



Tetrapod polychrome bowl

Date

AD 500-800

Primary Maker

Unidentified artist

Medium

Earthenware

Description

This Maya Late Classic shallow carinated polychrome bowl has four feet and a sharply everted rim. The surface decoration consists of burnished tan or light orange slip with bold red and black geometric designs on the well-preserved exterior. The interior surface of the bowl is eroded, but a band of designs (possibly stylized water birds) is clearly visible around the sides of the bowl, and the flat top of the rim has five panels containing conjoined strings of black or gray ovals and dots of red. The pronounced shoulder bend at the top of each foot is characteristic of pottery from this area, and the lack of slip around the base of each foot on the underside of the bowl is also very typical. The underside of the bowl base has double orange lines curving around each foot in a crescent shape. This tetrapod dish may originate in the Sula Valley-El Cajón-Comayagua area, or even Rivas. The form and the nature of the exterior linear painting strongly recalls Sula Polychrome ("Bold Geometric") (but compare Healy, *Archaeology of Rivas Region, Nicaragua* Fig 55, *Madeira Polychrome*). Sula Polychrome vessels are usually much larger, and the paints are different (though still red and black on orange). The light ground color of this vessel suggests a very late Classic/Postclassic date. The vessel is whole and unbroken. Maya, Honduras/El Salvador

Dimensions

2 5/8 × 6 11/16 inches (6.7 × 17 cm)