



Reclining dog effigy vessel

Not on display

Title/Description: Reclining dog effigy vessel

Measurements: h. 115 x w. 240 x d. 180 mm

Accession Number: 867

Historic Period: Proto-Classic period (200 BC-AD 300)

Credit Line: Purchased with support from the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust, 1983

Colima tombs are generally smaller and shallower than those of Nayarit and Jalisco, and their ceramic contents are thought to show less stylistic variation. In terms of imagery, however, the Colima ceramics show a much broader thematic repertoire. A large number of 'acrobats', horned individuals, animals and other creatures are exquisitely rendered in the form of glossy red-slipped vessels or hollow figurines.

Small fat dogs, thought to represent a pre-Hispanic hairless dog known as *techichi*, are among the

most common representations. Kelly (1978) excavated a dog effigy vessel from a tomb at El Manchon, south of Los Ortices, Colima, which she attributes to the Comala phase (early Classic period). The significance of dogs as part of a mortuary complex is uncertain. They may have been included in the tombs as a reference to sustenance, since such dogs were fattened up and eaten as a delicacy in pre-Hispanic Mexico. Alternatively, Toscano (1946: 24) has suggested that they were the emissaries of Xolotl who guided the dead to the underworld.

The spout is placed on the back of the curled up dog, which is shown with bared teeth, as are many of the Colima dog effigies.

Joanne Pillsbury & Ted. J. J. Leyenaar, 1997

Entry from Steven Hooper (ed.), *Catalogue to the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection*. University of East Anglia, 1997.)

Provenance

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from John Stokes, New York, on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1983 out of funds provided by the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Art Trust.
