



MAYA POTTERY
THE CHAMÁ VASE

a new accession, since it was secured by Dr. Farabee in Peru in 1923, but its beauty has recently been brought out by the electrolytic cleaning process. These vases are characteristic of the ancient Chimu culture of the northern Peruvian Coast around the city of Trujillo. This was one of the earlier cultures of Peru and flourished probably in the early centuries of the Christian era, long before the rise to power of the Incas who later conquered it. The Museum already possesses two such vases of solid gold of similar shape but much smaller size [Compare, *The Museum Journal*, September, 1926.] All three vases are of similar type and technique, and illustrate the great ability of these ancient metal-workers.

The vase stands sixteen and one half inches high and is made, apparently, from one sheet of silver, hammered out, probably over a form. Impossible as this may seem in view of the nose, which projects to a distance of one and three-quarters inches, there is no evidence of soldering. If any process of soldering or welding were employed, the evidences have been completely obliterated.

At the back of the head two ears of corn are shown in repoussé, and the characteristic face is supposed to represent the Corn God. The vase was probably filled with chicao, the native beer, and placed in the grave in which it was found for the use of the spirit of the deceased.

11. *The Chamá Vase* **T**HE Museum's collection of Maya Pottery, which already contained probably more examples of outstanding artistic merit

than any other collection, has been further enriched by the loan of the most noted of all Maya pottery vessels. This is generally known as "The Vase of Chamá" notwithstanding the fact that other vessels from Chamá are extant. It was reproduced as the first plate of the large album, *Maya Pottery*, now being published by the Museum, this leading position being indicative of its importance; in Plates XI and XII are shown smaller reproductions made from the album plates.

The history of this vase is of particular interest. It was found by Mr. Ebenezer Cary of Philadelphia in 1893 on his coffee plantation at Chamá, Guatemala. The excavation there was begun by the noted Maya archeologist, E. P. Dieseldorff, who was later compelled to cease these excavations. Mr. Cary then continued them and at once came upon this beautiful vase. Mr. Dieseldorff, however, published the first description of the vase in 1894, since which time his illustration of it has frequently been reproduced in works dealing with aboriginal American art. Although he did not claim possession of it, many archeologists have assumed that he was its owner, and one even stated that he understood that it had been lost in a fire in a New York hotel. The vase remained in Mr. Cary's possession in Philadelphia until his recent death when Mrs. Cary very generously agreed to lend it to the Museum as a memorial to him. The vase is therefore now on public exhibition for the first time.

The vase is in perfect condition and is an admirable



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DECORATION ON THE CHAMÁ VASE

example of Maya art. The scene depicted is a religious ceremony possibly preceding a human sacrifice, which rite was sometimes celebrated by the Maya, though by no means to such an extent as by the Aztec. The figures painted in black represent the priests while the kneeling figure between them is presumed to be the one doomed to sacrifice. The other four figures are presumably assistants at the ceremony. The glyphs which are seen in various places probably indicate the nature of the rite or the names of the persons, but our knowledge of these is yet not sufficiently advanced to permit more than a guess regarding their true interpretation.

12. *A New Haida
Copper Tiná*

THE Tiná, of which a drawing appears on the cover of *The Bulletin*, is a shield-like sheet of copper, three and a half feet long and about one-eighth inch in thickness, wrought from great nuggets of the native ore, without soldering, and by a process of welding, the technique of which has not yet been defined. Of Tlingit origin, such objects were originally used as war indemnity between clans, and each piece had an individual name, but in recent years each important chief had his own, and the pieces came to have value as a medium of exchange, usually representing the cost of four male slaves.

The design engraved at the top of this tiná represents the grizzly bear. The piece was probably made for the Haida by the Tlingits, who were encouraged in the manufacture of such objects by the Haida, who had no native copper of their own.