that traditionally these tiny shells were used as pawns in the game.

