

CHICAGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Roosevelt Road and Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago 5, Illinois

Archaeology

Care CIVAD-Saipan  
Marianas Is.  
Navy 3245  
Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.  
17 January 1950

Dear Pete

I have been on Saipan for two months now, and though I haven't done too much, at least I am well squared away with the native community. It is an interesting job, as the people are still unsettled after the war and community life is really just beginning to re-crystallize. The Chamorros here are in many respects un-Micronesian, no doubt through the long period of Spanish contact. They remind one more of Mexican communities, or probably more like Christianized ones in the Philippines, though I haven't seen the latter. There is also good material on the interaction between the Chamorros and the thousand or so Carolinians. The latter are very conservative, and a tough body of their old culture continues to maintain itself. I am anxious to see Joseph and Murray's book as soon as it comes out, as I want my own work to complement theirs, particularly on the problem of the relation of the changing social structure to the formation of personality types,

On the archaeological side, I have completed an archaeological survey of Saipan, and plan 6 weeks of digging beginning in February. Later on, I shall also extend the ethnology to Tinian, Rota, Alamagan, and Agruhan, and the archaeology to Tinian and Rota. There may also be sites on Ragan; am anxious to see. The archaeological project brings to mind the main point of this letter. I feel ~~archaeological project brings to mind the main point of this letter.~~ I feel very strongly that we should try to get a cooperative project underway in western Micronesia. It is true that the archaeology of the area is of academic interest only and that the Navy could not be expected to foot any part of the ~~interest only and that~~ bill. On the other hand, they might be amenable to transporting archaeologists on a revenue basis and extending commissary privileges, which would help a lot. Do you think it would be worth while to send out feelers as to competent archaeologists who might be interested in working in the area, as well as to possible sources of funds? After the Navy pulls out, transportation will really be tough, and the project should get underway in 1951 at the latest. At the moment, it seems logical to get up a party as follows:

Palau - 2 men, preferably a director and assistant  
Yap - 1 man, possibly two  
Guam - 1 man,  
Ponape - 2 men. Primarily a mapping job, I should think, with some digging any sites on Truk?

The pottery area of western Micronesia interests me most as it is here that we may be able to build up stratigraphic sequences that can possibly be tied to the Philippines. It is a real chance to get Pacific prehistory built up on a sound basis. The ruins at Ponape and Kasaie also have never been thoroughly mapped, though as I recall Hambruch described them, while test digging should also be done there. Lastly, the project on Ponape and Kusaie could be tied to an investigation of their suitability as historic monuments, and hence to con-

ENCL (4)

ervation plans for the Trust Territory. As for my own work, I will only be able to complete survey and stratigraphic testing in the Marianas other than Guam. The cost of such a cooperative project will come high, of course. Each party should stay in the field at least 6 months, and \$20,000 is probably the minimum. Would it be worthwhile to approach the Viking Fund, or are they bogged down with requests?

The

The question of personnel is also a touchy one of course. The men would have to take considerable hardship and on a job of this sort it would be desirable to leave the wives at home unless they were going out for a year. Could Ben Rouse be interested? Other possibilities are Heizer at Berkeley, Emory at Honolulu, possibly Homer Barnett. There are certainly others, but how should such a project be set up? You are a master at this sort of thing, and I would appreciate getting your reactions. Even with the war and consequent destruction of sites, there are still a lot left, and the archaeology is really pretty rich. Having been trained originally as a digger in the Southwest and the Mississippi valley, I find it is a lot of fun to get back to a bit of archaeology, particularly as a relief from the frustrations of ethnological field work. The latter is rough stuff compared to the straight away procedure of archaeological field work.

Although I regret somewhat not going back to the Marshalls for intensive work on various problems of theoretical importance in social organizations, Saipan has many interesting angles. Hope to get a really solid job done, though even a year isn't a bit too long. If I were young and unattached it would be a pleasure to spend five years or so knocking around Micronesia. The Gilberts need attention badly, though Katherine Luomala no doubt got a lot of interesting material, and there is a man named Hughes at the University of London who wrote me that he was going to the Gilberts shortly.

My best wishes for the New Year

Cordially,

s/ Alex

Alexander Spoehr

ENC (4)