

G. M. G.

% Burns Philp, Co.,
Suva, Fiji.
Dec. 26, 1931.

My dear Mr. Grimble:

Your kindness in writing to me the situation of the anthropological field workers in the Gilbert and Ellice and the progress of the work there is greatly appreciated. I can readily see the feeling that would arise should another worker enter the field. Although I am personally disappointed in not going to a field where I thought I could make an anthropological "scoop", I am glad for the sake of the study itself, that someone else, who will be in the field for years, is undertaking the survey.

My trip has been entirely altered. I shall sail next month from Suva for the Island of Rotuma to attempt an anthropological survey of that island, and then join another Fellow of the Bishop Museum to continue the work in Uvea and Futuna. Rotuma, on which I find little or nothing written, I believe will prove to be strongly Micronesian in many phases of its culture. Certainly the little I have seen of the language would indicate such. If, in your Gilbert Island studies, you have found anything that suggests Rotuman affiliations, or anything in particular that asks for special enquiry in Rotuma, I should be very grateful to know of these while I am in the field.

Your publications will not be in print, I expect, until after I have finished my field work. The previous papers in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, I have read and digested with much interest. Evidently, you have found more to substantiate the evidence in the myths of the earlier Buru homeland. Your data fits in admirably with the migration theory of Dr. R. B. Dixon of Harvard. In his "Racial History of Man" he traces his "Alpine Group" as migrating eastward to the islands ^ust west of New Guinea, and then sweeping ⁿorthward.

In talking with Dr. Margaret Mead at the Museum of Natural History in New York, she gave me the following details of her trip in the Admiralty Islands. I give them hoping they may prove of some interest to you. On the Island of Baluan, she notes these culture traits as Samoan.

Kava-Pounding the root.

Possession of mediums by ghosts.

Ifoga- A Samoan custom of humiliation.

Public deflowering or consummation of marriage.

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Ilamotu- The power of the father's sister to curse his children, and the especial right over her brothers. (In Western Samoa, I find that Mead is wrong in calling her the ilamotu. The ilamotu is one phase of the rights and powers of the eldest sister in the family. She is known here as the Tamasa of sacred child, and holds many privileges distinct from the position of ilamotu. She is never addressed as ilamotu.)

Taupou-A trace of this position of a girl in the chief's retinue.

Rank e Only slightly marked.

Stone walls- Samoan ufile.

On Manus she finds more Samoan Traits which I did not have time to note.

Dr. Mead has written a book "Growing Up in New Guinea" which hurts to read. Detailed ethnographic data seems to have been maliciously omitted. But recently the Bishop Museum has published her "Social Organization of Manua"-Samoa East, which is a long hoped for supplement to her "Coming of Age in Samoa". She is now in Papua, so that I cannot say what will be forthcoming on the Admiralty Ethnography. Her husband, Mr. Fortune, may have published something in the last six months.

One wonders what the subject will be for Papua, now that the poor South Sea maiden has come of age and grown up.

What is being done, if anything, in the way of Physical Anthropology in the Gilberts. Dr. Shapiro of the American Museum of Natural History of New York, and for whom I am taking measurements in Tonga and Samoa, is very anxious to obtain data on the physical type from the "Threshold of Polynesia". Of course it is out of the question for me to measure there within the next year, if at all. As we have measured between us some six thousand Polynesians in all the major groups except New Zealand, we are anxious to make a complete survey along the western borders of Polynesia. I am enclosing one of my blanks, in case someone is doing the work, so that he may see what we want for comparative material.

I regret that I shall not be able to meet you in Australia, but I do hope earnestly that I may have the pleasure some day when I may hear more of your work.

Most sincerely,

Gordon Macgregor.