

Robert B. Fox 1918–1985

WILHELM G. SOLHEIM II

ROBERT BRADFORD FOX (Bob) was a well-rounded anthropologist with training in physical anthropology, archaeology, and his Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, from the University of Chicago. At one time or another he made use, professionally, of all three of these areas of anthropological training. Working in the field and in the National Museum of the Philippines he alternated between ethnography and archaeology. For several years before he went to Chicago to study for his Ph.D. he worked as a civilian for the United States Army in charge of a laboratory identifying remains of American personnel who died during the Second World War. When Bob left for Chicago to study for his Ph.D., Charles Warren took over this job.

Bob was well known for his ethnographic research on the Tagbanuwa in Palawan, the Pinatubo Negritos of Luzon, and most recently the Tasaday of Mindanao. You may rest assured that the Tasaday were a truly, though not totally, isolated ethnic group, using stone tools and living in caves. In no way had the Tasaday been totally isolated from any other ethnic group for thousands of years, but, to my knowledge, it was the communications industry, in its many forms, that came up with the idea that this is what made the Tasaday exciting to the rest of the world. Bob would have had no part in developing such a false story.

In the academic world Bob was better known for his archaeological work. Of the three subfields of anthropology, he had the least training in archaeology. As a field worker he was very good but, unfortunately, he had little background in the analysis of collected archaeological data. He was making up for this lack, over five or more years before he had his stroke, in the analysis he was making of the flaked stone artifacts from the Tabon Caves. At first he was very frustrated for he realized after several years of work on this material that he had gotten nowhere beyond simple description. It was difficult to find the needed technical books in the Philippines, but he managed. The last time I had a visit with him before his stroke he showed me what he was doing with this material and I became convinced that he finally was on the right track and that soon he would produce a very valuable final report. His stroke brought this, and many other unfinished projects, to an end. It is fortunate that at least a few of these projects were close enough to completion that, with some editing, final publications appeared in the last few years.

Bob was no angel. In the field he was first class but he had difficulty coping with the big city. After coming back to Manila he would at times disappear for weeks at a time. He would eventually be found in one of the unsavory bars of Harrison St. in Pasay City. He knew how to take care of himself in a street fight, and on some occasions had to do so. His life story would make a very powerful and exciting movie. I am sure that his experiences with the U.S. Navy during the Second World War were exciting as well. If my memory serves me, he was with a PT boat squadron around Sulawesi towards the end of the war and took his discharge in the Philippines. He served the Philippines well.

I owe the following bibliography of Bob's publications having to do with archaeology to an article by Harold Conklin titled "A Bibliography of the Works of Robert B. Fox," which appeared in *Pilipinas: A Journal of Philippine Studies* (No. 7, Fall 1986:75-85). Conklin's article presents a more complete listing of Bob's writings as I have left out items which were not of direct interest to archaeology and prehistory and have included articles and books that could be considered ethnoarchaeological in nature.



Plate I. Bob Fox in Tabon Cave, Palawan, Philippines; photo by Joseph J. Scherschel (© National Geographic Society. I would like to thank the National Geographic Society for permission to use this photo).

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