

with us, dont be afraid of sending ; for I know how to deal honorably with a man ; for we want to come to a right understanding with each other, so that we & you may be no longer dubious of terms we am in future to go upon ⁽¹⁾.

We must tell you Govr. that it is a shame to any one of us to sell [only] Goats, Things, yams, Bulls at it [Sierra Leone Camp]. We am used to take 10 & 20 Slaves at time to sell them. This our forefathers did & we mean to do the same ⁽²⁾.

Please to send me a Mule, or else a Horse. I will thank you for that Govr. I must tell you Govr. that there am plenty people in this country who am older than myself & have more Slaves than I have, but the whole country joined & made me King. Any thing you may hear contrary to it is a story. We all give you good service

I Alimami & Wille Solyman
The Bearer of this is
Momodo Samba
& Peter Sampson

[ps] A Sheep for present.

Fresh from negotiations with chiefs in Senegambia and still basking in the success of his policies in the Rio Pongo, MAXWELL was far from a willing recipient of Amara's chastisement or threats ⁽³⁾. Instead, MAXWELL ignored the letter and failed to report its substance to the Colonial Office until May 1, 1814. By avoiding the « endless palaver » at Foricariah, MAXWELL revealed his alliance with Sierra Leone commercial interests ⁽⁴⁾. Freetown's traders had aligned themselves behind not only legitimate trade but also behind Sanasi in his dispute with Alimami AMARA. AMARA's letter, while a shrewd political document of its own, failed to reconcile Moria's differences with the colony or to defuse his developing struggle with Sanasi of Maliguia.

(1) This is clearly an attempt to diminish SANASI's influence with Sierra Leone-based legitimate traders.

(2) This is a reference to Sierra Leone's policy of granting freedom to slaves when brought into the colony's territory.

(3) Robert ROBINSON, « British Colonial Policy and Trade on the Windward Coast of Africa, 1812-1832 » (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Duke University, 1966), 32-33 ; MOUSER, « Trade and Politics », 93-117.

(4) MAXWELL to BATHURST, May 1, 1814, CO 267/38/52, PRO.

Moria politics in 1814 ; Amara to Maxwell, March 2

by Bruce L. MOUSER.

Between 1787 and 1814 Moria Country, located at the mouth of the Foricariah River in the Republic of Guinea, and the British at Freetown, Sierra Leone, vacillated from commercial cooperation to vigorous competition. Located on a major trade path between the Futa Jalon and the coast, Moria and its sister-Mandingo chieftaincies of Sumbuya and Moricania sought to monopolize direct contact between British traders and those of the interior. In 1794 Sierra Leone Company officials attempted to open a new path to Timbo via Port Loko in Temne Country and to by-pass the Moria terminals. These and subsequent attempts, however, failed to open a secure avenue of commerce. Instead, British traders established factories in Mandingo Country where, with changes in official British policy toward slave trading after 1808, African and European commercial and political interests clashed. This study of Moria politics in 1814 traces the developing hostilities between British traders and Mandingo chiefs and British attempts to subvert the traditional authority of Moria's chiefs to British designs. The accompanying letter from Foricariah's Chief AMARA, ruler of Moria, to Governor Charles MAXWELL of Sierra Leone represents an important reaffirmation of independence and a warning of reprisals should Sierra Leone intervene in Moria's political affairs.

Leaders from Moria, Sumbuya, and Moricania countries, from the inception of the Province of Freedom in 1787, sought to profit from their control of a major path with the interior. Dala MODU, son of Chief Fenda MODU of Wonkapong in Sumbuya who was a sometime ally of Moria, established a trading outlet near Freetown in 1795 and thereafter supplied settlers with cattle,

rice, and other trade goods from the interior⁽¹⁾. While other Mandingos quickly followed MODU's example by establishing factories near the British markets, British and Sierra Leone traders soon moved into the Melacoree, Foricariah, Beriera, and Wonkapong rivers areas where they made arrangement with local chiefs and built factories⁽²⁾. Whether at Freetown or in Mandingo Country, Mandingo chiefs profited greatly from increased trade.

The first test of friendship between Moria and the budding Sierra Leone settlement occurred in 1802 after Nova Scotian settlers rebelled in 1800 against company authorities at Freetown and after King TOM, aided by many disgruntled Nova Scotians, attacked the settlement in 1801. During the 1801 conflict, several Mandingo chiefs joined King TOM « without the national sanction » of Moria, and when TOM lost the war, he and several Nova Scotians sought refuge at Foricariah, the capital of Moria⁽³⁾. In a spirit of cooperation, Moria's authorities promptly extradited the refugees to Freetown for trial when requested by British officials⁽⁴⁾.

A second test occurred in 1807 when British traders again attempted to open the long-sought Port Loko path between Freetown and Timbo, capital of the Futa Jalon. Since 1802, however, a change of political leadership had occurred in Moria, followed by an energetic defense of Moria's control of major paths to the interior. This position was supported by Alimami AMARA of Foricariah. AMARA had come to power late in 1802 in a contested and heated election which represented a division within Mandingo Country along lines reflecting economic as well as political interests. Mandingo and Susu chiefs in the interior, with the Benna chieftaincy among the most important, had long tied their prosperity to income from paths

(1) Christopher FYFE, « A History of Sierra Leone » (London, 1962), 89, 96; James WATT, « Journal of Mr. James Watt, in his Expedition to and from Teembo in the Year 1794 » (Rhodes House Library, Oxford, Mss. Africa S. 22), 121.

(2) See Bruce L. MOUSER « Trade and Politics in the Nunez and Pongo Rivers, 1790-1865 » (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971), 20-37, and Walter A. RODNEY, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast* (London, 1970), 82-84, for a more detailed description of the landlord-stranger relationship as practiced along this section of the Windward Coast.

(3) Richard BRIGHT, « Journal of Mr. Bright's Expedition to the Mandingo Country », 13, CO 270/8, PRO.

(4) *Ibid.*, 33-39; Alexander SMITH, « Journal of a Voyage from Sierra Leone to the River Kisi Kisi, etc., in the Schooner King Kanta of Sierra Leone by Mr. Alex[ander] SMITH », 2-6, CO 270/8, PRO.

About Daniel Gospel⁽¹⁾ I know no more than you do Sir; but I will bring the transgressors to trial- & whatever my book [Koran] says that I will put into execution.

Governor I & Solyman we tell you one thing. If you do not want to buy any Slaves please do let those people that want to buy them come unto us freely, & do not take their Ships & property away from them. If you do, take care of yourself. Dont think you will get any black man's thing in all this Country either to buy or to eat. If you take this, please send some White man line to us to see one another. If not keep at [Sierra Leone] when you ans[wer]. We want Slave trade. Our book tells us we must buy Slaves, for bad people can not sit along side of good people. Gov. told Al Koran palaver [palaver] in your letter. Well look [in] the Koran on this subject wether we tell you a story. Governor we not want war with any man⁽²⁾.

First White people came this country for trade palaver. We all were very glad of it, & whatsoever they wanted we tried to get it, Bulls, fur, yams, oil, Slaves, Ivory etc. But to day White people come to take the country away from us & to make Slaves of us in return. Nor will they suffer any person to come near us except as they like. Any person that comes to this coast for Slaves, he is our Stranger, he is protected by [us] & so any other that comes for anything else, provided he comes peaccably. You make Sierra Leone very Camp [i. e., fortified]. We am very glad of it & we will be glad if you extend it 1000 times as much. We will consider you as our friends, even as ourselves, but if you keep on taking these Slave trading Ships you must get up & go back to your own country. We beg you Governor let this war be done. We beg you as much as a man can do unto man. We dont like war. Dont force us Governor. This country is your country if you only will leave off taking these Slave trading Ships that come to this coast to bring us a little thing. You know this country belongs unto us the Natives of it. You are a « Stranger » Lens, we am the proprietors.

Governor, I understand that Mr. Edmonds told you that I took away from him his Bulls his wives and so [blurred]. I am sorry to hear this. He has lost nothing, ask him. I gave him a letter to you but he wanted not to carry it. My book says such a man must be killed & his estate divided because he wanted two Governors to fall out⁽³⁾. None of Edmond people were in irons with us Lens. Mr. Edmonds mon[e]y, half belongs to us to day & the other unto you Govr. according to my book, for Edmonds did not want to carry my palaver to you⁽⁴⁾.

We tell you another palaver Govr. Any White Man that wants to buy no Slaves, he must not come into any of these rivers⁽⁵⁾. & if any White man buys Slaves & you trouble him for that palaver, you trouble me King Alimami & me Wille Solyman at Fanj. If you want to send any person here to talk

(1) An 1823 RSGLA report linked Gospel to Sanasi of Maliguia. His precise role in the turmoil of Moria's politics in 1814 is unclear.

(2) The use of the word « war » in this case probably refers to the deteriorating relations between Foricariah and Freetown. No outbreaks of fighting had yet occurred between AMARA and SANASI.

(3) AMARA includes himself in this category.

(4) EDMOND's identity is unclear.

(5) While AMARA may have meant only those rivers in Moria Chieftaincy, it is more probably that he intended to include those belonging to neighboring chieftaincies as well.

economic policy, represented potential change in Moria's leadership⁽¹⁾. By 1814, the contest between Alimani AMARA and Chief SANASI for control of Moria's destiny had become a reality.

The most vehement threat against British commerce in Mandingo Country came early in 1814 in response to a cooling of relations between Chief AMARA and Freetown's Governor MAXWELL. Early in the year a number of slaves belonging to a Moria caravan then visiting Freetown escaped, and MAXWELL granted their freedom in accordance with time-honored practice in the colony. AMARA retaliated by seizing a number of settler-traders in Moria, among them Daniel GOSPEL, a Freetown settler and trader at Maliguia, who died a mysterious death at Foricariah⁽²⁾.

GOSPEL's death, MAXWELL's subsequent inquiry, and AMARA's stinging response of March 2, 1814, while ostensibly leading to a normalization of relations, represent a deep current of unrest in Mandingo Country. This letter, sent by AMARA to MAXWELL, contains a thinly veiled threat of reprisals but also suggests solutions to their collective dilemma. AMARA asked MAXWELL to control his traders from Sierra Leone and to remind them of their obligations under the traditional « landlord-stranger » relationship. AMARA reminds MAXWELL and « strangers » in Mandingo Country that they refrain from involvement in local politics, particularly that contest between Sanasi and himself. Finally, the letter outlines those political and economic rights of sovereign states which even MAXWELL should have respected⁽³⁾.

Fanj
March 2^d 1814

Governor
Sir

I King Am[a]ra present my compliments to you, & so [does] Wille Solyman Lens of Fanj. (4) The letter you sent by Momodo Samba we am glad of. (5)

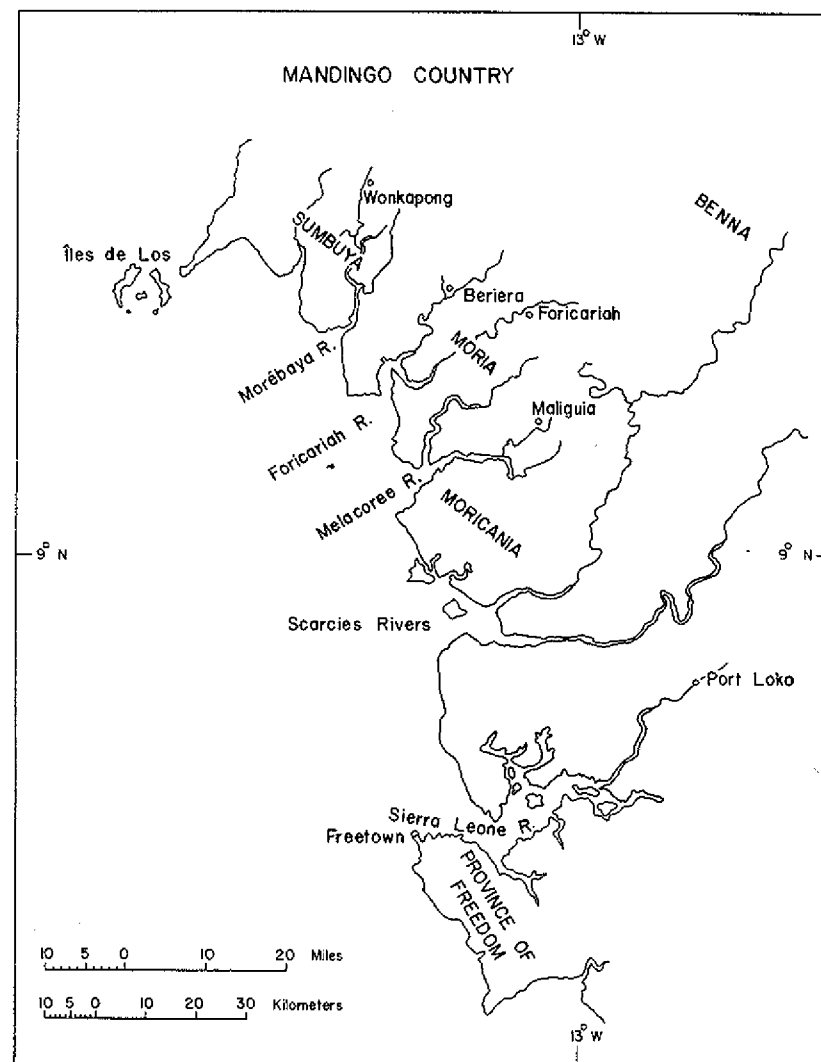
(1) MACCARTHY to BATHURST, August 5, 1817, CO 267/45/37, PRO; Journal of Dr. Brian O'BEIRNE, entry dated February 17, 1821, enclosed in Grant to Bathurst, September 24, 1821, CO 267/53/14, PRO; RGSLA, February 22, 1823.

(2) RGSLA, February 2, 1823.

(3) AMARA to MAXWELL, March 2, 1814, enclosed in MAXWELL to BATHURST, May 1, 1814, CO 267/38/52, PRO.

(4) Wille Solyman was the ruler of Fanj, a town located several miles inland from Foricariah. The meaning of « Lens » is unclear.

(5) Mamado SAMBA was born in Moria and had accompanied James WATT from Timbo to the coast in 1794. Freetown knew SAMBA as a shrewd negotiator and a long-term caravan leader between Freetown and Timbo via Foricariah.



which crossed their territories and to continued Moria control of trade on the coast⁽¹⁾. AMARA championed these interests and promised strict supervision of British traders who would

(1) Amara to MAXWELL, March 2, 1814, enclosed in MAXWELL to BATHURST, May 1, 1814, CO 267/38/52, PRO; BRIGHT, « Journal », 23; Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser, February 24, 1821, and September 6, 1823, hereafter cited as RGSLA.

receive goods through a single center of commerce, namely Foricariah. In return, chiefs of Benna and other Susu chieftaincies agreed to close paths which terminated outside Moria Country. Those chiefs opposing AMARA's election, in contrast, represented towns and districts in Sumbuya, Moricania, and those coast-side of Foricariah in Moria Country⁽¹⁾. To them, AMARA symbolized the old-guard, the status-quo, the interior interests which abhorred the possibility of coastal towns competing with each other and thereby endangering profits to caravan leaders. Economically, it meant a larger piece of the economic pie to chiefs restricted by Foricariah's political and economic guidance.

A second division of Mandingo Country stemmed from a generation-old religious dispute between Foricariah, the most Islamized of the Mandingo towns, and its neighbors. In the late 1760's Foricariah launched a holy war, seized Bereira, and marched into Sumbuya before forces loyal to the chief of Wonkapong halted the Moria advance. A decade later, Moria initiated a second invasion but met similar failure⁽²⁾. During the 1780's a holy man named Fatta arrived in Mandingo Country, and again Moria's neighbors mustered their forces to oppose a renewed holy war which never materialized⁽³⁾. Thereafter, Moria's neighbors and towns located between Foricariah and the coast which had adapted Islamic creeds to local customs remained cautious of Foricariah's political and economic ambitions. Despite these divisions, AMARA drew a majority of Moria's chiefs to his banner and became the new ruler in 1802.

When AMARA in 1807 learned of new British attempts to open a Port Loko path which would by-pass the taxes and restrictions of Mandingo suppliers, he and his advisors moved quickly to forestall company success⁽⁴⁾. At AMARA's instigation, Brima

(1) RGS LA, September 14, 1822, and February 22, 1823.

(2) BRIGHT, « Journal », 42-43, 50-52, 69-71 ; « On the Means of Establishing a Commercial Intercourse Between the Western Coast of Africa and the River Niger, » by W. MACAULAY, September 4, 1802, CO 2/1, PRO.

(3) BRIGHT, « Journal », 19, 42, 80-81 ; Thomas WINTERBOTTOM, « An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone » (Rept : London, 1969), I, 246-49 ; James F. HOPEWELL, « Muslim Penetration into French Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia Before 1850 » (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1958), 110-11.

(4) The dream of a path to Timbo through Port Loko had long been an objective of Sierra Leone officials and merchants alike. The 1793-94 expedition to Timbo by James WATT sought to expedite construction of such a road but no « official » path became a reality. Wars between the Fula of Timbo and Susu in the upper Scarcies dashed possibilities of a Port Loko path. While occasional Fula caravans crossed the area between 1794 and 1807, these were the exception rather than the usual. See MAXWELL to BATHURST, May 1, 1814, CO 267/38/52, PRO.

Konkuri, a native of Moria, seized the Port Loko chieftaincy in 1807 and remained ruler of the district until 1816⁽¹⁾. His action closed an avenue of commerce which promised to materially improve Freetown's ties to the interior. Caravan trade from the interior would, as events proved, continue to terminate in Mandingo Country.

Although AMARA had won his initial confrontation with the colony, he became increasingly disgruntled with Freetown during the years that followed. In 1808 Great Britain outlawed slave trading by British nationals. And Freetown authorities sought to persuade their own settlers, as well as nationals not governed by British law but resident in Moria's rivers, to restrict themselves to legitimate commerce⁽²⁾. Some slavers stopped trading altogether, but others continued as long as the British employed no effective means to halt slaving⁽³⁾. Seizures of vessels and traders of slaving in Mandingo Country increased steadily after 1811, however, and prompted AMARA to warn Freetown repeatedly of possible adverse reactions to legitimate traders located within his territory⁽⁴⁾.

British influence in Mandingo Country, through its traders, paced the growth of the Sierra Leone settlement and by 1814 was endangering Moria's prosperity and enhancing that of her neighbors. Moreover, British and Sierra Leone traders who eschewed slaving settled more numerous in coastal towns where schooners and sloops could anchor. Slaving dwindled as a preoccupation of the area, and in its place, trade in cattle and rice flourished⁽⁵⁾. Long distance trade continued only through the Foricariah terminal, but that too was under challenge. To reverse Foricariah's policy of forced scarcity and price controls, the chiefs of Sumbuya and Moricania rallied behind the young Chief Sanasi of Maliguia who, also restricted by Foricariah's

(1) « Observations on the Situation of Sierra Leone with Respect to the Surrounding Natives », enclosed in Dawes to Earl of Liverpool, November 1, 1811, CO 267/29, PRO ; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 124-25.

(2) Reginald COUPLAND, « The British Anti-Slavery Movement » (2nd ed. ; London, 1964), 104-11 ; Christopher LLOYD, « The Navy and the Slave Trade » (rept ; London, 1968), 41.

(3) Leopold BUTSCHER, « Extracts », *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society*, III (1810-12), 88, 90-91.

(4) Britain, until 1816, had no recognized Squadron on the Windward Coast nor was there direction from London for those occasional men-of-war that visited the area. Instead, British warships sought to intercept slavers as they left the coast. In 1811 Governor MAXWELL of Sierra Leone ordered warships into the Rio Pongo to seize slave traders, destroy slave vessels, and burn factories.

(5) MAXWELL to BATHURST, May 1, 1814, CO 267/38/52, PRO.