



## Cylinder Vessel

### Date

c. 700-950 C.E.

### Medium

Ceramic with polychrome slip

### Description

Tall cylindrical vessel with codex-style image of a seated human or deity figure (possibly Itzamná, or God D?) and glyphs framed with red bands at the rim and base. Based on the size and shape, this was possibly a cacao / chocolate drinking cup. Although painting was at the forefront of the arts of the Maya, only a small portion of it remains, in part because the frescoes on which it was typically practiced have failed to survive environmental exposure over the centuries. In addition, missionaries from Spain and other colonial powers destroyed much of the canon of Maya codex painting upon contact. Ceramics such as this vase are invaluable, therefore, as well-preserved examples of the art form. The vessel's shape and decoration, including the red-painted rim, are standard for the era in which it was produced. In this case, the primary hieroglyphic text is contained within fine, black, double horizontal lines. Maya vessels and bowls typically have a repetitious inscription around the rim that may identify the type of vessel and/or name its owner, who is also depicted below. Here, profile depictions of a ruler seated cross-legged on a throne, with

a bowl of food beneath (or beside) him, appear on opposite sides of the vessel, separated by two vertical registers of glyphs. Most polychrome ceramics made by the Maya fulfilled a ritual purpose, and this one probably held a cacao-based beverage during ceremonies. In 2001, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute Museum of Art deaccessioned its "PreColumbian" collection, having determined that it was outside the museum's mission, and gave forty ceramics to Hamilton College, including this vase. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

### Dimensions

Overall: 10 3/4 x 4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in. (27.3 x 11.4 x 11.4 cm)