

LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL



Edited by:

Svend E. Holsoe,
DePauw University

David M. Foley,
University of Georgia

Cover photograph: Dan-Ngere Poro mask, 16 inches high.
From the Genevieve McMillan Collection.

The editors are most grateful to Mrs. Linda Kerr for typing the manuscript, Kenneth Miller for the maps and George Thomas for the cover photograph.

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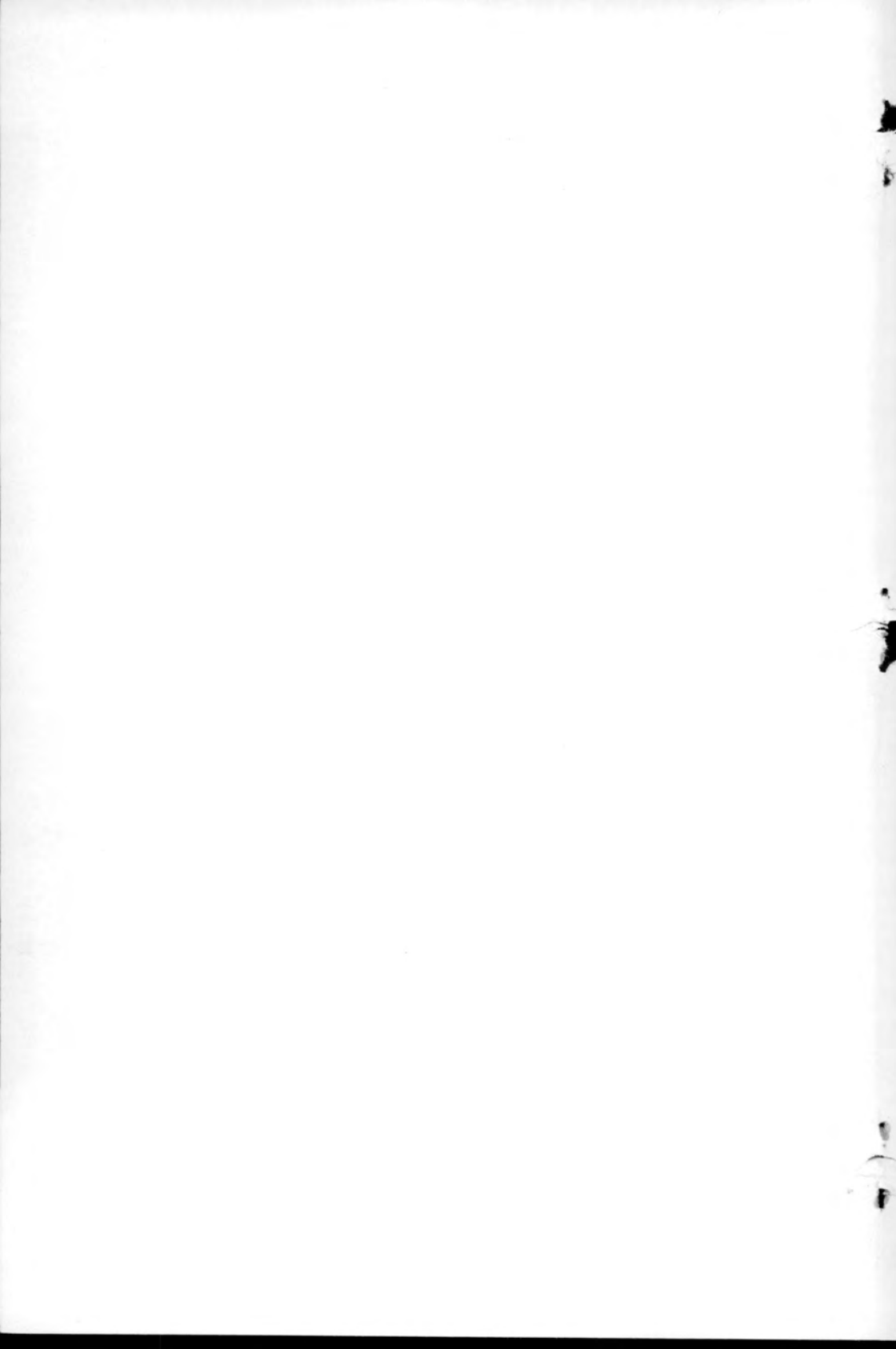
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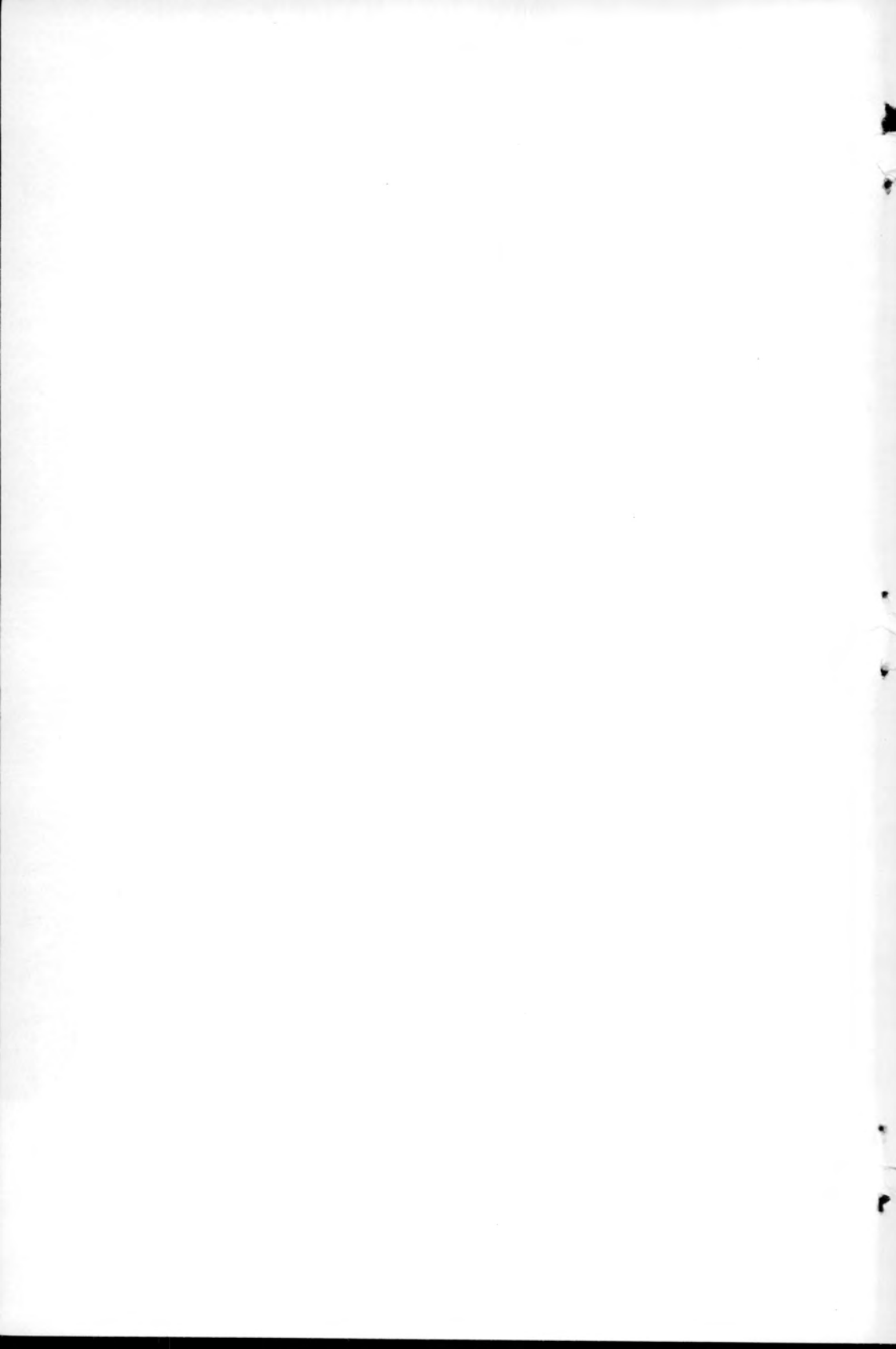


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A TRIBAL REACTION TO NATIONALISM¹ (PART 1)*

Warren L. d' Azevedo

INTRODUCTION

Discussions of Liberian national development have, for the most part, focused attention on the social structure, economy, administrative policies, and international orientation of an elite class which has, in the past one hundred and forty years or so, emerged from the interrelations of a small minority of American colonists with a complex and heterogeneous population of African tribal peoples. Studies of Liberian political and economic life have dealt almost entirely with the structure of power and authority as it forms and generates in Monrovia, and as it responds to the strains between coastal urban ruling class traditions and the requirements for supervision of the vast subordinate regions of the interior. Actual relations between tribal authorities and the Liberian government have been reported only in passing, and major stress is placed upon the response of central government to vaguely defined pressures from the interior and upon resulting policy and legislation.

Few have recognized the character of the forces which have been unleashed by President Tubman's Unification Policy or identified them with processes which have been at work in Liberian culture throughout the history of the nation. Nevertheless, a fundamental problem of analysis exists due to the paucity of studies of Liberian tribal history, tribal relations with the government, and the development of accommodations on the part of traditional societies with reference to Liberian nationalist goals.

1. A preliminary version of this paper was presented in a symposium on Liberian research at a meeting of the African Studies Association, Los Angeles, November, 1968. Unless otherwise noted, all observations and interpretations are derived from the analysis of data collected in the field during the years 1956-57, and 1966-67 under grants from the Ford Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and Northwestern University.

Local terms and place names are given in accordance with standard Liberian or Euroamerican orthographic usage, excepting in a few instances where the author has chosen to employ simplified variants of customary spelling in the interests of consistency; e.g. Bele (Belle), Kpele (Kpelle), or Suen (Suehn). Where deemed necessary, certain of the distinctive Gola phonemes are indicated as follows: o for the low back vowel as in the English ought, and n for the velar nasal consonant as in the English sing. Nasalized vowels are indicated by the tilde.

* This paper has been divided into four parts. The remaining sections will be published in the next three issues of the journal, eds.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF GOLA TRIBAL AUTHORITY
IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

NORTHERN CHIEFDOMS

Kongba Paramount Chieftaincy

Traditional Chiefdoms, or "Clans"

1. Tungele
2. Gboba Nenge
3. Zui

Pokpa Paramount Chieftaincy

Traditional Chiefdoms, or "Clans"

1. Sokpo
2. Kposo
3. Pokpa (incorporating old Semavula, Dagole, Dazangbo & Dago chiefdoms)

Gola-Kone Paramount Chieftaincy

Traditional Chiefdoms, or "Clans"

1. Laa
2. Mana
3. Dablo

Goje Paramount Chieftaincy

Traditional Chiefdoms, or "Clans"

1. Yangaya
2. Gbama

SOUTHERN CHIEFDOMS

Lofa-Gola Paramount Chieftaincy

Traditional Chiefdoms, or "Clans"

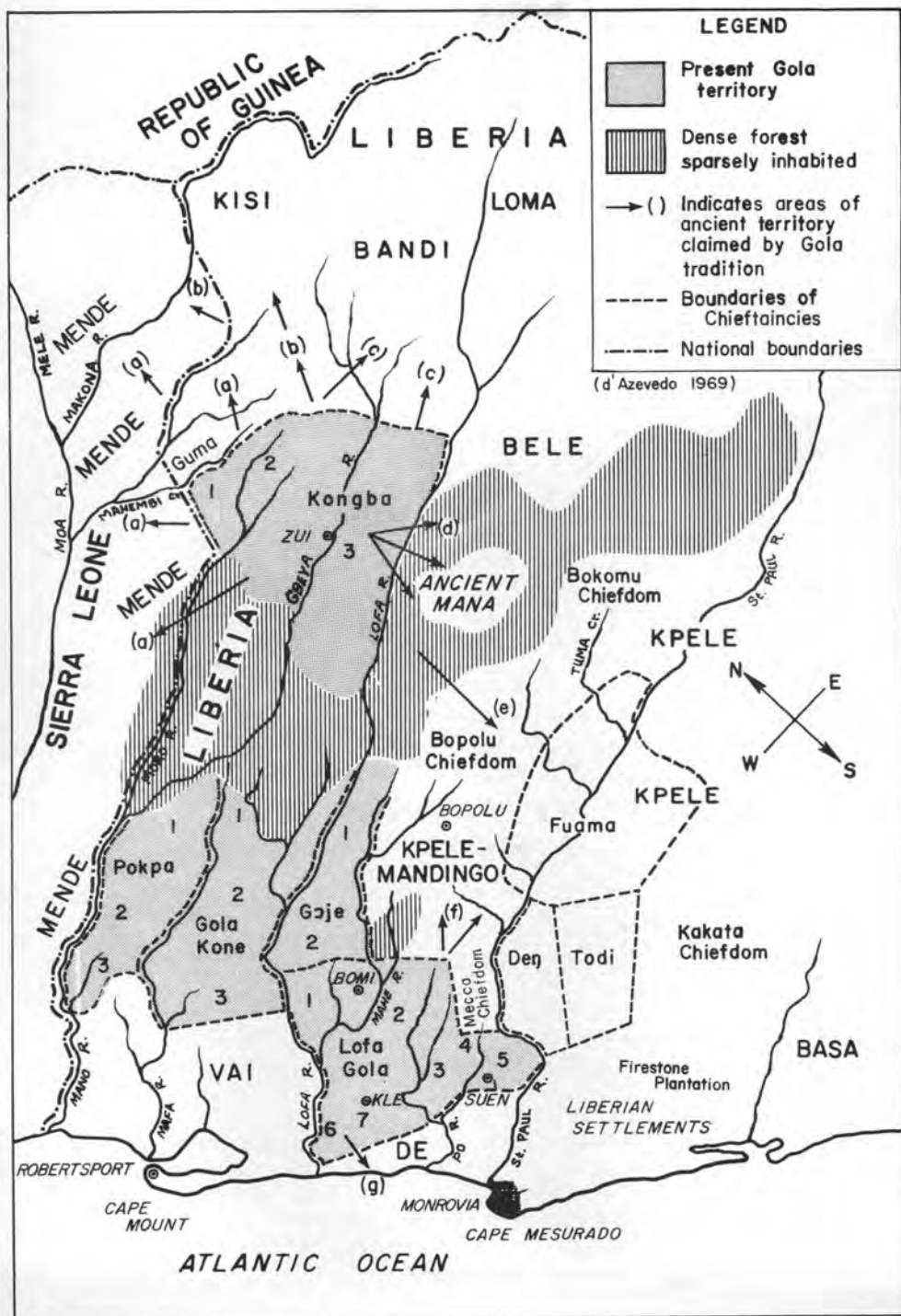
- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. Senje | 5. Gbɔ |
| 2. Mana | 6. Gbɔla |
| 3. Te | 7. Kpo |
| 4. Bɔje | |

RECENTLY ALIENATED TERRITORIES

<u>Fuama Chiefdom</u>	(reverted to Kpelle control in early twentieth century)
<u>Den Chiefdom</u>	(absorbed as Liberian townships in the 1950s and 1960s)
<u>Todi Chiefdom</u>	
<u>Mecca Chiefdom</u>	(a section of Lofa-Gola territory transferred to Mandingo jurisdiction by the government in the 1940s)

ANCIENT TERRITORIES CLAIMED BY GOLA TRADITION

- (a) The Guma section of Liberia, and lands in Sierra Leone districts between the Mano and Moa rivers, now occupied by the Mende.
- (b) Bandi and Kisi sections northeast of Kongba.
- (c) The western sections of territories presently occupied by the Bandi.
- (d) The legendary Kongba area, also known as "Ancient Mana."
- (e) Territories east of Bopolu to Fuama.
- (f) The territory northeast of Lofa-Gola to Bopolu.
- (g) Access to coastal salt pans and trading stations at the mouths of the Lofa and Po rivers through old De chiefdoms.



This paper presents some results of investigation in the western section of Liberia which provide insight into certain historical and structural processes affecting the internal development of the Liberian nation. They are expressed by long-term continuities of traditional institutions and their accommodation to the conditions imposed by external change. The evidence suggests, for example, that the dynamics of Gola subjugation and eventual cooperative involvement in the emerging Liberian nation must be understood not only in terms of specific features of Gola and colonial social organization, but also in terms of regional historical events prior to colonial occupation and during the long period of struggle on the part of the newcomers to establish cultural and political jurisdiction over a portion of the west African coast. The view that the national leviathan slowly and awkwardly overwhelmed indigenous cultures and was met by futile upsurges of military resistance on the part of disintegrating tribal societies is not appropriate to the Gola case, at least, and may not be appropriate to other sections of Liberia.

This paper will attempt to show that the establishment of a new Liberian "territory", known as Bomi Territory, following the formation of four new counties replacing the old hinterland provinces in the early 1960's, is a Liberian national response to highly viable sectional aspirations which have affected events in the western interior for centuries. It is, furthermore, an expression of an emergent "tribalism" which was, previously, only a latent function of inter-chiefdom relations. Among the Gola there has been a reaffirmation of the ancient tradition of pan-tribal solidarity in terms of new structural alternatives provided by the modern Liberian nation itself. Processes of tribal territorial expansion and consolidation, interrupted more than a century ago, have reappeared within the context of national administrative policy and under the banner of national unification.

SOME EARLY HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Liberia is, in many respects, a unique nation in Africa. It is the oldest black republic in Africa south of the Sahara. The effective agency of national orientation was a colonial group of American black freedmen and their recaptured African wards who established tenure on the Mesurado coast between the years of 1822 and 1845. Though these developments were similar to those in Sierra Leone, the Liberian case was distinctive in that black colonization was not a prelude to political domination by a foreign power. It resulted, rather, in the early creation of an independent African state. This national entity was also distinguishable from the African colonies and protectorates by the ethnic composition of its ruling class and, now, from the new African nations by the absence of a colonial tradition forged by long-standing political, economic, military and cultural patronage from abroad. And, perhaps, no other government with so small and unaggressive a constituency has for so long contrived to restrain the mass of indigenous peoples who might have swept them from their minute communities along the coast. The phenomenon is sufficiently remarkable that a question may be posed as to what factors, aside from the absence of military might on the part of the colonists or of political unity on the part of interior chiefdoms, might help to account for almost one hundred and fifty years of slow insistent absorption of a heterogeneous population into a national entity.

During the centuries prior to effective colonization, the region which now comprises Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and the Ivory Coast presented an extremely fluid social situation influenced by disturbances taking place among the great empires of the western Sudan as well as by the impact of European commerce on the coast. The westward expansion of Mande-speaking peoples, resulting in the present distribution of groups such as Vai, Mende, Loma and Kpele, pressed numerous smaller tribal groups into close proximity along the Atlantic littoral. Among the latter were the Kwa-speaking De, Basa and Kru, and the West Atlantic-speaking Gola, Temne, Kisi, and Bullom.² This concentration of new population in the forest region was accompanied by intensive competition for control of the trade routes between the coast and the interior, a competition which became a dominant preoccupation with the rapid growth of the slave trade in the 18th century. Loose confederacies formed periodically among small chiefdoms of various tribes, or under the control of a powerful war king. These alliances were often primarily for the purpose of controlling trade, but were also for defense against the continuing threat of powerful Mandingo and Bambara chiefdoms of the eastern highlands. The shifting centers of power created by these confederacies led to the political and economic ascendancy of the coastal De and Vai in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Temne and Mende in the seventeenth century, the Mandingo-dominated confederacy of Kondo at Bopolu in the eighteenth century and, finally, the frontier hegemony of the Gola in the nineteenth century.

The intertribal relations during this early period were characterized by intensive population mixture through marriage, migration, conquest and slavery. The multiplicity of temporary federations reinforced regionally effective institutions such as the Poro secret societies and tended to unite sections of different tribal groups under what were to become historically validated common traditions and alliances. Despite the profusion of languages, and the wide range of types of social organization, there is a high degree of cultural homogeneity and sectional traditions which often supercede local group solidarity and antedate the further integrative effect of colonial and national policy.

The Gola present a dramatic case of a recent frontier people who expanded into the forest regions formerly controlled by De and Vai chiefdoms immediately interior to the northwestern Liberian coast. Scanty but valuable documentation by European observers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries corroborates the abundant oral traditions of this area which places them originally in the mountainous

2. Dalby has proposed that the term 'West Atlantic' be dropped from scientific discussion of the languages of this region except when referring to earlier classifications. Insofar as the unity of the so-called "West Atlantic" languages has not been satisfactorily established, he gives the name of "Mel" to a southern grouping of these languages where a close relationship can be demonstrated. This grouping includes, among others, Temne, Bullom, Kisi and Gola. See David Dalby, "The Mel Languages: A Reclassification of the Southern 'West Atlantic'," African Language Studies, VI (1965), 1-17.

Kongba region of the upper Lofa River in northeastern Liberia, a region which is now known as Kongba Chiefdom and to which all northern and southern Gola chiefdoms trace their origin. The Gola attribute their earliest coastward migrations to a desire to procure salt from sources along the coast maintained by Vai and De chiefdoms. By settling in the immediate interior and intermarrying with these peoples, they were able to establish a few ancient towns which supplied salt, fish, game and ivory to their more interior neighbors. Later and larger migrations toward the coast are attributed to the intensification of warfare among interior tribes, which caused thousands of refugees to flee into the forest to join those who had established frontier villages.

These movements, according to legend, occurred prior to the earliest settlements in Sierra Leone and were related to intensive slaving in the interior. The Gola speak of themselves as having been vulnerable to conquest and slave raids in the distant past, but say that by migration and the establishment of powerful new frontier chiefdoms, they reversed this process, becoming themselves the greatest and wealthiest slave traders of the western region. In the latter part of the seventeenth century they are mentioned by Dapper as a relatively unimportant group interior to the Vai at Cape Mount, though they are also stated to be, intriguingly enough, the custodians of Sande secret ritual, sending their sacred officials to administer Vai rites.³ But by the early nineteenth century they had become the most powerful obstacle to Mandingo contact with coastal trading centers and a major problem for the new Liberian colony in its attempts to develop legitimate trade with the eastern interior. By this time, the principal new Gola chiefdoms of the frontier had been established between the Mano and the St. Paul Rivers, cutting through and controlling the major routes of communication from the coast to the prosperous markets of the Mande-speaking peoples of the north and east.

The most centralized of the late confederacies in northwestern Liberia was that of Kondo at Bopolu established by Mandingo warlords in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In this period, Bopolu was the westernmost outpost of Mandingo control of the trade between coastal ports and the peripheral caravan routes through such centers as Bamako, Tangrela and old Musadu. Under the leadership of a famous warchief, Sau Bosu, numerous chiefdoms of the Bandi, Loma, Kpele, Vai, De and Gola peoples were incorporated into a strongly centralized enclave which controlled the slave traffic between the St. Paul and Mano rivers. It was this confederacy, with its mercenary armies, and administrative and marketing center at Bopolu, which became the focus of a struggle for power among chiefdoms of the region during the early period of Liberian colonization. The larger Gola chiefdoms, together with those of the coastal De and Vai, had maintained a favorable position as middlemen in the trade between European merchants and the markets of the interior. This situation had reached a critical stage of development when the colonists arrived in the early 1820's.

3. Olfert Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1686).

The decline of the European slave trade after the turn of the 19th century was attributed by Gola chieftains only in part to the American settlers, whose anti-slavery sentiments were known before they arrived from Sherbro in Sierra Leone. Gola historical tradition places primary responsibility on the supposed machinations of the Mandingo chieftains at Bopolu who were believed to be plotting ways to circumvent costly right-of-way exactions imposed by intervening chiefdoms. Old suspicions and rivalries were awakened and, in the first fifteen years of Liberian colonization, the Gola instigated hostilities directed not so much against the new colony as against the threat of direct commerce between the colonists and the interior Mandingo. The most powerful of the Gola chiefdoms made war upon any and all suspected of yielding to pressure from Bopolu, and particularly those small Basa and De chiefdoms along the St. Paul River which were the first to weaken and turn to the Liberian colony for support.

By 1845, Gola chiefs had succeeded in wresting control of Bopolu from the Mandingo leaders, and this center was soon entirely dominated by surrounding Gola chiefdoms of the older confederacy.⁴ But this was not a simple conquest by war. It was achieved by an effective Gola disruption of all trade with the Liberian colony and the economic isolation of Bopolu. The diplomatic and incorporative function of woman-exchange also contributed to Gola dominance in that Gola women from important lineages had become leading wives of many of the more powerful Mandingo headmen. With the rising power of Gola chiefdoms, leadership at Bopolu began to shift to the descendants of the Mandingo chiefs through Gola wives and later rulers of Bopolu were selected from among candidates on the basis of their affiliation with influential Gola ruling houses. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century it was the unstable and declining remnants of this confederacy that presented the most serious restriction to Liberian national jurisdiction in the western interior.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND TRIBALISM

The regional historical setting of Gola chiefdoms is indispensable to an understanding of the various forms of social organization they represent and the concepts of pan-tribal solidarity which persisted and developed despite alienation and factionalism. Three major factors may be pointed out as particularly significant in the analysis of Gola development in the western interior. The first is the relative recentness of Gola expansion into the lowland forest area between the Mano and St. Paul rivers involving lands already claimed by established chiefdoms of the Vai and De. Though some of the northwestern Gola chiefdoms of the Pokpa, Tewo and Kone

4. See the following section of this paper entitled "Accommodations to Nationalism" for discussion of this period and some relevant sources.

sections, behind Gallinas and Cape Mount, were apparently formed as early as the seventeenth century, the southwestern newer chiefdoms from the Lofa to the St. Paul rivers were not established until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They were, in fact, still in the process of consolidating their territories through warfare and sectional alliances when the first colonists appeared on the coast in the 1820's.

A second factor was the extreme competition for control of land and the formation of viable population units. Land was essential not only for agriculture, but came to possess a strategic importance with regard to routes of commerce between the coast and the interior. During the height of the slave trade, land itself was not always so important as the size of the population which a unit controlled. Chiefdoms which actually comprised very small territories might exert great power and influence because of their ability to engage in effective warfare and defense. Many of the Gola chiefdoms near the coast were very minute in territory, but because of their relatively large and politically centralized populations they were able to produce sizeable armies, make extensive alliances, and control commerce.

The histories of all the new Gola chiefdoms begin with a tale of small bands of migrants seeking patronage from Vai, De, or other tribal chiefdoms upon whose interior lands they sought to settle. These arrangements were always validated by exchange of women, gifts from the soliciting group, and pacts of clientship and mutual cooperation. But as it is said of the Gola by their neighbors, they never actually assimilated into patron groups but, rather, maintained their own traditions, increased in population, and eventually usurped the lands of their hosts. This is often expressed in the view that Gola women given in marriage to men of other tribes nevertheless "follow their fathers" and bring their children up as Gola. These children eventually reaffiliate with their Gola patrikin and a chiefdom thus may be infiltrated and slowly come under Gola control. This process took place on the periphery of De, Vai, and Kpele territories, and also in the heart of the old Mandingo confederacy at Bopolu. The prime mechanism of Gola competition in this period was one of preliminary attachment through patronage followed by progressive incorporation by means of continued infiltration and cultural persistence.

The concept of inalienable "Golaness" is explicit in Gola culture. It is thought that any degree of Gola blood is sufficient to cause a person to yearn to be a Gola even though he may have been stolen away as an infant and never told of his past. The greatest contempt for surrounding peoples is directed against those who willingly sold their own people into slavery or allowed their intermarried or pawned children to identify with the culture of another tribe. Their high regard, as well as antagonism, for the Vai and Mandingo is in part attributable to the former orientation of these groups involving notions of cultural solidarity and superiority expressed in high bridewealth requirements for their women, discouragement of intermarriage, and extreme proprietorship with regard to children. This ambivalent respect was also later directed to the Liberian colonists for their more extreme observance of cultural discrimination and insulation.

At the same time, Gola contempt for Kpele culture is largely attributed to the ease with which masses of Kpele slaves were acquired by Gola chiefdoms, the willingness of Kpele men to affiliate with the families of their Gola wives, and the total assimilation of Kpele women and their children by the culture of their Gola husbands. It is said that when a Gola places a woman of the family into the house of a patron, or gives a child out to service, this is done for the good of the family, but that the temporary removal of the individual is never considered to be alienation from Gola culture or family of origin, merely an extension of it. "The child who forgets his beginnings," goes the proverb, "destroys his ancestors".

A third factor conditioning Gola tribal development was the change that took place in basic institutions to accommodate the requirements of viability in the complex regional and historical setting. Gola tradition concerning the social organization of the idealized past appeals to legend and myth which describe the homeland section of Kongba as comprising a number of small chiefdoms, each of which was founded by "brothers" who were "sons" of a Gola ancestor from the east who had founded the first ancient Gola town in the Liberian interior known in legend as Mana Bla.⁵ The chiefdoms were closely associated by marriages between their important families, always with an eye to maintaining the strength of the tribal-wide lineage concept relating the core lineage of each chiefdom to the autochthonous ancestors of legendary Mana Bla. A further unifying institution was that of the male and female secret societies--Poró (Bón), and Sande--which maintained the sacred traditions of origin and provided a basis for pan-tribal brotherhood.⁶ It is said that Poró regulations made warfare among these early Gola chiefdoms impossible, and that all forms of assimilation of non-Gola into these Gola groups was discouraged.

This ideal concept of social order still permeates Gola culture and is appealed to in discussions of proper arrangements, particularly where matters of ritual are involved. And, in fact, remnants of segmentary societies of a relatively conservative kind are to be found today in the more remote Gola sections of the

5. From a version of Gola origin given by elders in the village of Zui, Kongba Chiefdom. "Mana Bla" translates essentially as "Ancient Mana" in that the word bla is used to indicate either "deserted," "gone to bush," or "broken down".

6. "Poró" is a general term which has been used as an inclusive reference to a unique type of compulsory fraternal association found among a number of tribes clustered together in southern Sierra Leone and northwestern Liberia. Each tribal group has its own local name for the organization, but recognizes and occasionally employs the general term. Among the Gola, "Bón" or "Bón" is the local term, though the variant form "Gbon" is sometimes offered. The term "Sande" for the female ritual association has a wider distribution among these tribes, though other terms such as "Bunde" (Mende) are used. For discussion of the distribution of these associations see W. L. d'Azevedo, "Some Historical Problems in the Delineation of a Central West Atlantic Region," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 96 (1962), 512-538.

interior where the ranked lineage system provides the model for chiefdom organization. This tradition is still reflected in the layout of central towns and their satellite villages in these areas.

But it is in the region of rapid and recent Gola expansion that a profound transformation of social organization into a variety of adaptive forms seems to have taken place. The period of intensive warfare, dispersion westward, and the creation of new competitive societies produced a rapid transition from kin-based units to village or community-based units. Segmentary kinship organization gave way to a semi-bureaucratic administrative apparatus directed by war chiefs and councils of clients usurping the functions of the traditional custodians of chiefdom authority and the councils of lineage elders.⁷

In the early nineteenth century, Gola chiefdoms were in a state of almost continual war among themselves or with chiefdoms of other tribes. Groups of chiefdoms frequently were united in either offensive or defensive alliances, most of which were short lived. But a few of these confederacies were relatively stable or recurrent. A degree of centralization was often achieved which produced lasting effects upon the social relations of people throughout a number of clustered chiefdoms comprising a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous population. Certain of today's large hinterland towns were once important administrative and trade centers for federated chiefdoms which may have declined in power a century or more ago. Many of these urban centers became focal points of Liberian Government authority in the twentieth century.

Of all the changes which took place in Gola society during the period of expansion, none is so dramatic as that which transformed the Gola Poro into a new pan-tribal and inter-tribal institution of diplomacy and solidarity as an adaptive response to the chaotic frontier. It is this institution which may account, more than any other, for the remarkable phenomenon of Gola hegemony and tribal consciousness which survived throughout the period of dispersion and growth of population, and which continues in the present day to exert a powerful influence on political life.

As pointed out above, Gola tradition defines both the Poro and Sande organizations in ancient times as highly localized institutions concerned with the preservation of ritual, socialization of youth, and maintenance of inter-chiefdom solidarity. Sande organization was and is limited in jurisdiction to the women of individual chiefdoms and draws its officials from the core lineages of these entities. Its major functions revolve around ancestor and nature-spirit propitiation, socialization of women, and the regulation of marriage and sexual behavior. Poro, on the other hand, aside from its important function in the socialization of males, is described by tradition as having a crucial political role in the relations between chiefdoms. This role involved the validation of citizenship beyond chiefdom boundaries or close kin groups,

7. Cf. W. L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures Among the Gola of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist*, 64 (1962), 504-520.

and mechanisms for resolution of conflict. It is to Poro that tradition credits the supposed absence of warfare between the ancient Gola chiefdoms of the Kongba homeland. Each chiefdom had a Dazo who had presided over local Poro activities. He was a sacred personage selected from a particular core lineage segment which controlled this title. Along with the head of the Sande society - the Mazo - the Dazo represented the consolidation of all ritual power and its custodianship in the ruling patrilineages of a chiefdom. But Dazos⁸ had an additional function involving inter-chiefdom councils of their colleagues and chiefs which regulated relationships among chiefdoms and with neighboring peoples.

During the period of Gola expansion, the unitary structure of legendary Kongba society is said to have responded to new requirements. Emigration of large numbers of the Kongba Gola into new territories near the coast, and the emergence of new powerful chiefdoms, took place in so brief a time that the initial tendency was to seek ritual and organizational guidance from the homeland. When Poro groves were formed in the new chiefdoms, Dazos were called from Kongba to preside over the ceremonies of initiation. The problem of administering the Poro groves of far-flung chiefdoms was resolved by the appointment of new Dazos in the Senje and Goje sections west of Kongba who made periodic tours of duty into the new chiefdoms. These officials carry ancient titles passed down from Kongba and are considered to be lineal descendants of the Dazos of the legendary chiefdoms. Today, there are seven Dazos whose ritual centers are in the oldest Gola sections of Kongba, Goje, Senje, Kone, and Pokpa. Two of these sacred officials are charged with the administration of the Poro groves of the new chiefdoms south of the Lofa which they tour twice in an approximately ten-year period during the cycle of alternating Poro and Sande activities.

Gola Poro accommodated to the political complexity of the frontier region - and to the era of extensive warfare among emerging Gola chiefdoms of a new type - by maintaining a degree of political neutrality and providing an instrument of secret diplomacy. Poro officials often entered battles on the side of their own chiefdoms, and Poro organizations were frequently enlisted in support of particular political rulers. But legends of Gola wars indicate that pan-tribal training in obedience to Poro codes was more frequently utilized to resolve hostilities before or even after they had occurred. A Poro official in his vestments was relatively immune from harm even in the most hostile enemy camp and could move freely between chiefdoms. Secret agreements among Poro officials of warring chiefdoms could result in the sudden cessation of hostilities in the midst of battle. For, though all formal secret society activities were suspended in times of war, a Dazo could reconvene Poro through ritual signs that were common to all Gola men regardless of local political allegiance. The issues which might or did lead to war were, in this manner, often settled in Poro councils called by the Dazos.

8. The plural forms of these words in Gola are Dazoa and Mazoa. In this paper, however, anglicized forms will be used for convenience.

A particularly significant feature of Gola Poro development was its accommodation to intertribal relations. Both the De and the Vai attribute their own Poro organizations to the influence of the Gola. Vai tradition assigns the adoption of Poro to the period of their earliest migrations from the Guinea highlands to the coast during which they lived in close association with the Gola. De Poro tradition is more recent and reveals a syncretism of non-Poro secret society organization, similar to that of the Basa and Kru peoples, with that of the Gola. The expression of this historical situation appears in the sharing of Poro titles and degrees between the Gola and the De in the chiefdoms between the Lofa and the St. Paul rivers. The De do not have Dazos, but a presiding official of all sacred matters known as Kpopla Kan. The complementary official in each of the new southern Gola chiefdoms is known as Kanda Jia, a local Poro title which does not occur in the older conservative Gola chiefdoms to the north. The Gola identify these officials as derived from their early relations with the De.

But it is the Gola Dazos, sent from the old chiefdoms of the interior, who announce the commencement of Poro and Sande activities and who supercede the Kanda Jia in authority over Poro matters. Furthermore, De Poro traditionally awaits the ritual sign from the Gola Dazo when he has completed his tour of nearby Gola chiefdoms before initiating its own periodic activities. But the Gola Dazo does not enter De territory or preside in any of its functions. The Gola Kanda Jia, however, receive their "degrees" from De Poro as well as from Gola and constitute a body of officials with intertribal jurisdiction and authority.

The old frontier area of Gola expansion into the former Kpele territory south of the St. Paul river was known as "Ding Gola" (from the Gola word, *den*, for the St. Paul river) during the nineteenth century. But with the general decline of Gola fortunes in the early twentieth century, much of this area reverted to Kpele domination and is now known as Fuama Chiefdom. The portion held by Gola chiefs until very recently was known as Todi Chiefdom. In this section, which represents the only extension of the Gola south of the St. Paul river, Gola Dazos do not appear to direct Poro grove activities, though it is said that they did so in the period of Gola domination early in the last century. Kpele Poro officials now maintain jurisdiction throughout the area and, as a consequence, many Gola families send their sons to Poro groves in chiefdoms north of the river. A similar situation also obtains for those Gola far to the north who moved in among the Mende of Sierra Leone. They are under jurisdiction of Mende Poro, though many of them send their sons to groves in the old northern Gola chiefdoms of Liberia for training. Thus, the distribution of Gola Poro groves under the jurisdiction of the system of Dazo officials provides an accurate indicator of the actual extent of Gola expansion and the tribal territory which may be considered to be under the effective control of Gola dominated chiefdoms.

These historical and structural features of societies of the region are as meaningful for the understanding of the past as they are for present developments in western Liberia. The emergence of new alliances and administrative divisions under Liberian national policy has been profoundly affected by these conditions.

ACCOMMODATIONS TO NATIONALISM

When the first colonists arrived at Mesurado in the second decade of the 1800's, it is claimed by Gola historians that their coming and their mission had been anticipated by advance word from Vai sources in Sierra Leone and by earlier visits of Colonization Society officials to the coast. Their avowed antagonism to the slave trade and desire to establish a permanent settlement had, according to historical narrative, already been a subject of discussion in tribal and intertribal councils. Though documents written by Europeans and colonists report the role of slave traders such as Theodore Canot and Don Pedro Blanco in arousing local resistance to colonization, Gola legend ignores them and focuses attention on the rivalries and politico-economic concerns of the various loose federations of chiefdoms at the time.

Gola elders from the southern chiefdoms, whose ancestors participated in the early negotiations with the colonists, claim that the disagreements which took place between the Vai, De, and Gola leaders with regard to the disposition of a settlement on the Mesurado lagoon were not based so much on a fear of interference with the slave trade, as on competition for control of what appeared to be yet another coastal depot of lucrative commerce. When advance colonial agent Eli Ayers conferred with a "King Peter" in 1821 concerning the use of lands on Bushrod Island, he was told that the colonists could not settle there because it was a Poro bush and great trouble would come to the king if he allowed it to be used by strangers. According to the Gola, "King Long Peter", one of the consulting chiefs, was actually Fã Fula Yenge of Gobla Chiefdom, a powerful De-Gola leader who had wrested control of the slaving station at Digbe from former De chiefs and had provided the first major direct access to the coast for interior Gola chiefdoms. The Poro grove on Bushrod Island (referred to as "Dazoa Island" in early reports)⁹ was a crucial center of De

9. In December, 1821, Captain Robert Stockton and Dr. Eli Ayers signed (on behalf of the American Colonization Society) a contract for land which was also signed by a number of Gola, Vai, De, and Basa chiefs. The contract supposedly invested the agents with powers to "treat with and purchase" from the "Kings, Princes, and Head-men" certain lands which included "Dazoa Island, and also all that portion of land bounded north and west by the Atlantic ocean, and on the south and east by a line drawn in a south-east direction from the north of Mesurado river".

This version of the contract quoted by Huberich from the Fifth Annual Report of the Colonization Society differs slightly, though significantly, from an interpretation given in the Seventh Annual Report of the Society which states that "the land purchased for the American Colonization Society by Lieut. Stockton and Dr. Ayers, was Perseverance Island, and also that portion of land bounded North and West by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the South and East by a line drawn in a South East direction from the mouth of the Montserado". Nevertheless, it appears that the "Dazoa Island" of the first report was actually what later became known as Bushrod Island and where legend indicates that an important De Poro grove was maintained. It is not clear whether the island called "Perseverance" in the Ayers report is the

and Gola Poro activities represented the results of intensive Gola infiltration into the De territory and influence upon De culture. The concern was that the colonists would provide the De and Vai with support for a unilateral trade, accumulation of wealth, and eventual resistance to Gola intrusion. This produced the pressure causing King Peter to recind an earlier agreement to allow the colonists to settle at Mesurado.

A further concern of the Gola chiefs was the threat made by Sau Bosu of Bopolu to clear a path of direct trade with the colonists if the earlier pact was not honored. At this point the Gola were just consolidating their new chiefdoms along the St. Paul River between Bopolu and the coast, and they saw the colony as a danger to their policy of containment of the Mandingo overlords at Bopolu and the effective control of trade routes. It is claimed that the early attacks on the colony were not for the purpose of driving the colonists away so much as preventing them from establishing direct contact with Bopolu through the agency of certain De chieftains who were seeking to resist Gola and Vai dominance. Though Gola chiefs such as Nyola and Fā Fula Yenge signed treaties in 1825 and 1828 which increased the colonists' land-holdings, they continued to harass those De, Kpele, and Mandingo towns between Bopolu and Monrovia which seemed interested in direct commerce between the coast and the interior via routes which the Gola did not control. Thus the attacks were not intended to drive off the settlers, but to maintain the corridor of entrepreneurial advantage between the coast and the interior.

Rare expeditions sent to Sau Bosu by the colonists from 1828 to 1835 reported that Bopolu had been almost totally insulated from the coast by intervening Gola chiefdoms, and that Sau Bosu was pleading for colony arms to make war against the Gola.¹⁰ In 1839 the Gola chiefs under Getumbe began intensive attacks upon colonial settlements along the St. Paul River, and Governor Buchanan reported to the Colonization Society that the entire country north of the St. Paul River was seething

small rise in the Mesurado lagoon now known as Providence Island, or whether it was one of the shifting sandbanks of the southern tip of Bushrod Island. Whatever the interpretation of early reports, there is no doubt that "the Cape", just south of the Mesurado lagoon, was not intended by the chiefs George and Peter of the De to be included in the agreement. It was a sacred shrine of great importance, and confusion over this matter precipitated the first major conflicts between the colonists and the De and Gola chiefs.

See summary of early reports in C. H. Huberich, Political and Legislative History of Liberia (New York, 1947), Vol. 1, 184-196; and in the Seventh Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1824), 79-87, and appended map after page 173.

10. For an account of one such colonial expedition in 1829, and events involving subsequent Gola hostilities, see A. Alexander, A History of the Colonization of the Western Coast of Africa (Philadelphia, 1849), 449, 512, 572, 581, 588.

in wars which had caused whole chiefdoms of De people to flee to Monrovia as refugees. A militia was dispatched against Getumbe, who was defeated, and Liberian history books state that he became a "homeless wanderer". In actuality he remained an influential elder statesman of the Gola groups which had finally gained control of Bopolu. When Benjamin Anderson visited Bopolu in the late 1860's, Getumbe was still living near Suen and was a highly respected advisor and kinsman of Momolu, a descendant of Sau Bosu through Gola women, who had become ruler of the town which now had a flourishing trade with Musadu in the Guinea highlands.¹¹

The significance of these developments is that the Gola are shown to have completed their consolidation of control throughout the northwestern interior of Liberia by the 1840's. Attacks against the colony had ceased, and the Gola are described in reports after this period as a diligent and prosperous people. It was a period of relative prosperity, intensive trade and development of stable agricultural chiefdoms. The slave trade with Europeans and the former frontier economy had given way to an agricultural emphasis based on the use of domestic slaves for farming, small coffee plantations, and harvesting wild forestcrops. In the new Liberian nation, however, the myth still prevailed that Bopolu was the gateway to a potentially fabulous trade with wealthy Mandingo empires of the interior, but that the western province was a dangerous and chaotic area of recalcitrant warring tribes.

Benjamin Anderson's remarkable narrative reinforced the view that the western interior was an obstacle to contact with the wealthy marketing peoples of the highlands, and his later proposal that roads should be built on the southern side of the St. Paul, rather than directly through Bopolu, was reflected in the orientation of all later Liberian commerce with the far northeastern borders. Liberian avoidance of the northwestern interior for almost a century is an intriguing aspect of early national history. The region was recognized as being highly productive, and the rural Liberian towns along the northern side of the St. Paul river flourished in agriculture and trade. These were close to the new Gola chiefdoms of Gobla, Kpo, and Te usurped by the Gola from previous De and Mandingo chieftains. The route to Bopolu through Suen was a major trading thoroughfare to the interior, but had come completely under Gola influence. The Liberians of Monrovia and nearby settlements enjoyed cooperative relations with the Vai as far north as Cape Mount, and with the subdued and almost decimated De groups clustered closely in their remaining territories near Monrovia. Thus the De and the Vai, as well as the Mandingo, have always been referred to in Liberian tradition as among the most "advanced" and "civilized" of the interior tribes. But the relatively large area of Gola distribution was almost unknown to the colonists, and the Gola were regarded with mixed admiration and distrust because of the earlier difficulties and their continued dominance over the mysterious interior region between the St. Paul and Mano rivers.

11. B. Anderson, Narrative of a Journey to Musardu, the Capital of the Western Mandingoes (New York, 1870).

Aside from Anderson's narrative there is little information concerning this area during the forty or fifty years after the establishment of the republic. There are scattered references to "Gola cattle" (which were actually Mandingo livestock) and abundant produce brought to marketing sites at the St. Paul river crossings, and even references to the "industrious" and "provident" Gola. A few early Christian missions were established on the periphery of Gola territory and relatively friendly relations between the Liberians and Gola seemed to exist in these areas of controlled contact. The Gola refer to this period as the good days of peace and prosperity, and elder informants speak of it as "the days when our grandfathers owned and ruled this whole country". There are indications that Gola families sent some of their youth to missions at this time, and that numerous children were pawned or turned over as wards to Liberian urban and rural patrons. Gola women were "country wives" of many Liberians and even part of polygamous families of certain Liberian farmers among the class of "Congoes" in the rural settlements along the St. Paul river. These arrangements, which will be discussed below, represented a continuity of traditional patterns of accommodation between the Gola and all groups with whom they sought peaceful and advantageous connections.

The Gola consider themselves to have almost totally incorporated remaining De territory in this period and to have been so intermingled as to have absorbed them. Gola Poro is also said to have become dominant in De chiefdoms, and Gola had begun to supplant the De language. In the Cape Mount area inter-chiefdom wars continued between the Vai and Gola up to the turn of the century despite increased Liberian settlement and authority in that area. Old rivalries among chiefs over the remnants of the declining slave trade, and "labor recruitment" by illegal European traders, continued to keep the coastal and interior Vai sections in turmoil. The boundary problems with the British in Sierra Leone also contributed to the unrest. Along the St. Paul river, Gola chieftains were at war with one another, as well as with Mandingo and Kpele chiefs, for control of territories on the southern side of the St. Paul.

Nevertheless, most of the latter half of the nineteenth century seemed to represent an era of slow but insistent Liberian assumption of authority over the coastal Vai and the De-Gola chiefdoms between Monrovia and Bopolu along the St. Paul river. Liberian authority was limited, but the government had apparently gained the respect of chiefdoms of the coastal region. It had assumed the role of arbiter of inter-chiefdom hostilities, the third-party role which was and is so much a part of traditional tribal litigation.

The interpretation, which runs through much of the historical comment about early Liberian development, suggesting a general tribal resentment of the Liberians, and explaining government difficulties with tribal groups in terms of resistance to Liberian intrusion and conquest, does not hold up under examination of events or of the content of oral history. Gola historians seldom interpret hostilities between themselves and surrounding groups - or with the Liberians for that matter - as motivated by a desire to force their removal or destruction. Early Gola relations with their neighbors were entirely opportunistic and incorporative. Individual chiefdoms continually sought enterprising liaisons with any and all groups. Warfare was *always* a function of competition for status and economic advantage between chiefdoms or clusters of chiefdoms. Wars seldom terminated with the total destruction

or absorption of one or the other political unit, but rather in new alliances and balances of power responding to wider regional political and economic processes.

The sparse Gola traditions pertaining to inter-chiefdom relations in the latter part of the nineteenth century stress the development of profitable relations with the colonists on the coast. Trade routes through Gola chiefdoms were heavily travelled and the major towns of these chiefdoms became centers of political power and wealth. Rice cultivation increased, and the Gola adopted sorghum, coffee, and cocoa planting in addition to the traditional palmnut and palm fiber harvesting. The utilization of surplus slaves in agriculture increased the use of lands for subsistence agriculture as well as money-crop plantations throughout the region. With the rapid depletion of forests and game, cattle from the highlands and intensive farming became a more important feature of the economy.

Gola orientation was essentially one of accepting the Liberians as members of a confederacy of much the same type as had characterized regional federations in the region in the past. Any threat to this new-gained hegemony stimulated fresh temporary alliances among chiefdoms to strengthen controls over territory and commerce. Thus, historical traditions reveal hostility to Liberians or to other groups only in connection with those specific periods of conflict where self-determination and tribal power were placed in jeopardy. For example, the De chiefs of the early colonial period are referred to as having attempted to betray their alliances with the Gola involving insulation of the colony from Bopolu, and their rapid decimation and declining power is to this day contemptuously attributed to their failure to cooperate. The Vai are admired for their continued maintenance of strong independent chiefdoms and coastal trading depots throughout the nineteenth century despite Liberian interference. Once the interior situation was relatively stabilized to the advantage of the Gola, accounts of wars with De and Vai chiefdoms tend to be presented as "family matters" involving adjustments in relations between the ruling families interrelated through marriage. Legends of Sau Bosu, the overlord of the old Mandingo confederacy at Bopolu, are heroic. His power and ruthlessness are extolled even in accounts of wars with Gola chiefs. His decline under Gola pressure is also dealt with as a "family matter" and his prestige is incorporated into Gola lineage history which shows him as having been eventually chastized by his elder Gola relatives, and his Gola wives and children. It is only in the traditions of particular Gola chiefdoms, whose political and economic power were destroyed in war, that bitterness and condemnation concerning the enemy appears. Otherwise the specific description of wars and their causes are dominated by the heroic behavior of both sides, and by new alliances, gift exchanges, and intermarriages followed by a period of peaceful cooperation.

This is very much the character of historical narrative concerning early Gola relations with the colonists and the new republic. Alleged Liberian connivances with certain chiefdoms of the Vai and De to circumvent Gola jurisdiction in the interior are righteously condemned, and all early wars between the Gola and the Liberians are seen in this light. But these, too, merge into a general retrospective picture of productive competition with the Liberians, once Gola aspirations in the western interior had been achieved.

Though these attitudes characterize Gola historical accounts of the early period, there was also the recognition that the Liberians represented a quite different kind of society than had been involved in relations among groups in the past. Their slight military and technological advantage, and their centralized government was a new phenomenon in competition. Furthermore, Liberian cultural insularity, based on notions of superiority, created apprehension about the continued application of the traditional forms of alliance and peaceful relations among groups which were basic to tribal relations and development. It is interesting that the Gola describe Liberian unwillingness to intermarry with their great houses in the same terms as they do Mandingo disinclination in this regard. Like the Mandingo, it is claimed, the Liberians did not want their culture, their wealth, or their bloodlines to be influenced by outsiders. Like the Mandingo, the Liberians proclaimed a religion which separated them socially from all who were not members, and which imposed rules of marriage, family structure and social relations quite different than their own. Though these codes had some remote similarity to Poro, the boundaries imposed by these concepts among the Liberians were vastly more inflexible, and the usual modes of group interaction and peaceful accommodation were not possible.

Nevertheless, Liberian national aspirations were well understood, and the idea that a powerful coastal society was coming into existence is not presented as a threat in Gola retrospect, but as a source of highly advantageous political and economic relations within a new confederacy of chiefdoms. Monrovia had replaced the old Bopolu, and the Gola could only profit from the stability brought about by this situation as long as there was no interference with their autonomy in the interior.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Gola, as well as other peoples of the western interior, developed a number of important modes of adjustment to conditions created by the growing Liberian nation. In each instance, these modes were based upon traditional social relations and represented patterns of diplomacy and alliance which had characterized all intergroup relations in the region. But there were important modifications imposed by the special cultural barriers between the Liberians and tribal Africans.

One of these modes of mutual accommodations was the analogy drawn by the Gola of the new southwestern chiefdoms between their own class structure and that of the Liberians. The existence of large numbers of "Congoes", or "recaptured Africans", on the plantations and farms of Liberians in the interior near Monrovia, living under conditions which the Gola compared invidiously with that of their own high status families and with that of the urban ruling Liberians, caused them to equate the laboring Congoes with their own domestic slaves or other low status countrymen. Old Gola people frequently still refer to the rural Congo element as "slaves of the Americans". Wealthy families with numbers of slaves and non-kin dependents encouraged ties with Congo farmers by offering them gifts of low status children and women, and sometimes took Congo children in as wards by exchange. From the Gola point of view these were diplomatic exchanges aimed at forming closer ties with dependent resident "strangers", and were never thought of in the same way as marriages and wardship involving high status persons representing important politico-economic units.

The inclination of prestigious Gola families, however, to validate cooperative relations with upper-status Liberian peoples was frustrated by the latter's attitude of cultural superiority with regard to the tribesmen. Important women of the family were offered to Liberian males, and children of the lineage were eagerly placed in Monrovia homes. But the elders of leading Gola families recount the sense of diminished dignity and pride which their ancestors experienced when discovering that their children were treated as domestic slaves in the household rather than members of the family, and that Liberians did not exchange their own children or women in order to complete the anticipated intergroup bonds. Eventually the system of "country wives" and one-directional wardship was accepted as the form which such relations would take. But the feeling that fundamental problems of mutual status were involved, and that Gola ruling families were being denigrated by such arrangements, has never been dispelled.

During the first half-century of Liberian development, these relationships were producing an intricate network of latent commitments and obligations between various levels of Liberian and tribal culture. Thousands of Gola members of interior chiefdoms carry the names of Liberian families who raised them or who patronized one of their ancestors, while many others carry names of the Liberian patron of a female ancestress who passed his name on to certain favored children of his "country wife". Still other European names were taken from missionaries in whose care some leading Gola families placed certain of their children for training.

An irony of the later period, after the turn of the century, was that many of the children of low status Gola families who had been given over to the rural Congo population had received educations at the missions which were concentrated in the outlying areas around Monrovia. These children became part of an intermediate urban lower class in Liberian society who were often given clerical and supervisory positions because of their learning, while the children of important tribal families tended to return to their villages or to be recalled by their families before their education was complete. As a result, the Gola were often forced to seek the services of former low status persons of their own society in order to gain access to favors of officials. The situation became further complicated as many Congo families rose in wealth and prominence in Liberian urban society, and as recognized "civilized" marriages increased between them and the elite Liberian settler class. Thus, the descendants of many of the Gola wards and "given" women who had been placed with Congo families were passing through the caste boundaries between tribal and elite Liberian society.

The flexibility of the kinship system, which had adapted to the vast structural changes of the new frontier chiefdoms, was brought to bear under these conditions by either fictionalizing the descent of persons who had provided useful links with Liberian society, or by binding their tribal descendants in marriages with a Gola patrilineage through which validation of descent was accomplished and kinship links with a Liberian family could be appealed to. Nevertheless, these were always sub rosa traditions which Liberians were seldom expected to confront except in private negotiations; but they were well known and kept viable among Gola families of the interior who were able to trace connections of the most complicated kind between their families and those of Liberians for generations.

Another mode of mutual accommodation was the strengthening and restructuring of Gola Poro in the new setting of expanded territories and proliferated chiefdoms. Poro was put to new uses in creating a sense of pan-tribal "Golaness" while maintaining intimate interrelations with neighboring peoples. The Gola claim that they are unique among surrounding Poro tribes in having initiated any and all youths, regardless of tribe, and including slave children, into Poro. The claim is based upon their traditionally long period of Poro training which was said to be sufficient to instill profound loyalties and obedience in Poro members, and also to "make a Gola" out of any child who received this training. The explanation is often offered that it was this feature of Gola Poro that accounted for the success of Gola contact with other tribes so often resulting in Gola dominance. It is this feature, they claim, which makes Gola Poro more powerful and so much admired by the De, the Kpele and the Vai. De historians concur in this and state that if it were not for their protected position under the wing of Monrovia, the Gola would have come "like driver ants and eaten us up, not by war, but by their women and their Poro".

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Poro was also utilized to impress and to give honor to Liberian officials. Special degrees were created to bestow on Liberians from whom favors were sought. In some rare cases, actual Poro initiation was given as a means of insuring the support of key Liberians seeking influence in the interior. The Gola and other interior tribesmen were deeply impressed by the public ceremonies of Masonry and the Christian churches in Monrovia. They were convinced, as many are today, that the Masons represented the Liberian equivalent of Poro, and in explaining Poro to Liberians they frequently made the analogy. In return, Liberians often referred to Poro as an "African Masonry" and held it in a degree of awe.

The departmentalization and enlargement of Poro administrative structure described earlier was a consequence of territorial expansion and the requirements of a complex acculturative situation. But a particularly significant feature of this development was the maintenance of Gola Poro administrative centers within the ancient Gola areas north of the Lofa river. Despite early attempts on the part of the new frontier chiefdoms to the southwest to have Dazoship conferred on a local member of one of their ruling lineages, such moves were always successfully resisted by the older interior chiefdoms. In the last decade of the nineteenth century renewed turmoil in the interior caused the southwestern Gola chiefdoms to move, again, toward some autonomy in Poro matters. Though such matters are shrouded in secrecy, indirect references to controversy of this kind appear in narratives concerning the period. Apparently the chiefs of Kongba, Goje, and Senje of the northern Gola united with the Dazos in insisting that the new Gola chiefdoms should be administered by Poro officials from the old Poro centers. This was supported by appeal to the legends concerning Gola origin in the Kongba forests. The new Gola chiefdoms were referred to as unstable and "mixed" and therefore unreliable in Poro matters. The adoption of Vai and De elements in the Poro of certain peripheral Gola chiefdoms was one source of criticism. Irregularities in ritual relations between Poro and Sande were also matters of controversy, as well as the usurpation of Poro prerogative by upstarts and despots.

The tenacity and functional importance of the Poro institution is clearly demonstrated by its adaptive flexibility in response to the complex conditions created by Gola territorial expansion, and the late nineteenth century confrontation with limits to that expansion presented by growing national Liberian domination over the surrounding interior regions. Despite this vigorous adaptability, however, the role of Poro, as an essentially traditionalistic institution oriented to the preservation of ritual authority and a pan-tribal myth of unity through common descent, is reflected in the disinclination of the older conservative chiefdoms of the north to allow the new southern chiefdoms the right to develop independent Poro centers or to confer the title of Dazo.

Though it will be shown below that later events reinforced this sectionalism between north and south, the southern chiefdoms continued to defer to the system of Poro patronage and guidance from the interior. Certain of the southern chiefdoms, which had close affiliation with the De, achieved a degree of Poro independence by elevating the office of the Kanda Jia in each chiefdom so that Poro activities could be maintained during periods of war which might disrupt relations with the custodial Poro sections of the interior. But in times of peace, the Dazos assigned to these chiefdoms always resumed their tours of duty.

The character of these relations has even been incorporated into Poro ritual conducted by the visiting Dazo. In the secret society ceremonies of the traditional chiefdoms of the interior the Dazo enacts the role of the loving protector and ritual brother of the Mazo of the women's Sande society. He is the stern father and teacher of all members of Poro and of all the women of Sande. But when he presides over the transition ceremonies of the distant southern chiefdoms, he becomes the angry admonisher. He berates the assembled Kanda Jia for usurping his prerogatives and insults them for their pretense of Poro authority. Humorous references to them as his "wives" expose their supposedly ambivalent dual role in the affairs of women's Sande as well as Poro. The particular target of ritual humor and hostility, however, is the local Mazo of Sande whom he denounces as an "ungrateful sister" who has divided her loyalty and who plots him harm by means of her magical powers. "Our children that I left in your charge are ignorant and untrained," he tells her before all the citizens of the area, "and now I must come among you again and straighten matters out".

This ritual expression of tribal division and the continued function of Poro as a prime mechanism of cultural integration provides an indispensable key to the understanding of Gola tribalism and sectional realignments after the turn of the twentieth century. The processes of accommodation which characterized Gola adjustment to the hesitant but irreversible pressure of Liberian national aspirations in the nineteenth century have continued to operate as mechanisms of defense of tribal identity and cultural assertiveness into the modern period when Liberian colonial and nationalist goals have been achieved.

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CHIEFDOM AND CLAN MAPS OF WESTERN LIBERIA¹

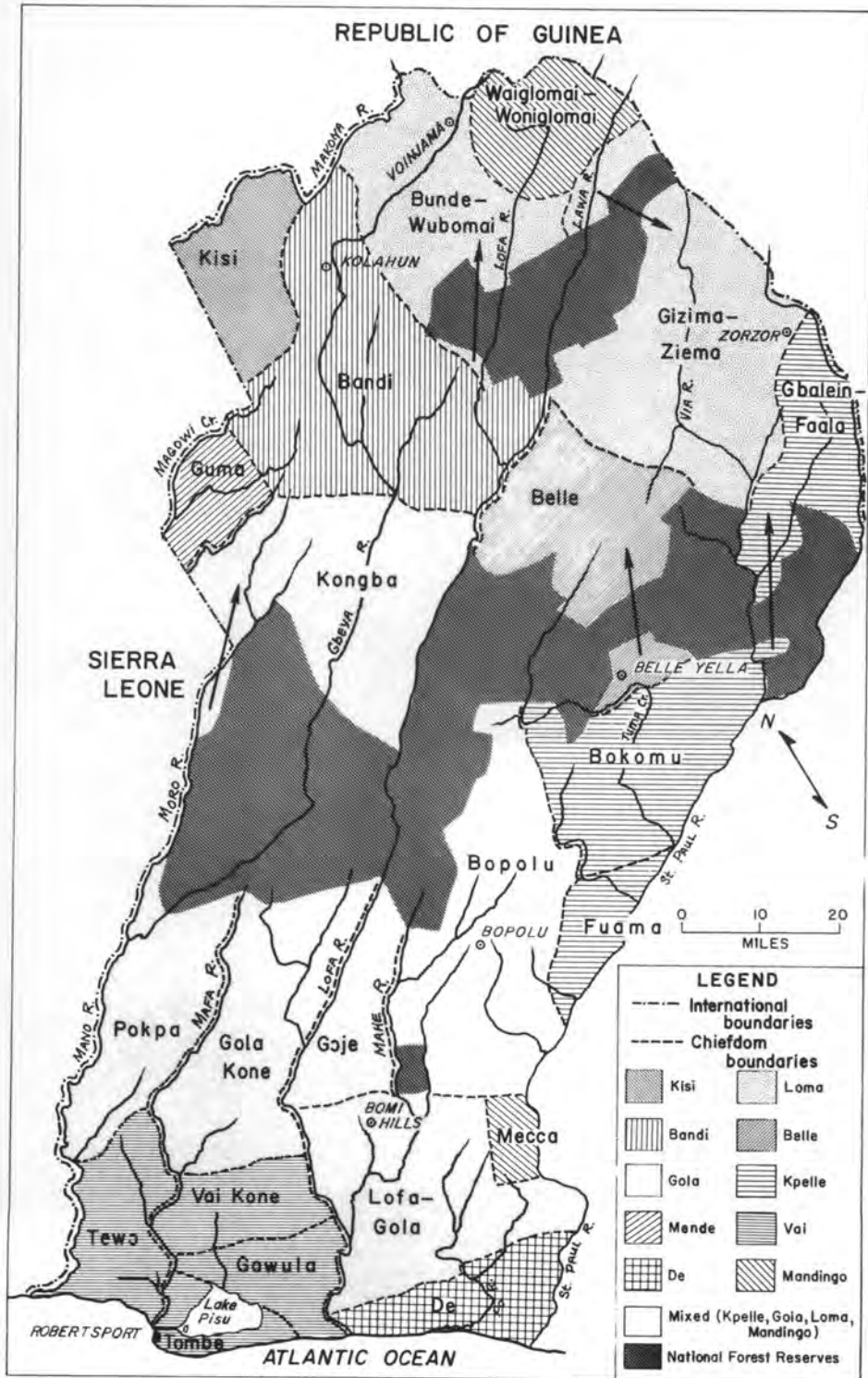
Svend E. Holsoe, Warren L. d'Azevedo, John H. Gay

The maps which are presented here represent the first attempt of which the authors are aware to plot all the chiefdoms and their constituent clans for the western part of Liberia. Because this is preliminary work some cautionary statements must be made about the accompanying maps. There are uncertainties which can be resolved as further research is conducted in this area. The boundaries are not exact both because they have not been surveyed and because they are loosely defined by the clans and chiefdoms themselves. In addition, these maps are not intended to show exact ethnic boundaries. People have moved from one area to another over the years and an area which at one time belonged to one ethnic group now may be claimed by another group.

What is presented represents the cumulative knowledge of many people. The chiefdom boundaries have been worked out with the assistance of Bai T. Moore, Jangaba Johnson, Thomas Brima, John Kellemu, Margaret Miller, Gerald Currens and members of the Order of the Holy Cross to whom the authors are grateful. In addition, use has been made of the maps drawn in 1961 in preparation for the national census.² The clan boundaries are based almost completely upon the census maps. The materials for those maps were collected by several members of the Census Bureau in the field. The boundaries for the Vai, Mecca, Bandi and Guma Mende areas were checked and modified in the field by one of the authors (Holsoe), and the Gola area was corrected by another of the authors (d'Azevedo). Any comments or suggested modifications would be welcomed by the authors for inclusion in a later revised version. Again, it must be stressed that this is not a definitive study and that these maps must be considered as working documents only.

Within the area of Liberia represented by the maps there are, according to present language classifications, speakers of three different language families.

1. Part of the research for this paper was supported by a Foreign Area Fellowship and grants from the American Philosophical Society and the Great Lakes Colleges Association Humanities Fund.
2. We do not have the names of all of the persons who have helped us, and we may have omitted some inadvertently. We will be glad to correct any errors called to our attention.



MAP 1. - CHIEFDOM MAP OF WESTERN LIBERIA

The Mel language speakers are represented by the Gola and Kisi people.³ The Kru speakers include the De and Belle people.⁴ The third family is the Mande-speaking people. Two groups of this family are located in the western area of Liberia. The Vai and Mandingo are classified as a part of the Northern Mande, while the Kpelle, Loma, Bandi and Mende are included in the Southwestern Mande group.⁵ Thus, on the basis on linguistic evidence, there is considerable variation in this relatively small area. However, as d'Azevedo has pointed out⁶ all these peoples seem to belong to one cultural area primarily based on agricultural techniques, subregional confederacies, the slave trade, Poro and direct contact with the interior highlands. This he calls "Central West Atlantic". There are nevertheless cultural variations based on the historical backgrounds of the various peoples which account for an absence of homogeneity.

In order to understand more clearly the ethnic composition of the various chiefdoms, it seems useful to comment on each area individually.

THE VAI CHIEFDOMS

There are today four chiefdoms which are considered Vai, namely, TewO,⁷ Tombe, Gawula and Vai Kone. Ethnically this area is quite mixed.

TewO Chiefdom

The TewO chiefdom is probably the best example of this ethnic diversity. Many of the clans originate among the Gola people to the north and east of the Vai area. The clans which fall into this group are the DaseN, GetawE, and parts of the present-day Sambola clan, namely the former DagO and Golafali areas. The Paalofaama were also Gola but were subordinated to the Kroma people, who emigrated from what is today Sierra Leone as an offshoot from the Mandingo peoples who moved into Sierra Leone at a earlier date. In addition to this group, the Jaleiba,⁸ who most recently

3. David Dalby, "The Mel Languages: A Reclassification of Southern 'West Atlantic'," African Language Studies, VI (1965), 1-17.

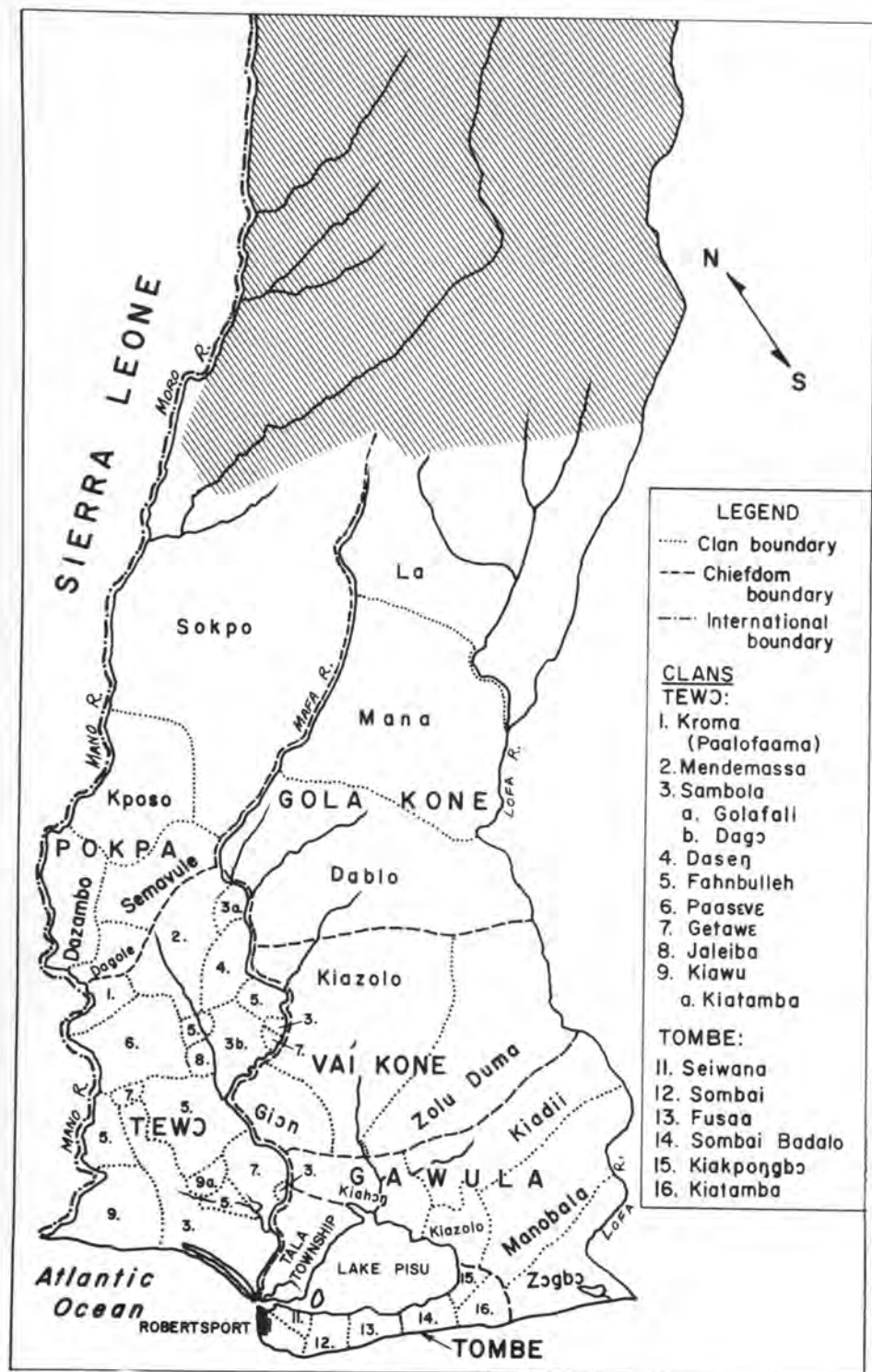
4. D. Westermann, and M. A. Bryan, Handbook of African Languages: Part II. Languages of West Africa (London, 1952), 51.

5. W. Welmers, "The Mande Languages," Georgetown University Monograph Series, No. 11 (1958), 9-23.

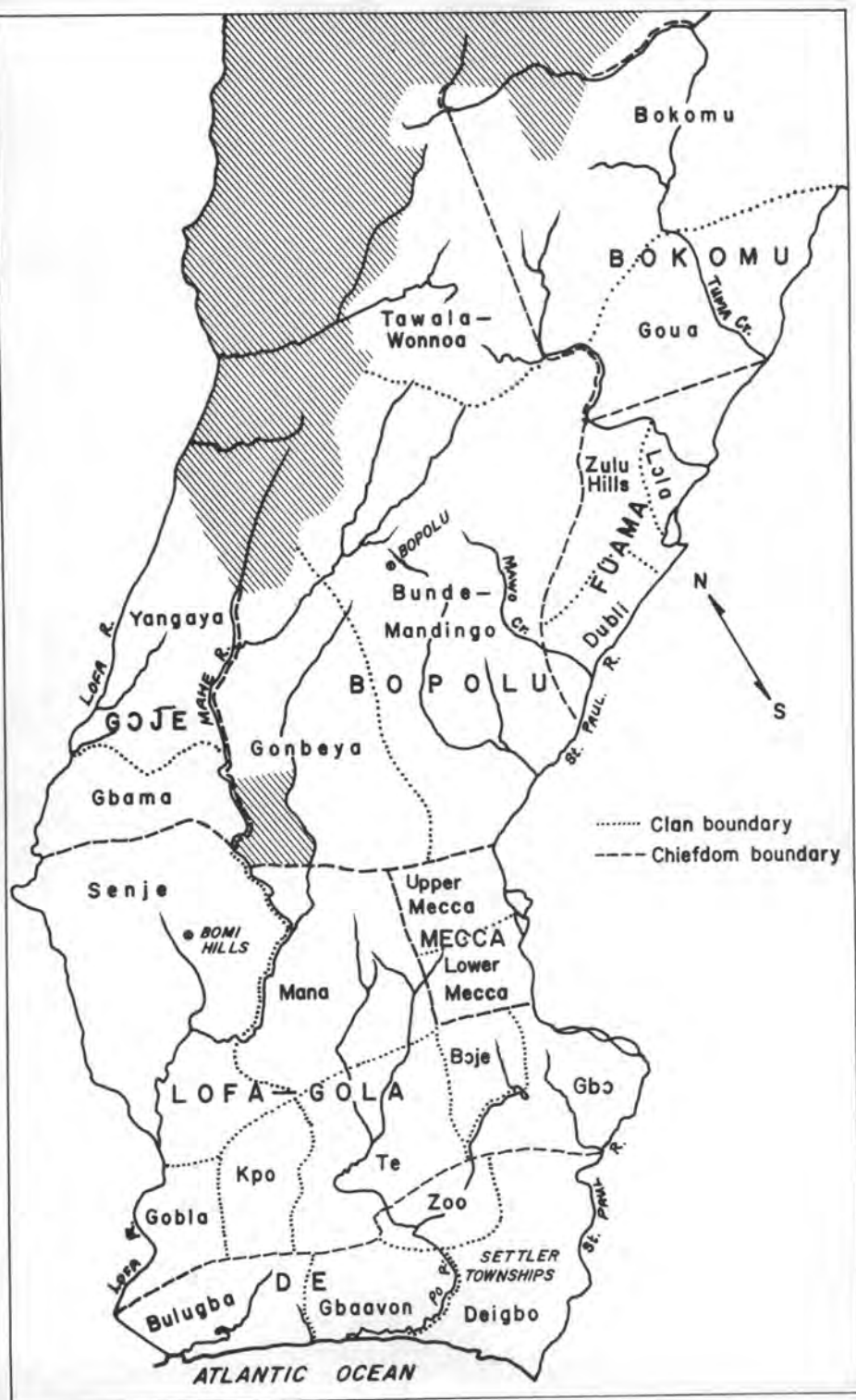
6. W. d'Azevedo, "Some Historical Problems in the Delineation of a Central West Atlantic Region," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 96 (1962), 512-538.

7. The capital letters O, E, and N represent the following phonetic letters, ɔ, ɛ, ɲ.

8. Could this name refer to the name given to the traditional Mandinka griot in the Mende country of Sierra Leone?



MAP II. - CLAN MAP OF THE POKPA, TEWO, GOLA KONE, VAI KONE, GAWULA AND TOMBE CHIEFDOMS



MAP III. - CLAN MAP OF THE DE, LOFA-GOLA, MECCA, BOPOLU, GAJE, FUAMA (PART) AND BOKOMU (PART) CHIEFDOMS

migrated from the KiahON area in the Gawula chiefdom also seem to have their origins from an earlier Mandingo group.

The PaasEvE people trace their origins to the Bandi people to the northeast, specifically, from the town of Mambo which was located near the Lofa river.⁹ The SEvE people, however, seem to have originally been Gola people who acculturated to the Bandi way of life.¹⁰

The Mendemassa people trace their origins from the Gallinas from which they fled in the middle of the nineteenth century in order to escape from slavery. Territory was granted to them by the Fahnbulleh people in an area where they could act as a buffer against attacks from Gola warriors to the north and east.

The Kiawu clan believes it originated among the De people to the southeast, while the Kiatamba, who now form a part of their clan, trace their origins to the town of Bomi in the Tombe chiefdom.

The Sambola people also believe that they migrated from the southeast and prior to that, from the interior. The exact route, however, remains far from clear.

Finally, the largest clan in TewO is the Fahnbulleh¹¹ clan. These people have conflicting histories of their origins. One history states that they came from the northwest, from the Gallinas area in present-day Sierra Leone, and that they were a part of the Vai vanguard that came from the interior to the coast.¹² A stronger argument, however, can be made for the tradition that they came from the town of Mani¹³ in Gawula, and prior to that from the interior in the Gola area.¹⁴ While living there, they may have intermarried with the Gola and absorbed some of their language. This hypothesis is especially supported by the fact that the word Fahn (FaN) seems to be a name given to certain members of the Gola poro.¹⁵ The word

9. BOima Sese Jaleiba, Clan Chief, Jaleiba clan, at Mambo, PaasEvE clan, TewO Chiefdom, March 31, 1966.

10. SEvE Mata, Konehun and Gondolahun, Yawiyasu clan, Bandi chiefdom, July 7, 1968.

11. Phonetically it should be spelled, FaNbulle. Its commonly used spelling is retained here.

12. SimaiEla Fahnbulleh, Town Chief, Dia, Fahnbulleh clan, TewO chiefdom, May 5, 1966.

13. Today this town is a part of the Kiazolo clan.

14. Momo Lami Fahnbulleh, Town Chief, Mani, Kiazolo clan, Gawula chiefdom, February 16, 22, 1966.

15. D. Westermann lists it as "a man's name" in, Die Gola-Sprache in Liberia (Hamburg, 1921), 138.

is found in the names of several of the early nineteenth century leaders of the Vai and Gola area, e.g. FaNtOIO and FaNfOni.¹⁶

In recent times several Mandingo religious men have settled in the TewO area, some of them forming separate towns, such as BandO and Pujehun in the Kiawu clan and Zogboja in the Getawe clan.

Of all the Vai chiefdoms, as will be seen, TewO probably has the most diverse population.

Tombe Chiefdom

This chiefdom, which lies between the Atlantic Ocean and Lake Pisu, consists of five clans, each consisting of one town only. Four of the clans, that is the Seiwana, Sombai, Sombai Badalo and Pussaa, seem to be older than the Kiatamba and KiakpoNgO clans. With the exception of the Kiatamba people who claim to have migrated with the Fahnbulleh people from the interior to the coast, the other clans seem to know little about their origins. Thus, the first four named clans may have been either Gola or Te in their origins. That they are related to the De clans would seem to be the most plausible, particularly if one sees them in conjunction with the ZogbO clan in the Gawula chiefdom which claims De origins.

There has been some movement of peoples from one area to another. Thus there is a sizable segment of the Kiawu people who trace their origins to the clan of that name in TewO. Mandingo people do not seem to have settled in any numbers in this chiefdom.

Gawula Chiefdom

As with the TewO chiefdom, Gawula originally consisted of many more clans than it does today. But under the influence of the Liberian government, amalgamations were encouraged in order to make larger political units. As has already been mentioned, the ZogbO people claim to have De origins. The other four clans in Gawula, the Manoballa, Kiazolo, KiahON and Kiadti all seem to trace their origins to the Gola country.¹⁷ Some of these clans have during past years incorporated

16. It is interesting to note that the name Fahnbulleh seems to have been associated with this area for a considerable time. The name, or what seems to be the same name, appears in several of the seventeenth century accounts of the area. See: S. Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Vai people with a Particular Emphasis on the TewO Chiefdom," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Boston University, 1967), 83-84.

17. The recurrent prefix for many of the clan names, kia- needs elucidation. There are several folk etymologies as to its meaning, but they hardly seem adequate.

large numbers of outsiders, particularly during the slave trading era. Thus, the Kiazolo clan has within it a town on the lower part of the Lofa river, Bomboja, which clearly derives from the Bandi area. Some of the people who settled in the chiefdom were brought as slaves from the interior, while others came as mercenaries to assist the local people in their wars.

The township of Tala was formed during the middle of the last century by the central government as a settlement for recaptured slaves settled in Liberia. A Vai clan called Kiandoli was included within the township boundaries and as a consequence the clan lost its tribal status to this new political entity.

Vai Kone Chiefdom

This chiefdom has been separated administratively only in recent years from what today is called the Gola Kone chiefdom due to the different ethnic affiliations which the two groups declared. In the past the two chiefdoms formed one political unit.

The Kiazolo clan of this chiefdom has clear ties with the clan of the same name in Gawula, and it would seem that the Vai Kone section was the area where these people originally settled. The Zolu Duma clan takes its name from a famous leader of the early nineteenth century who held under his political control most of the territory which today is included in the Tombe, Gawula and two Kone chiefdoms. This clan, as well as the GiOn clan seems to originate among the Gola people.

One might ask, in light of the detailed origins of the various so-called Vai clans, who are the Vai? The answer to this question is far from clear. It would seem, if the hypotheses are correct, that the original Vai immigrants settled in the Gallinas area on the coast of what is today Sierra Leone. They had a hierarchical political structure, advanced military techniques, and an economy based on agriculture, thereby making them culturally superior in relation to the original De and Gola inhabitants of the area who were largely hunting and gathering peoples. Thus, their cultural influence spread, and other groups identified themselves with the Vai. Even today, there is a strong tendency, particularly among the De people to the south and east of the Vai country, to claim to be Vai.

That the Vai area is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in western Liberia is due also to the fact that the Vai were very important slave traders with the consequence that large numbers of different peoples were imported into the area from the interior.

THE DE CHIEFDOM

The De people at one time lived in an area of western Liberia stretching from the Mano river to Bopolu in the east and as far south as Cape Mesurado. In time, however, as they were faced by outside pressures they more readily acculturated than any group in this region to other ethnic and linguistic groups. The area which today consists of settler townships was originally De. During the last century, as the settlers spread outward from the original settlement at Cape Mesurado, much of De country came under direct settler control. Thus, today two former clans, Gbaavon and Deigbo, no longer have their tribal status, having lost it to the political control of the settler townships. In addition, during the same period, Gola expansion on their northern and western frontiers, brought about a considerable intercourse between De and Gola culture. Moreover, since the De were few in numbers and since their territory lay between the larger interior tribes and the coast where European trade goods were available, they were quickly overrun. Finally, during the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century, large numbers of Mandingo traders and Moslem 'ulama settled in the De area. Thus today with only a few exceptions, most of the De area is very mixed ethnically and linguistically.

THE GOLA CHIEFDOMS

Lofa-Gola, GOje, Gola Kone, Pokpa and Kongba Chiefdoms

Geographically, the Gola people occupy the largest area of the western part of Liberia, even though large portions of the Gola area remain uninhabited virgin forest. In addition, there is a small group of Gola people, at one time far more numerous, south of the St. Paul river in the Todi and DeN areas, and there were also Gola chiefdoms at one time north of the Mano river in what is today Sierra Leone. The population has been estimated at 75,000.¹⁸

From traditional histories, the Gola people believe that they originated in the Kongba area, a part of which is included today in the Kongba chiefdom. From this territory they spread south and westward into the areas which they presently occupy.

The Gola form one of the oldest groups in the area, related linguistically to the Kisi, Krim, Bulom and Sherbro in Sierra Leone, as part of the Mel language group.¹⁹ They were apparently a sparsely distributed group of hunting and gathering people who moved through the forest of this region. With the invasion, first of the Vai people and later of the Mende, Bandi, Loma and Kpelle, much of the area which once was considered Gola became acculturated to the new groups.

18. W. d'Azevedo, "Continuity and Integration in Gola Society," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Northwestern University, 1962), 1.

19. Dalby, "The Mel Languages," 1-17.

However, the Gola have in turn also clearly affected many of these peoples. The cultural history of this area has been highly complex over the past 200-300 years with one or another culture dominating at different periods.

Today this process continues. Mention has been made of the effects of Vai culture on the Gola. Likewise, Mende culture and language, particularly in the Pokpa chiefdom, is making increasing headway. Such apparently has been the fate of the Gola in Sierra Leone, who today can only with difficulty be differentiated from the culturally more influential Mende.

MECCA CHIEFDOM

As in other parts of this western area of Liberia, the Mandingo people have penetrated and settled in Mecca chiefdom. Their influence has been particularly strong in the southern section of the Lofa-Gola chiefdom, though they have not had the same success in converting people to Islam as they have had, for instance, in the Vai area. In the latter chiefdoms nearly all the people profess to be Moslem.

Political recognition of this Mandingo penetration came in the 1920's under the presidency of C. D. B. King, when the Mandingo people were granted the privilege of forming their own chiefdom. The area selected was largely forest, though claimed by the old Gola chiefdoms of Te, Mana and GbO. Through the 1930's, under Edwin Barclay's administration, a series of disputes arose between the Mandingo and Gola peoples. Not until W. V. S. Tubman became president, was it possible to secure an agreement between the two contending parties. A boundary was finally decided upon and surveyed. Through these means the Mecca chiefdom was created.

Most of the Mandingo people who had been widely scattered in the Gola and De areas, as well as having been settled in the vicinity of the town of Bopolu, were encouraged to move to the new chiefdom. Today this chiefdom still reflects its origins. Most of the patrilineages stem from Mandingo ancestors, although most of the maternal lineages can be traced to Gola or Kpelle ancestors. In fact, most of the men no longer speak the Mandingo language. Instead Kpelle has become the lingua franca, though it is a special dialect and can be differentiated from Kakata or Jokwele Kpelle.

BOPOLU CHIEFDOM

The Bopolu chiefdom is similar to the Vai chiefdoms in that it reflects great ethnic diversity, largely due to trade patterns of the past century. During the nineteenth century the town of Bopolu was the major trading center for the whole of western Liberia. According to tradition, a settlement near the present site of the town was established by a De hunter. In time, however, with increasing trade and continued harassment by the De, people from the Loma and Bandi areas, along with Mandingo religious advisors, settled in the area, which was surrounded by Gola

peoples. Even today the Gonbeya clan in the Bopolu chiefdom clearly remains Gola culturally and linguistically.

To the north and east, influence of Kpelle speakers has had a strong effect. Thus the Tawala-Wonnoa clan has clear cultural ties with the people from the Bokomu chiefdom. Kpelle influence has been particularly significant linguistically. As a consequence, the lingua franca for the Bopolu chiefdom, with all its internal cultural and linguistic diversity, is a Kpelle dialect similar to that spoken in the Mecca chiefdom.

Culturally, the chiefdom remains quite diverse. The Gonbeya clan is still clearly part of the larger Gola culture area, while in the Bunde-Mandingo clan there is a cultural blending between the Loma-Bandi peoples and the Mandingo similar to that which occurred in their original home areas. Islam is practiced by many, but its observance is not universal.

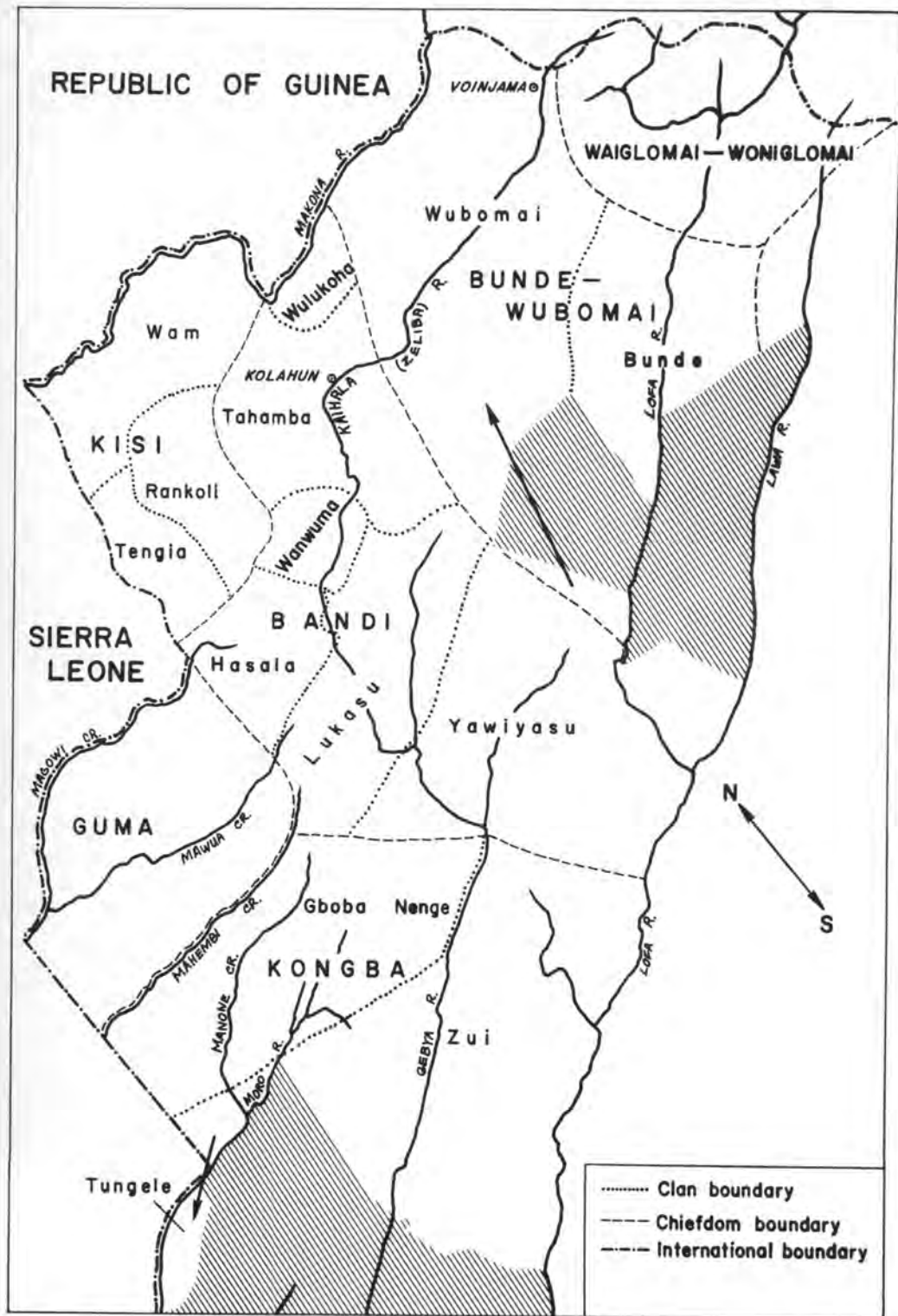
THE KPELLE CHIEFDOMS

Fuama, Bokomu and Gbalein-Faala Chiefdoms

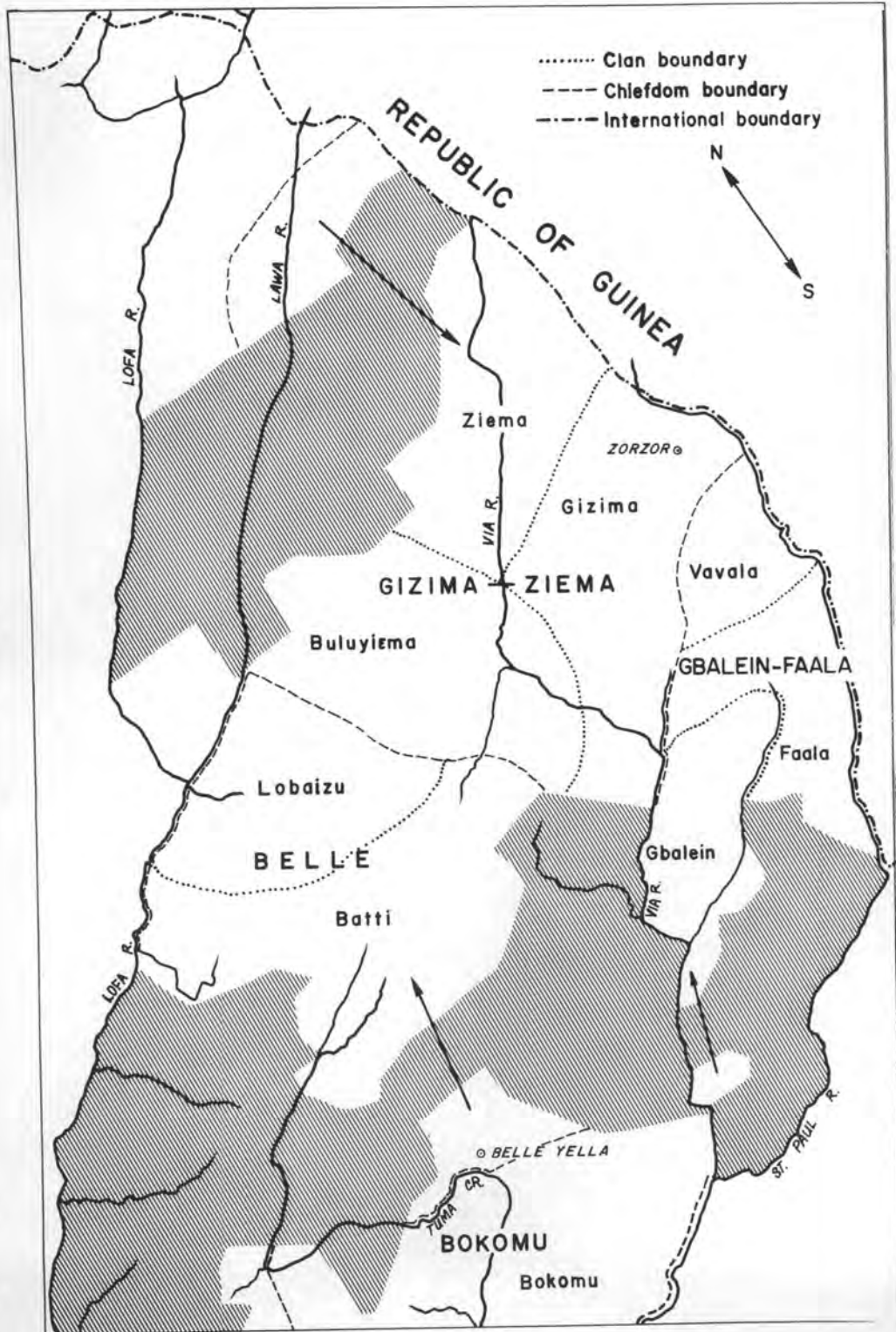
These chiefdoms culturally and linguistically form a part of Kpelle-land, the greater portion of which is in the area between the St. Paul and St. John rivers. In fact, most of the Fuama chiefdom itself lies south of the St. Paul river.

The peoples of the Fuama and Bokomu chiefdoms are in some ways more sharply divided culturally and linguistically from the Bopolu and Gola chiefdoms, than the Kpelle people of the Gbalein-Faala chiefdom from the Loma people of the Gizima-Ziema chiefdom. Culturally, the Loma people are much closer to the Kpelle than are any one of the other groups. However, all of these boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, as has been seen to be the case for portions of the Bopolu chiefdom. In fact, historical evidence indicates that the Fuama chiefdom was originally a Gola area and continued to be through the first decade or two of the present century. Thus, cultural boundaries have not remained static.

Dialects of Kpelle spoken north of the St. Paul River are akin to those spoken in the principal Kpelle territory to the south, as described in the article on central Liberia given elsewhere in this issue. The dialect of Kpelle spoken in the Mecca and Bopolu chiefdoms is also spoken in some villages between these chiefdoms and the St. Paul River. Kakata Kpelle is spoken in the area adjacent to the St. Paul River near Dubli Island. Totota Kpelle is the dialect of a large area below Belle Yella. Vavala Kpelle is spoken in the triangle east of the Via River and north of the St. Paul River.



MAP IV. - CLAN MAP OF THE KISI, BANDI, BUNDE-WUBOMAI, WAIGLOMAI-WONIGLOMAI, GUMA AND KONGBA CHIEFDOMS



MAP V. - CLAN MAP OF THE GIZIMA-ZIEMA, GBALAIN FAALA, BELLE AND BOKOMU (PART) CHIEFDOMS

BELLE CHIEFDOM

The Belle people are surrounded by peoples who apparently have cultures quite different from their own. Tradition states that the Belle are related to the Kru-speaking peoples,²⁰ though there is some evidence that linguistically they may have some relationship with the Mel-speakers such as the Gola and Kisi.²¹ The hypothesis of Kru origin makes historical sense, as is known from traditions that there were De-speakers as close to present-day Belle country as Bopolu. In addition, prior to the invasion of the Mande-speaking peoples in the sixteenth century, Kru and Mel speakers must have been widely dispersed throughout the whole forest region thus permitting limited amounts of cultural contact between these two linguistic groups, which as Dalby speculates, may not in fact actually be so clearly differentiated as has been heretofore claimed.

In any case the Belle are fast losing their cultural distinctiveness. As will be seen in another article which appears in this issue of the Journal, the Belle have been strongly influenced by their neighbors. Culturally they are becoming amalgamated particularly toward the Kpelle-Loma-Bandi-Mende cultures and as a consequence, the Belle language also is disappearing very rapidly. In fact, in northern Belle-land there are settlements of Mende people which originated in the latter part of the 19th century. Moreover, one of the clan names, Lobaizu, is clearly related linguistically to the Loma.

GUMA CHIEFDOM

This chiefdom, which consists of people who today identify themselves culturally as Mende, occupies an area once settled exclusively by Gola people. The chiefdom consists of one clan. Culturally and linguistically the people represent a transitional group between the Bandi of Liberia and the far more numerous central Mende of Sierra Leone. In some ways, the boundary line between the Guma Mende and the Hasala Bandi is arbitrary and apparently due to the Kamboi mountain range lying between them.

KISI CHIEFDOM

The members of this chiefdom, which consists of three clans, are only a small segment of the Kisi people, the vast majority of whom are in Guinea, with an additional small segment in Sierra Leone. Linguistically, the Kisi differ from

20. See: Westermann and Bryan, *Languages of West Africa*, 51.

21. David Dalby has made this suggestion in conversation with one of the authors (Holsoe).

their neighbors to the south and east in that they belong to the Mel-speaking groups, while the latter are Mande-speakers. Culturally, however, they do not differ significantly from their southern neighbors, in that they are agriculturists, have hierarchical political systems and belong to the Poro secret society complex. Nevertheless, there seems to have been little inter-penetration between the Bandi and Kisi, with the possible exception of the area bordering the Hasala clan, where a series of towns are still disputed. In the past there was a considerable amount of raiding across these boundaries between the Bandi and Kisi.

BANDI CHIEFDOM

There are within the Bandi chiefdom six clans today. During the early part of the century there were apparently more,²² but they have been combined to form larger political units by the Liberian government.

There are some linguistic differences between the various clans. The Hasala people and the western section of Lukasu more closely resemble the Guma Mende, while the people of eastern Lukasu and Yawiyasu have several linguistic similarities to the Loma people. It is said that the Tahamba people, in which clan Kolahun, the district headquarters is located, speak the only correct Bandi language.

Some of these clans are ethnically more mixed than others. The Wulukoha people who live near the Loma and Kisi have received settlers into their area, particularly from the Loma. In addition, many of the Bandi clans have groups of Mandingo families who have settled in their midst. The town of Masambolahun in the Wanwuma clan is an extreme example in that it is a completely Mandingo town. Yawiyasu was at one time undoubtedly a mixed area of Bandi, Gola and possibly Belle people. During the early part of the twentieth century, however, with the occupation of the area by the Liberian government, large numbers of people from the area moved across the border into Sierra Leone. Today, the territory of this clan is very sparsely populated, despite the fact that Bandi country is in general one of the more populous regions in Liberia.

THE LOMA CHIEFDOMS

Bunde-Wubomai Chiefdom

This chiefdom is one of two Loma chiefdoms. In the past these people referred to themselves as Bunde, but today they call themselves Loma.

22. Walter Volz, Reise durch das Hinterland von Liberia in Winter 1906-1907 (Bern, 1911), passim & end map.

Linguistically they are close to the Loma people of the Gizima-Ziema chiefdom. and it is clear that the people of this whole area stretching from the Loma-Kpelle border through the Bandi to the Guma Mende border are a part of a linguistic continuum with only slight dialectical shifts from one area to the next. Thus, any particular grouping is somewhat arbitrary and in the end must depend on how the people themselves choose to define their boundaries.

There is also some confusion concerning the name of one of the two clans within this chiefdom. The original census maps done in 1961 from which much of the information for the maps presented here has been taken, lists one of the clans as being called WOkO. However, from other materials,²³ and from the name of the chiefdom itself, it would seem that this same area is also called the Wubomai clan. Even though it is not possible to give a definitive answer as to what the correct name is on the basis of present information, the latter seems the most likely and is used on the accompanying map.

From the traditions of origins which these people have, it appears that both of the two clans in the chiefdom migrated from the Guinea side of the border. This is not surprising as there is a large section of the upper Guinea Republic area which is closely related ethnically to these Liberian peoples, consisting of the so-called Toma people.

Gizima-Ziema Chiefdom

This chiefdom consists of three clans. Schwab states,²⁴ based on information collected in the area, that the Gizima clan's area once was a part of the Vavala Kpelle clan. Town histories collected recently among the Vavala Kpelle support this tradition.²⁵ Likewise, the BuluyiEma clan is supposed to have been populated also by a combination of Vavala Kpelle and Loma people. The cultural and linguistic differences between these two peoples are not great, and thus it is not surprising that the two groups should have intermixed.

It would seem also that there has been some ethnic movements between the Belle and Loma areas. The fact that the one Belle clan, Lobaizu, has a Loma name has already been pointed out.

23. Paul M. Korvah, "The History of the Loma Tribe," copy of ms. in author's (Holsoe) possession, *passim*.

24. George Schwab, Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (Cambridge, 1947), 21-22.

25. A. Akki Kulah, "Sueromu: Culture and Traditions," copy of ms. in author's (Gay) possession, 1-3.

CONCLUSION

There are then a wide variety of peoples living in this western part of Liberia, which although they all fall into one culture area, still maintain local variations. A considerable amount of movement has occurred across ethnic boundaries, and many people have redefined themselves with different tribal labels from those used by their ancestors.

The material which is presented here is only a brief survey. Many of the areas mentioned have never been studied by trained social scientists. It is to be hoped that this commentary will provide a stimulus for further and more intensive research.

Warmest congratulations and our sincere
wish for continued success

in the publication of the Journal

Alexander W. Hutchings, President

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LANGUAGE MAP OF CENTRAL LIBERIA

John H. Gay, Warren d'Azevedo, William E. Welmers

Despite an intensification of linguistic research in Liberia, much uncertainty remains regarding the language boundaries in the central portion of the republic. This is due not only to the multilingual character of many of the towns in border areas, but also to the dearth of field studies which must be undertaken to clarify the reports of informants. Sufficient data have been secured, however, to warrant the preparation of a map tentatively illustrating the approximate distribution of major language groups in central Liberia.

The five language groups represented on the map are members of three major classes of languages. The Gola belong to the Mel group¹, also called - with Limba - the southern West Atlantic group², the Kpelle belong to the southwestern Mande group³, the Mano and Gio belong to the eastern Mande group and the Bassa belong to the Kru subdivision of the Kwa group⁴.

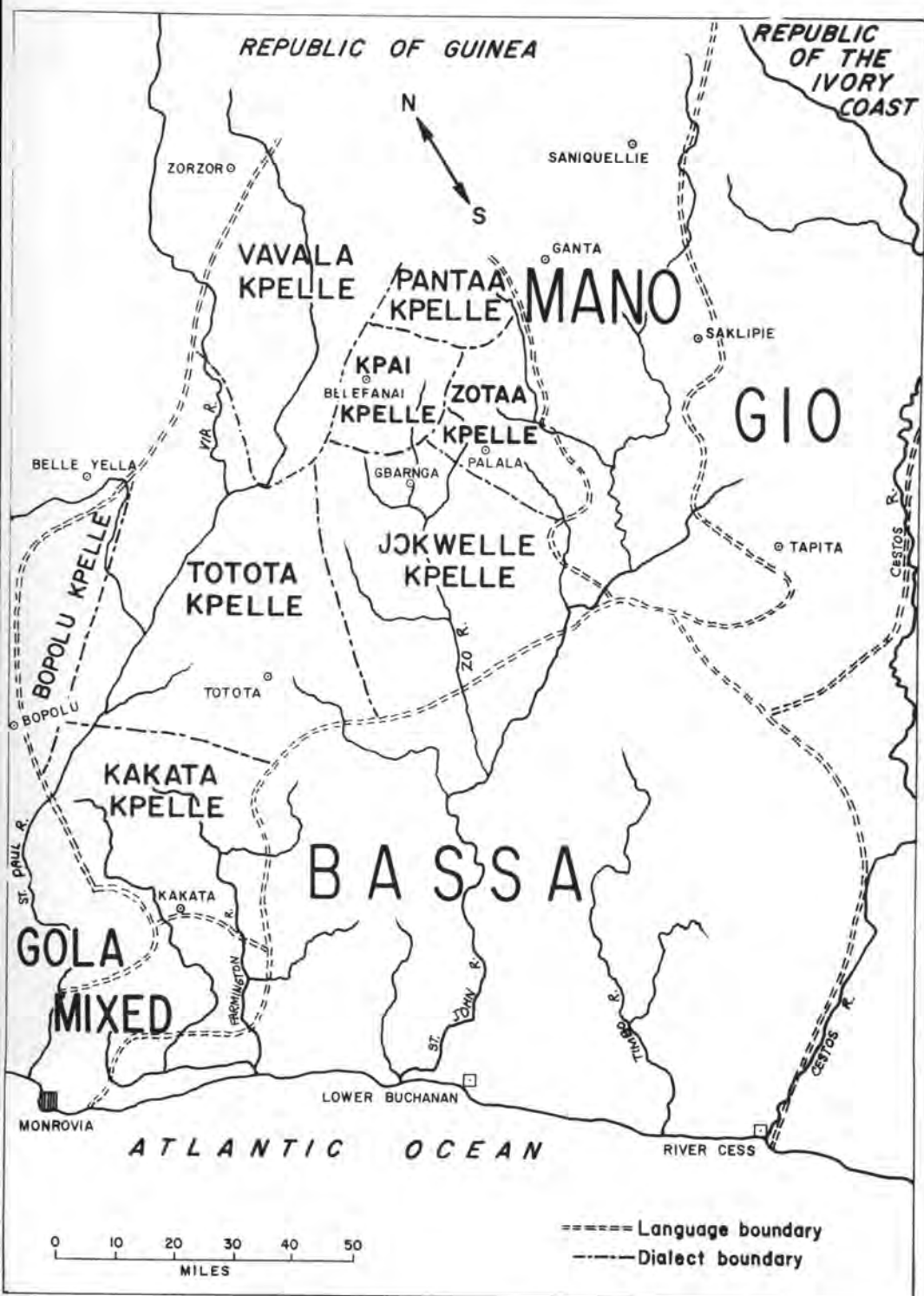
Within central Liberia there are representatives of other languages as well. There are large numbers of Mandingoes, who are part of the northern Mande group.⁵ There are in addition larger or smaller pockets, usually on a family basis or on a short-term employment basis, of linguistic groups found elsewhere in Liberia. Around Monrovia and Lower Buchanan, in the iron and rubber concessions, and along the main roads to Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast, are substantial numbers of English-speaking persons, for many of whom English is the first language. There are some French-speaking persons along the Ivory Coast and Guinea borders, particularly in the larger towns.

It is possible to give additional detail on dialects within the Kpelle territory. At the present, such information is not available to the authors for the Mano, Gio and Bassa area. It is to be hoped that readers of this journal may supply the needed details. The dialect boundaries indicated on the map are very rough, because there are gradual shadings in boundary areas rather than abrupt shifts. There may be errors in placement, and the authors would appreciate correction.

1. David Dalby, "The Mel Languages: A Reclassification of Southern 'West Atlantic'," African Language Studies, VI (1965), 1-17.
2. J. H. Greenberg, Languages of Africa (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore and Linguistics, Publication 25, 1963), 8.
3. William Welmers, "The Mande Languages," Georgetown Univ. Monograph Series, XI (1958), 9-23.
4. Greenberg, Languages of Africa, 8.
5. Ibid.

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LANGUAGE MAP OF CENTRAL LIBERIA



The dialects are characterized among the Kpelle in two ways. First, there is a tendency for front vowels to shift back to a central position and for consonants to lighten, especially in the medial position. For example, intervocalic *n* and *r* shift to *l*, intervocalic *l* and *k* shift to *ʎ*, intervocalic *s* shifts to a very lightly aspirated *h*, and intervocalic *ʎ* tends to shift to *y* or to disappear, giving rise to long vowels.

The second characteristic is acquisition of some vocabulary from the surrounding language groups. Bopolu Kpelle is influenced by Mandingo, De and Gola; Vavala Kpelle by Loma; Kpai, Pantaa and Zotaa Kpelle by Mano; and Jokwele Kpelle by Bassa and Mano. Totota Kpelle is the most central and the least influenced by other languages. It would appear, therefore, that a wise choice was made when Totota Kpelle was selected as the standard for the written language.

It should be noted that the dialectal variations are primarily in the phonemes, and only to a small extent in the morphemes. Pilot studies using the Swadesh 100-word list indicated very little variation among representatives from different Kpelle dialects in the terms given as translations for the words on the list.

We are grateful to John Kellemu, A. Akki Kulah, John McKay, Theodore Leidenfrost, Mildred Black, David Blanchard, George Tabmen, June Hobley and government officials in Gbarnga for their help. If we have inadvertently omitted names of others who helped us, we would appreciate having it brought to our attention.

Congratulations and best wishes upon
the launching of this very worthwhile Journal.

May your efforts always accelerate.

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THE TRADITIONS, HISTORY AND FOLKLORE OF THE BELLE TRIBE¹

S. Jangaba M. Johnson

LOCATION, ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Belle tribe which is located in Lofa County in the northern part of Liberia, is surrounded by several different tribes. On the north, it is bounded by the Bandi and Loma peoples; on the east, by the Gbalein Kpelle; on the west, by the Kongba Gola, and on the south, by the Bokomu Kpelle.

The elders of the tribe maintain that their ancestors migrated from somewhere in the eastern part of modern Liberia and that they were originally members of the Kru-speaking peoples. The exact time of the migration of the Belle is not known but, apart from the Gola, Kisi and Mende, the Belle tribe is the oldest in Lofa County.

These migrating people assumed the name of "Belle" from an expression made by their leader. When the people reached the place where they finally settled, they were physically exhausted from the long journey over the hills and mountains and across the countless rivers and creeks. The leader said to his followers, Se belle, which means, "I am tired," or "I am not able" to proceed any farther.

There is also another name by which the Belle are known. After they had succeeded in building their first town, they declared themselves settled. This expression in Kru is Koao, and it means "we are settled".

The route the Belle took to reach their new territory is difficult to locate these days, but the present generation of the tribe believes that their ancestors crossed the Via river at the point where the Loma town of Zomai now stands. It is said that each tribe, through whose territory these travellers passed, tried to persuade the Belle to settle among them, but they refused. They were trying to find an uninhabited area where they could establish themselves and live independently of the other tribes.

1. This work is the result of a research tour I made in the Belle Chiefdom in April and May, 1960, under the auspices of the Bureau of Folklore, Department of Interior (now Internal Affairs), R. L. The facts were collected from the Tribal Authority in council assembled in the town of Belle Yella, under the chairmanship of Paramount Chief Willie Belle, now a member of the Honourable, the House of Representatives, R. L. The council consisted of the Clan Chiefs, Elders and other leading men of the tribe, and to these my sincere thanks are due, particularly, ex-Paramount Chief Momolu Sewe, who was the leading spokesman of the council in answering my questions.

The Kru peoples, as we know, once lived in the far interior in eastern Liberia and the western part of the Ivory Coast. During that time, their king (in order to enrich himself) freely seized and sold any young man who came his way. Through this practice, many householders in his territory were deprived of their children and other dependents. To escape this fate, the various families of the tribe decided to leave and find some other place to settle in the coastal regions, outside of the reach of this avaricious king.

It was while the other families were journeying toward the coast that a man named Judu, his brother Neun, and their uncle Balla, decided to unite their respective households and lead them westward into another interior section. When the Belle reached their new territory, they found a location marked by a cotton tree which they all agreed was a suitable place to settle. Here they built their first town and called it Kohnyande which means, "under the cotton tree" in their language. Some people who are not of pure Belle origin call this town Gohnyande. This town is still in existence.

In the area settled by the Belle, according to legend, they met no human beings of their own tribe, but they discovered that it was inhabited by elves. Because these beings were diminutive in stature, they called them "short people". Getting acquainted with these strange beings was difficult so the new-comers decided to get rid of them. They began to attack and kill them and soon the poor creatures abandoned the plains and made their way into the mountains.

For a long time thereafter, the elves gave their attackers considerable trouble when they found one of them travelling alone. They would seize a lone traveller, carry him to their home, keep him there for a number of days and then release him. Many such victims were found dumb and senseless when they returned to their homes, and the task of restoring them to a normal state was not an easy one. Even in these days, elves are reported to be seen occasionally in some parts of the area but they are now less troublesome.

With the elves out of the way, the new settlers at once began to build other towns and after completing several of them, they gave their territory the name of Batti which means "agreed" or "one word". As the years passed, and as the various families increased numerically, Neun, the younger brother, and Balla, his uncle, decided to spread out over what they considered to be their God-given territory. They left Batti and went to a point about twelve and a half hours' walk from Kohnyande, the first Belle town, and built a town called Wonigba, which interpreted means, "great fishing-fence maker". The building of Wonigba was the beginning of a second Belle section, and it was given the name, Tolowanu, which means "a pond". The chiefdom was composed then of two distinct sections.

In time, each of these sections expanded, forming many healthily populated towns. Those in Batti numbered about twenty and those in Tolowanu about twenty-seven. However, as a result of the many inter-tribal and intra-tribal wars experienced by the Belle, most of these towns are now demolished. The following are the Belle towns which still exist. It should be noted that some of these towns were built by the Mende after migration into the area.

<u>BATTI SECTION</u>		<u>TOLOWANU (NOW LOBAIZU) SECTION</u>	
<u>Original Name</u>	<u>Present Name</u>	<u>Original Name</u>	<u>Present Name</u>
Jelia	Yella	Gbelenyaje	Gbelenyalahun
Mavodo	Mavodo	Teike	Teigili
Doi	Kpawuluzu	Koloje	Goleta
Kpakonu	Fasaima	Kalaje	Kalata
Baloma	Baloma	Kohnkpou	Guowuma
Kohnyande	Gohnyande	Sasazu	Sasazu
Katema	Gatema	Kenaaje	Kenata
		Looma	Looma
		Kongoje	Kondesu

From the above, one can conclude that a Kru-type language was spoken by the Belle for a long time after settling in their western territory. But with the change of generations, and due to the lack of contact with the larger group of their tribe, their speech became a corruption of the original. This corrupted Kru-type language, together with new words coined by them, then became the present-day Belle language. Later, relationships with other tribes added to the vocabulary of the tribe.

The few words listed here show the similarity of words in the Kru and Belle languages.

<u>English</u>	<u>Belle</u>	<u>Kru</u>
water	ni	ni
mother	maa	ma
come	ji	ji
woman	nyuno	nyuno
two	sohn	sohn

Although the Belle have their own language, the majority of them speak very little of it. This is because of the close proximity of the other tribes surrounding them. There are only three towns in which Belle is principally used. People in the other thirteen towns speak Bandi, Loma, Mende and Kpelle. All the people near the Bandi tribe speak nothing but Bandi. Those near the Loma, speak Loma, and likewise those in the neighborhood of the Kpelle speak Kpelle. Mende is spoken exclusively in towns inhabited by the descendants of Mbawulome, the great Mende warrior, and the people who followed him from the Guma Mende section to Belle country. The following illustrates the method of counting in Belle:

1...Dee (both "e"s are short)	11...Koa koakone	21...Koasohn loakone
2...Sohn	12...Koisohn	22...Koaisohn
3...Tahn	13...Koaitahn	23...Koaitahn
4...Nyie	14...Koainyie	24...Koaininyie
5...Waayo	15...Koiwaayo	25...Koiwaayo
6...Foole (both "o"s are long)	16...Koai loaifoole	26...Koaifoole
7...Koono	17...Koaidowo	27...Koaikoono
8...Kotang	18...Koai kotahn	28...Koaikotahn
9...Konyie	19...Koai konyie	29...Koaikonyie
10..Koa	20...Koasohn	30...Koatahn

TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

The primitive tribal government of the Belle, which was handed down to them by their fathers, was headed by a warrior-king who had to exhibit his bravery and skill in warfare before assuming control of the tribe. This was because in those days of inter-tribal warfare, when tribes took special pleasure in attacking and invading one another to enrich themselves, it was necessary for the Belle to have someone as their ruler who could protect them against any attack. This was true particularly after other tribes had migrated into the territories around them. Since almost every man of the tribe was a soldier, the strongest man in a town became its chief, but he controlled the town under the supervision of the king.

The king was assisted in his functions by a group of elders. Among these was one who was recognized by the other elders as their leader. The ruling elder, however, had to be a descendant of one of the original founders of the tribe. This leading elder was permitted to have the last word regarding the selection of the king. This practice continued until the election system was introduced by the Liberian government. When the position of the king became vacant, the elders met on the "road" to discuss the situation and decide on someone, invariably one of them, to fill the vacancy. When they arrived at their place of deliberation, the leading elder listened to the discussion and the recommendation of each member of the group. If all of them agreed on the same person, and the selection met the leading elder's approval, the latter simply confirmed their decision. In the majority of cases the group left the selection site with the newly chosen king, and his choice was accepted by all without any dissension.

When the selection was announced, the preferred individual was led into town by the Council of Elders and the leading elder introduced him to the general public as their new king. The elder then placed an iron rod on the ground and instructed the king to step on it and to stand erect and at attention. The iron represented the land or territory over which he was to rule. The elder then spat lightly on the candidate's forehead and said, "be brave and fear not to face anyone on earth". The elder then took the new king's arms and gave them strength by rubbing them and saying, "be strong to fight for the people under your control". He then spat on the king's legs and rubbing them with his hands, he said, "may your feet be strong and swift to go anywhere your presence is required for the defence and protection of your tribe".

Next, the king was seated on a tabouret and enrobed in a big gown. The traditional "cow tail" of authority was placed in his right hand. The ceremonies ended with the presentation of ten kola nuts on a white plate which were given to the king to signify the "purity of heart" of the entire tribe towards him. Some of the leading families extended congratulations by giving the king wives. A big dance followed all these formalities and lasted for days. In reaction to this great honor, custom required the king to show some appreciation to the tribe by producing a large bull for them to slaughter and feast on while they rejoiced over his good fortune. In recognition of his supreme authority and protection over them, all members of the tribe were compelled to serve the king in whatever field their services were needed. The entire tribe was annually required to make a farm for the king in each town. This included underbrushing, felling trees, burning, planting, weeding, driving off birds, harvesting and securing the crop in a barn. In addition, the king was entitled to the breast and right fore-leg of all big game killed, including the red deer, and domestic animals. The ceremonious reporting of the killing of a leopard, a crocodile and a golden pheasant was one of the strongest requirements of the tribe. Failure to do so was not dealt with lightly.

BELLE JUDICIAL PRACTICES

The judiciary functions of the tribe were placed in the hands of a group of elderly men and women selected from all the important towns. They were called the "Gown People" because they were uniformed in long dark gowns which almost touched the ground. They wore caps that were specially designed to match the gowns and carried long staffs and cow tails to signify their office, which the tribe regarded with great reverence.

Membership in this group was hereditary. That is, if a member died, his place was filled by someone from his town and from his family. The members of the group did not move about singly. When it was necessary for any of them to go somewhere, the whole group moved with him. They always walked slowly and in unison. Their office did not permit them to lodge in any house. Upon entering any town, they went straight to the town shed and rested and slept until their business in that town was finished. Being the only group charged with the trial of criminal matters, their verdict in any case was final and their judgment irrevocable. Even the king had no right to interfere with decisions given by them. Because of the sacredness of their office, anyone who ran to the group for refuge during their assembly of deliberation, was free from further attack by his pursuer, regardless of the nature of the crime.

When a complaint was made to the king against anyone, he summoned him to court by means of his "cow tail" which was the emblem of his authority. If the defendant refused to regard the summons, an order for arrest was sent to him by means of a "stick" or "package" of salt. Resistance to the order resulted in war.

The following practices were forbidden among the Belle, and therefore, the commitment of any of them was punished according to the decision of the council of the "Gown People". Although this council no longer exists, the laws are still a part of the legal code of the tribe.

- 1) Entering another man's cassava patch, pulling up and moving away with some of the cassava contained in a hamper or any other container. This practice was regarded as stealing.

But a traveller, finding a patch of cassava on the wayside, could pull up as much as his stomach could hold, whether he ate it raw, roasted it or cooked it. This was not regarded as stealing but was to save him from starving. This law also applied to other foods, including rice.

- 2) Entering a house or room in which a man finds or suspects his wife to be keeping company with another man.

The reason for this prohibition was to prevent the occurrence of any danger between the two men, or between the husband and wife. When such an incident occurred, an action against the offender was the proper course in seeking a redress.

3) Fighting between two persons outside of town.

If a man was offended by another man to the point of wishing to attack him, he offered the challenge through the proper authorities of the town and if the challenge was accepted, the two men were taken to the road opposite the Poro grove and were permitted to try their powers. But before they began, each of them was thoroughly searched for any kind of weapon on his person, and if any were found, they were removed. This law was also to prevent serious consequences from a fight between two men who might sneak out of town to fight.

4) Quarreling and fighting in town.

5) Going around town making insinuations and using obscene language without directing the expression to any particular individual.

Such an action was naturally presumed to be an attack on the people of the town as a whole.

6) Disrespect to an elderly person.

Severe beating, authorized by the Council of Elders, was the punishment for such misbehavior.

7) Stealing

8) Kidnapping

9) Allowing a cow or any other domestic animal to remain alive after it injured a human being.

Such a animal was to be killed immediately, regardless of whose it was.

10) Sexual intercourse in the bush at any time.

11) Sexual intercourse with another man's wife while she was pregnant or nursing a baby.

12) Deflowering a young girl, either with or without her consent.

13) Sexual intercourse with another man's wife (ordinary "woman palaver") entitled the husband to damages.

14) Rape

15) Arson

16) Murder

17) Wounding someone

In case of a man inflicting a wound on another person, the wound was measured by means of a piece of straw and the same wound was put on the man who was responsible for the original wound.

- 18) Failing to report the wounding of a ferocious animal to the ruler or any other leading member of the tribe.
- 19) Failing to bring any of the following animals to the ruler or any other leading member of the tribe, when killed:

Leopard, Crocodile, Anteater, Eagle

In olden days, the foregoing crimes and many more, with the exception of murder, were punished by the imposition of fines, according to the nature of the case. Where the convict was unable to pay the fine, he was sold for the amount.

In case of accidental arson, the man who committed the act was simply required to pay fifty sticks, or packages, of salt. A man who killed someone accidentally was required to give to the family of the deceased, a cloth, generally regarded as the "blood cloth", a slave, and woman for wife, so that by her, the vacant place in the family could be filled. Finally, he was required to produce a cow to "wipe off" the blood he had shed.

With reference to willful murder, death was the certain penalty, regardless of the status of the man who committed it. But the tribe, considering it a sin to waste the blood of a human being, did not kill him by any means. Rather, a stage was erected and a big fire kindled under it. Here the convict was placed and kept until he was burnt to ashes. After the cremation, one of the firesticks from that particular fire was handed to the family of the cremated man to be kept as a reminder of the incident.

In this connection, the following is a story told about a man named Doba, who was a very powerful warrior-chief in the town of Kpawuluzu. He was a grandfather of former Clan Chief Wiido of Fasaima, and of another chief who lived at Ngainga, by the name of Kpango. Doba and Kpango were friends, and to strengthen the friendly tie between them, Doba asked Kpango for the hand in marriage of one of his daughters who was named Klubo. His request was granted and the girl was given to him. It happened on a certain day that Chief Doba had a cow killed and he asked one of his other wives to prepare a bit of soup for him from some of the meat. While the soup was being cooked, the wife in charge stepped outside, leaving Kpango's daughter Klubo to mind the pot until she returned. In her absence, Klubo dipped into the soup, took some meat, ate it and gave the bone to the dog in the house.

When the wife returned, she at once noticed that some of the meat was missing and she asked Klubo what had become of it. Klubo said the dog ate it. As soon as the dog heard what Klubo said about him, he ran to a corner of the house where a charm was kept, got the charm and placed it in front of Klubo. This indicated that Klubo should swear to the statement she had just made. But she could not swear to the lie she had told concerning the animal. Consequently, it was concluded that it was she who ate the meat, and so the matter was reported to her husband.

Chief Doba had a practice of sending his boys to beat any of his wives who annoyed him. Following this practice, he instructed his boys to take Klubo outside and beat her for the theft she had committed. As a result of this beating, the girl died.

When the news of the incident reached Chief Kpango, he sent to ascertain from Chief Doba, through King Nwanya Kolli, their superior ruler, whether it was true that he had beaten his daughter to death. Doba admitted the report to be correct, but explained that it was his boys who beat the girl and not he himself. He added that although he knew the law governing murder, since the occurrence was an accident, he was willing to pay her father any amount rather than suffer the death-penalty.

Kpango would not listen to such an explanation concerning his daughter's death, so he referred the matter to the "Gown People" for their decision. In keeping with the law of the tribe, the "Gown People" ruled that inasmuch as Chief Doba had willfully killed Kpango's daughter, he too must die. And although for seven days he resisted the fatal sentence by means of his sword, he was finally captured by the Mende Chief, Mbawulome, and cremated according to the law. His dependents, with the exception of the Mandingo people among them, were all caught and divided among the warriors. But according to Doba's last request, no one has dared to touch any of his cows up to this day. They wander freely in the bush.

INTER-TRIBAL RELATIONS

During the reign of Oldman Gbele's son, Gbelenya, in the Belle country, there reigned over the Yawiyasu section of the Bandi tribe, a king whose name was Gunuzele. His home town was Mamboma. As contemporary kings, having their territories next door to each other, Gunuzele wanted an alliance with Gbelenya to guard their mutual interests and to protect themselves against aggression from any other tribe. He told Gbelenya of his idea. Gbelenya readily agreed to the proposition. To consolidate and perpetuate their friendship and alliance into brotherhood, the two kings decided to exchange blood. Accordingly, each cut himself, and let some blood fall on a piece of cotton which was held by a pair of pincers. They exchanged the piece of cotton and made an oath. The pair of pincers which was used at the time of the exchanging of blood was left with King Gbelenya and is today among the relics of the Royal House of Gbelenyalahun.

Because of this incident, the Bandi of Yawiyasu and the Belle have always regarded themselves as brothers and sisters instead of being mere friends and allies. In their cultural and social activities, they are always united. If a session of the Sande is instituted in the Belle country, the people of Yawiyasu must cooperate and send some girls to be initiated there. If three girls are sent, one of them must remain and marry someone in the area after the session closes. If five are sent, two must remain. The same thing happens when Belle girls join the Sande in Yawiyasu. It is said that until the Interior Administration of Jeremiah J. Harris, these two tribes even did their public works together. To offend or

please one of them, is to offend or please the other.

Another group with whom the Belle have enjoyed a special relationship is the Loma of the Ziema area. The Belle claim these are their "nephews" because of the following incident. A man of the Wubomai area violated one of the traditional laws of that tribe and consequently, he and all his household were put to death, except one of his wives by the name of Gama, who was pregnant and who escaped and made her way to King Gbele of the Belle country who placed her under his protection. Gama remained in the Belle country and gave birth to a son. When this boy became a man, the old man gave him a wife, and by her, two boys were born. The name of the first boy was Lolia, and the name of the second was Zeliwaa. When these boys grew up and each became heads of households, they decided to try their luck outside of the Belle country. Lolia built himself a town which he called Woize, and Zeliwaa built one called Bokisa. This was the beginning of the Ziema area. Their grandmother and mother were both Belle.

The people of Belle and the Gbalein Kpelle consider themselves one and the same people. Claims for woman palaver damages do not occur between members of the two groups. In fact, their close ties forbid them from making claims against each other. The following story explains the connection.

At the town of Boadi in the Gbalein area, there once lived a man named Kena Kolli. He was one of the wealthiest men of the tribe, but he had neglected to become a member of the Poro Society. Consequently, there was little respect accorded him. Not only did men of his age reproach and scorn him but the younger folks even did it. As the years passed, the situation became more annoying and embarrassing both to himself and to members of his household, particularly his sister whose name was Sowolo Godo. She heard that the Poro was in session at Sewetown in the Belle area, so she left Belle and went to Sewetown. She found an old man named Woni Sewe, the owner of the town, lying in a hammock. She challenged his "manhood" by striking him with a cloth she had in her hand and said, "If you are a man, get up, go to Gbalein, bring my brother Kena Kolli, and have him initiated". He sent warriors to apprehend Kena Kolli and brought him to the Belle country. Immediately upon reaching Woni Sewe's town, Kena Kolli was made a member of the Poro Society.

Kena Kolli and his people were so happy after the initiation that they gave gifts to Woni Sewe and other members of the society, and all of them had a big feast together. When the rejoicing was over, Kena Kolli and his dependents left for home, but they got only as far as the Kpo mountain before it grew dark. The travellers decided to spend the night where they were. While Kena Kolli rested, his hunter went off in search of game. He met some women who were on their way to fetch water. They asked him where he was coming from and where he was going. He told them he was in a party travelling from Sewetown to Boadi in Gbalein, but as night had overtaken them, and their father did not care to travel in the dark, they had decided to rest on the mountain until morning.

After the women had heard the hunter's story, they told him of their town nearby, and suggested he go along with them to see the chief of the town and tell him about his father and of their desire to find a shelter for the night. The hunter took the suggestion and went to the town called Ngainga. The old chief was called Ngain. As soon as Chief Ngain heard the hunter's story, he sent an invitation to the travellers to come to his town. Their stay was so enjoyable that they postponed leaving for a long time. Kena Kolli asked Chief Ngain to open a road between Ngainga and his town of Boadi, whereby communication between him and his people could be established and maintained. After the road was made, he told his followers who were not of his immediate household, to go back to Boadi. But instead of going to Boadi, they built towns of their own on the new road and settled there. Tokpa, Diimenta, Tonge and Kao were some of the towns built at that time.

Kena Kolli remained in the Belle country for the rest of his life. When he grew old, he joined the council of the "Gown People", and upon his death he was buried at Ngainga. His grave is one of those worshiped by the present generation of that town.

The Belle are said to be "nephews" to the Kpelle of Bokomu because the people of Bokomu gave a woman in marriage to the grandfather of the Belle people. In consummating the marriage, the people of Bokomu said, "this wife we are giving you is a token of the sincerity of our friendship to you and all your people. We will now consider ourselves one people and therefore, allow no quarrel to come between us". The Belle leader accepted this kind gift and agreed to the friendship. To confirm this treaty of friendship, they jointly sacrificed a ram and made oaths. Bokomu kept one of the horns, and Belle kept the other. This is why these two peoples do not quarrel.

INTER-TRIBAL WARS

The first war experienced by the Belle occurred after they had settled in their present territory. The attack was made on them by some Mandingo warriors from what is now Guinea, under the command of the renowned Samolu Ture (Samori) of the Franco-Mandingo struggles. These Mandingo people broke up the entire Belle territory and moved on down to the coast, fighting every tribe they met on the way. Some of the Mandingo now living in Gaje and other places near the coast are descendants of those Mandingo warriors.

In the Buliyema area of the Loma country, there lived a king named Geleguye. This man was a very powerful and wicked warrior. He was a bitter enemy of the Belle and hated their language. He gave orders to all his people to cut off the head of any man they heard uttering the word "aklo" which is the morning salutation in Belle.

Thus the Belle were in constant trouble with this Loma neighbor. At one time he attacked them and destroyed all but two of their towns. King Gbelenya of the Belle grew old and feeble, and before his death he placed a man named

Godolo in control of the tribe. In order to bring peace between the Belle and Loma, Godolo and his people sent a delegation consisting of three of their leading men, Nyango, Kotu and Kpawulu Kpala to Geleguye. They had a white fowl, a white cloth, and ten kola nuts in a white plate to sue for peace. Geleguye refused to listen to their entreaty. To show how he felt toward the Belle, he killed their representatives.

The news of this violation of tribal customs infuriated Godolo beyond words. With the assistance of Chief Gunuzele of Yawiyasu, he immediately mobilized an army composed of Belle and Bandi people and placed it under the command of his son Degula, with instructions that he should bring Geleguye back dead or alive.

There was in Belle at that time an old lady named Klubo who was reported to be an extraordinary person. Before Degula left for Buluyiema, this old lady requested Godolo and Gunuzele to permit her to help in the capture of Geleguye. Her request was granted. She then placed her hand on the shoulder of King Godolo while he gave his last instructions to his son Degula. "You are going for Geleguye," said the king to his son, "and I want you to bear in mind that you should be the one to attack this man. You will receive a wound in your side, but it will not halt you. You will win". Raising his hand from Degula's shoulder, he told him to go after the "trouble-maker".

So Degula led his army to Buluyiema to catch Geleguye. Upon entering the town of Wuomai where Geleguye lived, he went straight to the royal house and finding it closed, he climbed to the roof and entered the house this way. The people of the town saw this and set the house on fire, hoping to trap Degula. The fire burned Degula's side but the injury was not serious. Degula succeeded in capturing about one hundred Loma people, including Geleguye, whose head was taken to Godolo. With the capture of their king, the Loma sued for peace and the Belle agreed. The peace-oath was made between the two tribes under two cotton trees in the Buluyiema town of Baagulazu. This was the first important incident of Godolo's reign.

The first war between the Belle and the Gola of Kongba resulted when the Gola kept a Belle woman from her husband. This was what happened: Kpemgba Doma, a Gola man, visited the Belle area accompanied by his daughter, Maasuu. While visiting, a Belle man named Kagbo fell in love with Maasuu and paid a dowry for her. After going through the customary preliminaries connected with marriage, she became his wife. Her father returned home leaving her with her husband.

Later, she went home to visit her father and after a considerable length of time had passed, Kagbo sent for her to return. Her father refused to let her go. The daughter was anxious to return to her husband so she told her father that she heard a rumor to the effect that her husband and his people were planning an attack on the entire Kongba section because her father would not let her return home. Hearing this, Kpemgba and his people decided to attack first. They made their attack but the Belle proved to be superior in strength and skill, and consequently drove them back shamefully. In revenge for this attack made on them by people whom they had regarded as friends, the Belle planned and carried out an attack on

the Gola. Again the Gola were unable to withstand the Belle. Their territory was invaded and Kagbo's wife, Maasuu, and scores of other Gola women were taken back to the Belle country as war captives. This ended the conflict between the two groups.

MBAWULOME IN THE BELLE COUNTRY

The great Mbawulome of the Guma Mende area fled from his home to escape being captured by his enemies who planned to kill him. He first took refuge in the town of his friend Fobe in the Yawiyasu area of the Bandi country. When he found that his enemies continued to pursue him, he fled to the Belle area. His enemies reached Yawiyasu, but not finding him there, they returned to Mendeland.

At the time of the arrival of Mbawulome in the Belle country, King Nwanya Kolli was in control of that area. This king and his people knew the power of this man in warfare so they naturalized him in a ceremonious way and gave him the recognition due his distinction. In appreciation of the grand reception given him, and the great honor conferred upon him, Mbawulome gave the Belle leaders ten large demi-johns of rum, twenty pieces of imported cloth and two hundred heads of tobacco, together with a white country cloth which symbolized the sincerity with which these things were given. Some time after Mbawulome's arrival in the Belle country, his enemies again attacked him, but they found themselves unequal to the combined strength of the Belle warriors and Mbawulome. Two hundred men of their vanguard were captured and those in the rear, seeing this, ran away. Of the two hundred men captured, only twelve were eventually released and allowed to go back to Mendeland and tell the story of what had happened to their one hundred and eighty-eight companions.

The twelve men who eventually were permitted to return home had been kept in strict confinement during their captivity and compelled to eat the bodies of their companions as they were killed, one by one. On the day they ate the last of the men, they were released and permitted to return home. While the relatives and friends of these twelve men were glad to see them return, they wondered what became of the others so they asked about them. Each time they asked, the twelve men replied, "We were forced to eat their dead bodies". As a result of this information, the Mende abandoned their fight against Mbawulome and never again ventured into the Belle territory with the thought of making war. They were afraid of being made cannibals.

The town of Gbelenyalahun where Mbawulome settled was not large enough for a permanent settlement for him and all his dependents. His Belle stranger-fathers suggested he build a town of his own where he and his people could live more comfortably. Mbawulome agreed to this suggestion and left Gbelenyalahun to look for a suitable spot to build his town.

While walking along one of the trails, Mbawulome met a woman by the name of Klubo, who was on her way home from fishing. The lady wanted to know the stranger's business in the area. Mbawulome told her that he was looking for a

suitable place to build a town. Turning around, she pointed to a spot where a cotton tree stood and suggested that it would be a beautiful spot for a settlement. Mbawulome went to the spot and found it satisfactory. Returning to Gbelenyalahun, he informed King Nwanya Kolli of his good fortune, and at once proceeded with the necessary arrangements for the town in which he was to live. King Nwanya Kolli and his subordinate leaders indicated their sincere support by giving him a wife who they said was to be the "fire bearer" of the new town. When Mbawulome's town was completed, he named it Looma which means "a place to rest" in the Loma language.

Mbawulome lived in Looma for the rest of his life. He prospered and became more renowned than he had been in his own Guma area. Not only did his town grow as people from Guma and other Mende sections joined him in the Belle country, but other towns were built by him for his dependents. This is why there are several Mende towns in the Lobaizu clan area where he lived. In warfare, Mbawulome led all others during his days. He fought off the enemies of the Belle people who had placed themselves under his protection.

Another incident by which Mbawulome proved his skill and bravery in warfare was by capturing Bima, a great Loma warrior of the town of Woize in the Ziema section. The people of Ziema were at war with the people of Gizima. Finding Bima too strong for them, the Gizima people appealed to the Belle for assistance. Degula, the ruler of the Belle at the time, sent Mbawulome who, within a few hours after his arrival at Woize captured Bima in his own house without any struggle and took him to the Belle country along with many others. Mbawulome's friendly attitude, fatherly care, and protective services as a general of the Belle warriors gained for him the confidence of his adopted countrymen. Upon the death of King Dewule Kandakai, he was selected to the supreme leadership of the tribe. When he died, his son Kutubu succeeded him.

The principal surviving heir of Mbawulome is his grandson, Aama Kutubu, who served as chief of the Lobaizu Clan for about forty years. He was retired recently on a pension by the Liberian Government.

THE FOUNDING OF GBELEJE

Of all the towns of the Belle Chiefdom there is none as mysterious and historic as Gbeleje (now Gbelenyalahun) which is situated in the Lobaizu Clan, and the traditional account of its founding is most interesting.

When old man Gbele, Gbelenya's father, became the leader of the Belle he was concerned about the safety of his tribe as they were being attacked by almost all the surrounding tribes. He asked a Muslim doctor of the Kane family, who was then living in his town, to assist him in finding a way to prevent the invasion of their territory by either tribes. The Muslim agreed to assist the old man and his people and at once proceeded with the necessary divination which would determine whether the proposal would be successful.

After completing his investigation, the Muslim told the old man that he would assist him in this matter on three conditions:

- 1) The old man must move from Wonigba, the town in which he was living, and build a new town on a site selected by the Muslim.
- 2) The old man must pay the Muslim with one hundred slaves when he had finished his task.
- 3) He must sacrifice a young virgin girl by burying her alive with a brass bucket on her head.

These requirements, especially the third, were hard and the old chief considered compliance with them impossible. However, he called all his people together and referred the proposition to them. Each promised to give his quota of the one hundred slaves when the work was done but none was willing to give up any of his daughters to be buried alive. The tribesmen told the chief that if he would sacrifice his own daughter, he would be leader of the tribe forever. This left the old man in a state of bewilderment, as he was not prepared to sacrifice any of his own daughters.

While at a loss as to what to do under the circumstances, one of his daughters voluntarily came forward and said to him, "Father, I can see you are greatly worried over the question of the sacrifice you are required to make. Since this sacrifice is for the good of our tribe, I am willing to give up myself and die to save you from your worries". At first the old man thought the little girl was joking and her mother, of course, refused to listen to her foolish talk. But day after day the girl repeated her desire to die for her people. She did not rest until she had gained the consent of her parents to give her up for the required sacrifice.

So finally the chief informed the Muslim that he was ready with the virgin girl needed for the sacrifice. The Muslim then started his work. He prepared seven small hooks of stick on a rope and gave them to the chief to tie around his waist. He told him to go into the woods and walk around until all of the seven hooks happened to get fastened to some ropes. That would be the most suitable spot for a new town to be built.

The old man took the rope with hooks on it and did exactly as he was told. He walked about the woods for several hours, passing through many thickets without all of the hooks getting hitched.

At last, he reached an area where the underbrush was not as thick as in other places. Here, to his surprise, he found all of the seven hooks fastened to a rope. He took the rope from his waist, unfastened the hooks and placed them on the spot where he stood. He then returned to town and reported to the Muslim.

The Muslim was glad to know of his success. He followed him to see the

spot where the hooks laid. Upon reaching it, he asked the old man to have the place cleared and a shed built there at once. When this was done, he ordered a hole of about eight feet deep to be dug under the shed and for seven days and nights, he stayed inside and worked on the charm which was to be placed on the head of the girl who was to be sacrificed. On the eighth day the Muslim informed old man Gbele that he had completed his work and was ready to make the sacrifice.

On the day of the sacrifice, all the leading people of the Belle tribe, both men and women, were assembled on the spot to witness the ceremonies. The girl was lowered into the hole and a brass bucket was put on her head with the charm placed in it. The hole was filled immediately upon the conclusion of the ceremonies and old man Gbele's daughter was buried forever.

The Muslim assured the old man and all the people of Belle that as a result of the sacrifice they had made and the work he had done for them, their tribe would never suffer defeat. Also, since it was Gbele who gave up his daughter to be sacrificed, he and his descendants were to lead the tribe forever. He then pronounced his own personal blessings on them. This is why a son or nominee of the Gbele House must always be the ruler of the Belle tribe. Anybody else who forces his way into the leadership of the tribe and succeeds without the sanction and blessing of this ruling house, does not prosper. This has been the experience of the tribe since they made the sacrifice and built historic Gbeleje.

As soon as the Muslim had completed his work, the one hundred slaves he required for his compensation were collected and turned over to him, together with a wife, one of the remaining daughters of Gbele. Not long after, the Muslim left for his home in the Sudan.

In the neighborhood of Gbeleje, there used to be a mountain called Wulusejeu. It is said that in olden days Wulusejeu was a very high mountain. It was so high that its top could be seen from distant places. In the same vicinity there was a river called Siwe. This river had falls that could be heard far away. These two objects jointly became a cause of great trouble to the Muslim after he had returned home.

In her new home, when the atmosphere was clear and all was quiet, the Muslim's Belle wife was able to see the top of Mount Wulusejeu and hear the sound of the Siwe Falls. They often made her think of her native land and of her parents. The view of the mountain and the sound of the falls brought to her mind the experiences of her childhood days. She thought of the moonlight plays she used to have with her friends; the beautiful folk tales she used to hear from the older people when she was kept indoors; the great festivities that followed the annual family worship; and the songs her tribe sang which she could no longer sing because of her loneliness in a strange land. All of these reminiscences created in her a longing for her home each time she saw Wulusejeu and imagined hearing the sound of the Siwe Falls. She became so homesick that she left and returned to the Belle country by following the view of the mountain and the sound of the falls. After a long and tedious journey, she arrived at Gbeleje and happily found her parents, relatives and friends to be well. They also were happy to see her again.

The Muslim was upset by the absence of what he regarded as his prize from the Belle people. He at once set out in search of her. Taking the trails he had walked before, he soon found himself back in Gbeleje. There he met the object of his search, the woman whom he had grown to love since their marriage. He asked her if she had been treated so badly by him that she was forced to leave. She replied that he did not mistreat her, but that it was the view of Mount Wulusejeu and the sound of the Siwe Falls that caused her to want to see her native home again.

Hearing this explanation, the Muslim's anger at his wife's action gave way to a disgust for the existence of the objects which had caused her to leave. He therefore told her that as far as Mount Wulusejeu and the sound of the Siwe Falls were concerned, they would give her no more cause to return home. He requested some boys to bring him seven live lizards and seven broken pieces of earthen pots. On receiving these, he wrote some suras on them and sent the lizards to be released on the mountain and the broken pieces of pot to be deposited in the Siwe Creek.

After spending some time with his friends and relatives-in-law, the Muslim begged leave to return home. Very regretfully the leave was granted. Unfortunately however, the tribe gave the Muslim no food the night before he was to leave, so he went to bed without eating. In the morning, infuriated by this unexpected inhospitable act of his friends, he assembled all of the people of the town together and informed them that the work he had done for the prosperity of their tribe and territory would remain unchanged to the end of the world; that the tribe, particularly the members of the Lobaizu Clan, would become numerically plentiful and immune to any defeat in war. However, because they had permitted him to go to bed unfed, there would never be sufficient foodstuffs in their town and no food would remain in their stomach for any length of time. This is why, from that time to now, the people of Gbeleje always have a constant desire to eat. He also warned them against any careless handling of fire in the town, otherwise, it would some day be utterly destroyed by fire. After making these pronouncements, he took his wife and left them forever.

With regards to Mount Wulusejeu and the Siwe Falls, these objects gave no further trouble to the Muslim. The top of the mountain broke off and was reduced to a mere hill, and the sound of the Siwe Falls ceased to be loud. It is said that whenever the falls are heard making a very loud sound, the occurrence foretells the death of the ruler of one of the outstanding leaders of the tribe.

It was when Gbele's son Gbelenya came into power that the name of the town was changed from Gbeleje to Gbelenyaje. The meaning of the name is Gbelenyatown. The Bandi call it Gbelenyakhun and this is the name by which it is generally called in these days.

RELIGION

The religion of the Belle is spiritualism. They acknowledge the existence of a great Being who is responsible for the creation of the world and everything in it. To Him they attribute all occurrences, good or bad. In their original language they called Him, Nyesoa, but now that their language is changed, they call Him Ngewo-Ngala. These two words are borrowed from Mende and Kpelle, respectively, and each is the name for God in that language. But the Belle, not knowing how to communicate with Ngewo-Ngala, hold the belief that there are spirits connected with certain things created by Him, such as mountains, rocks, abysses, animals, and reptiles. They believe that these spirits, together with those of departed relatives, can act as agents for Ngewo-Ngala and are therefore the proper channels of worship through the various objects with which they are connected.

Unlike some other tribes, the Belle do not hold a general worship. Each town in the Batti Clan has its own place of worship, and there the people of the town meet annually to pray and to offer the special sacrifice required by the spirit or spirits of the locality. The following are the towns in this clan, with their respective places of worship:

Mavodo: The people of this town worship under a tree which is standing on a hill. They believe that there is a spirit at the bottom of the tree, thus the tree is their shrine. Two white fowls are offered for sacrifice.

Fasaima, Gohnyande and Baloma: These three towns have a common place of worship and their object of worship is a mountain which is called Kangaima Jade. The sacrifice is a white fowl.

Yella (Belle): The place of sacrifice for the people of this town is in a very high forest situated about 10 minutes walk from Yella, heading towards Gumbeta in Bokomu. A white fowl, a white ram and some clean rice are offered to the spirits of Sugbaanu which is the name of the bush.

In olden days the area in which Yella is situated was called, Jebola, because of its shape which is like the elbow of a person.

Another place of worship for Yella is Siwe Kude, on the way to Mavodo. The things sacrificed to spirits of Sugbaanu are also sacrificed here. A nephew of the family must make the sacrifice.

Kenata: The people of this town worship a mountain called, Kolowali Jade. They sacrifice a white fowl, dry meat and clean rice.

In the Tolowanu, or Lobaizu, Clan, arrangements are a bit different. The clansmen as a whole, have a common place of worship at Koloje, or Goleta as the town is now called. They meet annually to appease the spirits for their wrong doings and pray for luck for the clan and the tribe. In the past, when the council of the "Gown People" existed, one of their members was always selected

to conduct the ceremonies connected with this general worship of the tribe. However, after the council ceased to exist, the people of Goleta became the sacrificers. The man conducting the ceremonies must be attired in white and must sacrifice a ram.

Apart from this general worship of the clan, the people of Tolowanu, or Lobaizu, like their kinsmen in Batti, also have their individual family worship, and here again we find some towns grouping themselves for this purpose.

Kalata, Gbelenyalahun, Guowuma, Teigili and Goleta: The people of these towns worship at Tolowanu, the pond after which the clan was named.

Gatema, Sasazu, Kondesu and Looma: They worship a mountain called Kambo. The sacrifice consists of four fowls and a goat or ram. Following devotions a big meal is cooked for both the spirits and worshippers. After the food is eaten, the townspeople want to know if the spirits were pleased with the ceremonies. To do this, the one who offered the sacrifice splits four kola nuts and throws them into the air. If all of the eight pieces turn upright when they land, the prayers are considered accepted and rejoicing follows; otherwise the ceremonies are repeated.

THE CULTURAL SOCIETIES

The Belle, through association with the Loma, were initiated into the mysteries of the Poro and Sande societies. Finding the societies to be of a cultural nature, the Belle obtained "fire" (the charter) from the Loma to establish the society in their own territories in order to train their boys and girls. In Belle the Poro (male society) is called Finyaa, while they use the same name, Sande (female society), as the Loma. As in the case of the Loma and other tribes having the Poro and Sande, the Belle Finyaa remains in session for four years and the Sande for three years. After a session of one is dissolved, two years must elapse before the other can be put into session. This permits everything pertaining to the outgoing society to be thoroughly "washed" from the bush. The institution of each of those societies is preceded by a ceremonious "turning over" of the bush by one group to the other, and this is always a grand affair.

Like the Loma, the Belle have no dancing mummers in connection with the Sande. Instead, it is the Finyaa that has mummers. These mummers are classified into males and females; but whether male or female, whenever any of these mummers dance, the women in that part of the town where the mummers are dancing must confine themselves indoors.

Apart from the Finyaa and Sande, there are other secret societies some of which have been introduced to the Belle by their neighbors. While a few of these societies are common to both sexes, some are exclusively for men and others strictly for women. They are all secret because the business of each is known only to its members. They are closely connected with the Finyaa and Sande. The following are some of the other societies which exist:

Moli: This secret society is originally Belle, and it is maintained for the protection of its male and female members against the effects of witchcraft. It also cures those who have been harmed by witchcraft.

Kumbe: This society does the same work as Moli, but it is for men only.

Nyinokolli: The name of the society indicates that it is strictly for women. It operates the same as the Kumbe. Both the Kumbe and the Nyinokolli are of Kpelle origin. In the Kpelle country the Kumbe is called Milsli.

Zaze: The Zaze Society, like Finyaa and Sande, was introduced to the Belle by the Loma. Its purpose is to bring luck to its members. Although it is a female society, men are not forbidden to become members.

None of these other societies remain in session for more than one week. Only members of the Finyaa and Sande are eligible for membership. These societies always form and disband preceding the institution of the Finyaa or Sande.

DOMESTIC LIFE AND ECONOMICS

The original culture of the Belle people has been affected by their intermingling with other tribes. Their alliances with the Bandi, Loma, Kpelle and Mende, the inter-marriages between them, and their adherence to the Poro, Sande and Zaze cults, all influenced the Belle mores, customary laws, and religious beliefs to such an extent that there are only a few observable differences between the Belle and their allies.

Being a Kru-speaking people, the towns of the early Belle are not unlike the towns of the Kru people seen on the coast. The huts were found with one door. The people slept on mats placed on beds of mud which they built near the wall. The center was left clear for the fireplace. Each town was fortified against the effects of witchcraft and other calamities by a sort of doctor, who buried a charm for this purpose. The location was marked by rocks which were piled over the charm. A tree was also planted on the spot. Children used this area for a play-ground, and it also served as a gathering place for old folks during their festive activities.

According to the information gained from the Gbalein - Vavala Kpelle, which was confirmed by the Belle themselves, the early people of this tribe were accomplished cannibals. Doomia, the man connected with the bamboo wine near the Kemba Creek, is said to have been one of the leaders. But the practice has long ceased to exist in the tribe. The present generation only hears of it in their traditions.

Men and women of the Belle tribe bathe together in a creek.

Important among Belle mores is that a man go to a friend's house and thank him for some special service or kindness he has rendered. This expression of

thanks must be made about 5:30 a.m. on the day after the service was performed. Failure to do this indicates a lack of a sense of gratitude.

The tandegi, or fanga as it is now generally called, is a musical instrument invented by the Belle people. It was used by them in time of war to move their warriors to bravery. The fanga, samgba, sassaa, konigi (of Loma origin) and various drums are the musical instruments used by the Belle.

Apart from their inter-tribal roads and trails which were used to contact one another, a special drum was used to warn of danger and serious occurrences. In case of actual war, the war horn was sounded. The elephant tusk was sounded at the approach of the king.

Draughts, or checkers, and wari are used by the old folks for amusement. The name for the draughts in Belle is king, and the name for wari is te.

Bombo (drawers) and a cloth over it, was worn by both men and women. In later years, men started wearing gowns. A Belle warrior's dress consisted of a leopard skin shirt and a cap of leopard and sheep skins. On his left shoulder he wore a specially prepared charm of some significance in his profession.

Like all other tribes whose staple food is rice, rice-farming was the principal occupation of the Belle. In addition to rice, they raised cassava (mainly for the leaves which are eaten with the rice), eddoes, sweet potatoes, yams, beni seeds, kefa seeds, corn, guinea corn, cotton, pepper, pumpkins and other vegetables. They also cultivated plantains, bananas, sugarcane, tobacco and kola nuts. Since cows are always needed for feasts and payment of dowries, and sheep and goats are used for religious ceremonies, these animals were raised by almost every leading man of the tribe. Chickens and ducks were also kept. The other occupations of the tribe included fishing and oil-making. In addition, there were a series of crafts practiced, such as making tools and weapons from stone, weaving, dyeing, carving, pottery, and the weaving of hammocks, mats, fishing nets and baskets.

The blacksmith was particularly important to the life of the community, so much so that he was regarded as the father of it. He was governed by the following professional regulations:

- 1) He was required to do his work in the principal town of the community, not in a village.
- 2) In town, his smithy had to be erected at the head of the road leading to the waterside.
- 3) If he found cause to leave one community for another, he could take his hammer with him but not his anvil and bellows. If he violated any of these regulations, he was penalized.

- 4) The community was required to make a farm for him every year in payment for his services.
- 5) He was given special burial ceremonies.

Trade was carried on through a weekly market system. Markets were held and conducted in all the important towns and each town had its own day in the week for marketing. The medium of exchange was iron. The items for sale consisted of their farm and industrial products. A substance obtained from a certain tree or from the piassava stock also was sold as a seasoning to be used in place of salt. Long ago there was considerable trade between the Belle and the Vai. In Belle, there is a demolished site on which a large Vai town once stood. The Belle called it Bunda Vain. The biggest source of wealth for the Belle people in the past, however, came from warfare.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

A Belle man gave a girl a ring when he wanted to marry her. She showed her parents the ring, and they asked her what she thought about the marriage proposal. If she loved the man, she told them so and if they liked him, she went back and told her lover that her parents consented. Later, the parents or representatives of the lover took a package of salt to the girl's parents as a confirmation of the proposal. If the salt was accepted, this indicated the consent of all concerned. The dowry for a wife was paid with a cow and a slave. In the absence of either of these items, a large bundle of iron was paid instead. When this was done, the marriage was consummated and the girl turned over to her husband.

In the Belle country a man is strictly forbidden to have sexual relations with any of his mother's brother's wives. He is, however, free to marry any of his mother's brother's children if he so desires. A man may have relations with two women of the same father and mother but if he cohabitates with a younger sister first, he is not permitted to cohabit with the elder, because she is regarded as his sister-in-law and in the family, she takes the place of the mother. But he could have access to all the younger sisters, if he began with the eldest.

A woman who has two lovers at the same time violates one of the strongest mores of the tribe. When this is discovered, she is severely censured by the Poro dancing mummer who forces her to cook enough rice to feed all the men in town. He also abuses her publicly for trying to create trouble between the two men. Finally, she is required to make a selection of one of them who is publicly announced as her lover. When the selection is made, the rejected party is very strongly advised against any further interference with her, since she has publicly selected the other man to be her lover. Disregard for this advice is severely penalized.

FUNERAL PRACTICES

When a king or chief dies, he is buried either in town or in the special burial-ground of his family with ceremonies befitting his rank. Common people are buried outside of town, but the burial place of the blacksmith has always been by his smithy.

According to tradition, a Poro Dazo who dies is buried in a location known only to high-ranking members of the society. In the event of a Mazo of the Sande dying, only the officers of the society handle the body and bury the remains with the customary ceremonies. The death of a Zo of one of the other secret societies is governed by similar traditions as those of the Poro and Sande.

In former times when a person died, the corpse was tied to a stick and put on the shoulders of two men. Another stick was ceremoniously arranged and placed at a distance. After this was done, the corpse was commanded to move back and forth between the two sticks. If death had been caused by witchcraft or through bad medicine practiced by the dead person, the corpse would move. If the corpse obeyed the order, it was buried and some leaves were placed over the grave after burial to keep people from dreaming of the corpse. In case the dead person was not guilty, burial was made in the general burial ground of the "pure" dead. This is also the practice of the Glebo people in Maryland County.

THE LONG HAIR OF BELLE WOMEN

There are two stories told to trace the origin of the long hair worn by Belle women. One tradition relates that there was a man by the name of Doomia in the town of Gbelenyalahun, who tapped a bamboo tree on the edge of the Kemba creek for its wine. For some time Doomia found wine in the pendant container each time he went to his bamboo tree; but one day, he went to the tree and found it empty. Doomia was annoyed by the trick someone was playing on him. He hid in the bushes close to the tree so he could catch the culprit. While hiding, he saw a crocodile emerge from the water and transform itself into a handsome young man. The man left his skin under the bamboo tree and climbed it so he could get the wine. While he was drinking the wine, Doomia rushed out of his hiding place and took possession of the skin under the tree. The man was distressed. He begged Doomia not to deprive him of his skin, but to let him have it. He said if Doomia would, he would take him to his home under the water. Doomia agreed and returned his skin. After directing Doomia as to what he had to do to be able to go down with him into the water, he again turned himself into a crocodile. They both plunged down into the abyss.

Under the water Doomia found a large town with people living in it just as he and his own people were living on earth. These people cordially welcomed Doomia and suggested a lasting friendship between them. But Doomia, finding these water people so pretty, especially the women with their long-flowing hair,

decided on something instead of more friendship. He returned to earth and collected a number of his friends and took them down to invade the water town and help themselves with the spoils.

The water people, not wanting to go to war, gave Doomia three of their beautiful women to take back to earth. From this incident, it is claimed that the long hair worn by Belle women, came from these three women who lived and mingled with the people of Belle.

The second story traces the origin of the long hair of Belle women to Sumo Folle, one of the fathers of Kenata in the Batti Clan. It is said that Sumo Folle was a water man whose hair hung down to his waist. It is reported that from him the women came to have long hair.

Apart from this characteristic of the tribe, most of the people of the town of Kondesu are known to have long, straight hair. It is said that these people are descendants of some white people who were driven to that part of the country by another set of white people with whom they had had a fight. The cannon used in this fight can still be seen at Kondesu. The people of Kondesu, although Belle, are distinguished from the rest of their tribe by the name of Lowo. This is because of their ancestors and their own peculiar hair.

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

The Bala Saando: The two words "Bala Saando" mean "Balla's family". It has been mentioned that the leading founders of the Belle tribe were two brothers, Judu and Neun, their uncle Bala and Neun's son Gbangua.

When Bala was about to die, he asked the Belle tribe not to permit any woman to see his remains after his death. In fact, he requested that women never be allowed to see the remains of any member of his family.

When he died a second Bala became head of the family. When he was about to die, he expressed the desire to eat some domboi. The domboi was given to him, he ate it and died. For this reason, the spirits of the Bala Saando are not fed when they are worshipped.

Tribal and Family Totems: True Belle do not eat bananas, particularly the very short kind. They regard this as their guardian plant for fertility. Another totem of the tribe is the leopard. If a Belle touches the skin of this animal it will cause him to go insane. As is the practice in some other tribes, Belle twins do not eat black deer.

Members of the Nwanya Kolli family do not eat steinbok. This is because one of their ancestors was caught by a crocodile who put him in a hole in the riverbed. While the old man was sitting hopelessly in the hole, he saw a ray of light over him. that came through a small opening caused by the foot of a steinbok engaged

in a fight. By means of the opening, he was able to escape from what had appeared to be a hopeless confinement. Hence this family regards the steinbok as their friend.

Omens: There is a small animal living in the bush which the Belle call kpoo. According to their belief, it is an omen of death if they hear this animal crying during the day. Another sign of death is the singing of the gunbenyanda bird. The tribe also regards the seeing of a chameleon, or gebue, at any time as an indication of some death. The zengbetuutu and the niange are birds whose languages can be understood and interpreted by some Belle people. Nonobolo, the rooster, is believed to be a foreteller of coming events. Kolakpokpo is a bird that walks in the center of the road. If this bird comes toward and passes a man who is walking in the road, it is a sign of bad luck. If the bird runs in front of a traveller, it is a good omen. When kamukah, the fire-fly, enters a house at night and is seen by the residents, it means some fresh meat or an agreeable stranger is coming the next day.

The Spirit-Catching Spirit: There is in the Belle country a spirit that catches evil spirits. That is, if someone dies, especially a child, and the death is suspected to be unnatural, this spirit is called to catch whatever spirit was responsible for the witchcraft practice. The name of this catching spirit is Ngainkama. When the evil spirit is caught, it is kept under duress until it confesses and tells why it has committed the act it has.

Desertion of the Tribe in Time of War: The spirits of the tribe are opposed to any of their sons deserting their territory in time of war. If the son of a Belle happens to be in any of the neighboring territories and hears of an attack made on his tribe, it is his duty to return home and take part in the fight. If he does not return, especially after hearing the sound of the war horn, he will die.

LOCAL NARRATIVES

The Abyss in the Tuma River: The Tuma river separates a portion of the Bokomu Chieftdom from Belle. Long ago there was a town on the Belle side of the river called Nyeneun. The guardian spirit of the owner of this town lodged in an abyss in the river. One day, the old chief, apprehensive about an attack from his enemies, decided to get out of their reach by going to live under the water. He therefore ordered all his people to collect their entire personal effects and follow him to the riverside. Reaching the river, the chief walked on a large log that lay across it to the edge of the abyss. When he got to the end of the log, he placed his chair on the water and sat on it, whirled around and went down to the bottom. Except for one old lady, everyone else took their belongings and made their way into the abyss in the same manner.

The enemies whose attack the chief had feared, arrived shortly after the town had been abandoned. They found the old lady sitting at the riverside and inquired of her the whereabouts of the other people of the town. In reply, she told them to follow her and she would show them where they had gone. She then took her chair, placed it on the water, sat on it, whirled around and also went down to the

bottom. This terrified the attackers and they ran away. From that time on, talking, drum-beating and singing have been occasionally heard from the bottom of the abyss.

The Genie That Talked: In the Manjala Creek near which the town of Kpakonu, or Fasaima is situated, there is an abyss from which a genie always talks. Former Clan Chief Wiido of the Batti Clan, a native of Fasaima, is one of those who have stated that they have actually heard the genie speak.

There was a man by the name of Nyono at Fasaima, who was a professional fanga-player. One day, this man went out to cut some bamboo from a bamboo tree which stood near this abyss. As he crossed the creek and started to cut the bamboo, he heard a voice from under the abyss asking, "Who is that cutting bamboo over this place"? The fanga-player replied, "It is I, Nyono". When the voice heard this he asked, "Are old man Yaasie Gbehn and old lady Mavaa Zuli in town"? Nyono replied, "Yes". "Go and tell them to come", said the voice, "but do not let old man Zomgba know about their coming".

Nyono delivered the message quietly to the two parties without letting Zomgba know anything. However, since Zomgba and Chief Wiido observed Nyono and the two old people in close conversation, and then saw them going towards the creek, they followed them out of curiosity, to see what was happening there.

When they reached the spot, they listened awhile, but heard nothing. Nyono then said to the voice that had sent him, "You sent me to call old man Yaasie Gbehn and old lady Mavaa Zuli, and they are here, but you are saying nothing". The voice answered, "Yes, I sent you to call Yaasie Gbehn and Mavaa Zuli, and I see they are here. But I told you not to tell Zomgba anything. Since he is here with them, I have nothing to say".

Around Gbelenyalahun: The area in which Gbelenyalahun is located is surrounded by mountains and hills. On one of these hills one can see a large cobweb among the trees which is strong enough to bear any weight. On the same hill a group of society dancers who were petrified in the active performance of their art also can be seen.

Another hill is called Masakongo. It is not far from old man Masa Kolli's village, and the great Mbawulome once had a village at its foot. People have many times quite unexpectedly found this hill throbbing in four different spots close to its summit. If anyone wishes to see this event, they must not mention it or they will fail to see it.

One of the mountains in the Gbelenyalahun area is called Koibala. In this mountain one sometimes sees a large quantity of cowrie shells. From them, the noise of elves and the roar of the lion can be heard.

Nyawuze is the hill nearest Cbelenyalahun. Here is the story told by former Paramount Chief Momolu Sewe concerning this hill:

"About three months before my father, Chief Degula, died, my brother

Bonaa, who was then the paramount chief of Belle, had a feast at our town of Gbelenyalahun. One day, while the feast was going on, we observed some people building a house on the hill which is near the town. This hill is called Nyawuze. The incident was strange, so we went straight to the old man and told him about it. His reply to us was, "Yes, I see the house that they are building, but have you nothing else to do but to look at it? That house is being built for me".

While this mysterious house was still being thatched, the old man sent me on an errand to the Buluyiema area where I had to spend a couple of weeks. I left my father in good health but before I returned home he died. His death occurred the very day the thatching of the house was completed. Since that time, the building of this mysterious house on the hill has always preceeded the death of a distinguished member of our family.

In addition to this, whenever there is a fire at Gbelenyalahun, we can see men and women coming down from this hill to help fight the fire.

At the foot of Nyawuze, there is a big pond from which singing is occasionally heard. When a serious event is about to occur a woman appears in the pond. She sings and then disappears. Also there is a cat which comes from the pond every night and returns to it the next morning. There is a rice barn at Gbelenyalahun and animals cannot be tied to any of its posts. If they are, they die. Another interesting thing that can be seen at Gbelenyalahun is a palm tree which was grown from a banana tree planted by a man named Bakutonda.

The sons of Gbelenyalahun are forbidden to say they want to leave town because they are disgusted with it. The spirits declare if this reason is given, the man planning to leave will die while he is planning his departure.

The Orange Tree on the Rock: At Kpawuluzu, there is an orange tree standing on a rock. How this tree managed to grow on the rock has been a puzzle.

Around Gohnyande: On the road to Fasaima is a small creek whose water can be drawn and taken to any town but Gohnyande. People from Gohnyande can drink as much of the water as they like, but they must never take it in a container into town. If they do, a big quarrel will be the result.

In the center of the town of Gohnyande there is a small hole. When it rains, a large school of fish can be seen coming from the hole and running into the creek nearby. Still later, another school of a larger species of fish can be seen coming from the creek and returning into the hole. As soon as the rain stops the hole becomes dry.

The Five Giants of Wonigba: In the town of Wonigba, the first town of the Lobaizu clan, there once lived four men and one woman of extraordinary stature. Nothing much can be remembered by the present generation in connection with these people, except that they were very tall, very large, very hairy, and very peculiar in their manner of life. They lived by themselves and interfered very little with the rest of the people of the community. The one woman among them was not married to any of the men. These people remained in Wonigba until they died out.

A Curse on the Town of Belle Yella: One of the early leaders of the town of Belle Yella once employed a certain Muslim to pray for the prosperity of his town. The Muslim agreed and did his work. On his way home, he was pursued and overtaken by some of the young men of the town. They coaxed him away from the main road into a small village on the wayside. They took everything their leader had given him as payment for the work he had done, and then killed him. As he was about to breathe his last breath, he reversed the blessing he had prayed on the town and made it a curse. That is why strangers instead of natives prosper at Belle Yella.

APPENDIX I.

RULERS OF THE TRIBE FROM KING NWANYA KOLLI
TO THE PRESENT DAY

<u>NAME</u>	<u>HOME TOWN</u>
1. Nwanya Kolli	Teigili
2. Kpango	Ngainga
3. Degula *	Gbelenyalahun
4. Doba Konyaun	Kpawuluzu
5. Nwoni Sewe	Kondesu
6. Dewule Kandakai	Gatema
7. Mbawulome (Mende)	Looma
8. Kutubu (Mende)	Looma
9. Nyango	Teigili
10. Woiso	Gbelenyalahun
11. Bonaa	Kenata
12. Nyono	Guowoma
13. Momolu Sewe	Gbelenyalahun
14. Lake Tokpa	Baloma
15. Willie Belle **	Mavodo
16. Yakpawolu Barnett	Kpawuluzu

* During the administration of President G. W. Gibson, King Degula and his contemporaries, Moimgbe of Bunde, and Vabaa Zazu of Gizima-Ziema sent a delegation to Monrovia to pledge their allegiance to the Liberian government. Degula was requested by his friends to head the delegation. The friendly and loyal attitude demonstrated by these people towards the government was highly appreciated by the president who gave King Degula gifts to be taken back to his people as a token of his friendship.

** Paramount Chief Willie Belle who was in control of the area when we made our research tour has been elevated to the National Legislature and Yakpawolo Barnett, was elected and appointed in his place.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE OFFICIAL PAPERS OF WILLIAM V.S. TUBMAN, PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA: COVERING ADDRESSES, MESSAGES, SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS, 1960-67. Edited by E. Reginald Townsend, Assisted by Adeodu Bowen Jones. London: Longmans Green & Co. Ltd., 1968. 687 Pp.

W. V. S. Tubman is not usually placed in the front ranks of Africa's leaders in spite of his unprecedented 25 years as President of Africa's oldest republic. He has not inspired enthusiasm among westerners as have such personalities as Nyerere, Bourgiba, or even Toure'. He is seldom if ever quoted in the multitude of studies of the "African way" to political development. Nor has he developed a dramatic style or device for expressing the uniqueness of the Liberian-African personality. Some students of African affairs are content to write off Tubman and Liberia as sui generis, given the nation's heritage of nineteenth century American political institutions, behavior and leadership. Tubman and most other top Liberian leaders were known as "Americo-Liberians", descendants of the American Negroes and freed slaves who founded Liberia; hence, they are not considered by many Euro-Americans to have their roots in Africa.

Perhaps the view given widest credence among Africanists is that Tubman and his lieutenants represent a small elite group which is determined to maintain power even at the cost of the nation's development; that the mass of the indigenous tribal people are not permitted to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of their nation; and that Liberia is an archetypical Fanonist one-party dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Hence, if one is to study Liberia at all, it should be in terms of a regressive political system which requires a revolutionary catharsis.

Serious students of Liberia, while perhaps having shared one or more of the above premises, seldom end up with such opinions. Comparative studies of political development, which examine the mobilization-type systems along with those which are more or less laissez-faire, would do well to conclude that Africa's leaders are not simply--and romantically--"the instruments of some type of relentless 'process of modernization'," but are, rather, "individuals engaged in a complex process of problem solving."¹ It is as a problem solver that I regard Tubman. He is, furthermore, a modernizer, albeit of the "defensive" brand identified by Dankwart A. Rustow. The volume of speeches and papers under review underscores this point.

The principle themes which run through Tubman's public statements over the now five and one-half terms of his presidency are 1) unification of the historically separate settler and indigenous peoples of Liberia; 2) economic development based on foreign capital and technical investment; 3) international relations, focused increasingly on the African continent; 4) the expansion of social services, particularly education; and 5) the problem of political opposition. There also is

1. Charles Anderson, Fred von der Mehden and Crawford Young, Issues of Political Development. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1967), 7.

a generous sprinkling of religious and social commentary which so enrich Liberian life and, indeed, inspire its political rhetoric as well. But compared with the early style in which Tubman addressed himself to the above subjects, which appeared in the first volume of his speeches covering the years 1944-59,² the problems Tubman has been grappling with in the last eight years are typically those of a developing nation caught up in the currents and agonies of rather sudden and profound modernization. While the earlier addresses were first hopeful and then full of self-congratulation, now the issues are economic austerity, self-help, and consolidation of Liberia's internal gains.

Take the earlier question of national integration. Tubman had promised in the 1943 election campaign "to strive with all my might to agglutinate and unify our population". But in his first inaugural address in 1944 he warned that Liberia's centers of civilization were in danger of being overrun by the more numerous tribal people. Thus, the "civilized" population needed to be increased by "people of our own blood", that is, from the United States, the West Indies, and British West Africa. Yet, at the first Unification Council in 1954, Tubman had concluded that "Americo-Liberianism must be forgotten...". He crowned his earlier promise in 1964 when he welcomed elected representatives of the newly constituted hinterland tribal counties to the Legislature. (Independence Day Message, 26 July 1964).

Admittedly, the transition to "direct" and representative government has been slow, and still remains uncompleted. But at the same time, the obstacles to unification, posed by both the conservative old families and the conservative tribal peasants, persist. Thus, Tubman continues to instruct all Liberians about the "bitter fruits" of this internal division (page 17). At times, however, he finds it advisable to acknowledge the heroism and special claims of the settlers' descendants, for example in his defense of the maintenance of the celebration of Mathilda Newport Day, a semi-legendary heroine of the early colonist-tribal wars (page 146).

Liberia's hundred-year-old social stratification problem has a parallel in the Republic's lonely independence in a European-governed continent. Tubman's early speeches reflect Liberia's unease in the new and growing African community of independent states. In 1944 he embraced the Atlantic Charter, particularly its expressions of freedom and self-determination. But it was of Liberia's freedom that Tubman for good reasons was thinking. In 1952 he took a gradualist approach to independence for fellow Africans. And on the eve of Ghana's independence, Tubman apparently was deeply concerned about the question of African leadership. By the 1960's, however, Tubman displayed a more confident posture. Once his fears of political unification in Africa (the leadership of which seemed destined for radical hands) were allayed, he became a firm champion of African liberation and, as he had been from the 1950's, an advocate of functional cooperation in loose regional economic associations and the like.

2. Reginald E. Townsend, (ed.) President Tubman of Liberia Speaks, (London: Consolidated Publications Co., 1959).

By the 1960's there was also a difference in Tubman's treatment of economics. In the 1950's he apparently still needed to promote the idea of Liberia's Open Door Policy to conservative leaders. This policy provided excellent terms for foreign investors who developed Liberia's iron ore potential and expanded its rubber and forestry industries. In recent years, the blessings and burdens of Liberia's astronomical economic growth (second only to Japan's since World War II, according to the Northwestern economic surveys)³ have induced Tubman to seek to control their consequences. On the one hand, government agencies proliferated in order to contend with the growing need for regulation of the booming economy. On the other hand, the consequences of the country's social mobilization required a more efficient administration, one which could penetrate the tribal hinterland which had been, in effect, governed separately from the old coastal counties. Finally, owing to the government's difficulties, both in the handling of unprecedented revenues and in ambitious investment in the public sector (primary roads increased from virtually zero to 1200 miles; school attendance eightfold; expenditures for health facilities over four times during some 15 years), and a sudden drop in the world prices for rubber and iron ore, Liberia's mainstays, the Government of Liberia found itself deeply in debt. Following an IMF standby loan (and several subsequent agreements), Tubman turned his government's and the country's attention and efforts to riding out a period of fiscal austerity. Pride in Liberia's prosperity gave way to the more familiar rhetoric of other new nations: hard work, self help, and administrative efficiency.

Here then is the confluence of sudden growth, adverse circumstances, and the will of the nation's leader to manage them and maintain stability which launched Liberia's modernization. This is not to say that Unification is a *fait accompli*, that the government uses its resources efficiently, or that Liberia is pulling itself up by its bootstraps. Which underdeveloped nation has successfully done so? But, the task is being met forthrightly, as Tubman has pointed out.

First, we must live within our available financial resources. No one owes us a living, and our first duty is to do everything we can to help ourselves.

By this means we shall achieve our second objective which is to adhere rigidly to the financial plans worked out in co-operation with the International Monetary Fund.

This, in turn, will permit us to achieve our third objective, which is to honour our obligations to other governments, international institutions, and others who have loaned us money.

3. Robert Clower et al., Growth Without Development. An Economic Survey of Liberia, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.

Like any Commander-in-Chief of an army I must talk to you frankly, and give you my confidence. Only by this means can leadership be effective, and the people of Liberia -- who make up the Army -- be expected to give of their best.

It is apparent that for some time to come, while circumstances force us to be on the defensive, there can be no alternative to a policy of austerity, and rigid financial control. For all of us, this must mean hardship in some degree, and postponement of some of the things that, as a Government, and as individuals, we should have liked to do. However, there is no escape from this situation if our defences are to be made secure. There are no easy answers and no quick solutions. But if our defences are made secure, we shall ensure the financial stability of our country, our international reputation will be preserved -- indeed, our determination can enhance our international standing -- as well as ensure that the savings of our people are protected. (pages 94-5).

With characteristic religious fervor, Tubman has commented: "Let everyone practise the gospel of hard and productive labor." (p. 87)

If Tubman's recent speeches show his deep concern about Liberia's economic problems, they have been equally concerned about disloyalty and threats of subversion. These phenomena reflect the successes rather than the failures of his policies. For Liberians have experienced extensive social dislocations, deriving from the nation's economic growth, urbanization, enhanced communications, growing educational opportunities, and new political experiences such as in exposure to the spreading central government administration.

Whereas in the past major opposition has come only from within the Americo-Liberian community, now students, aspiring tribal politicians and young chiefs, workers in labor unions, and at least some representatives of the man in the interior are asking for a piece of the action. While Tubman may warn of "trading ideologies" surfacing at Liberian institutions of higher learning, he is really acknowledging that Liberia has come of age, that its citizens are pretty much like those elsewhere in the developing (and, indeed, the developed) world; that the more they get, the more they want. It is Tubman himself who has led them to this stage. It remains to be seen whether "Shad", now 73 years old, can turn his sixth term of office into one in which more democratic forms and more flexible institutions may emerge from the supporting structure he has helped build. Should he succeed in at least establishing the bases for such a transition -- a task which calls for the foresight and power of an Ataturk (or a Tubman?) -- Liberia may yet confound her critics. The answer does not reside in this second volume of Tubman's speeches. Perhaps we, and Liberia, will be fortunate enough to uncover it in the third volume, if Mr. Townsend and Dr. Jones will continue the work they have so ably carried out thus far.

Martin Lowenkopf
Stanford University

CURRENT RESEARCH

Bertha Baker Azango, director of evaluation and guidance services, Republic of Liberia, is studying relationships between non-academic factors and academic achievement of Liberian students.

David E. Blanchard, Economics Department, Wisconsin State University at Oshkosh, is completing his doctoral dissertation, tentatively titled "Economic Development Through Integration: Case Study of the Mano Tribe".

George E. Brooks, jr., associate professor of history, Indiana University, is completing a research paper entitled, "The Employment of Kru Mariners on Merchant Vessels and Men of War in West Africa in the Nineteenth Century".

Penelope Campbell, assistant professor history, Agnes Scott College, is continuing her research on the activities of the Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857.

Frank R. Chalk, assistant professor of history, Sir George Williams University, is currently studying the formulation of American policy towards Liberia.

Gerald E. Currens, Anthropology Department, University of Oregon, recently completed translating the New Testament into Loma.

Ronald W. Davis, assistant professor of history, Western Michigan University, is working on a history of the Kru coast.

Vernon R. Dorjahn, professor of anthropology, University of Oregon, is interested in Liberian attitudes toward fertility, and the effects of family planning and migrations.

Humphrey J. Fisher, lecturer in history at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, is working on the history of Islam in Liberia and is preparing an introduction for the forthcoming re-issue of Benjamin Anderson's accounts of his visits to Musadu.

David M. Foley, assistant professor of history, University of Georgia, is working on a history of Liberia's foreign relations during the period 1885-1912.

Richard M. Fulton, assistant professor of political science, Case Western Reserve University, is revising for publication his doctoral dissertation, "The Kpelle of Liberia: A Study of Political Change in the Liberian Interior".

John H. Gay, visiting assistant professor in the Social Science Division, University of California at Irvine, and Prof. Michael Cole, also at Irvine, are continuing their joint research on cognition and culture among the Kpelle.

P. E. H. Hair, lecturer in history, University of Liverpool, is preparing a study, in conjunction with Mrs. Gail Stewart, on the development of the Vai script.

W. Penn Handwerker, Anthropology Department, University of Oregon, is completing his doctoral dissertation on the social organization of urban Bassa.

Svend E. Holsoe, assistant professor of anthropology and director of African Studies, DePauw University, is completing a book on pre-1822 Liberia based primarily on European documentary evidence and is continuing his historical research on northwestern Liberia.

Alta Jablow, professor of anthropology, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, is engaged in a comparison of dramatis personae in West African myths and tales.

Milton R. Konvitz, professor of industrial and labor relations and of law, Cornell University, continues as director of the Liberian codification project which has been preparing laws for the Republic of Liberia since 1952.

John F. Kunkel, Bong mining company, Liberia, is studying Christian dominational work and community programming as they relate to modernization, social change and ethnic tensions.

Ronald J. Kurtz, associate professor of anthropology, Grinnell College, is studying role and cultural change among the Bassa and Kpelle as well as completing his report on the Grebo-speaking peoples which work was done as a member of the Ethnographic Survey of Southeastern Liberia sponsored by the Tubman Center of African Culture.

J. Gus Liebenow, professor of government and chairman of the African studies program, Indiana University, has completed a book entitled Liberia: Evolution of Privilege.

Frederick D. McEvoy, instructor in anthropology, University of Oregon, is completing his doctoral dissertation titled, "A Study of Sabo Labor Migration".

Floyd J. Miller, History Department, University of Minnesota, is working on Martin R. Delany, active in the Liberian Exodus Association of Charleston in the late 1870's, as a doctoral dissertation topic.

Dorothy B. Purves, research analyst, Library of Congress, is continuing her work on the Bandi language, and is preparing a selection of Bandi stories for publication.

James C. Riddell, Anthropology Department, University of Oregon, is completing his doctoral dissertation, "Labor Migration and Village Change in Central Mano Towns".

James T. Sabin, History Department, Columbia University, is working on his doctoral dissertation, tentatively titled, "Immigration, Assimilation, and Social Mobility in 19th Century Liberia".

Wolfe W. Schmokel, associate professor of history, University of Vermont, is engaged in research on Germany's relations with Liberia and Ethiopia, ca. 1880-1918.

Eli Seifman, professor of education, State University of New York at Stony Brook, is engaged in research on the colonization movement and Liberia.

H. Dieter Seibel, visiting lecturer in sociology, Princeton University, recently completed a research project entitled "Adaption to Wage Labor -- A Study into the Social System of the Bong Mining Company".

William C. Siegmann, formerly of Cuttington College, Liberia and beginning in the fall of 1969 a graduate student at Indiana University, is writing up his research on the Bassa people carried out in 1968 as a member of the Ethnographic Survey of Southeastern Liberia, sponsored by the Tubman Center of African Culture.

INFORMATION REQUESTED

Any information concerning, or examples of the Gola script would be most appreciated by David Dalby. Any materials sent to the editors will be forwarded to Professor Dalby.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A conference on Liberian studies sponsored by the Committee on African Studies, Stanford University will be held on August 1st and 2nd, 1969. Persons interested in further information should contact Professor Martin Lowenkopf, Department of Political Science, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 94305.

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