
Yapese Politics, Yapese Money and the Sawei Tribute Network before World War I

Author(s): M. L. Berg

Source: *The Journal of Pacific History*, Dec., 1992, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Dec., 1992), pp. 150-164

Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25169125>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Taylor & Francis, Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Pacific History*

Yapese Politics, Yapese Money and the Sawei Tribute Network before World War I*

M. L. BERG

UNTIL WORLD WAR I, WHEN THE JAPANESE OCCUPIED MICRONESIA, TWO MAIN TYPES OF money were in use on the island of Yap in the western Caroline Islands. The more valuable of the two was called *gau*; the other was known as *fei* (also *feaq* and *palang*).

The *gau* variety consisted of discs of Spondylus shell about three mm thick and one cm in diameter, bored through the centre and strung on strings in a crudely rounded form. The shells that were used came from three sources: Etal Atoll in the Mortlocks, Eauripik Atoll in the low-island region and Udot Island inside the Truk (Chuuk) Lagoon. Only the most important Yapese chiefs had custody of the *gau* money, and it was only employed during serious threats of war when its use was decisively effective.

Yapese *fei* money, which is more familiar to outsiders, consisted of huge 'wheels' of aragonite, deposits of which were quarried on the rock islands of southern and eastern Palau (Belau). These 'wheels' had holes bored through their centres and were anywhere from under a metre to several metres in diameter. Johann Kubary, the Polish-German ethnographer who visited Palau in 1882 and found 400 Yapese quarriers at work near Koror, said the aragonite was quarried and carved with 'unutterable effort' before being transported to Yap in the islanders' 'fragile vessels'. He added that when the quarriers returned home an entire village would pay for the money they had brought at so much taro per stone. The chief would then take possession of all the large ones and 40% of the small ones. In this manner all the important settlements on Yap would be provided with stone money, which they used to keep other settlements dependent upon them.¹

Both the *gau* and the *fei* varieties of money were used in a tribute network that linked Yap with Palau about 300 km to the west, and with all the islands of the

* I use the term 'money' for the various shell and stone valuables that were used on Yap prior to World War I. Such usage accords with the writings of recent researchers who have worked on Yap, such as David Labby, Sherwood Lingenfelter and Richard Marksbury. More importantly, Kubary reported that these forms of currency were in circulation during the late 19th century. Small pieces of stone money were exchanged for agricultural goods and small handicraft items; average pieces for buildings; and the biggest pieces for inter-village political alliances and debts. On this, see Johann Kubary, 'Ueber das einheimische Geld auf der Insel Yap und auf den Palau-Inseln', in *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Karolinen Archipels*, J. D. E. Schmeltz, ed. (Leiden 1889-95), 1-28.

For assistance with this article, I would like to thank Drs Deryck Scarr and Donald Denoon of the Australian National University and Stewart Firth of Macquarie University.

¹ Kubary, 'Ueber das einheimische Geld', 3-5.

Carolines as far east as Truk, a distance of roughly 1,500 km. The network, called 'sawei', seems to have been in existence as far back as the 12th century AD and to have been the driving force in Yapese politics. If so, how did this come about? What social conditions and what social conflicts played a part in this matter? How did the mining of aragonite figure in inter-island relations? How did the sawei network itself change over the years?

IN THE EARLY 20th century, during the German colonial era, Yapese lived in over 100 villages scattered about in 12 districts on four islands.² According to an April 1903 census conducted on Yap by the German District Office, the total resident population of Yap was 7,156.³ The foundations of Yapese society as it was during German colonial rule were recounted in a legend dealing with a flood and its aftermath, the direct result of which was that 'Yap Island, which had earlier only gone as far as Lama'r [a village on the southeast coast in Mela'u district], was extended with the addition of Nimegil [a region composed of the four southern districts of Mela'u, Lika'tsag, Kinifai and Galiman]'.⁴

The significant portion of the legend for the purposes of this article is the inclusion of Nimegil into society, almost the birth of that part of Yap Island since it was said not to have been accessible before the flood. As will be shown below, the Nimegil portion of Yap is especially linked to one of the two major types of Yapese money.

It is only possible to speculate on how long Yapese society had existed in the form found just prior to World War I. David Labby suggests that it originated in the 18th century.⁵ The longest genealogy recalled on Yap in 1909 or 1910 was that of Golevu, the chief priest of Dugor village in Ueloi district on the east coast of Yap Island; it went back nine generations.⁶ If a single generation is calculated as from 20 to 25 years, this would represent between 180 and 225 years, perhaps moving the origin of Yapese society back into the late 17th century. As will also be seen later, the 17th century was an important era in the use of one type of Yapese money.

Local warfare within Yapese society showed a clear division of villages and districts into two war parties, embracing virtually the entire archipelago. These war parties were called the *vaani pilung* (or *ban pilung*, 'side of chiefs') and the *vaani pagal* (or *ban pagael*, 'side of young men').⁷ The *vaani pilung* forces were

² Wilhelm Müller, *Yap*, in Georg Thilenius (ed.), *Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition, 1908-1910* (hereinafter *ESE*), II, B, 2, 1 (Hamburg 1917), 235-41.

³ 'Ergebnis der im April 1903 vorgenommenen Zählung der Eingeborenen auf Yap', *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, 14 (1903), 498.

⁴ Müller, *Yap*, I, 321-2.

⁵ David Labby, *The Demystification of Yap* (Chicago 1976), 2.

⁶ Müller, *Yap*, I, 323.

⁷ Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Yap: Political Leadership and Culture Change in an Island Society* (Honolulu 1975), 124-6; and Labby, *Demystification*, 105-6.

headed by Rull district and, more particularly, by the Ru'way (or Uai) estate in Valavat village. The *vaani pagal* forces were led by Gagil district, more exactly by the Buluwol estate in the Ariap section of Gatsapar village. The ideal arrangement for these warring factions was to have Tav village in Tamil district, especially the Arib estate there, in a neutral position to mediate between Rull and Gagil. By 1909/1910, Tav village had had to join Rull because of the dominance of Gagil. At that time the Rull forces included Rull, Fanif, Kinifai and Dalipevinau districts on Yap Island and Tamil district on Gagil-Tamil Island. The Gagil forces embraced Gagil district on the same island, Map Island and the districts of Ueloi, Mela'u and Lika'tsag on Yap Island. There were, therefore, five districts on each side. The remaining two districts, Rumung Island and Galiman district located at the extreme northern and southern ends of Yap, were evenly divided between the two.⁸

Such a well-balanced alignment gives the appearance of a deliberate adjustment of forces having been struck along lines of membership in one of the two war parties. This impression is enhanced by the population totals for the two war parties as worked out from the April 1903 census. The number of men in *vaani pagal* villages is roughly 1,300, and in *vaani pilung* villages 1,500.⁹ (Total numbers of village residents embracing men, women and children are 3,000 for *vaani pagal* and 4,000 for *vaani pilung* villages.) This indicates that war alliances were a key principle of Yapese social organisation prior to World War I.

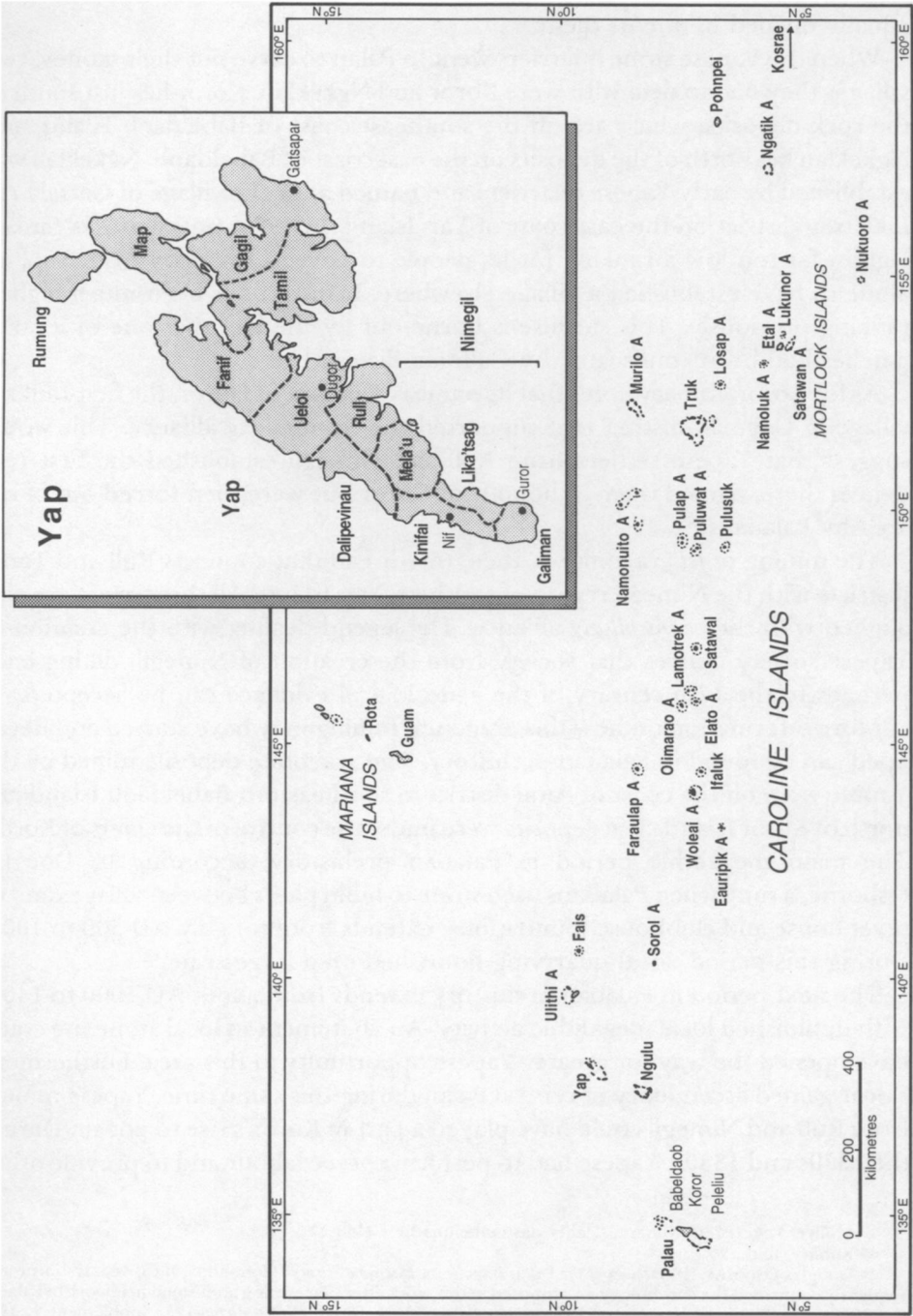
Yapese money played an important role in Yapese politics. Aragonite had long been mined on Palau. Kubary records a legend indicating that both Rull and Tamil districts had taken part in the earliest mining on Palau.¹⁰ The legend recounting the formation of Yapese society as it was before World War I referred to the Nimegil region as being added to Yap Island after a flood brought on by the death of Madavul. The man who figured in the legend was one Rigog, from Tav village on Tamil. These legends, then, link Tamil with Rull in the mining of aragonite and with Nimegil in the formation of Yapese society. Mela'u and Lika'tsag districts were both members of the Gagil *vaani pagal* alliance, while Kinifai belonged to the *vaani pilung* and Galiman was divided. However, Galiman district had a first-ranking village, Guror, which supported the *vaani pilung*, as did the first-ranking village Nif in Kinifai. Neither Mela'u nor Lika'tsag had first-ranking villages, but in times of unequal combat Mela'u had to support the Rull *vaani pilung* side.¹¹ The general sense is, therefore, that the Nimegil region's most prominent villages were closely aligned with the *vaani pilung* despite the usual

⁸ Müller, *Yap*, I, 235–41.

⁹ 'Ergebnis der im April 1903 vorgenommenen Zählung', 498.

¹⁰ Kubary, 'Ueber das einheimische Geld', 4: 'Rull and Tamil people were castaway to Peleliu [Pili] on Belau where the same material [aragonite] was present'.

¹¹ Müller, *Yap*, I, 239–41.



war party affiliations being against the *vaani pilung* in two of the four districts and equally divided in one of them.

When the Yapese stone quarriers went to Palau to carve out their money, two villages they had to deal with were Koror and Ngkeklau. Koror lies just south of the rock deposits, which are off the southeast coast of Babeldaob Island, and Ngkeklau lies north of the deposits on the east coast of Babeldaob. Ngkeklau was established by early Yapese quarriers and named after the village of Gatsalau in Lika'tsag district on the east coast of Yap Island. In 1909, Gatsalau was ranked eighth, far too low a ranking for its people to have sailed away from Yap, let alone to have established a village elsewhere. It must have been much higher-ranking previously. This surmise is borne out by the fact that one of its taro patches had been confiscated by Galiman district.¹²

As for Koror, Kubary notes that its name is a variant of Guror, the first-ranking village in Galiman district that supported the *vaani pilung* alliance. This would suggest that Yapese settlers from Rull and Nimegil established the first residences there, named them in honour of Guror but were then forced out of the area by Palauans.¹³

The mining of *fei* aragonite is, then, the thread that connects Rull and Tamil districts with the Nimegil region of southern Yap Island. All three areas are also aligned with the *vaani pilung* alliance. The legend dealing with the creation of Yapese society derives that society from the creation of Nimegil, dating back perhaps to the 17th century, if the genealogical evidence can be accepted.

More information on how this aragonite mining may have started and developed can be found in Palauan prehistory. The aragonite deposits mined by the Yapese were off the coast of Airai district in southeastern Babeldaob Island just north of Koror Island. The deposits were under the control of the chiefs of Koror. The main megalithic period in Palauan prehistory, according to Douglas Osborne, a time when Palauans used stone to build paths between villages and to revet house and clubhouse foundations, extends from roughly AD 500 to 1000. During this period, local quarrying flourished on a large scale.¹⁴

The next period in Palauan prehistory extends from about AD 1000 to 1400, with diminished local megalithic activity. An abatement in local stone use could have opened the way for greater Yapese opportunity in this area. Furthermore Koror gained ascendancy in central Palau during this same time. Yapese miners from Rull and Nimegil could have played a part in Koror's rise to power. During the 1870s and 1880s, Yapese had to perform *corvée* labour and to provide other

¹² Müller, *Yap*, I, 250; Kubary, 'Ueber das einheimische Geld', 27.

¹³ Kubary, *ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴ Douglas Osborne, *Archaeology of the Palau Islands: an Intensive Survey* (Honolulu 1966), 463. Osborne subsequently confirmed the chronology he proposed in this work after performing additional fieldwork in Palau in the 1960s. See his *Archaeological Test Excavations: Palau Islands, 1968-1969, Micronesica*, Supplement 1, 1979 (Guam 1979), 240-1.

services to the chiefs of Koror for the right to quarry the stone. One Yapese member of a Koror fighting club was involved in the murder of Captain Andrew Cheyne on Palau in 1866, a murder ordered by the Koror council of chiefs and later atoned for by the execution of the then Ibedul, the head chief of Koror.¹⁵ On Palau, the Yapese were always deferential towards the Palauans, whom they called *piubalau*, since they were 'dependent there on the [Koror] chief and the entire population', who often treated the visiting Yapese with contempt.¹⁶

The picture that suggests itself from these considerations is as follows: Yapese miners first came to Palau in the period AD 500 to 1000 and obtained their first samples of aragonite. The earliest miners were said to have come from Rull and Tamil. In a later era, AD 1000 to 1400, Yapese miners came in greater numbers, founding settlements at Ngkeklaui and on Koror Island during their long enforced sojourns there. These later miners were drawn largely, perhaps, from the Nimegil region of Yap, as specified in the legend dealing with the founding of Yapese society and since Guror and Gatsalau villages are found in that section of Yap Island. The introduction of the stone money is thus linked with the creation of Yapese society as it was handed down until World War I and may go back to the 17th century or earlier. The latter stages of the AD 1000 to 1400 period suggested by Osborne may also allow for a date in the 15th or 16th century.

The motive for all this quarrying would have been to offset the prevalence of the other type of Yapese valuable, the *gau* obtained from the region of the low islands east of Yap. One alternative to accepting the worth of *gau* was to introduce the *fei* aragonite, leading to devaluation of *gau* over the years and a simultaneous appreciation of *fei* as its circle of use grew. Once *fei* had been embraced by Rull, Tamil and their allies, it would have been to the advantage of the *vaani pagal* to acquire *fei* for themselves and their allies, to lure members of the *vaani pilung* over to their side. This seems to have happened since both Okau and Gilefith were said to be preparing to negotiate with stone money to settle a dispute in the 1880s, and these two top-ranking villages belonged to different war parties.

The second type of Yapese money, the *gau* shell money, Kubary said came from the north and the east. By the early 1900s, the only direction from which it came was from the east, that is, the low islands lying between Yap and Truk. As noted above, three sources for this *Spondylus* shell were Etal Atoll in the Mort-

¹⁵ Cdr Charles E. Stevens, 'Report of proceedings at the Pellew Islands, in the Matter of the Murder of Andrew Cheyne Master of Schooner "*Acis*"', photocopy provided by Dr Dorothy Shineberg, Division of Pacific and Asian History, Australian National University. Section 9 states: 'A native of Yap brought to Corror [Koror] by Captain Cheyne is said to have held him Captain Cheyne, whilst the murder was committed by several persons'. Later in the same section, the Yapese man is identified as 'Bathercock'. See pp 10 and 11 of this report, which was stamped by the Public Record Office, London, 22 Jan. 1868. Stevens's investigation on Palau began on 6 Apr. and resulted in the execution of the Ibedul on 12 Apr. 1867.

¹⁶ Osborne, *Archaeology of Palau*, 462-3; Fr Salesius, 'Die Karolineninsel Yap', *Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht und Kolonialwirtschaft*, 8 (1906), 418; Kubary, 'Ueber das einheimische Geld', 26.

locks, Eauripik Atoll in the low island region, and Udot Island in the Truk Lagoon.¹⁷ Supplies of *Spondylus* were much more plentiful on Eauripik and more readily available to the Yapese than the deposits on either Etal or Udot. Eauripik was a member of the *sawei* tribute network linking Yap with high and low islands as far away as Truk.¹⁸

Low-island residents brought gifts to Gagil district on regular, usually annual, voyages. They followed a certain route and visited certain estates in the villages of Gatsapar, Riken and Uonean in Gagil. Canoes from Satawal, Elato, Lamotrek, Ifaluk, Eauripik and Faraulap assembled at Woleai Atoll and sailed on to Fais Island and Ulithi Atoll. At Ulithi, they were joined by Ulithi captains at Fasseraï Island. The Ulithians assumed command of the fleet for the last leg of the journey. According to Ulithian informants, these voyages

occur once a year, usually in the month *thumur*. When the northeast *mataral* monsoon prevails, they prepare the canoes, usually ten to twenty. The canoes gather at the lagoon entrance near Fasseraï Island. In the year 1909, captains Pol and Rumeniar from Falalop [Island] took over command of the entire fleet after they had performed some magic. Observations of the sun rise and wave action determine the destination. Although the sailors do not have to observe any food taboos beforehand, once the trip begins, they cannot eat bananas, or any *dak* or *longui* marine animals since these 'belong' to Yongalap [the deity whose cult was intimately involved with the *sawei* network]. This ban applies for up to five months after the return from Yap. Women who have no children cannot make these trips.

The destination is Gatsapar in the district of Gagil in northern Yap. In 1906, the old head priest, Vogilrou, was still living there. Every one of the coral islands has some land here where their people live during their visit. The Ulithi people often build canoes here. After their arrival, the canoes are kept in seclusion in Gatsapar for four days; only after this may they lower their masts, that is, land at last. A man from Riken village immediately performs some *matsemats* magic by taking a palm frond and striking each canoe and then taking half a coconut shell and beating the masts. Only afterwards do four men lower the mast, and the distribution of goods follows at once . . .

. . . With the rising *melthau* southwesterlies, that is, three to four months after arriving, the return trip is undertaken.¹⁹

Early in this century the *sawei* tribute brought to Yap was claimed largely by six men, three chiefs and three priests in the cult of Yongalap, who was regarded on Yap as the youngest son of Maragigi, daughter of Madavul.²⁰ The three chiefs

¹⁷ Hans Damm, *Zentralkarolinen in ESE*, II, B, 10, 2 (Hamburg 1938), 128, 131; and Otto Finsch, *Ethnologische Erfahrungen und Belegstücke aus der Südsee* (Wien 1893), 358/596 (for Etal and Udot).

¹⁸ For an account of the *sawei* network from the standpoint of Ulithians in the 1940s — in terms of clan relations between Yapese and Ulithians on the one hand and between Ulithians and low islanders on the other — see William Lessa, 'Ulithi and the outer native world', *American Anthropologist*, 52 (1950), 27–52. For an account of it from the standpoint of other low islanders, see William Alkire, 'Systems of measurement on Woleai Atoll, Caroline Islands', *Anthropos*, 65 (1970), 1–73, and 'Technical knowledge and the evolution of political systems in the Central and Western Caroline Islands of Micronesia', *Canadian Journal of Anthropology*, I (1980), 229–37. Alkire's earliest fieldwork data stem from the 1960s.

¹⁹ Müller, *Yap*, I, 323–4.

²⁰ Wilhelm Müller, *Yap*, in *ESE*, II, B, 2 (Hamburg 1918), 630; and Lingenfelter, *Yap*, 30.

were Rungun, a chief from Gatsapar village, who claimed half of Sorol Atoll; and Folavu (Folbuw) and Vogilrou, his father who was leader of young men in Gatsapar village and the head of the Tagabuy estate in the Ariap section of Gatsapar, jointly claimed Eauripik Atoll, Jefang village on Falalap Island in Woleai Atoll, as well as the islands of Sulywap and Tagailap in Woleai.²¹ The three priests were Manefel, a priest from Uonean, who claimed all of Fais Island;²² Inefel (Inifell), a priest from Dalipevinau district who was an assistant in the cult of Yongalap; and Ruepong, the head priest in the cult of Yongalap who resided at Numurui estate. Inefel disputed Manafel's claim to Fais Island, which might reflect some conflict between Uonean and Gatsapar within Gagil. Inefel believed he was the real proprietor of Fais and demanded its first tobacco crop as an offering to Yongalap and his five brothers. Inefel also claimed half of Ifaluk, as well as Raiur and Wottagai Islands in Woleai and two additional villages in Woleai, Tavagap on Mariang Island and Unamarai on Tagailap Island.²³ The most extensive claims were put forth by Ruepong. He claimed half of Ifaluk, half of Sorol and the entire atolls of Lamotrek, Elato, Olimarao, Pulap, Satawal and Puluwat.²⁴ Ruepong was also a leading weather magician and practitioner of preventive medicine, that is, keeping epidemics out of the low-island region. Müller witnessed a ceremony to prevent epidemics on the low islands that Ruepong performed on 26 November 1909.²⁵ As a weather magician Ruepong also claimed, for example, to be able to cause droughts by heating certain whale bones over a fire on Numurui, and to bring typhoons by soaking them in water.²⁶

The three men most prominent in this *sawei* arrangement were Vogilrou, Inefel and Ruepong, all from Gatsapar. Both Inefel and Ruepong were leading priests in the cult of Yongalap that undergirded the entire system. Ruepong's abilities as a weather magician undoubtedly helped to keep the low islanders in line and bringing tribute even if they were unwilling to do so. A March 1907 typhoon on Woleai, which killed over 200, was ascribed to Woleai's having missed a tribute payment on one occasion.²⁷ For our purposes Vogilrou is the most important person involved. As the head of young men in Gatsapar he was a leader in the *vaani pagal* alliance. One of his 'holdings' in the low-island region was Eauripik, a source of the Spondylus shell out of which was made the *gau*, the most coveted money on Yap. Here is the close association between *gau* shell and the *vaani pagal* war alliance that we have been seeking.

²¹ Augustin Krämer, *Zentralkarolinen* in *ESE*, II, B, 10, 1 (Hamburg 1937), 83, 251, 346; Müller, *Yap*, I, 245; and Lingenfelter, *Yap*, 131–2, 161.

²² Krämer, *Zentralkarolinen*, 346; Müller, *Yap*, I, 329.

²³ Krämer, *Zentralkarolinen*, 251, 346.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 346; Müller, *Yap*, I, 250.

²⁵ Müller, *Yap*, I, 326.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 365, which adds that the woman Guathag performed magic on Numurui to beach a whale, whose bones were distributed throughout Yap, undoubtedly for use in weather magic.

²⁷ Krämer, *Zentralkarolinen*, 198–9; Hans Damm, *Inseln um Truk* in *ESE*, II, B, 6, 2 (Hamburg 1935), 199 and n. 2.

Both Labby and Lingenfelter mention that Gatsapar village had risen to the top because of *sawei* tribute and that the *vaani pagal* relied on it to cement political and military alliances with other villages on Yap.²⁸ The great worth placed on *gau* — Kubary said its use was decisive in conflicts — reveals how strong the *vaani pagal* position was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. To combat such an advantage, the *vaani pilung* had turned to the mining of *fei* and, somewhat later, to the trading of trepang with and the making of copra for foreign resident traders.

Trading was another important influence on Yapese politics. Archaeological work on Lamotrek has revealed the presence of potsherds from Yap dating back perhaps to the 13th century, an era when Lamotrek had trading relations with Yap, Truk and Palau.²⁹ Kubary believed that Yap had once been linked both with Pohnpei, east of Truk, and with the Mariana Islands far to the north on the basis of forms of shells found on all three island groups.³⁰ One legend from Pohnpei also puts Yapese connections with that island in the same era as the date of the pottery shards found on Lamotrek. It concerns one Warikitam, an emissary of the Souiap, 'ruler of Yap', who was a noted sorcerer. (The place name 'Kitam' or 'Gitam' incorporated in the personal name 'Warikitam' is a Yapese village noted for its clay pots.) Warikitam went to Pohnpei to help with mountain building, but because of a quarrel with Kepinpil, his partner, their work remained unfinished.³¹ The period of Pohnpeian history when Kepinpil and Warikitam quarrelled is known as the Mwehin Kawa or 'Building Time'; it was succeeded by the Mwehin Saudeleur, 500 years of tyranny under cruel, and cannibalistic, rulers. These alleged tyrants lived off the main island on a number of small islets which boast impressive basalt structures and the best known of which is Nan Madol. The rule of the Saudeleurs ended when they were beaten by Isohkelekel from Kosrae, to the east, about 1630.³² The date of their defeat puts the building time in or before the 12th century, a period according well with the archaeological evidence cited above in terms of trading relations across the Caroline

²⁸ Labby, *Demystification*, 106; and Lingenfelter, *Yap*, 153.

²⁹ Keiko Fujimura and William Alkire, 'Archaeological test excavations on Faraulep, Woleai, and Lamotrek in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia', in Yosihiko Sinoto (ed.), *Caroline Islands Archaeology: Investigations on Fefen, Faraulep, Woleai and Lamotrek* (Honolulu 1984), 112, 125.

³⁰ Kubary, 'Ueber das einheimische Geld', 3, which says in part, 'I can only regard *gau* as similar to the mussel bits of the ancient Chamorros [residents of the Marianas]' and 'In a similar way, the crude Spondylus bits from graves at Nantauac on Pohnpei evince old relations between this island with current conditions on the central Carolines and with previous conditions in the Marianas'.

³¹ Paul Hambruch, *Ponape*, in *ESE*, II, B, 7, 3 (Hamburg 1936), 335. I owe this reference, as well as the spellings of the names Warikitam (Uarikitam) and Kepinpil (Saumuinkap'enpil) to David Hanlon, 'Upon a stone altar: a history of the island of Ponape from the beginnings of foreign contact to 1890', PhD thesis, University of Hawaii (Honolulu 1984), 4. Information on Gitam village is from Damm, *Zentralkarolinen*, 313, and Müller, *Yap*, I, 240.

³² I have discussed my reasons for holding to this date in a forthcoming paper on German colonial rule in the western Carolines.

archipelago. The shell money discovered on Pohnpei, the Marianas and Yap could well have been circulating during this early era, the 12th and 13th centuries, a time when aragonite stone mining might have been in an incipient stage.

The longevity of the chiefly lines on both Puluwat and Satawal Atolls argues for the continued stability of a trading system into the 14th century. The chiefly lines on those two atolls dated back 25 generations in 1909/1910. If we use 20 or 25 years per generation, as done above for the genealogy of a Yapese priest, these lines would stretch back into the 14th or early 15th century. Both Satawal and Puluwat were active members in the *sawei* network. If the Yapese had extended their authority over the low islands by this time, it is possible that both Satawal and Puluwat had been obliged to furnish tribute from the foundation of their present social orders.³³

By the 14th and 15th centuries, the end of the period in Palauan history when Koror rose to power in the south and Palauans were hardly using aragonite locally, Yapese use of *fei* might have been on the upswing to offset the trading connections linking eastern Yap with the low islands. Perhaps the crucial time for the introduction of *fei* occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries. This was the time of the addition of Nimegil to the rest of Yap, according to both legendary and genealogical evidence, and it was also a time when eastern Yap might have increased its hold over the low islands, for it was in this general period that Ifaluk society, as described in 1909/1910, appears to have been established or perhaps to have been remodelled by Yapese settlers. The Ifaluk chiefly line went back 16 to 18 generations, beginning with one Modj, from Gatsapar.³⁴ This takes political links between Yap and Ifaluk back 300 to over 400 years, and may reflect increasing pressure on the low islands by the eastern Yapese in response to the successful introduction of *fei* into Yapese political life.

Eauripik Atoll, sole source of Spondylus in the low-island region, was also said to have been settled by the Yapese, in this case by one Choiss. However, Modj also makes an appearance in the list of Eauripik chiefs behind Choiss. The connection of Modj with both Ifaluk and Eauripik may reflect increasing interest by the Gagil war alliance in both groups and also perhaps mark the beginning of control of Eauripik's Spondylus supplies by a leader in the *vaani pagal* party.³⁵

According to a later researcher, there were 11 generations represented by 16 chiefs from Modj's rule down to the middle 1970s. These 11 generations take Eauripik society back 200 or 300 years, roughly to the time of the foundation of

³³ Damm, *Inseln um Truk*, 156–60, 174–6.

³⁴ Damm, *Zentralkarolinen*, 79–80.

³⁵ Damm, *Zentralkarolinen*, 140–1.

the Yapese social order symbolised in the addition of Nimegil to the rest of Yap Island in the 17th century.³⁶

This part of the suggested history of the *sawei* network and of Yapese politics — based on legendary and genealogical evidence for the most part and put forth here only tentatively, but in a manner that seems to unite disparate elements in a sensible way until further work can be done by archaeologists and others — covers the period from the 12th through the 17th centuries. It posits trading relations linking Yap with Pohnpei in the east, and perhaps the Marianas in the north, as early as the 12th century continuing down into the 14th at the very least. These trading ties might not yet have had any significance for a *sawei* network. However, the chiefly lines on Satawal and Puluwat stem from roughly the same era, so perhaps there was a form of tribute exacted as early as the 14th century, though it might not have been bound up with a cult of any sort.

As mining increased on Palau during the 14th and 15th centuries the party based in eastern Yap may have had to turn to stronger measures to ensure a supply of tribute and Spondylus from the low islands, Eauripik in particular. The association of Gatsapar with both Ifaluk in the 16th century and Eauripik in the 17th century may signal the formation of the *sawei* network as it survived down to the early 20th century. The link here would have been political and military, with Gatsapar calling on the low islanders for ever more tribute to offset the increase of *fei* in circulation on Yap.

This may also have been the general period when a religious cult was associated with the *sawei* network. The weather magic at the disposal of priests in the service of deities, like Yongalap, known for their abilities to control weather may have been needed to keep tribute coming during times when Gagil and its allies needed it to counter the rising strength of the Rull faction, which had also enlisted the support of Tamil around this time. The *sawei* network would, therefore, have acquired its religious dimensions in the 17th or 18th century.

The seven centuries covered so far, the 12th down to the 18th, have been treated in a conjectural way, using legendary and genealogical evidence to point to possible periods when simple trading flourished (12th and 13th centuries), when tribute voyaging may have begun (14th and 15th centuries), and when factional fighting on Yap may have led to increasing tribute exactions by the Yapese from low islanders as aragonite mining on Palau strengthened the *vaani pilung* side, to the use of cultic powers to control magic, and to the alignment of Tamil with Rull and its allies (the 16th to the 18th centuries).

³⁶ Michael Levin, 'Eauripik population structure', PhD thesis, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor 1976), 42–3. The chiefly genealogy presented by Levin (p. 46) begins with Ligowuw, the goddess Ligoubub, instead of Choiss who heads the list compiled by Sarfert in 1909. (E. Sarfert, *Kusae, ESE*, II, B, 4, 1, Hamburg 1919). Levin's chiefly line covers 11 generations down to 1974.

Written records from the 19th and early 20th centuries reveal that the tribute payments had indeed been decisive for Gagil and its allies who had been dominant until the start of resident foreign trading on Yap in the 1840s. From the start of this trading, Rull and its allies maintained a monopoly on the supply of fire-arms traded for trepang and copra. The man who started this was Andrew Cheyne, notable in connection with *fei* mining and bringing Yapese men to Koror for a variety of tasks, one of which was his own murder. Cheyne traded exclusively with the Rull side in the 1840s and again in the middle 1860s until his death in 1866.³⁷ His successor, and one-time assistant, Alfred Tetens continued to trade with just the Rull side. Cheyne's journal suggests an impending island-wide conflict between Rull and Gagil forces, and Tetens's memoirs describe this conflict which occurred in 1867 or 1868.³⁸ A balance of forces was struck; there was skirmishing in later decades between villages and individuals, but nothing approaching the warfare of the 1860s. Foreign traders had allowed the Rull forces to fight their way back to a position of relative equality with the Gagil side. Once D. D. O'Keefe established himself on Yap in the 1870s, he further strengthened the Rull side by transporting immense quantities of aragonite money from Palau to Yap in exchange for the quarriers' help with copra cultivation. The excessive amounts of stone money that O'Keefe imported into Yap for the Rull side may have led to the dominance of the *vaani pilung* for the first time. Under German rule, the *vaani pagal* may have found a way to even the score once again. O'Keefe felt obliged to leave Yap early in the 1900s.³⁹ The Germans not only did not interfere with the *sawei* system, they strengthened the hold the Gagil side had on the low islanders because of improved inter-island transportation, improved opportunities for contract work and the resettlement of some low islanders following typhoons. Thus they may have aided the Gagil cause and given them much tighter control than they had ever enjoyed previously.

This possibility is supported by the large number of coral islanders whom the Gagil people had working for them in 1909 and 1910. During those two years, an unspecified number of men from Eauripik had been sent off to the Nauru phosphate mines by the chief of Gatsapar, perhaps after the Eauripik men had arrived

³⁷ See Andrew Cheyne, *The Trading Voyages of Andrew Cheyne, 1841–1844*, ed. Dorothy Shineberg (Honolulu 1971), and 'Log of the "Acis"' [1863–64 and 1865–66], TS furnished by Dr Dorothy Shineberg. I have discussed this involvement of Cheyne with the Rull side in an unpublished manuscript 'German colonial influence on the Yap Islands' in the context of showing that it was the Yapese themselves, not the Germans, that 'pacified' Yap by reaching a balance of forces on their own.

³⁸ Alfred Tetens, *Vom Schiffsjungen zum Wasserschout*, ed. S. Steinberg (Hamburg 1889), 317–20, 325, 328–31, 348–9, 365–6, 380–6.

³⁹ For O'Keefe's career, see Fr Francis X. Hezel, S.J., *Foreign Ships in Micronesia: a Compendium of Ship Contacts with the Caroline and Marshall Islands, 1521–1885* (Saipan 1979), 18, 22–5; idem, 'A Yankee trader in Yap: Crayton Philo Holcomb', *Journal of Pacific History*, 10 (1975), 3–19; and *The First Taint of Civilization: a History of the Caroline and Marshall Islands in Pre-colonial Days, 1521–1885* (Honolulu 1983), ch. 10. For the circumstances surrounding O'Keefe's departure from Yap, see Richard Deeken, *Die Karolinen* (Berlin 1912), 55.

on an annual tribute voyage. Only one of the men from Eauripik who had sailed to Yap was allowed to remain there. Ninety-one people from Ifaluk who had gone on a tribute voyage to Yap were put to work on Yap by the chief of Gatsapar. No one could say when they would return to Ifaluk. The Ifalukese had travelled to Yap aboard a German steamer. Fourteen people from Faraulap were on Yap at the same time, also presumably working for the chief of Gatsapar. Thus at least over 100 coral islanders were working for the chief of Gatsapar on Yap, and perhaps a dozen or 20 were sent from Eauripik to Nauru to mine phosphate.⁴⁰

In the 1940s, Ulithians claimed that the wages they had earned during German colonial rule were summarily taken by the Yapese.⁴¹ The same was probably true for those coral islanders who were sent to the mines or who were kept on Yap, if they were not engaged in *corvée* labour and had contract jobs.

The Yapese may have availed themselves of Carolinian low-island labour after they themselves had been asked by Palauans to provide labour in exchange for the aragonite *fei* money. The eastern Yapese from Gagil would have gained most from such an arrangement. On one hand, they would have seen western Yapese, their usual competitors, being put to work on Palau, and on the other, they would have put their low-island tribute bearers to work based on the harsh Palauan experiences of their rivals. Another possibility is that, due to population losses on Yap itself, low-island residents were asked to work for Gagil priests and chiefs to make up for the loss of able-bodied men. Yet a third possibility is that low islanders were put to work because Gagil had the chance to make money from salaried jobs for the first time and enlisted low islanders to exploit new economic opportunities. The first alternative is most intriguing, but more work needs to be done to establish priority among the alternatives.

The severity of Yapese exploitation seems to have been recent, most probably beginning during the German period itself. On Ifaluk, the people said the dominance of Yap had become exceedingly overbearing.⁴² The trader Evan Lewis, who had many dealings with the Yapese and the low islanders since he had a station on Lamotrek and had had one on Yap, witnessed these overbearing tactics. He complained about them to Vogilrou, one of the 'landowners' of islands in the low-island region, most particularly Eauripik, and a leader in the Gagil war alliance:

When the trader Lewis approached Vogilrou and reproached him by asking why he was driving his island children into the ground, Vogilrou replied, 'We aren't doing this. Their own deities are ruining them because they have broken the old taboos.'⁴³

⁴⁰ Damm, *Zentralkarolinen*, 78, 143, 186.

⁴¹ Lessa, 'Ulithi and the outer native world', 51.

⁴² Damm, *Zentralkarolinen*, 78.

⁴³ Krämer, *Zentralkarolinen*, 83.

Such self-serving reasons were intended to cover an appropriation of wages, the use of coral islanders in mines and the use of weather magic to exact tribute, all of which were practised by Gagil priests and chiefs during the German period.

The oppressive tactics of the Yapese prior to World War I, at the very least, were resented by the coral islanders for decades to come. Working on Ifaluk during the 1940s and 1960s, Edwin Burrows recorded a song expressive of the Ifalukese attitude towards the Yapese. The last two lines referred to the damage inflicted by a typhoon on Ifaluk at some unspecified time in the past: 'The Yapese will be sorry to hear of this. / There will be nothing left for them to take.'⁴⁴ This final couplet is laden with irony. The Yapese had threatened to use their weather magic to cause typhoons. If they had done so they would have known about it and not needed to be informed. If they had to be told about the typhoon, they were not responsible for it and, hence, did not possess such potent weather magic as they claimed. If they caused the typhoon, they were also injuring their own interests since they desired the tribute goods the Ifalukese could provide. Either way, the Yapese were portrayed as bungling and heartless; their uppermost concern was not for the welfare of the Ifalukese but for their material wealth. Deep-seated hatred of the Yapese must have had some basis in the way the Ifalukese had been treated by them. It is the contention here that mistreatment began under the Germans. At any rate, it certainly became quite intense because of the Germans.

It would seem that the Gagil faction was dominant until the mid-19th century. It was through trading carried on with such foreign traders as Cheyne (1840s and 1860s), Tetens (1860s) and O'Keefe (1870s to early 1900s) that the Rull faction first achieved equality with the Gagil faction (middle 1860s) and perhaps briefly dominated them (during O'Keefe's trading career) until the Germans allowed the Gagil faction a virtual stranglehold on the coral-island region to the east.

THE FOCUS has been on Yapese politics to draw together the uses for two disparate types of Yapese money and to interpret trading, the *sawei* network and aragonite mining on Palau from the standpoint of local affairs on Yap. If Yapese politics were not the main 'engine' in the western Carolines from the 12th century down to World War I, they certainly had an importance that future researchers should not overlook when writing about western Caroline regional history and inter-island relationships. With resources so scarce in the western Caroline Islands at all points in its history, residents there have had to avail themselves of whatever came to hand to gain ascendancy over their traditional rivals. In the case of the Yapese, this amounted to religious beliefs and magic in

⁴⁴ Edwin Burrows and Melford Spiro, *An Atoll Culture: Ethnography of Ifaluk in the Central Carolines* (New Haven 1957), 27.

their relations with the low islands and to aragonite stone money in their relations with Palauans and with each other. Both were grounded in local legends, and both anchored the aspirations of competing Yapese parties, whose intense rivalry left an unpleasant legacy in the minds and in the histories of the low islanders.

MICROFICHE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA PATROL REPORTS

More than 30,000 patrol reports, held by the National Archives and Public Records Service of Papua New Guinea, are in the process of being microfilmed. The project is in co-operation with the Melanesian Studies Resource Center of the University of California, San Diego, who are also providing an index.

The filming of nine provinces (Bougainville, Chimbu, Gulf, Central Province, East New Britain, West New Britain, Northern Province, Eastern Highlands, and East Sepik) is complete and copies of the fiche are available in sub-district sets. In addition, there are contents lists which show the order of filming for each province. In due course, the index will also be available for purchase.

For information please contact the Chief Archivist, National Archives, PO Box 1089, BOROKO, Papua New Guinea.