



Whistling bottle as a bird on eggs or pods

On display

Title/Description: Whistling bottle as a bird on eggs or pods

Object Type: Animal, Bottle

Materials: Earthenware

Measurements: h. 197 x w. 155 x d. 170 mm

Accession Number: 850

Historic Period: 1000-100 BC

Production Place: Ecuador, Manabi province, South America, The Americas

Cultural Group: Chorrera

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

Chorrera, one of the most inventive and technically accomplished pottery styles of the New World, was produced during the first millennium bc in the Pacific lowlands of Ecuador (Evans and Meggers, 1957; Meggers 1966: 55-61; Lathrap *et al.*, 1975: 34-7). Chorrera pottery (and its coastal 'Engoroy' variant) is finely made, with walls only 3-4 mm thick, and its buff-orange slip is burnished to a glossy sheen. Domestic wares are relatively plain, but funerary offerings include jars and bottles of elegant shapes, often in the form of animals, birds, fish, snakes and human beings.

One Chorrera innovation is the whistling bottle with an off-centre spout connected by a strap handle to a modelled bird or animal adorno containing a whistle, activated by the air which is drawn through as the liquid is poured out. The present example is a whistling bottle with three hollow, bulbous feet surmounted by a parrot or macaw. Parrots are a popular subject in Chorrera art, and a trilobate bottle similar to this piece is illustrated by Lapiner (1976: no. 730). The feet of these vessels may be intended to suggest eggs, but another macaw bottle, from Resbalón in Manabi, has supports in the shape of pods from the guamo tree (Lathrap *et al.*, 1975: fig. 59, no. 369). The whistle hole is situated where the strap handle meets the bird's head. The vessel is covered with an orange red slip, with the face picked out in white.

Chorrera decorative techniques include resist smudging (see object 772), fine incision, and the use of contrasting zones of colour. The influence of this culture on other regions was considerable, and related styles are found all along the coast as far as Esmeraldas, on the Colombian frontier, and in the highlands near Quito. Chorrera export pieces also occur on sites of the Cerro Narrio culture, in the southern highlands, perhaps in connection with the trade in *Spondylus* shell (see object 447).

Warwick Bray, 1997

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 John Stokes, New York, on the advice of Robert Sainsbury in 1983 out of income from the Sainsbury Purchasing Fund.
