

# Basic Detail Report

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## Vessel

### Date

700-900 CE

### Primary Maker

Maya

### Medium

Ceramic and pigment

### Description

This decorated Mayan vessel from the Classic Period (250-900) is painted with a waterbird and a fish. In Mayan culture there was an elite class of scribes—usually formed from aristocracy and in many cases even the king—who were the only individuals with the ability to write. Both men and women were included in this group, and there was also a chief scribe or ak k'u hun responsible not only

for recordkeeping but for many of the important events that might be subject to being recorded such as marriages and ceremonies. Due to the complexity of the hieroglyphics used by the Maya and the variable ways something might be written, it required grueling coursework to be able to learn how to properly express ideas. Given the small pool of individuals who could compose hieroglyphics and the amount of time that went into carving the large characters, evidence indicates that it was scribes who likely drew out outlines of the hieroglyphs in advance. Pottery vessels seem to further confirm that it was the elite class, not artisans who were responsible for almost all writing.

### Dimensions

10 1/2 × 4 1/2 in. (26.7 × 11.4 cm)