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CAROLINIAN VOYAGING IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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A holistic view of the Carolinian voyaging movement to date, highlighting major voyaging achievements as well as the master navigators (*palu*) who have made significant contributions. The reinvigorization of long-distance voyaging has expanded beyond the Carolinian-Marianas voyaging renaissance into a pan-Carolinian movement with navigators using traditionally-made canoes to make two-way voyages from Yap to Palau in the west and from Polowat to Pohnpei in the east.

Using ancient knowledge of non-instrument wayfinding that had been handed down for generations, master navigators (*palu*) from Polowat and Satawal in the later part of the last century rediscovered the 500-mile¹ sea route from their islands in the central Carolines² to Saipan and Guam in the Marianas archipelago. In so doing they sparked a renaissance of Carolinian-Marianas voyaging that continues today. First to rediscover the passage from the Caroline Islands to the Mariana Islands were Hipour (from Polowat) in 1969, Repunglap and Repunglug (from Satawal) in 1970, and Ikuliman (from Polowat) in 1972.³ These master navigators have now passed on but their names are legend inside and outside their island domains.⁴ Ikuliman died in 1983, Repunglap and Repunglug in 1999 and 2003 respectively, and Hipour in 2001. With their passing and a host of others who have played their part, it falls to succeeding generations of *palu* to carry on the voyaging traditions of old into the new millennium. Several master navigators living today in the Caroline Islands and the Marianas Islands are actively supporting the revitalization of naviga-

tion traditions. Many of these navigators have been recognized previously in published articles but some have not, either because they were formerly apprentices who only recently came of age as *palu* master navigators or the nature of their contribution has been that of teacher more than voyager. In addition, there are many others in “the background” who have participated in significant ways to the reinvigorization of the Carolinian voyaging movement — both men and women — whose storied achievements and contributions have yet to come to light. To these persons, in omitting them here, I tender my humble apologies.

The beginnings of the Carolinian voyaging movement is primarily documented from 1969 to 2001 in three published articles. First, there is Michael McCoy’s article, “A Renaissance in Carolinian-Marianas Voyaging” (1976) which describes the genesis of the movement and the initial voyages that took place between 1969 and 1976. Secondly, there is Reilly Ridgell, Manny Ikea (Sikau), and Isaoshy Uruo’s article, “The Persistence of Central Carolinian Navigation” (1994) which focuses on the question of

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whether or not there was a decline from 1976 to 1994 in “qualified” navigators capable of sustaining Carolinian-Marianas voyaging. In looking at the number of voyages accomplished and by comparing names of master navigators alive in 1976 and those in 1994, the authors concluded that there had been no decline in the “renaissance” described by McCoy. Third and lastly, there is William Flood’s article, “Carolinian-Marianas Voyaging: Continuing the Tradition” (2002) which reports on the voyages that had taken place nearly every year between 1994 and 2001. His investigation concluded, like the authors in the previous article, that the “renaissance” was alive and well.

Much of the success of the Carolinian voyaging movement may be attributed to the direct participation of Pius “Mau” Pailug, the famed master navigator from Satawal, who early on in the Carolinian-Marianas “renaissance” navigated a one-way voyage from Saipan to Satawal in 1973.⁵ In the following year, he made the two-way voyage between Satawal and Saipan. Pailug holds the record for the number of Carolinian-Marianas trips completed — no less than ten passages using Satawalese built single-outrigger voyaging canoes⁶ — so many journeys that observers have more or less stopped counting.⁷ On the later voyages Pailug has acted in a supportive role as backup navigator, thus enabling two of his sons, Sesario Seweralur and Anthony Urumeng, to complete their apprenticeship as captains.

It is important to recall that the art of navigating using traditional methods has never died out in the central Caroline Islands as it has in other areas of the Pacific. The knowledge has survived relatively intact because of the geographic remoteness of the islands and also, perhaps, because of a quirk of history. After WWII when the political entities of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands were established by the United States under an United Nations mandate, the division line between the Truk District (now Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia) and the Yap District (now Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia) was drawn between the islands of Polowat and Satawal. The administration of

these islands was and still is independent of each other. This has resulted in no regularly scheduled ship service connecting Satawal and Polowat. Goods and services reach Satawal via an inter-island government ship originating from Yap, and for Polowat another ship originates from Chuuk. Satawal and Polowat are culturally very similar, speak dialects of the same language, and intermarriage between the populations is common. The need for social-economic exchange is paramount. Since government ship service is infrequent at best the only other alternative for social exchange between the islands is contact via community-owned motorboat or voyaging canoe. Motorboats are a prohibitively expensive option for making the 260 mile round-trip journey so voyaging canoes fill the gap.

The knowledge and practice of voyaging between Yap and Chuuk has also survived out of economic necessity. Navigators in the remote Outer Islands of Yap (where Satawal is located) and navigators in the Western Islands of Chuuk (where Polowat is located) often undertake trips to uninhabited islands to harvest protein-rich food resources such as fish and sea turtles. Satawal’s harvest island, West Fayu, for example, is 41 miles away, which is a one-day voyage when wind and weather are favorable. Pikelot, an alternative harvest island 57 miles away, normally takes an overnight voyage since it lies in the direction of the northeast trades and often requires beating upwind to reach landfall. Satawal and Polowat share in the resources of Pikelot, but for Polowat the journey is more distant at 111 miles. Despite this distance, which often takes two days of sailing, the desire for sea turtles on the part of Polowat is such that a week or more spent in harvesting the resources of the island is deemed well worth the arduousness of the voyage.

During the Spanish administration of the Carolines in the nineteenth century, long-distance voyages between islands were not uncommon. A system of political, economic, and religious ties called *sawei* connected all the inhabited islands in the central Carolines to Gagil district in Yap. In ancient times this so-called “tribute system”⁸ stretched over 700 miles from Yap nearly to Chuuk.⁹ In the middle of

the nineteenth century Polowat stopped participating directly in the *sawei* system and began to send tribute through Satawal navigators rather than through their own representatives (Lessa 1950: 42). In a series of linked fleet voyages that would take place about every two or three years, Satawal canoes would collect the tribute from Polowat 130 miles to the east and return to Satawal. Satawal navigators would then deliver the *sawei* tribute to Lamotrek 38 miles to the west. Continuing west, Lamotrek navigators would take the tribute and deliver it to Woleai (150 miles). Woleai would then take charge of the tribute from the Lamotrek navigators and sail to Fais (244 miles) — the longest leg between islands in the *sawei* system — where they would pick up the Fais tribute and proceed northwest to Ulithi (53 miles). Twenty-two canoes filled with tribute would then sail in a final fleet convoy from Ulithi southwest to Yap (about 100 miles).¹⁰ The *sawei* system still functions today but without the traditional voyaging component. After WWI the Japanese administration prohibited long-distance voyaging between the islands. This resulted in a drastic reduction of voyaging throughout the area and subsequent decline of navigational know-how. Inter-island voyaging was further reduced with the installation of foreign ship service under the Japanese which continued after the American administration took over after WWII.

Today, navigators living on the following Carolinian islands are still believed to have the ability to make inter-island voyages: Satawal, Polowat, Pollap, Pulusuk, Tamatam, Lamotrek, Woleai and Ifaluk. Of this group only Satawal and Polowat may be said to be fully engaged in the practice of long-distance voyaging as evidenced by their participation in the Carolinian-Marianas voyages in past decades. The geographic, cultural, and socio-economic realities of the populations living on Satawal and Polowat are unique in that they have continued to foster the preservation of long-distance voyaging practices when others have not managed to do so to the same degree. Voyaging as a survival mechanism undoubtedly plays a large part in explaining this phenomenon but pride in navigational prowess must also be a contribut-

ing factor. In social interactions amongst Carolinians there is fierce competition between navigators to demonstrate their expertise. When Hipour sailed to Saipan from Polowat in 1969, Satawal rose to the challenge with a voyage of its own to Saipan in 1970, to which Polowat answered with a voyage to Guam in 1972, then countered by Satawal with another voyage to Saipan in 1973.

Undoubtedly, the successful “renaissance” of Carolinian-Marianas voyaging in the past thirty-six years is due in part to the competitive spirit that prevails between Satawal and Polowat. Measure for measure, Satawal and Polowat have been vying with each other for over three decades now in their sailing expeditions to the Marianas Islands. This rivalry came to a head with a fleet voyage in April 2000 in which both Satawal and Polowat participated. Not since the turn of the 19th century had canoes from these two islands sailed together.¹¹ Dubbed the “Millennium 2000” voyage, the plan was for three canoes from Satawal to sail together with three canoes from Polowat and arrive together at Tanapag Harbor in Saipan. Competing interests between Satawal and Polowat, however, made it difficult for all the canoes to sail together and the voyage more or less turned into a challenge to see who could get to Saipan first. Nevertheless, in the end the Office of Carolinian Affairs in Saipan forced the issue of equanimity and all six canoes were coaxed into entering the channel at Tanapag together.

The Millennium 2000 voyage was a resounding success in that it increased institutional involvement on both Saipan and Guam. Previously, the voyages were more or less family-oriented, supported in the main by relatives living on Satawal, Polowat, Saipan and Guam.¹² After the Millennium voyage one of the Satawalese canoes (which was actually constructed on Woleai) was purchased by the Saipan Arts Council to be the centerpiece of an educational program under the sponsorship of the Northern Marianas Islands (NMI) Canoe Federation. The NMI Canoe Federation was founded in 1997 with a vision by Ray Tebuteb, the first President of the club.¹³ The NMI Canoe Federation has been active on a number of fronts in recent years and I shall remark on

these in due course later on in this essay. With respect to Guam, the Traditional Seafaring Society (TSS) was founded in 1999 by students at the University of Guam with Vincente M. Diaz as faculty advisor.¹⁴

In 2000, TSS began construction of a canoe house using traditional materials. Its purpose was to house a Carolinian *waserak* voyaging canoe and to be used as a place to build a Chamorro *sakman* “flying proa.”¹⁵ Manny Sikau, a Polowat navigator living and working in Guam, directed the construction of the canoe house and taught a navigation course at the University of Guam at the same time. Sikau’s interest in traditional navigation is longstanding. At the age of thirteen, Manny Sikau accompanied his grandfather, Ikuliman Sikau, on one of the first “renaissance” voyages from Polowat to Guam in the early 1970s.¹⁶ Manny Sikau is dedicated to keeping the traditional seafaring arts alive and it is largely because of his participation that TSS is carrying out its objectives to reviving the navigational and canoe building arts on Guam.

In 2001, with funding from a Guam Visitors Bureau grant, the TSS participated in the sailing of two canoes from Polowat to Guam. The 30-foot *Halemetaw* was captained by Sikau and the 23-foot *Quest* was captained by Santiago Onopei, with Sikau acting as principle navigator on the voyage. The Polowat-Guam trip took seven days, an estimated voyage of 505 miles, with a layover on uninhabited Pikelot. After reaching Guam both the *Quest* and *Halemetaw* sailed 120 miles direct to Saipan in three and one-half days, Sikau again navigating. Afterwards, the *Halemetaw* sailed back to Polowat, this time navigated by Satorino Ainam, and the *Quest*, captained by Sikau, sailed back to Guam where it was purchased by TSS and took up permanent residence. On both legs of the Guam-Saipan-Guam trip members of TSS exchanged places as part of the crew, including the original co-founder of TSS, Vincente M. Diaz.¹⁷ The current faculty advisor of TSS, Lawrence J. Cunningham, who is a professor at the University of Guam, took part along with two other TSS members in the first voyage on the *Halemetaw* which sailed from Polowat to Guam. After making the voyage to

Guam from Polowat in 2001, Sikau directed the construction of the original canoe house for the *Quest* at Paseo de Susanna. Later that year, he was named the Guam Traditional Teacher of the Year by the Guam Humanities Council.

In the spring of 2001, about the same time when Sikau was leading two canoes from Polowat on a voyage to Guam, another navigator from Polowat was on an epic voyage of his own, but he was headed in an entirely different direction. On April 17, 2001, master navigator Rapwi Aluwairh (also known as Rapwi Amwit) and six of his apprentices left Polowat in the 29-foot *Sailoam* for Pohnpei, in the eastern Caroline Islands, 537 miles to the east. Like the “renaissance” voyage that Ikuliman had made from Polowat to Guam 29 years before, no such voyage had been attempted from Polowat to Pohnpei since the early 1900s.¹⁸ Coming from Polowat, the voyage to Pohnpei is straight upwind, into the prevailing Northeast Trades. Rapwi stopped at several islands along the way to reprovision and rest, and shelter from storms. His route took them first to Onari (135 miles – three days), then East Fayu (65 miles – two days), Weno, Chuuk (75 miles, one day) and finally Pohnpei (400 miles – thirteen days). Two days out of Chuuk they ran into bad weather and drifted with their sail down. They arrived in Pohnpei on May 15, twenty-eight days after their voyage had begun. The actual ocean distance covered was estimated to have been 675 miles. At the time Rapwi was sixty-seven years old.¹⁹

I happened to meet Rapwi in Colonia, Yap in July 2001 not long after he had completed his voyage back to Polowat from Pohnpei. I asked him why he did it. He said, “To show them.” By “them” he met his fellow navigators. I did not press him for details. This, I had learned from other Islanders in the past, was a common explanation for why navigators would make hazardous voyages from time to time. It was a perceived responsibility to the knowledge that had been passed down to them by their fathers, uncles, grandfathers, and ancestors, both male and female, perhaps reaching back to the mythological time when the daughter of a chief on Pollap first learned navigation from

a bird-spirit named Kulung.²⁰ One of Rapwi's older brothers, Repunglug, said the same thing about why he chose to risk life and limb when he sailed from Satawal to Saipan, thus kicking off the Carolinian-Marianas voyaging "renaissance" in 1970. When I met Mau Pailug on Satawal in 1988 he showed me the canoe that he planned to use to sail to Saipan in the spring of the following year. When I asked him, "Why?" it was the same response. "To show them," he said. The pride of these navigators runs deep and certainly must be one of the major reasons why Carolinian navigation traditions endure.

Rapwi had traveled to Colonia, Yap when he learned that his oldest brother, Jesus Urupiy, who was also a *palu* master navigator, was gravely ill. Both Rapwi and I had come to pay our last respects to this most humble of navigators. The senior navigator of a distinguished family of master navigators from Polowat and Satawal, Urupiy was not as well recognized by the outside world compared to his younger brothers, Repunglap, Repunglug, and Rapwi, but nonetheless he was considered not just a *palu* (master navigator) in his home islands but a *paluelap* (grandmaster navigator) because of his years and the extent and depth of his navigational knowledge. One of Urupiy's earliest memories was of voyaging as a young boy with his grandfather Sawfa in the 1920s to Satawan, an outer island south of Chuuk in the Mortlock Islands. In family oral history Sawfa and Raubo, a granduncle, are said to have sailed on trading voyages in the late 1800s to Saipan, Kapingamarangi, and Pohnpei, in addition to engaging in the *sawei* tribute to Yap. Besides the normal inter-island voyages expected of a master navigator — Satawal to West Fayu (41 miles), Satawal to Pikelot (57 miles), Satawal to Lamotrek (38 miles), Satawal to Polowat (130 miles) — the longest voyage that Urupiy piloted was from Lamotrek to Woleai (150 miles). On this voyage, which took place in 1946, Urupiy led a fleet of four canoes from Satawal and Lamotrek loaded with several hundred coconut seedlings to be delivered to Woleai to replenish the stocks of coconut trees that Japanese soldiers had cut down during the war. In the late 1940s Urupiy married Maria

Legasugrig of Lamotrek and took up residence there to raise a family. In the early 1950s, he was on a turtle hunting expedition to West Fayu when his canoe was storm driven to Pikelot and shipwrecked. He was there for seven months until two canoes from Polowat showed up. He and his crew were rescued to Satawal and eventually Urupiy made it back to Lamotrek.

In 1990 Urupiy started a "renaissance" of his own — the resurrection of the *pwo* navigator initiation ceremony on Lamotrek, located 38 miles west of Satawal. *Pwo* is the equivalent to a graduate doctorate degree in knowledge of traditional navigation and involves additional instruction in the more esoteric-related aspects of traditional navigation such as chants for calling upon patron spirits. The last time a *pwo* rite-of-passage for apprentice navigators had been performed was when Mau Pailug was "graduated" on Satawal in 1952.²¹ The mass Christian conversion of whole island communities in the central Caroline Islands in the early 1950s coupled with western influences and modern technology had resulted in opposition to many traditional rituals connected to the spirit world. Consequently, Pailug and one other navigator apprentice (now deceased) were the last to receive a formal initiation until Urupiy resurrected the *pwo* ceremony on Lamotrek in 1990. Until then this ancient ritual had edged closer and closer to extinction with the demise of master navigators qualified to perform the sacred rites, such that only a handful of navigators were left who had gone through *pwo* and fewer still who actually remembered the chants to perform it. The early leaders of the Carolinian-Marianas voyaging "renaissance" — Hipour, Repunglug, Repunglap, Ikuliman, and Pailug — had all been initiated in the *pwo* ceremony when they were young men. Many others as well, including Urupiy, had become *pwo* navigators but the majority of these navigators had been initiated many years before in the 1930s. By the time the "renaissance" had gotten under way in the 1970s and 1980s most of the elder *pwo* navigators were well into their sixties and seventies (with the notable exception of Mau Pailug) and the *pwo* ceremony was in danger of being forgotten.

I first heard about the *pwo* ceremony on Lamotrek in 1978 when I was doing research on traditional Carolinian arts and skills, but the adoption of Christianity on the island at that time suggested that the ritual was obsolete. With further research on Lamotrek in the 1980s I realized that I might have been too hasty in my judgment on the matter. Through my friendship with one of Urupiy's sons, Ali Haleyalur, I learned that Ali as a navigator-in-training still held out the hope that he might someday be initiated by his father in the *pwo* ceremony. During this time there also seemed to be a growing awareness amongst Islanders in the central Carolines that the "good" elements of the traditional belief system should be allowed to co-exist with those of Christianity, and that the traditional spirit world and arts and skills which stem from the traditional belief system need not altogether be abandoned. This position was gradually gaining support by the advent of indigenous priests newly ordained, who were taking over the roles that formerly had been held by non-Islander priests. This opened the possibility in my mind that perhaps the *pwo* ceremony might not be "lost" after all. In 1988 in Colonia, Yap I began videotaping and recording the *pwo* chants that Urupiy remembered and with Ali's help translated them. It was then that Ali and I both realized that Urupiy was indeed capable of performing the *pwo* ceremony, but we wondered if he would. The last *pwo* ceremony had been performed on Satawal in the early 1950s. I knew that other than a few brief descriptions and secondhand reports by anthropologists since the beginning of the 20th century, little was known about the *pwo* ritual because it had never been seen by a foreigner. I decided that it was worth a try to see if there was any way it could be revived and documented firsthand, so in 1989 I traveled to Yap specifically to find out. At this time Ali expressed concern that his father, because of his advanced years, might not be able to initiate him in the *pwo* ceremony if he waited much longer; so he mustered up the courage to ask Urupiy if he thought that he (Ali) was ready to be initiated. Without any hesitation Urupiy surprised both of us when he readily agreed to perform the *pwo* ceremony for

his son. It was as if Urupiy were just waiting for Ali to ask him. Now all Urupiy wanted to know was when he should plan to travel to Lamotrek to do it. At this point I asked Urupiy if it would be possible for me to make a film record of him performing the *pwo* ceremony. To which Urupiy replied saying that this would be a good idea because then many people would then see the film and learn the meaning of *pwo*. As a result, an extraordinary series of events were set in motion which ultimately culminated nine months later in the resurrection of the *pwo* ceremony by Urupiy on Lamotrek in May 1990, the formal "graduation" of five apprentice navigators, and my documentation of the event in a dissertation (1991) and film (1996). The five navigators initiated were Ali Haleyalur, Carlos Yarofaireg, Xavier Yarofalyang, Robert Erailug, and Ambrose Yangelmal.

By this time in the 1990s the Carolinian-Marianas voyaging "renaissance" was well underway with two-way voyages being undertaken nearly on an annual basis. The question that now presented itself was whether or not a navigator *pwo* "renaissance" was in the offering. Urupiy, a Satawalese master navigator living on Lamotrek, was the first to bring back the *pwo* ritual but would other navigators on other islands follow suit with *pwo* ceremonies of their own? Urupiy had effectively laid down the challenge to Satawal and Polowat, the two major players in the voyaging revivalist movement. Would they respond? The answer to this question would be YES but it had to be done carefully with much consideration paid to weathering the high seas and storms of Christian ideology, now widespread throughout the islands, which often argued against traditional rituals such as the *pwo* ceremony because in the island vernacular such island practices were *tai Cristiano* "not Christian."

A couple of weeks previous to the performance of the *pwo* ceremony on Lamotrek, several navigators and chiefs from Polowat showed up in a large modern fishing boat. They were doing a sweep of the islands to catch turtles and take them to Chuuk to sell on the open market. They had already been to Pikelot and West Fayu collecting turtles and had arrived at

Lamotrek to request permission to go to Olimarao for this purpose.²² Present among the group of Polowatese was the paramount chief of Polowat, Maniپی Rapung, who was also a *palu* master navigator and a close relative of Urupiy. When he learned that Urupiy was planning to perform the *pwo* ceremony on Lamotrek he expressed great interest and asked if Urupiy would come to Polowat to do the same. Urupiy did not want to say no and discussed Maniپی's proposal with his family. The idea was nixed when Urupiy's six daughters expressed concern for Urupiy's health, fearing that the journey would be too difficult for him and that Urupiy might be waiting a long time on Polowat before such an event would take place. Years later, however, chief Maniپی would eventually be successful in talking Hipour into conducting the *pwo* ceremony on Polowat. In the summer of 1997, Hipour performed the ritual for four initiates: Manny Sikau, Rainam Edward, Lasin Dilipy, and Deo Onopey.²³ The reader will note that one of the initiates is the same Manny Sikau who has been described earlier as a leading member of the Traditional Seafaring Society on Guam.

Independent of chief Maniپی's efforts, another Carolinian islander had been attempting to resurrect the *pwo* ceremony on Pollap, a neighboring island some 22 miles from Polowat. For years, Lambert Lokopwe had been looking for a *palu* master navigator who would be willing to come to his island, Pollap, to perform the *pwo* ceremony for himself and other qualified apprentices. Coincidentally, he succeeded in doing so in the summer of 1997 after the *pwo* ceremony was performed on Polowat. When I was visiting Chuuk in June 1999, I had a meeting with Lokopwe to get the details of what had happened at that *pwo* and to talk about a videotape that had been made of it. A Japanese film crew had documented the event at Lokopwe's request and sent VHS copies of the event to him.²⁴ In the video, "Pwo Ceremony, Pollap, Micronesia" (Visual Folklore Inc. 1997) which Lokopwe received it is worth noting that Lokopwe was interviewed on-camera as to why he wanted to be initiated in the *pwo* ceremony. He said, "It will permit me not only to sail and navigate, but the idea of

navigation and the ceremony of *pwo* itself and the teachings of *pwo* themselves will enable me to acquire other basic knowledge of our ways of life." Lokopwe is unique in that he already was a senior master mariner in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) before he became an initiated navigator. He also holds a FSM Unlimited Master's License in modern navigation, yet Lambert felt that that this was not enough. He had been studying traditional navigation techniques all his life and he wanted the distinction of being recognized as a traditionally licensed navigator. In addition, he lamented the fact that his home island of Pollap had "lost" the ability to perform the *pwo* ceremony. This was particularly unfortunate, he said, because in their folklore Pollap is always cited as the island where navigational knowledge was born.²⁵ After several attempts, Lambert finally convinced Ignathio Epeimai a senior navigator from Satawal to perform the *pwo* ceremony on Pollap. In addition to Lambert Lokopwe four other navigators were initiated: Francis Sermanyoung (from Satawal), Tobias Urupa (from Satawal), Martel Ikimaur (Pollap), and Hillerio Aituluk (Pollap).

In July 2000, Lambert Lokopwe, now a traditional *palu* navigator in his own right, performed a *pwo* ceremony on Pollap for six apprentices. Assisting him in the performance of the ritual and testing of the initiates was Mau Pailug, directly returned from his participation in the "Millennium 2000" voyage. Compared to other *pwo* ceremonies, this is probably the largest on record to date, both in the number of persons initiated and the number of witnesses in attendance.²⁶ Six navigators were "graduated" on Pollap this time: Akin Yourpi, Jesse Kaius, Jerry May, Michael Olodey, Sisines Molupto, and John Sandy.²⁷ Besides the principle participants and general public on Pollap, Lokopwe put out the word that anyone who wished to come was welcome to attend and would be fed and taken care of while on the island. Those who got the message and decided to go had a choice of one of three FSM government ships they could board for Pollap — the *Caroline Voyager* from Pohnpei, the *Micro Glory* from Chuuk, or the *Micro Spirit* from Yap. People from all over

Micronesia came including dignitaries from Guam and Saipan. In addition, the Governors of Chuuk and Yap, their associates, and members of the Guam and FSM news media were also in attendance.

In June 2002 a “Pwo-Ordination” ceremony was performed on Satawal, but unlike previous *pwo* ceremonies, this event was not an authentic *pwo* ritual. For the first time, a son of Satawal, Kenneth Urumolug, was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest. His ordination was performed first in the Catholic church on Satawal by the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of the Caroline Islands, Amando Samo. Directly afterwards, a much abbreviated *pwo* ceremony²⁸ was performed outside the church by Mau Piailug. A video entitled, “Becoming a Navigator, Becoming a Priest” has been made of the event by UNESCO (2004).²⁹ The title of the video is misleading, however, since Fr. Kenneth Urumolug did not actually become an initiated navigator in the classic sense, but rather, in the words of Bishop Samo who was interviewed by the UNESCO film crew, he became a “spiritual navigator.”³⁰ Obviously, the *pwo* ceremony was being used as a metaphor; nevertheless this created some confusion in peoples minds. In an interview given by Piailug to the UNESCO camera crew, he is highly critical of the reasons for which he is being asked to perform a *pwo* ceremony when he does not know for sure that Urumolug wants to become a traditional *palu* navigator and learn to voyage to other islands. In another scene, Piailug again raises his objection to how the *pwo* ceremony is being adapted to the Catholic Ordination ritual, and leaves no doubt that he feels it is an inappropriate use of the *pwo* ritual. So, the viewer has to wonder, why is Piailug agreeing to do something that he knows is wrong? The answer, we learn from Piailug himself is that he feels he has no choice in the matter. He tells us that he has been called upon by the chiefs of Satawal to perform the *pwo* ceremony because it is the wish of the island community and the Catholic church. Even though Piailug obviously has misgivings about what he is being asked to do, he chooses to put aside his own feelings on the matter and accepts (reluctantly) the will of the powers that be.

In April 2003, Mau Piailug sailed the *Simion Hokule'a* with a thirteen-man crew from Yap to Palau in preparation for the 9th Festival of Pacific Arts to be held in Koror, Palau the following year.³¹ The chiefs from Gachepar in Yap and Melekeok in Palau, who called for the trip hoped it would inspire people in the Pacific to preserve their culture. They also wanted to use the event to teach their youth about their traditions and strengthen the historic bond between the two villages. The 254-mile trip went well but on the return voyage in May the canoe was missing two weeks before a United States Coast Guard plane found it drifting 30 miles west of Yap. Light winds had becalmed what was supposed to be only a two to three day voyage. In addition, there was talk amongst the Outer Island community in Yap that perhaps Piailug's son, Sesario Seweralur, who was making a trial run as captain on the return leg of the voyage, had made a navigational error. Rather than take over command, it was believed that Piailug was letting his son make his own mistakes. The sailors were found exhausted and without water and were given emergency supplies by the Coast Guard so they could complete their trip, which they did a few days later.

About this same time I received word from my Lamotrek island clan brother, Ali Haleyalur, that he wanted to build a voyaging canoe to attend the the Palau Festival of Pacific Arts in July 2004. A request had gone out from the chiefs of Gachepar for a fleet of six canoes from the Outer Islands of Yap to sail from Yap to Palau. The hope was that in addition to one or two canoes from Satawal that Lamotrek, Woleai, and Ifaluk would sign on. There was mounting excitement amongst the Outer Islanders that perhaps the sea routes between Yap and Woleai that had been “closed” for nearly a 100 years would be “opened” again. Ali figured that he needed a year to build the canoe and get ready. Unfortunately, Ali had a problem. No tree capable of providing the keel for a voyaging canoe existed on Lamotrek. In 1991 typhoon Owen had destroyed all suitable breadfruit and mahogany trees on Lamotrek and the island had yet to fully recover its forest resources. Large trees were available on Woleai,

a neighboring atoll 150 miles west of Lamotrek, but arranging for purchase of a suitable tree posed another problem. With the modernization of outer island economies the purchase of property and goods has become dominated by a monetary exchange system rather than the traditional barter exchange system that was in place twenty-five years ago. As a result, the cost to purchase a tree from Ali's relatives on Woleai and to pay the workers to shape it for transport to Lamotrek for final construction was estimated to be \$800. This is why Ali contacted me, to see if there was some way we could come up with the money, and fast. Eventually we did come up with the money but it was too little too late, so no canoe from Lamotrek made it to Yap or the Festival of Pacific Arts in Palau.³²

Neither was Woleai or Ifaluk able to pull together the resources needed to sail their canoes from Yap to Palau, but Satawal and Saipan both participated. As planned, the 31-foot *Simion Hokule'a*, which had made a trial run the previous year, made the voyage to Palau and was navigated again by Sesario Seweralur, one of Piailug's son. When it arrived for the festival, it made its entrance along with another smaller canoe which had also originated in Yap. This canoe had been purchased from Woleai by the NMI Canoe Federation in Saipan and shipped to Yap where it was then piloted to Palau by Anthony Urumeng, another of Mau Piailug's sons.

In December of 2002, typhoon Pongsona destroyed the Traditional Seafaring Society's (TSS) canoe house in Guam and seriously damaged the 23-foot *Quest* which had been purchased from Polowat and sailed to Guam in 2001. Members of TSS spent most of 2003 repairing the typhoon damage to the *Quest* so they could attend the 9th Festival of Pacific Arts (FESPAC). After the *Quest* was repaired and seaworthy again it was shipped to Palau where it participated in the opening ceremonies of FESPAC with Manny Sikau as captain. As might be expected, the rivalry between Satawal and Polowat and their navigational skills surfaced with the Satawalese contingent feeling somewhat superior because they made the sail from Yap to Palau and the Polowat canoe had

not. Nevertheless, as evidenced in the past, this competition has probably done more to benefit the Carolinian voyaging movement than inhibit it. It was the same with their navigator forebears and probably will remain — this navigator brethren who share a mutual bond with the sea and sailing to distant islands.

CONCLUSION

Manny Sikau's contributions via Polowat to the restoration of traditional seafaring and navigation on Guam would seem to be following in the wake of another Carolinian navigator who has dedicated his life to the preservation of Carolinian navigational arts and skills — Pius "Mau" Piailug, whose sharing of navigational knowledge via Satawal with members of the Polynesian Voyaging Society on Hawaii has been instrumental in reviving the traditional navigation and seafaring arts in Polynesia.

Mau Piailug's name appears again and again in this discussion of Carolinian voyaging. His participation in the revival of traditional navigation arts and skills began in 1973, virtually at the beginning of the Carolinian-Marianas voyaging "renaissance" and have continued in significant ways with his involvement in the "Millennium 2000" voyage and the the Festival of Pacific Arts voyages in 2004. Almost single-handedly he revived the voyaging heritage between Yap and Palau and he continues to be a steadfast influence on the projects undertaken by the NMI Canoe Federation. With the training of his two sons, Sesario Seweralur and Anthony Piailug, as traditional navigators, it would seem he has laid a solid foundation for the continued vitality of voyaging between Satawal and Saipan. As if this were not enough, he has also been active in the *pwo* ceremony revivalist movement as evidenced by his participation in the *pwo* ceremony conducted on Pollap in 2000.

Indeed, an argument can be made that if it were not for the *pwo* ceremony there never would have been a Carolinian-Marianas voyaging "renaissance." The *pwo* ritual has codified the traditional knowledge of navigation in ways that makes pathfinding over long ocean distances retrievable to future generations, even though the knowledge itself may not have been used in generations. It should be recalled that

the legendary master navigators who were first to revive long-distance voyaging in Micronesia after 1969 — Hipour, Repunglug, Repunglap, and Ikuliman — had all been initiated in the *pwo* ceremonies on their respective islands. Pailug was the last one to go through the *pwo* ritual on Satawal before Christianization of the central Carolines in the early 1950s and he was among the first to make the revival of traditional navigation a *cause celebre* in the 1970s. The evidence presented in this paper suggests that traditional navigation reinvigoration has expanded beyond the Carolinian-Marianas voyaging “renaissance” and is now engaged in a sowing the seeds of a Carolinian voyaging movement extending from Palau in the west to Pohnpei in the east. There is still much that needs to be done. The question for the future is whether or not Satawalese and Polowatese navigators will have to continue to do it alone, or can modern institutions create supportive synergistic networks such as the NMI Canoe Federation on Saipan and the Traditional Seafaring Society on Guam to support enduring voyaging communities on their own islands? Only a new generation of navigators born in the new millennium will be able to answer this question.

ENDNOTES

- 1 One nautical mile equals 1.15 land miles and 1.85 kilometers. Nautical miles are used throughout this article, hereafter referred to simply as miles in the text. The 500-mile passage between the Caroline and Marianas Islands is an approximate average of the distance covered. The actual distance depends on the origin and intended target of the route taken. For example, the rhumb line (course distance on a single bearing) from Polowat to Guam is 448 miles, Polowat to Saipan is 511 miles, Satawal to Guam is 388 miles, and Satawal to Saipan is 476 miles. In reality, voyages from Satawal or Polowat to the Marianas Islands commonly involve setting a course 10 degrees or more east of the rhumb line with the intent of coming downwind to the Marianas chain. This can add 50 miles to the rhumb line distance and more if tacking upwind is necessary (cf. Lewis: 1978: 177).
- 2 All the coral atolls and raised islands east of Yap and west of Chuuk are referred to here as the

central Caroline Islands. This geographical area extends from Ulithi in the west to Namonuito in the east. The Carolinian culture realm also reaches east into Chuuk and its northern and southern outer island groups (Hall Islands and Mortlock Islands respectively) and west into the outer islands of Palau (Sonsorol, Pulo Anna, and Tobi). Carolinians also settled in the Mariana Islands during the early 19th century (Guam, Saipan, Tinian).

- 3 The Carolinian-Marianas voyaging renaissance is often cited as beginning with Hipour’s “demonstration” voyage in David Lewis’ ketch, *Isbjorn*, which sailed from Polowat to Saipan and back to Polowat in 1969 using only traditional methods. The following voyages by Repunglap and Repunglug in 1970 and Ikuliman in 1972 were accomplished using traditionally-made sailing canoes.
- 4 Hipour, Repunglap, Repunglug, and Ikuliman are recognized outside Micronesia chiefly because of the seminal writings of Thomas Gladwin (1970) and David Lewis (1972).
- 5 This was before Mau Pailug achieved international recognition in 1976 by guiding the *Hokule’a* from Hawaii to Tahiti without instruments, a distance of 2,400 miles.
- 6 Carolinian voyaging canoes average between 25-27 feet in length and carry 4-8 people (cf. Gladwin 1970: 76). The largest Carolinian canoe sailing currently is the Satawalese *Simion Hokule’a* at 31 feet which is capable of carrying 12-14 people (cf. Flood 2002: 50).
- 7 Another passage that Pailug made from Satawal to Saipan was completed in the Hawaiian 54-foot double-hulled canoe, *Makali’i*, which was used in the “E Mau — Sailing the Master Home” voyage from Hawaii to Micronesia in 1999.
- 8 Sohn and Tawerilmang (1976: 128) give the following definition for “*sawey*” (*sawei*): “a tribute system, a system linking Yap with outer islands and also representatives of the social groups of respective islands.”
- 9 Obeisance to Yap was demonstrated through the sending of tribute (*pitigil tamol*), gifts (*sawei*), and religious offerings (*maipil*) to the high chief of Gagil district on Yap through specific Yapese “overlords,” also called *sawei*. (Lessa 1966: 37; Alkire 1965: 4).
- 10 Lessa (1950: 42) reports that the twenty-two canoes in the fleet from Ulithi to Yap consisted of canoes not only from Ulithi and Woleai but also one canoe representing each of the other the

- sawei* partners: Satawal, Lamotrek, Elato, Ifaluk, Eauripik, and Faraulep. Chiefs and navigators whom I interviewed from Lamotrek and Satawal claimed that if navigators from these islands wanted to make the journey all the way to Yap (and back) they could but that their participation was not mandatory.
- 11 Flood (2002: 51)
 - 12 Flood (2002:50)
 - 13 Personal communication 2005, Rob Erickson, President of NMI Canoe Federation.
 - 14 The Traditional Seafaring Society (TSS) was formerly known as the Micronesian Seafaring Society (MSS). MSS was founded by the University of Guam (UOG) in 1994. Personal communication 2005, Lawrence Cunningham, TSS faculty advisor (UOG). MSS developed separately from an earlier group in Guam that was founded by Rob Limtiaco and Gary Guerrero in the 1980s to promote traditional canoe building and navigational knowledge. This organization, named TASI after an acronym in the Chamorro language that means “ocean,” is no longer believed to be active. Personal communication 2005, Judy Flores, former Folk Arts Coordinator for the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities.
 - 15 Actually, both Carolinian and Chamorro sailing canoes belong to the “proa” type. They both consist of a narrow canoe hull with an outrigger and float which is always kept to windward. Instead of tacking, these vessels switch bow for stern by moving the sail and rudder in a maneuver commonly referred to as shunting. The name “flying proa” was first applied to Chamorro canoes by early explorers who were impressed by their sailing qualities and is believed to have derived from the term “prahu” which is the general name for an Indonesian sailing boat. Whereas knowledge of the construction of Carolinian sailing canoes and methods of traditional navigation have survived fairly intact up to present times, Chamorro navigation and canoe building in the Marianas died out by the late 1700s. The Spanish settlement of Guam in 1668 and subsequent decline of the indigenous population as a result of warfare and disease took a heavy toll on Chamorro culture.
 - 16 After Manny was initiated in the pwo navigator initiation ceremony on Polowat in 1997, he changed his last name from Ikea to Sikau in honor of his grandfather, Ikuliman Sikau.
 - 17 Vincente M. Diaz is currently a professor at the University of Michigan but is still an active member in the University of Guam Traditional Seafaring Society.
 - 18 The last Polowat to Pohnpei voyage is thought to have taken place around 1915. Cited in Lewis, David (1972: 53).
 - 19 Kendrick (2001)
 - 20 Kulung = Pacific golden plover (*Charadrius*).
 - 21 There is uncertainty regarding the actual date of Mau Pailug’s pwo initiation. David Lewis in his book, *The Voyaging Stars: Secrets of the Pacific Island Navigators* (1978) states that Pailug was born in 1932 and was 18 years old when he was initiated. This would mean that the last pwo ceremony on Satawal took place in 1950. Stephen Thomas in his book, *The Last Navigator* (1987:118) on the other hand states that Pailug was 15 or 16 years old. This would make the date of Pailug’s pwo ceremony 1948 or 1949. To confuse the matter more, I was told that Pailug’s initiation took place in 1952 just before the conversion of the island to Catholicism.
 - 22 Olimarao Atoll is under the control of Lamotrek. See Alkire (1965: 147-48) for discussion of islands claimed by Lamotrek. After a couple of days of talks, permission was denied to the Polowatese because of the number of turtles which they might take due to the large carrying capacity of their boat. This possibility was believed to have the potential of seriously compromising the harvesting of turtles on which the Lamotrek community depended.
 - 23 Personal communication 2005, Manny Sikau via Lawrence J. Cunningham.
 - 24 It is not known if a complete version of this video has been made or if it is in distribution. All attempts by Lambert Lokopwe and myself to contact the producers have been unsuccessful.
 - 25 This is true. Pollap (Pulap) is often cited as the island where Carolinian navigation originated. See Krämer (1935, 1937), Damm (1938), Lessa (1961), Mitchell (1973), Flinn (1992), and Thomas (1987).
 - 26 I was allowed to videotape the major parts of this pwo except for one evening at Lesewa canoe house which was made taboo to everyone except Lambert Lokopwe, Mau Pailug, and the six initiates.
 - 27 Names and spellings of the pwo initiates, all from Pollap, were provided by Lambert Lokopwe’s younger brother, Justo Lokopwe.
 - 28 The part of the pwo ceremony which was performed was the swearing in rite called *ropai palu* in which an initiate goes up to a large bowl filled

with pounded breadfruit and taro and stretches his right arm over the bowl. The master navigator performing the ceremony then ties a young coconut-leaf bracelet on the initiates' right wrist and intones a chant, signifying that the initiate is a navigator.

- ²⁹ This video has not been released for distribution yet. I received a VHS copy for review from UNESCO-LINKS in 2004. The video is intended to be included in a CD-ROM series entitled, "The Canoe Is The People: Indigenous Navigation in the Pacific."
- ³⁰ Chief Manipy used a similar metaphor on Polowat in 1994 when he bestowed the honorary title of "Navigator to the Heavens" on Basilo Dilipy, the first Polowatese to become an or-

dained Roman Catholic priest (Wolfe and Pleadwell 1994).

- ³¹ The last time a similar voyage had been made from Yap to Palau was in 1994 when Piailug navigated the *Mathawmmal*, a traditional Yapese-made canoe.
- ³² In the process, Ali and I started the Urupiy Voyager Project in memory of his father Urupiy who passed away September 24, 2003. The purpose of the project is to raise the funds necessary to build a voyaging canoe and sail it in Urupiy's name to educate apprentice navigators in long-distance voyaging. More information about the Urupiy Voyager Project is available on the internet at <http://tritonfilms.com/urupiyvoyagerproj.htm>.

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