

- 359 

ARCHAEOLOGY IN MICRONESIA

Ross Cordy Historic Preservation Office Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands

The intent of this shorter communication is to provide information on recent archaeological activity in Micronesia—specifically in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Presently, nearly all archaeological work is done by or under the auspices of the Trust Territory Historic Preservation Office. The information is current to April 1, 1980.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK BEFORE 1977

Before 1977, very little archaeological research was undertaken in the Trust Territory. There were about 15 projects in the years between 1945-1977 (Table 1). Earlier work had been done under the German and Japanese administrations, but, this, too was limited. The German Südsee Expedition of 1910 was largely a programme of ethnographic study, although important archaeological work was done. Japanese researchers did small-scale excavations here and there throughout the area, but these were few in number and few of the reports are translated (see Chapman 1964).

A closer look at the 15 archaeological projects between 1945-1977 is merited. Archaeological surveys were quite rare. Clune's survey in Truk and Davidson's in various areas of Ponape were both cursory reconnaissance surveys. Only Osborne's and Spoehr's surveys were intensive. Although Osborne identified general archaeological areas, he rarely mapped villages or terraces in detail. Spoehr generally checked only coastal areas. Of the surveys, only Davidson's and Osborne's provide hints as to settlement patterns.

Most projects were excavations of one or a few sites. This generally reflects the culture history research orientation of the projects. The focus was on the establishment of time periods based on artefact types and the resultant determination of origins and sources of local cultures. Pottery overwhelmingly was the type artefact of concern in Palau, Yap, and the Marianas. Fishhooks were used in Nukuoro. No suitable type artefact was found in Truk. The Nan Madol research has not yet been published, so it is unknown if any type artefacts were identified there.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK SINCE 1977

Since 1977 the Historic Preservation Office has done or sponsored nearly all archaeological work in the Trust Territory. A few exceptions are the 1977 Kelton-Bishop Museum Expedition to the Eastern Carolines, the Alkire's 1977 Yap outer

- 360 

TABLE 1

Archaeological Research in Micronesia 1945-1976

District/Year	Researcher	Nature of Work/Island of Work
<i>Palau</i>		
1954	Osborne	Survey & Excavations

1960s ¹	Osborne	Excavations
<i>Northern Marianas</i>		
1949-50	Spoehr	Coastal Survey & Excavations: Rota, Tinian, & Saipan
1958	Pellet	Excavation (one site): Tinian
1970-71	Takayama & Egami	Excavation (one site): Rota
1973	Egami & Saito	Excavations: Pagan
1975	Takayama & Intoh	Excavation (one site): Rota
<i>Yap</i>		
1956	Gifford & Gifford	Excavations
<i>Truk</i>		
1970	Clune	Reconnaissance Survey: Truk Lagoon
1972-73	Takayama & Seki	Excavations (two sites): Tol (Truk Lagoon)
1973	Clune	Excavations (3 sites): Tol
1973-74	Takayama	Excavation (1 site): Tol
1975-76	Takayama & Intoh	Excavation (1 site): Tol
<i>Ponape</i>		
1963	Evans & Meggers	Excavation & Mapping: Nan Madol
1965	Davidson	Reconnaissance Survey: Madolenihmw, Ant, Pingelap, Mokil, Ngatik & Nukuoro Excavation (1 site): Nukuoro

¹ Exact date uncertain.

atoll excavations, and Japanese-funded work; however, the Historic Preservation Office has affiliated itself with these projects in various ways. Over 125 archaeological projects have been undertaken in the Trust Territory since 1977. These include survey, excavation, and some site development.

Table 2 lists survey projects in which sites have been identified, excavation projects, and site development projects. These projects are fairly well distributed over the districts, for one of the aims of the Historic Preservation Office is a well-distributed programme.

- 361 

TABLE 2

Archaeological Projects Since 1977

Year	Researcher	Project
<i>Palau</i>		
1977	Takayama	Test Excavations: Koror, Aluptaciel & Pelilieu
1978	Takayama	2Test Excavations: Kayengel, Rock Islands & Angaur
	PH&CPC	*Survey: Road Improvements, Babelthaupt

	PH&CPC	*Survey: Secondary Road, Ngaraard
	Kirch	Survey: Airai Airport
	PH&CPC	*Restoration: Bai ra Irrai, Airai
1979	Cordy & Sam	Survey: Coral Hauling Roads, Airai
	Cordy & Sam	*Survey: Housing Development, Ngerbechedesau
	Cordy	Data Recovery Plan: Palau Airport, Airai
	Cordy	Survey: Palau Airport, Airai
	Lucking	Salvage Excavations: Palau Airport, Airai
	Cordy	Data Recovery Plan 2: Palau Airport, Airai
	Gumerman	Survey: Airai & other areas on Babelthaup
1980	PH&CPC	Survey: Koror Sewer Extensions
	<i>Yap</i>	
1978	Craib & Price	Survey: Capital Improvement Projects
	Price, Craib & Dye	Survey: Yap Airport, Rull
	Kirch	Survey: Yap Airport, Rull
	King	Survey: Yap Airport, Rull
	King	Survey: Neighborhood Center, Gagil
	King	Survey: HUD projects, Rumung
	Hayakawa	Survey: Rang village, Fanif
	K. Alkire & W. Alkire	Test Excavations: Lamotrek, Faraulap & Woleai Atolls
1978-79	Craib	Survey & Test Excavations: Ulithi Atoll
1979	Cordy	Data Recovery Plan: Yap Airport, Rull
	Cordy	Survey: O'Keefes Island
1979-80	Price	³ Background Study: Yap Archaeological Sites & Patterning
1980	Cordy & Kugfas	Survey: Gitam & Balabat Villages, Rull
	Pickering, Hanson, Hanson, Denfeld, Lingenfelter	Survey & Salvage Excavation: Yap Airport, Rull
	Hunter-Anderson	**Survey: Toru village, Map
	Denfeld	*Survey: Second World War sites.
	Denfeld	**Survey: German Transmitter Station
	<i>Truk</i>	
1977	Sinoto, Shutler, & Takayama	Salvage Excavation, Fefan
1978	King	Predictions: Site Locations
	Craib	Survey: Capital Improvement Projects, Moen & Dublon
	Edwards	Survey: Road, Tol
	Edwards	Site Development Plan: Fauba Fort, Tol

² No final report is yet available.

³ Project ongoing. In some cases, preliminary reports are available.

- 362 

1978-79	King	*Survey & Salvage Excavations: Truk Airport & Iras Sewer, Moen
1979	Truk HP Survey Team	Survey: Sapuk Dredge Site
	Takayama	Test Excavations: Mortlocks
	Susumu Enterprises, Takayama & Nishikawa	*Site Development: Fauba Fort, Tol
	Denfeld	Survey: Second World War Land Sites
	Russell	*Site Development Plan: Lighthouse, Puluwat
	Truk HP Survey Team	Survey: Nepukos village, Moen
	Truk HP Survey Team	Survey: Tunnuk village, Moen
1980	Truk HP Survey Team & Cordy	**Survey: Tunnuk village, Moen
	Truk HP Survey Team & Cordy	**Survey: Sapuk village, Moen
	Brooks	**Geoarchaeological: Sourcing & Sealevel Studies
<i>Ponape</i>		
1977	PHPC	Survey: Pepper Plantation, Sokehs
	Ayres & Haun	Survey & Test Excavations: Awak Valley, Uh
1978	PHPC	Survey: Pohndollap Homesteads, Sokehs
	Saxe, King, PHPC	*Survey: Circumferential Road
	Ayres, Haun & Severence	Survey & Test Excavations: Awak Valley, Uh & Ant Atoll
	Saxe	*Site Development Plan: Nan Madol
1979	Denfeld	Survey: Second World War Land Sites
	Athens	Survey: Palikir, Sokehs
	Athens	*Survey: Nan Madol
	Ayres & Haun	*Survey & Test Excavations: Awak Valley, Uh; Wene Valley, Kitti; & Ant Atoll
	Cordy	Predictions: Site Locations
	Jones & Cordy	**Site Development Plan: German Belltower, Kolonia
	Hanlon	*Survey: Colonial Kolonia
	PHPC	Survey: Salapwuk Road, Kitti
	Streck	*Survey: Circumferential Road, Kitti
1979-80	Leach, Ward	**Survey: Kapingamarangi Atoll
1980	PHPC	Survey: Kolonia Sewer
	PHPC	Survey: Pohnauleng Dredge Site, Madolenihmw
	PHPC	Survey: Sokehs Pah Fill, Sokehs
<i>Kosrae</i>		
1977	King	Survey: Lelu Sewer
	Watson	Survey: General reconnaissance
1978	Craib	Survey: Capital Improvement Projects
	Price	Survey: Tafeyat Waterline, Lelu
1979	KHPC	Survey: Dam Redevelopments

Cordy & KHPC Archaeological

- 363 

	Survey Team	Survey: Contractor's Camp, Tafunsak
	Cordy, KHPC Survey Team	*Survey: Lela, Malem
	Cordy & KHPC Survey Team	Survey: Innem/Okat Road, Lelu
	Cordy & KHPC Survey Team	*Survey & Excavations: Putuk, Wiya, & Tepot villages, Tafunsak
	Cordy	Predictions: Site Locations
	Cordy	*Survey: Lelu Stone Ruins
	KHPC Survey Team	Survey: Tofol, Lelu
1980	KHPC Survey Team	Survey: Yewal, Utwe
	KHPC Survey Team	Survey: Kupla, Malem
	Sinoto & KHPC Survey Team	*Test Excavations: Tafunsak & Utwe
	Cordy & KHPC Survey Team	**Survey & Test Excavations: Lelu Stone Ruins

Marshall Islands

1978	Jelks	Restoration: De Brum House, Likiep Atoll
1979	Rosendahl	*Report Preparations: 1977 Kelton Expedition
	Riley	*Survey & Test Excavations: Majuro Atoll
	MIHPC	*Survey: Outer Island Docks
	Cordy	Predictions: Site Locations
1980	Rynkiewich	**Background Survey: Colonia Era Majuro & Jaluit

PH&CPC = Palau Historical & Cultural Preservation Commission

Truk HP Survey Team = Truk Historic Preservation Survey Team

PHPC = Ponape Historic Preservation Committee

KHPC = Kosrae Historic Preservation Committee

MIHPC = Marshall Islands Historic Preservation Committee

The Nature of the Work Since 1977

Most of the projects listed in Table 2 are strictly oriented towards producing inventories. They itemise the survey area and locate and describe sites found. I regard this as one of the major flaws of contract work in the northern Pacific. The Historic Preservation Office is trying to change this pattern by requiring a research framework, in which village settlement pattern analysis is a minimal prerequisite.

None the less, a look at Table 3 indicates that research orientations in Micronesian archaeology have changed. This change has seen an increase in the kinds of research orientations and the dominance of a settlement pattern focus. It is the intent of the Historic Preservation Office to continue to promote a variety of research approaches to archaeological work in the Trust Territory. (In Table 3, the Natural Environment category refers to subsistence studies. The Social Environment category refers to relations with other social units—e.g., in trade, marriage, war, etc. Chronology entails chronological analyses not associated with

- 364 

the culture historical concept of type artefacts and period assemblages; rather it refers to establishing chronologies independent of the period concept.)

TABLE 3

Research Orientations in Micronesian Archaeology (1977-April 1980)

RESEARCH TOPICS	1977	1978	1979	1980	Totals
Culture History	3	3	2	3	11
Settlement Patterns	2	5	16	12	35
Chronology		1	4	5	10
Activity Loci		1	5	2	8
Natural Environment Variations & Adaptations	1	3	6	1	11
Social Environment Variations & Adaptations		1	1	4	6
Development of Complex Societies	1	1	3	1	6

THE FUTURE

At present, the Historic Preservation Office has two basic goals which relate to archaeology. One is to continue to promote a large number of archaeological projects with different research orientations. The other is to establish a strong local programme, to continue after 1981, which is able to function easily and effectively despite financial restrictions and which continues to promote archaeological research in the area. If both goals are met, then a moderately large number of archaeological projects should continue in this area of the Pacific during the coming years.

REFERENCES

- ▶ CLUNE, Francis J., 1974. "Archaeological Survey of Truk, Micronesia." *Micronesica*, 10: 205-6.
- ▶ — MS. nd. Truk Islands Eastern Caroline Islands Trust Territory of the Pacific Archaeological Investigations. On file, Trust Territory Historic Preservation Office.
- ▶ DAVIDSON, Janet, 1967. "An Archaeological Assemblage of Simple Fishhooks from Nukuoro Atoll." *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 76: 177-96.
- ▶ — 1967. "Preliminary Archaeological Investigations on Ponape and other Eastern Caroline Islands." *Micronesica*, 3: 81-96.
- ▶ — 1967. "Archaeology on Coral Atolls," in G. Highland, et al. (eds), *Polynesian Culture History: Essays in Honor of K. P. Emory*. Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, pp.363-75.
- ▶ — 1968. "Nukuoro: Archaeology on a Polynesian Outlier in Micronesia," in I. Yawata and Y. Sinoto (eds), *Prehistoric Culture in Oceania*. Honolulu, Bishop Museum Press, pp.51-66.

- 365 

- ▶ — 1971. "Archaeology on Nukuoro Atoll." *Bulletin of the Auckland Institute and Museum*, 9.
- ▶ EGAMI, Tomoko and Fumiko SAITO, 1973. "Archaeological Excavation on Pagan in the Mariana Islands." *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Nippon*, 81: 203-26.
- ▶ GIFFORD, E.W. and D.S. GIFFORD, 1960. "Archaeological Excavations in Yap." *Anthropological Records*, 18(2). University of California.
- ▶ OSBORNE, Douglas, 1966. "The Archaeology of the Palau Islands: An Intensive Survey." *Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin* 230.
- ▶ — in press. "Archaeological Excavations at Palau, Western Caroline Islands: The 1967-1968 Field Season." *Micronesica Special Report*.
- ▶ PELLET, Marcian and Alexander SPOEHR, 1961. "Marianas Archaeology: Report on an Excavation on Tinian." *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 70: 321-25.
- ▶ RIESENBERG, Saul, Clifford EVANS and Betty MEGGERS, MS. 1963. Preliminary Report of Anthropological Research conducted on Ponape Island, Caroline Islands. Memorandum to High Commissioner M. W. Goding, March 8, 1963. On file, Trust Territory Historic Preservation Office.
- ▶ SPOEHR, Alexander, 1957. *Marianas Prehistory: Archaeological Survey and Excavations on Saipan, Tinian,*

and Rota. Chicago Natural History Museum, Fieldiana: Anthropology, 48.

- ▶ TAKAYAMA, Jun, 1971. "Archaeology on Rota in the Marianas Islands." *Reports of Pacific Archaeological Survey*, 1.
- ▶ TAKAYAMA, Jun and M. INTOH, 1976. "Archaeological Excavation of 'Latte' Site (M-13), Rota, in the Marianas." *Reports of Pacific Archaeological Survey*, 4.
- ▶ — 1978. "Archaeological Excavation at Chukienu Shell Midden on Tol, Truk." *Reports of Pacific Archaeological Survey*, 5.
- ▶ TAKAYAMA, Jun and T. SEKI, 1973. "Preliminary Archaeological Investigations on the Island of Tol in Truk." *Reports of Pacific Archaeological Survey*, 2.

- 366 

Page is blank