

*A Peruvian
Painting Set*

ONE of the most interesting of the recent accessions to the American Section is a group of small objects [Plate IV], from the Nazca region of the Pacific Coast of Peru. Practically nothing is known historically of the people who inhabited this region in the early centuries of the Christian Era, and the objects are so unique that their identification must of necessity be purely hypothetical and based upon an examination of the specimens themselves.

The collection consists of forty-four small objects of silver, showing various degrees of copper alloy, this mixture of metals probably being inherent in the ore employed and not intentional. The specimens seem to have composed the equipment of a painter of pottery, although, as frequently is the case with such mortuary objects, buried with the deceased, they may be miniature representations of the real equipment, not the utilitarian objects themselves.

Eight of the specimens are apparently containers for dry pigments, seven of them being of biconical shape, the other a tiny vase. The small orifices are closed with bits of dyed wool or fragments of cloth, the colors still bright—shades of red, brown, buff, green and purple. The pigments within have been lost in all but two cases, but the color of the woolen stopper evidently identified the pigment contained. Four smaller containers of copper may have served a similar purpose. Ten more are tiny plates, probably

representing those in which the colors were mixed, the palette of the artist. Seven are small spoons or ladles, one a spatula, one tweezers, and another of unidentified nature. The other twelve are evidently stencils or other forms for making geometric designs, made of thin flat plates of silver. Prominent among these are the cross and the step, favorite designs in this region. These artistic motifs probably identify the set as belonging to the Ica period which followed the Nazca and preceded the Inca periods, Ica pottery being characterized by a wealth of small geometric design.

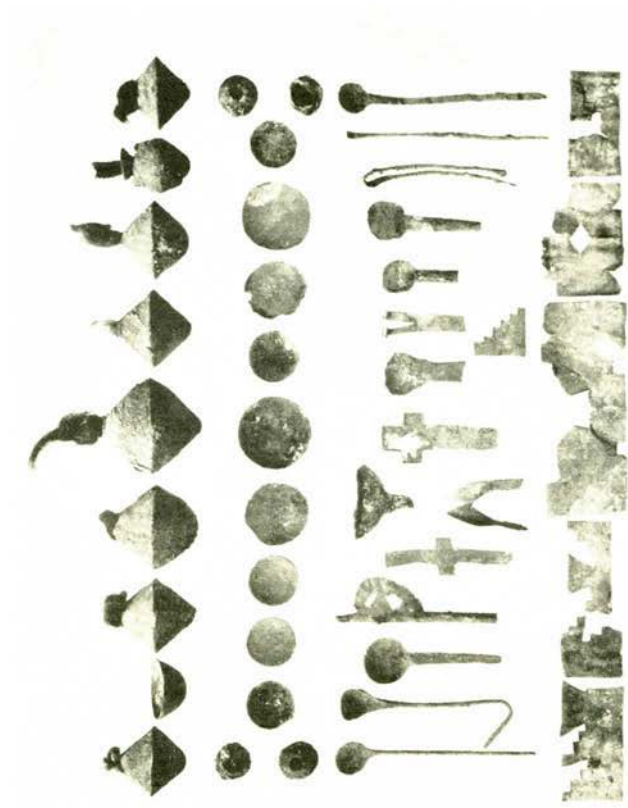
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*Field-Work
in the Southwest*

THERE seems to be an increasing evidence that man lived in the Southwest at a period earlier than the Basket Maker. This evidence is based largely on the association of human artifacts with the bones of extinct animals.

In a cave, on the eastern slopes of the Guadalupe Mountains, in New Mexico, where Mr. Edgar B. Howard of the Museum staff has been conducting work for the past two summers, a quantity of animal bones has been uncovered, mostly of Pleistocene age, among which were bison, antelope, horse, musk-ox and California condor. Some of these bones were in definite association with hearths found at various levels below Basket Maker burials.

Three burials have been uncovered, and in one, found this year, was a very fine twined-woven bag



A PERUVIAN PAINTING SET, PROBABLY OF THE ICA PERIOD, ABOUT A.D. 1200