



Vessel in the form of a fish

On display

Title/Description: Vessel in the form of a fish

Measurements: h. 170 x w. 204 x d. 72 mm

Accession Number: 847

Historic Period: Formative (early) period (1200-900 BC)

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

Burnished blackware animal-effigy vessels were excavated at Tlatilco in the 1940s and later (Covarrubias, 1950; Porter, 1953; Tolstoy, 1989). This fish-effigy vessel is a more abstracted version of one found in Burial 53 at Tlatilco (Porter, 1953: 103, pl.8E; see also Pina Chan, 1989: pl. 10), and it may have come from that site or one of the other highland sites near what is now Mexico City. The eye of the fish is rendered as the central void of the vessel and the mouth serves as the spout. Two fins and the tail, with incised detail, have received minor repairs.

The Tlatilco figurines and effigy vessels were of great interest to the artists Diego Rivera and Miguel Covarrubias, who were among the first to collect them (Braun, 1993). Rivera particularly favoured Tlatilco figurines, but he also collected effigy vessels from the site (see Porter, 1953: 103, pl. 8D, for a comparable vessel in the Rivera collection).

Joanne Pillsbury and Ted. J. J. Leyenaar, in Steven Hooper (ed.). *Catalogue to the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection*, University of East Anglia, 1997.

Provenance

Material in the Sainsbury Centre archives suggests the object may have been excavated at Tlatilco in the 1940s or another highland site near what is now Mexico City.

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from David Bramhall, New York, on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1983 out of income from the Sainsbury Purchasing Fund.
