

planning to concentrate on an architectural study of several new pyramid mounds, and two of these have been investigated so far.

In addition to the work at Piedras Negras, the Expedition has received permission from the Mexican government to make a brief architectural study at Yaxchilan, another important site on the Usumacinta River, some miles south of Piedras Negras. This reconnaissance should be finished early in the Expedition's season.

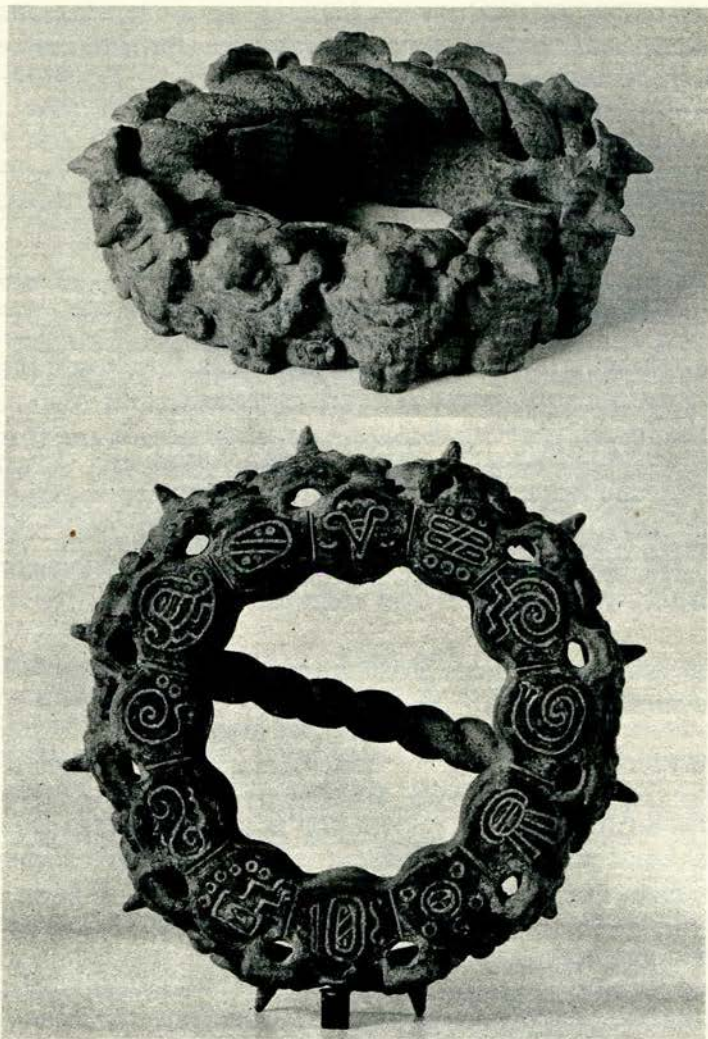
*A Survey of
Prehistoric Research*

MR. EDGAR B. HOWARD will continue this summer the search for prehistoric man in America in which he has been engaged during the past few years. The work this year will be sponsored jointly by the University Museum, the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Mr. Howard will start about June first on a survey tour of all the recent sites throughout this country at which any evidence suggesting the existence of prehistoric man has been found. He will then proceed to New Mexico and engage in field work in the vicinity of Carlsbad and Clovis.

*A Pottery Vessel
from Mexico*

THE most notable recent addition to the Mexican collections is a remarkable pottery vessel [Plate VI] lent to the Museum by Mr. Percy C. Madeira, Jr. It is an object of such unusual type and uncertain use that no short descriptive term seems to be applicable to it; 'basket' is the designation most frequently used, but the generalized term 'container' is about the most specific one that could properly be employed. It most resembles a carrier for individual communion glasses. Only three other examples of the type seem to be known.

It was found in a tomb at San Lorenzo Albarradas, District of Tlacolula, Oaxaca, Mexico, only a few miles from the famous ruins of Mitla, and also from those of Monte Alban where for several



POTTERY VESSEL FROM OAXACA, MEXICO

years the Mexican Government has been making excavations, and where the most spectacular finds of American archæology in recent years have been made. The other three known examples also came from a tomb in this same region, at Santo Domingo Jalieza, Tlacolula. The type seems, therefore, to be of very restricted distribution. This region is close to the border of the countries occupied by the Zapotec and the Mixtec peoples, but there is little doubt that the objects belong to the culture of the former. With it were found a large Zapotecan funerary urn figure, four small seated pottery figures, two small incense burners with long handles, and a 'scepter.' All of these objects except the censers were decorated with glyphs; the other three known pottery 'baskets' and most funerary urn figures bear no glyphs.

The container consists of a ring of twelve connected cylindrical cups with orifices about an inch and one-quarter in diameter and two inches deep, the center of the ensemble, of about five inches diameter, being open. Across the top is a basket handle of twisted thick pottery coils. Decorating the circumference on the outside, between each of the cups, is a standing anthropomorphic figure, twelve in all. These are identical and seem to have been made in a mould. The bodies are human, the heads animal, but of uncertain identification, with long noses or beaks and large ears. The arms are bent with the hands up, grasping some object of which the upper ends of the adjacent pairs meet in a rosette. Other decorative rosettes separate the feet of the figures which are adorned with breech-cloths and necklaces. The pottery is a bright red, probably produced by a red slip, but the surface is almost entirely covered by a thin layer of limy substance, possibly intentionally applied, or possibly acquired naturally in the centuries in the tomb.

The purpose of the specimen is unknown, but almost certainly of some ceremonial nature; the age is also dubious—doubtless pre-Columbian, but probably not greatly so.

The most interesting feature is the series of incised glyphs on the

base, of which there are twelve, one under each cup. Glyphs are very rare on pottery objects. The Zapotec glyphs are not well known; they seem to be to some degree intermediate between those of the Aztec and the Maya. The Mixtec glyphs are more closely related to the Aztec. Those here shown are probably Zapotec, but few of them can be identified with any other known glyphs. They are presumably calendrical, but the number twelve is not used in Mexican calendars, the 'year' consisting of eighteen 'months' of twenty days, and 'weeks' of thirteen days.

Comparing the glyphs with the well-known calendrical symbols of the Aztec, some tentative identifications may be reached; for the researches upon these I am indebted to Miss Mary Butler. One of them resembles a capital A. This is the Aztec sign for a year. Reading clockwise from this, the next (second) glyph may be a numerical exponent. The Zapotec, like the Maya, designated the number 'five' by a bar, 'one' by a circle. Reading the twin elements as ten, the number would be fourteen or sixteen, depending on whether the two smaller circles are considered as merely decorative, a device frequently employed. The fourth glyph probably represents a snake, *coatl*, one of the days in both the Aztec and the Zapotec calendars. The next, number five, may represent the 'Eye of Heaven.' Glyph six most resembles the Aztec sign for jade, *chalchihuitl*, but this was not the name of a day. The eighth glyph apparently bears the numerical exponent 'six,' and the tenth the exponent 'two.' The eleventh resembles the sign for water, *atl*, one of the days of the Zapotec as well as of the Aztec calendars. A decorative element of this type is very commonly used at the front of headdresses of the Zapotec funerary urn figures. J. A. M.

*The Joint Expedition
to Ur*

THE twelfth and final season of excavations at Ur has come to a successful conclusion, and the last field reports from Mr. C. Leonard Woolley are at hand. As was announced in