

## RAINMAKERS AND THE PROBLEMATICS OF POWER IN FALI SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

James H. WADE

University of Maiduguri

### Abstract

In a recent short article, clearly written with this seminar in mind, CLÉMENT (1992:19-30) focused our attention upon the socio-politics of water in the Mandara Mountains. In arguing that water in this region is not politically neutral, he draws upon VINCENT's two volume study of the Mofu-Diamaré (1991)<sup>2</sup>. In their autonomous realms the chiefs, or princes as VINCENT calls them, of the Mofu-Diamaré powerfully demonstrate the political significance of water. Each prince is firstly a rain-chief; power over rain, over water, translates into power over men. A prince's authority is dependant upon his bringing rain to his people, the onset of the annual rains re-affirms this authority. The loss of rainmaking stones undermines political power<sup>3</sup>. From the unglossed, unambiguous references to the "political", to "power" and to "authority" I take these as conveying an unambivalent, Weberian meaning centred on the concept of power as power over, i. e. control. The underpinning of the political authority of the Mofu-Diamaré prince by his power as rain-chief is both clearly demonstrated and essentially unproblematic.

However, CLÉMENT (1992:19) further contends that the concepts of power over rain and of a rain-chief are found everywhere in the Mandara Mountains<sup>4</sup>. I shall here argue that this is not so in at least part of the southern Mandara Mountains, where the Chadic-speaking Fali have rainmakers but not rain-chiefs, and that if we conflate these concepts we obscure matters of great interest. "Power" is as problematic in the Mandara Mountains as it has proved to be in anthropology.

**Keywords:** rainmakers, Fali, Wintim, Jilvu, Mandara mountains, Nigeria.

---

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to the organizers of this seminar, especially to Daniel Barreteau, Herrmann Jungraithmayr, Günter Nagel and also to Rudolf Leger for the making my attendance possible.

<sup>2</sup> I have not had access to this work.

<sup>3</sup> Does power equal potency?

<sup>4</sup> "..., la notion d'un pouvoir sur l'eau et d'un chef des pluies est omniprésente dans les monts Mandara."

### Rain in Fali - problematic and metaphor

In the southern Mandara Mountains, south of the Higi and north of the Gude, are the small Fali chiefdoms, perhaps a dozen in all<sup>5</sup> with a total population probably in excess of 60,000.

Those on the Cameroonian side of the border are called the Djimi in the Francophone literature. For the Fali, as for the other Mandara mountagnards, rain<sup>6</sup> was a perennial uncertainty, when and how much, the first planting always

<sup>5</sup> On the Nigerian side of the border: Bagira, Bahuli, Jilvu, Kiria, Mijilu, Muchella, Vimtim, and perhaps Mukta - each once a politically autonomous community (*vra:kun*). For an early published account, see MEEK 1931:300-312.

<sup>6</sup> In the semantic field of water Fali clearly distinguish between rain (*vu:nən*) and water as such (*ma'in*). See appendix for numerous further distinctions. In this paper all Fali words, unless otherwise indicated, are in the Vimtim dialect. Jilvu words are followed by (J). Fali words originally were transcribed phonetically, according to IPA standards. In advance of a full phonological analysis this transcription is simplified here as follows:

Vowels	front	central	back
close	[i]	[ɨ] [u]	[u]
close mid	[e]	[ə]	[o]
open mid	[ɛ]		[ʌ]
open		[a]	

[e] and [ɛ] are both written as "e"; [a] and [ʌ] as "a". Long vowels are indicated by ":" after the vowel. Tones are not marked.

Consonants: p, b, t, d, k, g, m, n, l, f, v, s, z,

[β] b	[ʒ] zh
[dʰ] d'	[ç] h
[c] ty	[x] h
[j] gy	[h] h
[ʔ] ' (glottal stop)	[j] y
[ɲ] ny	[ʎ] gh
[ŋ] n	[w] w
[tʰ] tl	[ts] ts
[r] (rolled) r	[tʃ] c
[ɾ] (flapped) r	[dz] dz
[ʃ] sh	[dʒ] j

a gamble. Drought and locusts were threats of historic proportion to these sorghum farmers, and at least some major famines became embedded in oral tradition. As metaphor, rain, precursor of fecundity, extends to the other great crop of life; on the pivotal September day of *\*dazipcin* (J) during the most notable biannual Fali fertility and initiation rite, Jilvu's *\*fimbidi*, it must rain to ensure the future potency and fecundity of Jilvu's youth - and in my experience it does.

### The rainmaking complex

Anti-locust shrines and rites and a rainmaking complex, in various localized derivations, may well be significant components within that "symbolic reservoir" (DAVID et al. 1991:173) which lends, *in toto*, a distinctive character to the societies of the Mandaras. The form and idiom of the rainmaking complex in any instance will be mediated by locally prevailing concepts of power and agency, perhaps by dominant modes of ritual, may be embedded within a material culture, can feature prominently in prevailing symbolic structures (BARLEY 1983), and will not, I suggest, be unaffected by a community's ethos.

Not every montagnard polity (from the acephalous to small states) has its own rainmakers<sup>7</sup> though all may well have access to one or another. In the Fali case each community does have its own, and sometimes more than one.

Rites to ensure the onset of the rains are a common feature as are later ones, when necessary, both to maintain sufficient rain and to prevent the destruction of crops by over-abundant rain.

The later rites may be initiated by the rainmaker or may be occasioned by the supplication of others. Fali practice fits this widespread pattern. The rites commonly involve the manipulation of stones (CLÉMENT 1992:20-22) but so far my data<sup>8</sup> indicates that this is not so among Fali. Stopping the rain is widely

Proper nouns are indicated by asterisk ( \* ) in front of the first letter. Gude words are written as in HOSKISON 1983.

<sup>7</sup> For example, the important chiefdom of Sukur is "dependant" on the rain-chief/rainmaker of nearby Wula Mango (Sukur fieldnotes 24/3/84).

<sup>8</sup> I would wish to further check this and other ethnographic details with a wider range of informants. For the data presented here I am especially indebted to Buba Momuna, *mi:hin* of Jilvu, and to *\*adabana, mag vu:nən* of Vimtim. My gratitude also to Billa Joseph Asarnda of Vimtim for assistance in compiling the append wordlist. Special thanks to my wife, Márta Galántha-Wade, for her work on the transcription of Fali and language-related exegesis,

associated with the rainbow, from the Mofu-Diamaré (VINCENT 1991:626 referred to in CLÉMENT 1992:20) of the northern Mandaras to the Fali, and southwards to the Verre of the Atlantika Mountains (EDWARDS 1991:320-321).

CLÉMENT (1992:29), following VINCENT, establishes an important dichotomy in the Mandara Mountains between those peoples for whom the "chief" (le chef politique) and the "rain-chief" (le chef des pluies) are one and the same, and those for whom the two are distinct. We are told that the former group includes the Ouldeme, northern Mafa, Mofu-Diamaré, Mofu-Gudur, Giziga and Mundang; and the latter group the Gemzek (Gemjek), Zulgo, Podokwo, northern Mofu and Kapsiki. Neither "group" forms a contiguous bloc. Fali rainmakers (*mag vu:næn*)<sup>9</sup> are quite distinct from Fali chiefs (*momun*), but as I would not wish to use the term "rain-chief", I hesitate to place the Fali within Vincent's second category. This apparently sharp dichotomy in the manifestation of political power, in the relationship of rainmaking "powers" and other "powers", should focus our attention upon a central problematic of Mandara Mountains ethnography, the nature of "power" in a region encompassing small states, chiefdoms and acephalous groups, with both casted<sup>10</sup> and uncasted societies, and where the politics of gender warrant reexamination<sup>11</sup>.

#### Fali ethos and constrained power

VAN BEEK has presented a convincing picture of the "self-sufficiency, circumspection and privacy" that "are the most important Kapsiki values" (1987:139). In this respect Fali are very similar. An assertive sense of the individual, and of his (and her) rights and obligations characterises Fali social praxis and implicit ideology. The primary economic and ritual unit is the largely autonomous household (*yin*). Here in the male upper section of his compound (*sin*), with its sense of permanency, surrounded by his ancestral or other shrines and his sorghum granaries, looking down upon his wives and children, each man is chief of his own world, upon which the legitimate authority of others hardly impinges.

---

as well as her care in unravelling my scribble. Thomas Geider generously helped prepare the final version of this paper for publication.

<sup>9</sup> Fali nouns in the text and in the appendix are given in the singular form.

<sup>10</sup> See the recent re-examination of "caste" in the Mandaras by STERNER & DAVID 1991. Fali are a decidedly castled group.

<sup>11</sup> I am less inclined to subscribe to a view of the "powerlessness" of women in Mandara montagnard societies than does, apparently, consensus opinion in the literature (STERNER & DAVID 1991:356-359).

The autonomy of the household is echoed in the autonomy of the settlement complex, the political community (*vra:kun*), vis-à-vis other chiefdoms. At both levels pride, prestige, and power manifested themselves, also identity. Fali chiefs had, it seems, very little power, legitimate authority over other men, and on the whole were not notably wealthy. (I presently know of only one, \**dapcu* of Jilvu, who was definitely *əmdigunan*, an exceptionally rich man.) In Fali the development of the institution of chieftaincy may well have been a necessary accompaniment to the consolidation of kin-based hamlets into large, nucleated settlements of between two and five thousand inhabitants. In what I have called (WADE 1989:234-235) a process of "incipient proto-urbanism" the person of the chief may have provided an essential symbolic focus, a representation of the polity. Chiefs are usually relatively minor ritual officiants<sup>12</sup>, far less important in this respect than the chief-smiths (*mom mi:hin*), though chiefly installation and funerary rituals are elaborate and distinctive. A balance was achieved between the valued self-sufficiency of the individual and the exigencies of membership in a large compact community; here chieftaincy had its place but was a highly constrained one.

Fali stress upon the worth of the individual, in an essentially non-hierarchical society, was dramatically manifested in a pervasive personal aestheticism, a self-celebratory aesthetic, active in both domestic and ritual contexts.

Given this ethos one can expect power to be subtle, dispersed and essentially problematic, very much negotiated in the strategies of daily life. The self-sufficiency of the polity extends to one or more rainmakers to each chiefdom. The "guardianship" of community shrines is widely dispersed among the clans. The ritual power of the chief-smith is circumscribed by his ambiguous status as "chief" of the endogamous "polluted" *mi:hin* caste. Chief, chief-smith and rainmaker are quite distinct from each other.

Concepts of the royal (*ka:mbin*), of caste (the small *mi:hin* craft-related caste vis-à-vis the majority *mu:gin* caste of farmers), and of gender are all potentially powerful determinants of hierarchy. All are constrained, rendered problematic in Fali culture by an ethos of individuality. Fali personhood is a product of place of origin and descent as well as of royal - non-royal, caste and gender distinctions; and ascribed personhood itself is mediated by an acute sense of the individual. (A man's admired capacity to acquire wealth and produce children depended upon an uncertain supply of the labour and bodies of women, a matter very much negotiated, and in which women were not powerless.)

---

<sup>12</sup> The "priest-chief" of Koma in Vintim is one clear exception.

### Who are the Fali rainmakers?

It would appear that only chiefs and chief-smiths are precluded from being *mag vu:nən*. Royals and non-royals, smiths and non-smiths, men and women are all represented among current and recent rainmakers. The Vimtim *mag vu:nən*, \**adabana*, is a woman of a royal clan (Vimtim fieldnotes, 1992); and in Bahuli a man of their royal clan is rainmaker. A *mi:h wun*<sup>13</sup>, \**kudyu*, inherited the position of Muchella *mag vu:nən*, about ten years ago, from his predecessor, a non-smith. Previously there had been a second Muchella *mag vu:nən*, also a man a non-smith. Neither of these earlier Muchella rainmakers were royal, nor of course, as smith, is \**kudyu*<sup>14</sup>. In 1978 Jilvu had three *mag vu:nən*, all male, and none *mi:hin*.

Beer and food came to the *mag vu:nən*, prestige accrued but quasi-political power did not. Beyond the fixed annual rite, the rainmaker acted on his/her own initiative, at the behest of the community (through the chief), and at that of individuals.

It is all very eclectic, consistent with the Fali ethos and with an implicit concept of power which is remote from ideas of authority and domination.

### The making of rainmaking

The ability to make rain goes back to Gudur (\**gudəI*) (J) in both Fali and Jilvu and Fali Vimtim traditions. Paraphernalia as well as knowledge is usually inherited within rainmaking families but its effectiveness is initially derived from Gudur. Three pairs of newly-made iron medicine holders are taken to Gudur by the rainmaker-to-be<sup>15</sup>. In each pair there is one *perma'an* (banana-shaped) and one *mbukin* (armlet with protuberance/s), standard forms in the region. The chief Gudur rainmaker incorporates medicine within the six holders; one pair becomes

<sup>13</sup> The Fali *mi:hin* caste divides into *mi:h wun* lineages, mainly associated with iron-smithing and funerary work (*wun* = corpse/first funeral) and *mi:h kujinun* lineages mainly associated with other craft work, sacrifice and divination (*kujinun* is a type of tree). The matter becomes complicated, especially as there can be movement between categories. There is some indication that, in Jilvu at least, "active" *mi:hin* cannot be rainmakers; this may pertain to practising iron-smiths and/or practising funerary smiths, and requires further investigation.

<sup>14</sup> James Kwasari, personal communication 1993.

<sup>15</sup> Given here is the Jilvu tradition (fieldnotes 1978 & 1983).

"rain" (*vi:ni*) (J), the second "wind" (*mbi:di*) (J), and the third "rainbow" (*mangarən*) (J)<sup>16</sup>. Two axes/adzes, also taken, are left with the Gudur rainmaker.

On return home the soon-to-be rainmaker provides a sheep for sacrifice by the chief-smith. Blood and stomach contents are lightly smeared on the medicine holders. These are regarded as being dangerous as well as powerful, especially "rain" which during this ritual is addressed roughly thus by the presiding *mom mi:hin*.

"Rain! You have been brought here to help people grow good crops, please don't be responsible for killing anyone and also let the rainmaker and his family be well."

The remote high god \**fitiruf* (J) is also addressed in prayer. Before the eating of the sheep by the four present, who include a brother to the rainmaker and a *mi:h kujinun*, is complete it should rain. During this rite only the *mag vu:nən* holds the *perma'an* and *mbukin*, and even he has his hands covered in honey to protect himself. The *mi:h kujinun* takes the sheep's skin from which he will make an undecorated *bu:kərən*<sup>17</sup>, loin covering, for the *mag vu:nən*. The rainmaker remains within his own compound for six sexless days. On the seventh the *mi:h kujinun* returns with the *bu:kərən* and with red ochre (*əmshidun*) and mahogany oil; he shaves the *mag vu:nən* leaving a single tuft of hair, covers him

<sup>16</sup> *vi:ni* (J) to bring rain; *mbi:di* (J) and *mangarən* (J) together to scatter the clouds and halt the rain.

The rainbow in its relation to stopping rain is especially interesting. We recall that in Verre "certain women are believed to have the power to check rainfall because of the rainbows in their stomachs" and that a Verre text states "As to the people who stop rain from coming, these people are witches with rainbows in their stomachs..." (EDWARDS 1991:320-321).

In Fali Vintim there are two expressions for "rainbow": *rag vu:nən* = lit. "bow (of) rain". The other, *manga vu:nən* is most likely a compound noun consisting of *ma* (agentive prefix) + *nga* + *vu:nən*, where *nga* has probably the same root as in *ngafuken* = "to set a trap" and in *mungan/mangan* = "poison (in food)". In Gude *mengana* (n.) has two meanings: "rainbow" and "poison" (HOSKISON 1983:250), among them "to set (a trap)"; "to put poison in food"; and "to prevent rain by witchcraft" = *nga vena*. Both setting a trap and putting poison in food have the notion of stopping, preventing, terminating, as the Gude expression *nga vana* explicitly shows. Thus the literal translation for *manga vu:nən* is most likely "the thing that stops/prevents/terminates the rain".

<sup>17</sup> An undecorated *bu:kərən* indicates ritual status.

in mahogany oil and a little of the red ochre. The *mag vu:nən* is also given a special black stick (*kada di:vun*)<sup>18</sup>. The black stick, undecorated *bu:kəɾən*, and hair tuft are the *mag vu:nən*'s insignia.

We surely see here a series of transformation which together generate the major transformational power manifest in rain-making. Artifacts are in Gudur endowed with power, transformed into potent and dangerous, but as yet undirected "medicines". A combination of sacrifice, rite, and prayer perform a further transformation, orientating "rain", "wind", and "rainbow" to the well-being of a particular autonomous community. The accompanying transformation of the man in its detail echoes both birth and initiation in the use of oil and ochre, and the former especially in the six day liminal period.

### Indigenous exegesis and semantics

The Fali term for rainmaker, *mag vu:nən*, lies within their semantic field of doing and making, not within that of coercive power. The compound noun, *mag vu:nən*, consists of the prefix *ma*, the stem *gə* from the verb *gəkun* meaning fetching (water), making (*kunu*), serving (beer), and the word for rain. Several other terms use the same *ma* prefix, in each case with the meaning of "the one who (does) ...":

<i>ma: bəlun</i>	iron/blacksmith (actual practioner)
<i>bəlukən</i>	to forge
<i>ma: həɾun</i>	thief
<i>hərkun</i>	to steal
<i>ma: kuran</i>	diviner
<i>kura:kən</i>	to divine
<i>ma: ghi:nən</i>	potter
<i>ghi:nəkən</i>	to make things out of clay
<i>mada mba:lin</i>	maker of beer ("officially" for a ritual occasion)
<i>dakən</i>	good
<i>mba:lin</i>	beer

In each case there is explicit stress upon doing, making, upon agency<sup>19</sup>. The rainmaker is simply that, s/he who makes/fetches/delivers rain<sup>20</sup>. If the rainmaker

<sup>18</sup> The black bark from branches of this sort is used in making the most important type of Fali basket, the *di:vun*.

<sup>19</sup> Fali Bagira, Bahuli, Muchella and Vimtim dialects are closely related to Gude which has been systematically analyzed (HOSKISON 1983). (Jilvu's language, though akin to these, is given separate status, while Mijilu and Kiria speak dialects of Higi.). According to HOSKISON, these four Fali dialects and Gude

happens to be royal this is irrelevant to the task. The chief-smith is *mom mi:hin*, and a certain, complex and problematic, equivalence to a chief, *momun*, is explicit; the rainmaker is not "*mom vu:nən*"! Indigenous exigesis denies any association between the *mag vu:nən* and chieftaincy.

In Fali there is a semantic field approximating to that of coercive, political power:

<i>haykiilafftukən</i>	control (significantly a loan word from Fulfulde)
<i>ngyərən</i>	physical strength and "political" power
<i>murən cu</i>	strong character (lit. "he is a man").

These are all appropriate in discourse relating to chieftaincy, they are not appropriate to discourse relating to rainmaking.

At the level of Fali exigesis and semantics rainmaking does not pertain to the political or quasi-political domain as conventionally understood<sup>21</sup>. With what sort of power are we therefore concerned?

### The power of creativity

"Power" in recent discussion (ARENS and KARP 1989, especially the editors' introduction) has been interestingly dissociated from conventional, Weberian notions of control. There has been a shift in focus which, using the well-established concepts of agency and personhood (HARRIS 1989, JACKSON and KARP 1990), has re-formulated "power" as culturally-defined generative

constitute a single language (1983:3). Hoskison deals with the prefix *ma* in detail calling it "agentive" and giving very similar examples (1983:27).

<sup>20</sup> The Gude word for rainmaker does not belong to the group of compound nouns incorporating the *ma* "agentive" prefix. However, the Gude expression, "*yavena* = person who is able to make rain" (HOSKISON 1983:295) is a compound noun *ya* + *vena* (= rain) where *ya* probably comes from the verb *dā* (HOSKISON 1983:182) meaning "do, make, create, happen, become", thus rendering it to the same semantic field as the equivalent Fali expression. (The Gude word for "to be pregnant", *dāsəka* (HOSKISON 1983:183), shows the same construction: *dā* = to make; *seka* = stomach.)

<sup>21</sup> In this recent study of Chamba religion and ritual FARDON tells us that "Mapeo people believed the people of Yeli, and especially the chief of Yeli, exercised power over them by virtue of control over rain, smallpox and locust infestation" and that "this sanction underwrote a small payment made by Mapeo households to Yeli on a formally (sic!) annual basis." (FARDON 1990:13). This does suggest something approximating to (quasi-)political power and tribute.

capacity. In this perspective "power" is centrally concerned with transformations be it of matter, people, or states of being, sometimes in interaction with other "powers" immanent in cosmological formulations. It is within these terms, this discussion, that I should wish us to re-locate our examination of rainmaking and power in the Mandara Mountains.

I would finally argue that the anthropologist reaching for symbolic structures, beyond indigenous exigesis and the explicit semantics of language, ritual and material culture, can discern a symbolic equivalence between chief, chief-smith and rainmaker, perhaps encoded in the common hairlock. I see these three as the great transformers in Fali society. This is most obviously so with the chief-smith who presides at life's great transformations, at initiation and death, and who leads those whose daily task is to transform the products of nature into the Fali material world as smiths, potters, casters, leather-workers, weavers and so on. DAVID AND STERNER have argued that this is the defining characteristic of the craft-associated, caste-like groups of our region, which they therefore wish us to call "transformers", rather than "smiths" or "specialists" (DAVID et al. 1991. STERNER and DAVID 1991). Many of the products of these "transformers" are of course themselves powerful tools of transformation, not least in the hands of farmers, who might on that score be considered major transformers themselves (WRIGHT 1989:52-53). I would be happier with "transformers" if the concepts of mediation and interpretation were subsumed within the concept of transformation; as sacrificers *mi:hin* are essentially mediators, as diviners, interpreters<sup>22</sup>. I further argue here that chiefs and rainmakers are transformers *par excellence*. I rather think that no term is satisfactory, that lengthy glossing is always going to be necessary.

Though he wielded little in the way of enforcible authority the chief's "power" perhaps lay in his capacity, as unifying symbol and personage, to transform an acephalous collection of kin groups into relatively large and quite compact autonomous political community. The *mag vu:nən*, uniting heaven and earth in the life-giving act of rain, re-creates meaningful time, that of sowing, growing and harvesting. The old, dry, dead, hot, stifling, impotent year is transformed into the new one with all its rain-given promise of fecundity. Rain is the product of potency, the power which renders the world fertile.

---

<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to David Zeitlyn for this reading of Fali and similar systems of divination (personal communication 1993).

## Bibliography

- ARENS, W. & I. KARP (eds) 1989. *Creativity of Power: Cosmology and action in African societies*. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press.
- BARLEY, N. 1983. *Symbolic structures - An exploration of the culture of the Dowayos*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- VAN BEEK, W. E. A. 1987. *The Kapsiki of the Mandara Hills*. Illinois, Waveland Press.
- CLÉMENT, D. 1992. Socio-politique de l'eau sur les monts Mandara. *Mega-Tchad* 92 (1):19-30.
- DAVID, N., K. GAVUA, A. S. MACEACHERN & J. STERNER 1991. Ethnicity and Material Culture in North Cameroon. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 15:171-177.
- EDWARDS, A. C. 1991. The Blacksmith and the Rainmaker among the Verre. *Forge et Forgerons*, ed. Y. MOÑINO, pp. 311-328. Paris, ORSTOM (Collection Colloques et Séminaires).
- FARDON, R. 1990. *Between God, the Dead and the Wild: Chamba interpretations of religion and ritual*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press for I. A. I.
- HARRIS, G. G. 1989. Concepts of Individual, Self, and Person in Description and Analysis. *American Anthropologist* 91 (3): 599-612.
- HOSKISON, J. T. 1983. *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Gude Language*. Ph. D. dissertation, Ohio State University.
- JACKSON, M. & I. KARP (eds) 1990. *Personhood and Agency: The Experience of Self and Other in African cultures*. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press for Uppsala University.
- MEEK, C. K. 1931. *The Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*, Vol. I. London, Kegan Paul.
- STERNER, J. & N. DAVID 1991. Gender and Caste in the Mandara Highlands: Northeastern Nigeria and Northern Cameroon. *Ethnology* 30 (4): 355-369.
- VINCENT, J. - F. 1991. *Princes montagnards du Nord-Cameroun, Les Mofu-Diamaré et le pouvoir politique*. (2 vols) Paris, L'Harmattan.
- WADE, J. H. 1989. The context of adoption of brass technology in north-eastern Nigeria and its effects on the elaboration of culture. In *What's New? a closer look at the process of innovation*, eds. S. E. VAN DER LEEUW & R. TORRENCE, pp. 225-244. London, Unwin Hyman.

WRIGHT, B. L. 1989. The Power of Articulation. In *Creativity of Power: Cosmology and Action in African Societies*, eds. W. ARENS & I. KARP, pp. 39-57. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press.

## Appendix: A Vintim Fali wordlist in the semantic field of water

<i>ma'in</i>	water
<i>mantlaban</i>	dew
<i>vu:nən / vo:nun</i>	rain
<i>məg vu:nən</i>	rainmaker
<i>kurməva</i>	rain coming from the direction of the village of Mova
<i>taŋga yawa</i>	rain coming from the direction of the village of Yawa
<i>mədaŋ kaya</i>	rain coming from the east (?)
<i>məŋgrya vu:nən ŋgryakun</i>	raincloud that foretells rain to bring
<i>mashafsha fən</i>	drizzle
<i>makuckucin / makutkutin</i>	very light drizzle; expression mainly used by children
<i>bi:rla</i>	heavy rain
<i>kabgakun</i>	long-lasting rain, preventing people from going out
<i>la:rən</i>	hail
<i>vu:n məgəvi:n</i>	the short, passing rain that closes the rainy season at the end of September, beginning of October
<i>dzaka vu:nən</i>	thunder ("striking of rain")
<i>burka: vu:nən</i>	lightning ("light of rain")
<i>fa:wun</i>	place where lightning struck / a certain illness one gets at the place of <i>fa:wun</i>
<i>mbi:dən</i>	wind
	rainbow
<i>rag vu:nən</i>	rainbow ("bow of rain")
<i>gi:rən</i>	pond, lake, water hole
<i>'gwi ma'in</i>	water hole

<i>ka: gurmun</i>	water-fetching area
<i>gəgəbən</i>	swamp, marsh
<i>yi:mun</i>	cave of underground water, usually deep in the rocks at the bottom of a hillside
<i>ma' yi:mun</i>	water of <i>yi:mun</i>
<i>ŋgurinyin</i>	cavity created by falling of water, or underground stream
<i>gwyi dūbwun</i>	hole produced by taking clay for building
<i>maigwyi dūbwun</i>	water of <i>gwyi: dūbwun</i>
<i>gu:ga</i>	well
<i>u:de jaŋa</i>	spring
<i>lahwan</i>	stream
<i>mi:rən</i>	river
<i>maɗu:n mi:rən</i>	large river
<i>nyab-nyab</i>	wet, moist, damp
<i>marbuki</i>	soaking wet
<i>gi:zən</i>	moist, damp soil
<i>vyəkun</i>	rainy season
<i>dəvəc</i>	in the rainy season
<i>məgəvi:n</i>	final period of rainy season (last 2 weeks of September, beginning of October)
<i>rə:nkən</i>	dry season
<i>dərə:nuc</i>	in the dry season
<i>mətsuftsuf</i>	hottest part of the dry season
<i>matsəfhan</i>	very hot, humid heat
<i>mahu:rhan.</i>	period of dryness/drought
<i>hu:rin</i>	dryness/drought