



Reclining ballplayer

On display

Title/Description: Reclining ballplayer

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Pigment, Terracotta

Measurements: h. 170 x w. 130 x d. 140 mm

Accession Number: 672

Historic Period: Formative period (c. 1000 BC)

Production Place: Guerrero, Mesoamerica, Mexico, The Americas

Cultural Group: Xochipala

Credit Line: Purchased with support Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1977

This ceramic figure is among the oldest known representations of a hip-ballplayer. His position, reclining with one hand on the ground, is typical for a hip-ballplayer playing *por abajo*, low over the ground, although he is represented in a resting pose (*cf.* Leyenaar and Parsons, 1988: fig. 31). His hip is protected by an open-ended *yugo*, and his right knee is covered with a pad for protection. The figure wears ear ornaments and a head-dress with avian imagery. Jones (1991: 172) suggests that the bird represented is an eagle rather than an owl as proposed by Gay (1972:32-5, figs. 22a-b; 1979: 46-7, fig. 19), although the beak shape is not unlike that of a parrot. Evidence of breakage on the chest indicates that at one time the figure probably wore a large chest ornament or protective device. Traces of red pigment are visible around the neck and ears.

Entry taken from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection 3 volume catalogue, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997).

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from David H. Bramhall, New York in 1977 out of funds provided by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury.
