disease yaws, which was introduced by a ship in the year 1887 and affected several hundred people. Through the application of appropriate measures, case numbers have been brought down. There is also a skin disease that causes light brown spots so that people who are afflicted by it look like a tabby cat; but this condition is not dangerous.

Cooling leaves, or a decoction made from such leaves, are applied directly onto wounds. Those who are ill are often fattened up so that they will stay strong, and massage is frequently used on all parts of the body. Boiling oil used to be poured into gunshot wounds, and a finger-long and finger-thick piece of soap was put on top of it. For a wide range of complaints, ill people are usually burnt upon their back. A piece of hardwood is made red-hot and then it is used to burn a hole half an inch deep, into which a glowing pandanus kernel is inserted. The pandanus kernel, kept red-hot by blowing onto it for a quarter of an hour, burns out the hole. Fractures are splinted with a piece of wood and with coconut bast. Dislocations are usually stretched without much success.

Celebrations take place when a house is completed, on the day when the roof leaves are cut straight, or when a canoe or a fish basket has been finished. When a chief's daughter is expecting her first child, in the fifth month of her pregnancy a celebration is organized, and in some families also during a second pregnancy. The onset of puberty of a chief's daughter is also celebrated with organized festivities, just like when a taboo has been lifted for coconut trees. This is because after a period of severe drought, a taboo of five to six months is imposed over using coconut trees until they have sufficiently recovered. Thirty years ago, the island was struck by a very long dry spell, with starvation as a result, since there was also a lack of fish at that time. The only food that was available were roots, and people died in large numbers. Every now and then the island was also hit by tidal waves that washed over the fertile lowlands.

Nauruan people count by lunar months. The time of the reappearance of the Great Bear constellation in the same location is counted as one year. If days need to be counted, e. g. the 15 days during which a woman who has recently given birth is kept locked up, then knots are tied in a cord.

Those stars which are most observed by the islanders are: the Seven Sisters/the Pleiades (*ejuwit*), Orion (*aramanamada*), the morning star/Venus (*men'ewak*), the evening star/Venus (*ediwaranbia*) and Sirius (*tangineparowa*).

Nauruan people have outstanding counting skills. They practice with games using shells, where they are finally able to estimate 100 shells at a single glance. Women in particular are very skilled in doing this. Shells are used as a tool for calculating large amounts.

The islanders have the following view on how Nauru was populated: in the distant past, before the Gilbert Islands people landed on the island, the people of Nauru had a great god, who according to their beliefs had created and populated the island. This god had a number of secondary gods, out of whom the most influential was Ligi (the butterfly). When Nauru was created, all the secondary gods helped out. In the beginning the clouds and the sky were a dense mass and they lay upon the ground. Then the great god commanded Ligi to fly in between and to separate the sky and the earth by lifting his wings. Thereafter the great god created two beings to bring life into his world, a man and a woman, who, after having begotten many children, were turned into stones. Their progeny married amongst themselves, but after some time they became very wicked and did not follow the words of the god; then, to punish them, he spoiled all the fruit of the coconut trees, which was a very big punishment indeed; because these trees were their main source of food. He also made the flesh of the shark inedible. A little while later a man died, who appeared to have had some connection to the spirits; because a coconut palm grew out of his grave. And because the tree had grown out of a skull, this is why all nuts have two eyes and a nose, and they are round like a head. The two stones into which the two ancestors of the islanders were transformed can still be seen today.

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Foreword: Father Alois Kayser MSC, His Life and Work on Nauru

Hilary Howes*

The following work is an English translation of a German-language article by Father Alois Kayser MSC (1877–1944),[1] a Catholic missionary who

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1 The abbreviation MSC comes from the Latin name for Kayser's missionary congregation, *Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis*, Missionaries of the (Most) Sacred Heart (of Jesus).

spent the majority of his life on Nauru. It was originally published in 1917/1918 in the journal *Anthropos* (Kayser 1917/1918). Translation and Open Access publication costs were funded by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Canberra, Australia, through the *Kleiner Kultur- und Wissenschaftsfonds* of the German Federal Foreign Office. The Embassy gratefully acknowledges the work of translator Adam Bartley and the support of Linguaset Translations, ACT, Australia. The Embassy also acknowledges the assistance of Alamanda Lauti, former director of the University of the South Pacific Nauru Campus, who encouraged translation of this work, and Sabine Heise, archivist, who facilitated access to relevant records in the Archive of the North German Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Münster-Hiltrup, Germany.

Readers are advised that the contents of this translation do not necessarily reflect the views of the German Government. It is important to bear in mind that the original German-language article is a product of its time and reflects the perspectives and attitudes of the author, including views that readers today may find biased, racist, or otherwise offensive.

Having said this, it is also important to note that the accounts of German-speaking visitors to the Pacific region during the 19th and early 20th centuries often contained detailed information about traditional ways of life in the Pacific Island States and are thus potentially of great interest to Pacific Islanders today. Translating such accounts into English and making them widely accessible to local communities is a significant aspect of Germany's cultural diplomacy. In relation to former German colonial territories such as Nauru, it is also a way of coming to terms with a complex and often challenging shared past.

This is an ongoing endeavour. As early as 1992 the German Embassy Canberra funded an edited translation of a compilation of archival documents on pre-1900 German Nauru by Wilhelm Fabricius (1992). The following year it published Kayser's "Nauru Grammar" on the basis of a rare roneo copy, dedicating it to the people of Nauru on the twenty-fifth anniversary of their independence (Kayser 1993). Over the period 2017–2019 it funded a translation of two volumes by the German ethnologist Paul Hambruch, who visited Nauru as part of the Hamburg South Seas Expedition of 1908–1910. This project emerged from a request of the President of Nauru and the resulting translations were dedicated to the people of Nauru on the fiftieth anniversary of their independence (Hambruch 1914, 1915).

Other organisations have also been involved in translating and publishing historical German-language works on Nauru. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Nauru's Catholic Church in 2002, three of Kayser's works were published in translation over the period 2002–2005. This was a joint project of the University of the South Pacific Centre on Nauru and the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, assisted by Father Karl-Maria Brand of Nauru Catholic Church. The three works documented aspects of everyday life on Nauru, including the uses of pandanus (*Pandanus tectoris*, a species of tree native to Nauru), traditional fishing tackle and practices, and traditional games and sports (Kayser 2002, 2003, 2005). Initial hopes of translating a fourth work on oil processing (Kayser 1928) have not yet been realised.

The current work is one of the earliest published by Kayser. As Rensch (1993: vi) notes, its title, "The natives of Nauru (South Sea). A critical study," could be considered "rather misleading." Rather than being "an ethnographic study of Nauruan society" (Rensch 1993: vi) per se, it is in fact a comprehensive review of Hambruch's abovementioned two-volume work on Nauru. Although Kayser acknowledged that some aspects of Hambruch's work were valuable, he believed that Hambruch's lack of prior knowledge of the Nauruan language and his relatively short stay of only six weeks had fundamentally compromised his ability to produce a reliable account of life on Nauru. Kayser's criticisms reflect broader tensions and rivalries between missionaries and "professional" anthropologists. Larsen (2016: 595) convincingly argues that these tensions can largely be attributed to the frustrations experienced by anthropologists seeking to reconcile their "professionalization goals" with their ongoing dependence on missionaries, who had usually been in the field for significantly longer and tended to have "a much deeper and fuller knowledge of indigenous languages and cultures."

This foreword concludes with a short biographical outline of Kayser, whose life story reflects a number of major events in the history of both Western Europe and Nauru. Aspects of his life

The congregation was founded in Issoudun, France, in 1854. Its French name, *Missionaires du Sacré-Coeur*, also abbreviates to MSC. The German equivalent is *Herz-Jesu-Missionare*. Kayser's name in his early publications is usually given as "P. A. Kayser" or "P. Al. Kayser." The "P." in this case actually stands for *Pater*, the Latin version of his title, "Father."

have been documented in various publications (e.g. Rensch 1993; Stolberg 2011; Viviani 1970), but to date no stand-alone biography has been published.

Kayser was born in 1877 in Lupstein in the Alsace region (then part of the German Empire, now located in north-eastern France). Little is known about his early years. Documents held in the Archive of the North German Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Münster-Hiltrup, Germany, indicate that he was one of eight children of Josef Kayser, a farmer, and Magdalena Kayser, née Wolff. His spiritual journey towards becoming a missionary was also a physical journey to various seminaries and mission houses of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In 1897, aged only 20, he commenced his novitiate in Tilburg, Netherlands. In 1898 he took his initial vows in Salzburg, Austria. He spent much of the period 1900–1903 studying in Hiltrup (now a suburb of Münster, Germany) and nearby Oeventrop (now a suburb of Arnsberg, Germany) (MSC Archive Undated, 1901, 1902b, 1903). In January 1902 he wrote to his superiors asking them to add his name to the list of candidates for missionary activity, stating that "frequent prayer" and "careful consideration" had led him to conclude that he could "do more and better work in New Pomerania than here in Europe" (MSC Archive 1902a). Probably he was not referring specifically to the island then known as New Pomerania (now New Britain, part of the Bismarck Archipelago in Papua New Guinea), but to the Vicariate Apostolic of New Pomerania, a territorial jurisdiction of the Catholic Church which until 1905 encompassed Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and Nauru in addition to the Bismarck Archipelago (Kennedy 1907–1912). In 1905 a new Vicariate Apostolic of the Marshall Islands was erected, including Nauru (MacErlean 1907–1912).

In 1903 Kayser's wish was granted and he was sent to Nauru, joining his fellow missionary Father Friedrich Gründl MSC (Linckens 1922: 124). According to Rensch (1993: vi), Kayser "immediately started to learn the language," then became "[f]ascinated by the diversity of Nauruan culture" and took to "visiting the various districts on his bicycle" in his free time to collect "linguistic and ethnological data." He contributed a number of articles on Nauruan traditional customs to the *Monatshefte zu Ehren Unserer Lieben Frau vom heiligsten Herzen Jesu*, the monthly magazine of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, including a series of articles on beliefs and practices relating to illness, death, and burial (Kayser 1916a, 1916b, 1916c). Translations of these articles could also be of considerable interest to Nauruans today.

Shortly after the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Australian military forces took possession of Nauru. All German nationals on the island, including Kayser, were deported to Australia. Kayser then made his way back to Germany, where, among other things, he found time to complete the original manuscript of "Games & Sports on Nauru," later published in two parts in *Anthropos* (Kayser 1921/1922, 1923/1924; MSC Archive 1919a). His correspondence from this period supports Rensch's (1993: viii) view that he "held little hope of ever returning" to his adopted island home. In one letter he encouraged another recently returned missionary to write a chronological account of missionary life in the Vicariate Apostolic of the Marshall Islands, adding: "Now everything is still fresh in [our] memories, later much will slowly fade and be forgotten" (MSC Archive 1919b).

However, when Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, formally bringing World War I to an end, it was required to agree to a number of conditions, including relinquishing all of its former colonial possessions and ceding a number of disputed territories closer to home. As a result, Nauru was taken over by Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand under a League of Nations Mandate, and Kayser's home region of Alsace was no longer part of the German Empire but part of the French Republic. Kayser became a French rather than a German national, and as such he was able to return to Nauru, arriving in 1921. Little has been published about his second extended stay. Clearly, he remained interested in linguistic and ethnological research: his works on pandanus and traditional fishing tackle and practices were published in 1936, and he completed his grammar and handed it over to the Australian Administration the same year (Kayser 1936a, 1936b; Rensch 1993: x).

In August 1942, during World War II, Japanese troops officially occupied Nauru. Most European and Chinese residents had been evacuated six months earlier. Kayser and his fellow missionary Father Pierre Clivaz MSC were two of only seven Europeans to remain on Nauru. Following Japanese occupation, troop concentrations and imported labourers artificially inflated Nauru's population. With Allied bombing disrupting outside supply routes, food became scarce. Over the period June-August 1943, Japan deported 1,200 Nauruans, amounting to two-thirds of the total Nauru-

an population at that time, to Truk (now Chuuk), an archipelago in the present-day Federated States of Micronesia, some 1,000 miles north-west of Nauru. Fathers Kayser and Clivaz were also deported, together with a handful of Chinese residents. Pollock (1991) and Tanaka (2018) have described in detail the privations experienced in exile. It is estimated that as many as 461 of the Nauruans deported to Truk did not survive (Tanaka 2018: 197). Father Kayser was also a victim of these privations. Various secondary sources, most drawing on records of Japanese war crimes held in the National Archives of Australia, report that he died on Truk in October 1944 as a result of ill-treatment and malnutrition, possibly after being imprisoned on charges of espionage (NAA 1945–1947; Rensch 1993: xii; Tanaka 2018: Viviani 1970: 84).

On 7 December 1947 a memorial to Kayser was unveiled on Nauru (Rensch 1993: xii). His name can also be found on a memorial in the gardens of the mission house in Münster-Hiltrup, Germany, to Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who perished in the Pacific during World War II, and he is commemorated in the name of Nauru's only private school, Kayser College.

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The Natives of Nauru (South Sea)

A Critical Study[1] By P. AL. KAYSER, MSC, presently at the Mission House Oeventrop, Westphalia

Alois Kaiser

The small island of Nauru (properly *Náọerọ̄*), barely known by name until a decade ago, has been torn from its concealment in recent years and, thanks to the enormous, very high-percentage phosphates found there, has become the focus of interest in the business world. The scholarly world was also made aware of the island by Dr. Paul Hambruch, who presented the results of his research in a monograph on the island. Hambruch visited the island twice. The first time was for only "a few days" and the second time was "from the beginning of October to the middle of November 1910" and in this short period of six weeks – "because nothing was able to be obtained here in the May days of 1909 due to other obligations except a small collection" – two extensive volumes with a total of about 772 pages were created. A grammar with a dictionary was also able to be drawn up systematically and incorporated into his work.

Understandably, an expert on the conditions on Nauru will take the work of Hambruch with very mixed feelings. The author of this work had been working as a missionary on the island for eleven years without interruption, some of them before the arrival of the Europeans; the natives were still quite primitive in their way of life and in their views, untainted by culture. As a result, he had ample opportunity to trace their customs and traditions, their religious and legal views, their entire senses and way of thinking, in order to gain a reasonably accurate picture of the country and the people of prehistoric times. Hambruch will, therefore, probably allow him to subject his work to a small examination.

Very little has previously been written about the island of Nauru and this small amount of writing usually consists only of short, fleeting notes from travellers and researchers, who touched the island as though in flight[2] and procured from some trader or other the material which had to provide substance for a chapter about its land and people. Ms Brandeis, who is mentioned several times, used an occasional trip from Haluit [probably a misreading by the original typesetter of Jaluit Atoll in the Marshall Islands] to persuade a former trader to write down a few things for her. Kretschmar, who worked as a doctor on the island for a whole year, allowed his imagination too much leeway in writing the commemorative book "Nauru zum 2. Oktober 1914" ("Nauru on October 2, 1914") and has not been recognised as reliable by any connoisseur of the conditions there until now. The last but most important factor, the American missionary Delaporte, had been resident on the island for fifteen years; as a result of his anything but scientific background, however, he cannot be considered to be a researcher. Hambruch himself has repeatedly awarded him this title. Where linguistics is con-

1 With regard to Paul Hambruch, "Nauru," 1st half-volume: with 108 illustrations in the text, 19 collotype plates and 1 map, L. Friederichsen & Co., Hamburg 1914, XII + 458 pp.; 2nd half-volume: with 338 illustrations in the text and 8 collotype plates, ibid. 1915, VIII + 314 pp.

2 Krämer spent only one morning on the island, "but worked non-stop to such an extent that he collapsed a few times for a short time." Hawaii, East Micronesia, Samoa, p. 443.