

August 25, 1971

Mr. Carl Phagan  
 Apartado Postal 83  
 Ayachucho, Peru

Dear Mr. Phagan,

Thank you for your letter of August 18. In reply, I will treat first your proposal to dig in the shelter-cave area. This I feel would be a serious mistake for several reasons. The most important is that you cannot possibly do more than a partial, provisional test, then must leave the area. No matter what you find, even if little or nothing, such digging will tip off the huaqueros and the places will be completely messed up. There is a reasonable chance that some late burials are present and even if there is little in the way of grave goods this will ensure looting.

In my opinion there is only one correct procedure -- that is to go in prepared and able to carry the work to conclusion. This cannot be done in less than several months and may even take two seasons. If that is the case some provision must be made to guard the sites between periods of excavation.

Please do not interpret this as a feeling on my part that I have any prior claim to the area, for I do not have this. We have stated our own interest to Dra. Araúz and proposed a joint project to which she has responded favorably. My objection is a sincere one which I believe is valid, and about which I feel so strongly that I will send a copy of this letter both to her and to our good friends in FSUIAS.

Regarding the other aspect of your proposal, the study of the lithic material already collected, there should be enough of it to keep you busy. You must be aware that the spear points are identical with ones S.K. Lothrop found with his Coclé burials so they were made by people who were also making ceramics, gold and polished stone artifacts. Richard Cooke reports that he, too, found these points in Coclé habitation refuse so the ones with the burials are not out of context. By this I do not mean to belittle the interest of the technology of the spear points made from large prismatic blades and without pressure flaking. They are intriguing and worth studying.

Incidentally, I brought back with me a piece of the brown and red jasper from a quarry site Dr. Snyder showed me. Don Crabtree sawed this in half and heat-treated one piece at 500°-550°F. Flakes from this do not reveal any marked change in the visual fracture property of the material, but Don says that it does flake more easily.

What is the news from Ayachcho? Have heard nothing for some time and don't even know if Scotty is still digging. On your way home, if you come by New York please stop in.

Sincerely,

*Junius Bird*

Junius B. Bird

CEL 1.5.37