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Zamboanga and Sulu: An Archaeological Approach to Ethnic Diversity

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Book Reviews

ZAMBOANGA AND SULU: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ETHNIC DIVERSITY. By Alexander Spoehr. (Department of Anthropology, *Ethnology Monograph No. 1*) Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg, 1973. 298 pages.

This volume, subtitled "An Archaeological Approach to Ethnic Diversity," is as much ethnology as archaeology, although the really substantive new data are archaeological. Spoehr himself defines his objective as "archaeological in nature and . . . directed toward gaining a historical perspective on the indigenous ethnic groups inhabiting the southern Zamboanga peninsula and the Sulu archipelago of the Philippines" (p. 15). The ethnic groups surveyed include the Zamboangueños, Subanun, Tausug, Badjau, and the various Samal-speaking indigenous groups. A novel way of looking at these various indigenous ethnic groups is that they are not isolated tribes but active societies forming a network of exchange relations among themselves. The ecological basis of this exchange is the land, farm, and forest products of the Zamboangueños and Subanun against the sea products and trade items of the Tausug and Samal. The Subanun, for instance, were not in direct contact with Chinese traders who frequented the ports of Zamboanga and Jolo over the centuries, but received their porcelain plates, jars, iron, and brasswork through the Samal traders acting both as overlords and middlemen. Control of the trade items at the source, in fact, largely defined the power and status relations between the groups. The Tausug sultans and datus, through whom foreign traders had to go for customs duty, were at the top of the pyramid. Below them were the Badjau and Subanun who acted as primary producers of food as well as of forest products, such as resin and beeswax, and of marine products, such as trepang and pearls, for export.

To give historical depth to these contemporary ethnic societies, Spoehr conducted a series of surveys and excavations in portions of southern Zamboanga peninsula and in two key islands in the Sulu archipelago. He excavated strategic areas of Fort Pilar associated with the Zamboangueños and the Samal who lived around the fort. He also excavated Bungiao Rock

Shelter and Limpapa Caves on the east coast of Zamboanga City, where archaeological remains were associated with the Subanun. The Tausug is revealed archaeologically in a series of excavated sites in Jolo island proper, particularly around the town of Parang. A number of the Jolo sites were *cottas* or military forts. The plans of these cottas have been reconstructed by Spoehr and are valuable historical documents for future research and writing on the history of southern Philippines. A Samal projection is implicit in the excavated materials from Sanga-Sanga Island, Tawi-Tawi, but the time depth is so distant (between 5995 and 6650 B.C.) as to make ethnic association rather hazardous. The rest of the book is a comparative analysis of ceramics, both local and trade, as well as non-ceramic assemblages such as stone tools, shell ornaments, brass artifacts, and grave marker styles. A major insight from the ceramic analysis of local wares is Spoehr's questioning of Solheim's threefold division of Philippine pottery into Kalanay, Novaliches, and Bau-Malay provinces. The Samalan pottery types and decorations found by Spoehr do not fit the traditional criteria of the so-called Bau-Malay prototypes. The challenge to this somewhat hazy southern Philippine pottery tradition is bound to be a turning point in the study of southern Philippine prehistory. The Sanga-Sanga rockshelter, which revealed the second site of shell-tool culture in the Philippines, connects with Tabon Caves on the one hand and with Micronesia on the other. And Spoehr, by coincidence, is the most logical person to make this tentative correlation between the southern Philippines and Micronesia because he has pioneered in both areas archaeologically. The Sulu-Marianas alignment initially is revealed by red-slipped potteries and the use of impressed circles filled with lime.

In conclusion, the link between ethnology and archaeology is found to lie in the role of excavated trade objects which throw light on both external and internal trade as well as on the internal dynamics of the participating societies. Spoehr may be right that the next frontier in archaeological research in the Philippines and Southeast Asia is in the central role of trade in the evolution of coastal and inland societies. And in this regard, *Zamboanga and Sulu* marks a good firm beginning.

Eric S. Casiño

HOLLOW SHIPS ON A WINE-DARK SEA AND OTHER ESSAYS. By William Henry Scott. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1976. 115 pages.

Everything that should be said of this collection of essays has been said in the Introduction by Salvador Lopez. The author, William Henry Scott, has spent the greater part of his adult life as a lay missionary in the Orient, first in China and then for more than twenty years in the Philippines. His writings on the peoples and history of the Mountain Province have made him a recognized