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Exploration in the Caroline Islands: Discussion

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a medium of exchange. It may be observed that in the northern islands of Map and Ramung, and the wilder parts of the main island, the money of the white man, whether English, Spanish, or American, is hardly ever accepted as legal tender, and it is only in the settlements around the Spanish colony in Tomil bay the natives have learned to recognize its value.

There is yet another treasure highly prized in Yap, but which from its comparative rarity is seldom bartered. It is a coarse shaggy white mat, resembling nothing so much as goat or dog's skin; it is made from the beaten-out bark of the Kal or lemon-hibiscus tree. It is not for use, but merely for show, and is always kept religiously rolled up in a safe corner. It is exactly the counterpart of the *Ie-sina* of Samoa, a white shaggy mat made out of the fibres of the bark of a species of *Ramie*.

After the reading of the paper, the PRESIDENT said: When Admiral Bridge's paper on these islands was read here twelve years ago, we, to our great regret, had not the pleasure of seeing him, as he had just been appointed to the *Colossus*, and the paper was read by his paymaster, Mr. Matthew. Well, twelve years have elapsed, and now we have the great pleasure of welcoming Admiral Bridge back from his command in Australia, and I trust that he will make up for our great disappointment when his paper was read, by opening the discussion on Mr. Christian's most interesting paper this evening.

Admiral CYPRIAN BRIDGE: I am very much afraid that, when the audience hears the little I have to say, after the very admirable account given us by Mr. Christian, it will be disposed to think that the loss in not hearing me before was somewhat less than your President, in his courtesy, tried to convey. It is now over fifteen years since I visited the Caroline islands, accompanied by my friend Mr. Le Hunte, who is about to leave this country to take up the office of Lieutenant-Governor of New Guinea, in succession to that very distinguished public servant, Sir William MacGregor; Mr. Le Hunte accompanied me as Judicial Commissioner of the Western Pacific. We visited many other groups of islands during our cruise; but it was in the months of June, July, and August, 1883. Therefore, even if I had made myself so thoroughly acquainted with them as to be able to give you any long description, after the very admirable account to which we have just listened, I am afraid my account would be rather like last week's paper after this evening's special edition. With regard to the great buildings on the island of Ponape, Mr. Christian has not dealt at any length upon the immense amount of work that he must have carried out in order to see the ruins at all; because the luxuriant vegetation of these tropical islands has nearly covered all these ruins, and a not very observant visitor might go there, and never know there were such things. The photographs he has shown us this evening can only have been taken as a result of a vast amount of clearing away. His plans are probably the first approaching anything like completeness that have been made. There are earlier plans, as the ruins were first described by the eminent Polish naturalist, Mr. Kubary, whose acquaintance Mr. Le Hunte and I made at the Pelew islands, and whose decease I have heard of with regret. He was only able to investigate a portion of them; and if anybody is curious in the matter, he will find a detailed account of his exploration in a book in German, called an 'Essay on South Sea Curiosities,' by Steinlitz and Kreuse, published at Hamburg in 1881. The "Cemetery

of the Little People " I fancy Mr. Christian is the discoverer of ; as, though having visited Ponape, I never heard of it until this evening, and I can easily understand, from the Metalanim rocks which are close to the sea, the great difficulties he had to overcome before making the plans we saw just now. I am not sure that I understood Mr. Christian aright, but I fancy his opinion is that the ancestors of the present natives were the builders of these great ruins. I should be very reluctant to appear to hold an opinion on such a subject contrary to any conclusion arrived at by Mr. Christian, but I confess it seems to me almost impossible. Not only are the buildings great artificial structures, but the very islands on which the buildings are made are artificial; and that vast area, I think about 3 miles square, of which Mr. Christian gave us a plan, is itself entirely artificial; so that this Microsnesian Venice has had even less help from nature in the way of construction than the Venice in the south of Europe. The structures themselves are of great size, and the materials of which they are composed are of the most massive description. I think Kubary estimated that some blocks of stone must have weighed 7700 lbs.—over $3\frac{1}{4}$ tons. As Mr. Christian told us, these hexagonal basaltic columns are quarried 30 miles away. Now, it is inconceivable to me, having seen the natives of Ponape, that they ever got these great masses from the quarry to the places where the structures are, much less build the structures. In the same way, in the island of Lele, the ruins are of a totally different character, built, not of basaltic prisms, but great irregular blocks of stone, some of very great size. The ruins differ essentially from those on Ponape; they are on the land, and the others are in the water. It seems incredible, no matter how much you allow for national degradation and forgetting the arts of their ancestors—no matter how much allowance you make, it seems to me incredible that any people of the present race should have constructed these immense works, of which we see the remnants. There is something to the white man very comforting in that belief. Wherever we go throughout the South Sea islands, we find the native populations diminishing. I believe I alluded to this in the paper to which your President referred just now. There were then two exceptions when I was at that time in the Pacific—Wallace Island, now under the French, and Savage Island, which lies to the east of the Tongas. I was at Savage island again three years ago, and I regret to say, having landed on the island, where they are all Christians, and many speak English fluently, I found that the population was diminishing; and I was told in Samoa, by the French Catholic missionaries, that the Wallace island people were diminishing also. It appears likely, then, that these great ruins were built by a race entirely passed away; which had not only diminished, but had disappeared long before any white man visited the islands; and it is comforting to think that the diminution and approaching disappearance of the present Pacific races is in no way attributable to us, but was probably going on long before we appeared on the scene. The builders of these immense places, like the mound-builders in the Mississippi valley, or Yucatan, and Central America, investigated by Mr. Maudslay, have disappeared quite independently of contact with any white people. I have only a few words to say about Yap, and these great stone coins or pieces of money, so well delineated in the photographs. They are made of stone not found in the island of Yap; it is found in the Pelew islands, 200 miles distant; and when my friend and I were in the Pelew island in 1883, the king of Korror allowed a hundred Yapmen, who were replaced from time to time, so that the number was always kept up to about a hundred, to live in his territory, to quarry these great discs of stone and send them over to their own island. At the present day they are carried across in schooners. We saw several 6 feet in diameter, and estimated the weight at over 3 tons; but we were told of one which was

over 9 feet 4 inches in diameter, and estimated to weigh 4 or 5 tons. Now, it is quite mysterious how these things were conveyed across 200 miles of ocean before the white man's schooners had come. They do move them about in Yap, between canoes; quite a fleet of canoes is required for them. That would not do across the open ocean. But, as some of the stones are very old, it is certain they came over before the schooners arrived; how they can have been brought is another mystery of the Pacific. I am afraid that, considering how very little information I have conveyed, and how very little I have supplemented what has been so ably told us by Mr. Christian, I have occupied your time rather longer than I ought.

The PRESIDENT: We have the pleasure of welcoming here this evening the new Governor of New Guinea, and we hope that accounts of any exploration undertaken under his auspices will be sent home by him to us in correspondence. Mr. Le Hunte accompanied, as deputy commissioner, Admiral Bridge when he visited the Caroline islands in the *Espiegle*.

Mr. LE HUNTE: I was not prepared for this distinguished reception to-night; I am sure, after what we have heard from Mr. Christian and Admiral Bridge, I should only be repeating and taking up your time unnecessarily. It has recalled to me one of the most interesting and pleasant times I can remember, that cruise of five months through the Western and South Pacific, and especially our visit to Kusei and Ponape, in the Carolines. Nothing can really convey, not even the words of the lecturer or the photographs or Admiral Bridge's speech, their beauty, which was marvellous. The vegetation is most beautiful. I found a magnificent red "*Ixora*" in one court of the ruins. I don't know whether it existed when Mr. Christian visited the place, or whether it fell a victim to the necessities of making room for the camera—a scarlet waterfall of flowers. [Mr. CHRISTIAN: It is still there.] I can quite understand the difficulty he found in clearing the ruins, because it was really a work of some difficulty, if not danger, to explore them, for I know nothing so hard as to sit down suddenly on one of these basaltic columns, hidden by creepers, and covered with slippery moss, and you sit down pretty frequently. I have no pretension to understand or be able to discuss the scientific questions. I was accompanied in my rambles about the ruins by a humorous though somewhat silent native of New Caledonia, and we were both of us extremely puzzled as to the builders of this marvellous sea city; but my friend "Joe" solved the difficulty by turning on his heel and remarking, "Debble, he build um." I could not go any further. I am inclined to agree with Admiral Bridge, with deference to any better opinion, They could not have been built by any races we saw, or any linked to them as natural predecessors; they must have been, I think, a separate race altogether. One thing I noticed was that all the defences faced seawards, and not inland, which to some extent shows that they were built by residents, and not by people attacking the island from the sea. On our visit to Yap we saw the extraordinary collection of stone money, which is perhaps not the right word; it is a token rather than a medium of exchange. At great festivals they interchange them, not in the same way as barter, but in the same way as the Fijians will exchange whales' teeth; they represent a value we can put no estimate upon. As Admiral Bridge says, they come from the Pelew islands. We saw scores of these enormous millstones in front of the king's treasure house at Yap. This evening's lecture has brought back most vividly to me a most interesting visit to these islands. As your President has alluded to the work I am going to, I may say I look forward most heartily with interest and zest to seeing further mysteries, and taking a very humble part in their elucidation.

Mr. A. P. MAUDSLAY: After hearing three people who have been to the Caroline islands, I cannot add much to the discussion. I took part in the discussion

on our previous paper, and then expressed a hope that some one would soon arise to give us an account of the ruins at Metalanim. We have had to wait fourteen years, and are proportionately thankful to Mr. Christian for what he has told us. I am glad to hear that Mr. Christian will very likely return, and as he has told us there are something like 11 square miles of ruins, there must be a great deal of work still to be done. Now, in one way I sympathize with him very much. When he went to the Carolines, he went principally with the idea of studying the languages, and not the ruins; and I have been placed in very much the same circumstances myself. When I first came across a ruin in Central America, I did not know what to do with it; it looked very big and very formidable, and I did not know how to set about recording my observations. Luckily for me, when I came home I fell into the hands of Mr. Coles, and anything I have since been able to do has been much owing to the instruction he gave me, and the advice I received from the officers of this Society. Now, we do very much want a still further exploration of Metalanim, and I trust Mr. Christian will put himself in Mr. Coles's hands, and bring us back in a year or two a very detailed plan of this town of 11 square miles. It is a big job, and it will take him, I am certain, more than one season. With regard to the ruins themselves, one speaks of masonry, but there appears to be no sign of tool-marks on the basaltic rocks; they are treated much as logs of wood, one piled up on top of another, and I believe the only implements Mr. Christian found are those very interesting shell axes. In those graves which Mr. Christian opened he found some bones in such a condition that they hardly seem to imply a very great age; however, one skull only is so far perfect that we may be able to get correct measurements; but if he will go back and again tackle the graves which still remain unopened, we may be able to get hold of some skulls that will tell us at least what people they were for whom these tombs were built; and that, I take it, is one of the most important works that lie before him. I can't say how much I envy him the chance of going back to Metalanim, and having another turn at those ruins. I am sure we shall encourage him to do it as soon as possible, and bring us back again as interesting results as we have now.

Mr. HERCULES REID: It is with considerable diffidence that I rise to say anything of this matter. Mr. Maudslay said he was diffident, but he at least has been in the Pacific; I can make no such boast. There is one point, I think, that is perfectly clear—that is, from the position of these islands, as you see on the map, there is every probability of the race being a mixed one, and from Mr. Christian's account it appears that the natives' opinion is that the earliest race was one of dwarfs or negritos; then followed a race of giants, after them came cannibals, and then I think the present inhabitants. That is as I understand Mr. Christian's account. Now this, I think, has many factors in common with the traditions that we find all over the world, not excepting our own country. We see evidences in the photographs that Mr. Christian has shown us, in the stories that he has told us, of the varying influences of these different races who at one time and another came from the west and the south, or possibly from the north. I think the nearest existing negritos are in the Philippines. The type of house that we see in the photographs, with the high-peaked ends, are precisely the same as are found in the south-east peninsula of New Guinea. Certainly I think those present who know the Melanesian type will agree with me that many of the types in the photographs are Melanesian. We have every possible type that could be expected in islands such as they are, and for that reason I am afraid, even if the skulls be brought here, we shall get only a confirmation of what would be possibly the case. Of course such a confirmation is very important, and it may confirm what we already guess; it may also give us some ideas we did not

possess about those islanders. Now, there is one point that Mr. Christian has rather insisted upon, and that is the Japanese type of these megalithic structures. For my own part, I must confess I cannot see necessarily any Japanese influence at all. It is quite possible that the Japanese may have come down to these islands; it is historically certain that they did come down to the Philippines; but if you look at the map, that was simply a coasting voyage. If they had gone out to the Carolines they would have had a very different trip indeed, and before assuming such influence it would be well to find some further confirmation of it. These structures, which are, of course, the most interesting feature of these islands, may properly be called structures on the timber plan, very like log huts; as Mr. Maudslay said, there is no sign of tool-marks upon them. They are simply piling Pelion upon Ossa. In that they differ from some others found in the Pacific, notably in Tonga, where in one well-known instance, most frequently photographed, there is a kind of slot in the lower stone into which the upper stone fits. Now, that shows a considerable advance in culture over the piling of one stone upon another, just as trunks of trees would be piled. I think it is very improbable that, even if the Caroline islanders wished to work these stones, they had anything with which they could do so; of course, these fine shell axes are excellent for wood, but I think against these basaltic columns they would be quite ineffectual. Now as to the question who were the builders. I shall not detain you long. For my own part, I do not see any reason whatever why the present inhabitants of the Caroline islands should not be the descendants of the people that made these buildings. That, as you know, is contrary to the views of two-thirds of those present who have spoken on the subject; but I think the evidence that Admiral Bridge himself gave us is something toward a solution. He told us that these stone discs, of an enormous weight, were brought by somebody from the Pelew islands, and I think, if these things now have a common value to the existing islanders, the probability is very great that they were made by their ancestors, and if so they were brought from the Pelew islands by the same people. Now, if they could bring these enormous weights from this distance, surely they had engineering skill enough to put these stone columns one upon another. I may cite, in illustration of my hypothesis, the present inhabitants of Egypt; would anybody, without knowledge, suppose that they were capable of building the gigantic and artistic structures to be found there? I don't think this at all an unfair analogy, and I think in this particular instance that it is not at all strained. With regard to the Japanese theory, there is only one view I saw in the whole series that could be at all compared with Japanese work; that was a doorway with the ordinary horizontal lintel, which is exactly like the entrance to a Japanese dolmen, and equally like that of a dolmen in Brittany. There are many points that might be alluded to in this very interesting paper. I think that Mr. C. F. Wood's visit to the islands about 1873, and published in 1875, gives probably the best account of these extraordinary ruins. He was only in a small yacht, and had no crew sufficient to clear away the undergrowth, and made no excavations, but observed the structure, etc., very well. Up to the date of the publication of that book in 1875, I think his was quite the best account that has been published. The Duke of Wellington said that the battle of Waterloo was won in the playing-fields at Eton; here we have an exploit of a much more pacific character, which had its origin in the same training.

MR. CHRISTIAN: With regard to what Admiral Bridge said, I want to say three or four things. First of all, the natives of Ponape are still clever architects. The photographs show us buildings in the same fashion as the walls at Metalanim, and there are several such indications along the coast which have been omitted. There is

one where the masonry is very much the same; and certainly more recent than Metalanim; other ruins found on the island of Tapak are modern too. I think the builders were an intelligent minority swaying an ignorant majority. Yap traditions about the stone money go back a long way before there was any war in the land. They say after the invention of stone money civil war broke out.

With regard to bringing these masses of masonry into position, I think very likely it was done by a large number of men hauling them up over coconut trunks covered with oil to avoid friction. The point I considered Japanese as well as the great entrance was the projecting eaves or cornice that I have seen in Osaka and Kioto. The fashion of the mat, I was told by a Japanese the other day, was distinctly Japanese, as is their method of dealing with the banana fibre. I really think Mr. Reid was right in his parallel between the poor wretched fellaheen of Egypt to-day and the people under the Pharaohs long ages ago, and we must remember what Prescott has told us that nations fall to decay very quickly.

The PRESIDENT: It now only remains for me to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Christian for his most interesting paper. It will have been new, I am sure, to most of the audience that there are existing such massive Cyclopean structures in these small and distant islands. They reminded me of what I used to study years ago in Captain Cook's voyages, of the great stone idols and platforms on Easter island, and I even used to have a suspicion that there had been connection between Easter island and the civilized peoples of South America. Though it seems most probable that the massive structures in the Caroline islands were built by ancestors of the present inhabitants, I do not believe it is altogether impossible that they were inspired by a visit of a higher race. We must all have been struck by the care and diligence with which Mr. Christian has examined and made plans of these ruins, and also with the excessively hard work which he must have gone through in clearing his way to them. We trust that he will complete his work in those islands when he returns, and that we shall have the pleasure of seeing him here again, and I hope, as Mr. Maudslay suggested, that before he goes he will make the acquaintance of Mr. Coles. I now have the pleasure of proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Christian for his paper, and for the illustrations which accompanied it.

CAPTAIN SVERDRUP'S EXPEDITION TO NORTHERN GREENLAND.*

CAPTAIN OTTO SVERDRUP'S polar expedition, which left Christiania on June 24 last year, has for its principal geographical object to ascertain the extension of Greenland towards the north, to determine the yet unknown configuration of the coast of its mainland, and, if possible, to discover whether this great arctic land finally breaks up into groups of islands in the north.

The ship used in this expedition is the *Fram*, so well known from

* The following account of the objects and equipment of Captain Sverdrup's expedition in the *Fram* to the north coast of Greenland has been forwarded to the President by Consul Axel Heiberg and MM. Amund and Ellef Ringnes, who contributed handsomely to Dr. Nansen's expedition, and who are generously bearing the entire expense of the present expedition in the *Fram*, the ship itself being provided by the Norwegian Government.