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NORTHEASTERN SIERRA LEONE**

By C. Magbaily Fyle

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## PRECOLONIAL COMMERCE IN NORTHEASTERN SIERRA LEONE

by C. Magbaily Fyle

The area of northeastern Sierra Leone has been inadequately lumped into more general systems of commerce in Upper Guinea or the Sierra Leone hinterland in the precolonial period. This trend has been partly due to two factors. A lack of historical exploration of the area has led to a misreading of the role of a plethora of petty chiefdoms dominating it, especially after the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Second, the area has been overlooked as part of a more generalized trading system with stronger emphasis elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will attempt to examine the nature of commerce in northeastern Sierra Leone particularly centered around a strong and relatively extensive kingdom called Solimana. This will help to demonstrate the commercial influence Solimana exerted on its neighbors, as well as in relation to the development of late nineteenth century long distance trade from that area. An exploration will be made of interregional trade systems between Solimana and its neighbors, and Solimana's participation in long distance trade (or "through" trade).

### The Political Matrix

The area described here as northeastern Sierra Leone historically spilled over the current political boundaries between Sierra Leone and the Republic of Guinea. It included large sections of

the present Région de Faranah of the Republic of Guinea. Ethnically it was composed of Yalunka to the north, Sankaran to the northeast, Koranko to the southeast, and peripherally, Limba in a southwesterly direction. All of these except the Limba were Mande-speaking peoples.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the area was dominated by the Solima Yalunka state called Solimana. This state coalesced about the late eighteenth century and was formed by Yalunka of the Samura clan, descended from an eponymous ancestor, Solimanga Samura. The formation of the state had involved particularly neighboring Yalunka of different clans who had initially come together to resist the domination of the Fula of Futa Jallon who had started a jihad in 1727-1728. This union, which had been led by the Samura of Soliman-khori (Solima country), had survived the Fula threat and gradually, as the nineteenth century progressed, the Solima Yalunka extended political control over large sections of Koranko territory and people north of the Seli (Rokel) River.<sup>3</sup>

South of the Seli, Koranko country was organized into relatively smaller states, some of which bore political relationship with the Solima. One group of the Koranko, the Barawa, had been driven out of their homes by the mid-nineteenth century, and eventually took refuge in Limba country at and around the town of Kabala.<sup>4</sup> But the Limba of Wara Wara, as this area was called, did not dominate any areas outside their own region. In fact they had much trouble with the Fula of Futa Jallon well into the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Until the nineteenth century, Sankaran country did not present a picture of large or centralized political units. This area had been the home of the Koranko before many of them migrated further into Sierra Leone.<sup>6</sup> As should be clear by now, the political bulwark of this area was the Solima Yalunka kingdom centered on Falaba, its capital, which was founded about 1780.<sup>7</sup> Falaba also became the center of an extensive interregional trade<sup>8</sup> involving exchanges with the Koranko, Sankaran, and Limba, as well as the distant coastal Soso.

#### The Start of Interregional Trade

Trade between the Solima Yalunka and their neighbors appears to have started since the late seventeenth century, well before the formation of the Solima state. Impetus for its inception came from a desire for salt, a scarce commodity in the hinterland. This product could be obtained on the coast in the Samu area of the Kambia district of Sierra Leone, where salt was then manufactured from deposits in the Scarcies River.<sup>9</sup> The traditions of the Tonko Limba, who occupied the coastal area around Samu at that time,<sup>10</sup> relate that one of their ruling houses was founded by Manso Dansa Samura. This Dansa was a Solima Yalunka of the Samura clan who was traveling toward the coast in search of salt.<sup>11</sup> This tradition is supported by those of the Samura of Solima which maintain that Manso Dansa, grandson of Solimanga, was responsible for the creation of dynasties in Tonko Limba.<sup>12</sup> Manso Dansa became manga (king) of the

Solima in the early eighteenth century and obviously executed his travels before this event.

The traditions of the Samura also indicate that before he became manga, Manso Dansa was a great trader, travelling into Sankaran country, taking salt there to trade for gold.<sup>13</sup> These traditions, therefore, clearly relate the start of interregional trade to the desire for salt which could be obtained near the coast. This also induced the trade between the Solima and the Sankaran, who also desired salt.

The Atlantic slave trade also played an important role in the development of this commerce. Soso people closer to the coast required slaves in this period to sell to Europeans in exchange for manufactured goods from Europe. A. G. Laing describes the exploits of Manso Dansa's father, Yana Tagesa, in whose rule the Solima raided for slaves among the Limba and sold such slaves to the Soso "who brought goods to exchange from the waterside."<sup>14</sup>

Thus one could conclude that interregional commerce existed before the nineteenth century between the Solima Yalunka and the Sankaran on the one hand, and between the Solima and the Soso and Limba nearer the coast, on the other. In this instance, before the founding of Falaba, it appears to have been largely on the initiative of the Solima and was not centered on Falaba.

This trade was conducted by a relay system in which goods moved from one region to another through successive intermediaries.<sup>15</sup>

The Soso brought manufactured goods to the Solima who also travelled to Limba country in search of salt. Some of this salt and imported goods the Solima took to Sankaran to obtain gold and cloth which the Sankaran were experts at weaving. Woven cloth was also used by the Sankaran in their trading trips to the gold mines of Boure to acquire the gold which attracted the Solima. It is unlikely that the Solima exported much of this gold to the Europeans on the coast in the eighteenth century. It was chiefly used for local ornamentation, for it was reported that in Solima country "every woman carries about twenty bars in her ear."<sup>16</sup> Some might have been used to decorate saddles. Tradition talks about a golden saddle which became the source of a major political rift between the Solima and some of their former subjects in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

#### Expansion of Interregional Trade

As the eighteenth century wore on, it appears that gold began to find its way out of Solima country in greater quantities and trade with the Koranko became important. In 1822, merchants from Kowaia in Sankaran country found their way to Falaba after having lost contact with that town for about forty years.<sup>18</sup> The fact that these traders brought a "considerable quantity of ivory and gold"<sup>19</sup> show that ivory as well as gold had become important items of trade between Falaba and Sankaran by the late eighteenth century. Not having been in contact with Falaba for such a long time, these

merchants must have known that ivory was marketable there for them to have brought a considerable quantity. Since ivory was not used in Solimana, it must have been sold to the Soso who brought the manufactured goods and who traded directly with the Europeans. Along with this ivory must have gone some of the gold obtained from Boure by the Sankaran.

Gold, ivory, and salt then became, by the late eighteenth century, important articles of interregional trade centered on Solimana. The Solima no longer travelled to the coast for salt, which was brought to them by the Soso traders. Some of this salt reached Sankaran and Koranko country from Solimana. Laing was told by Manga Sori Wuleng in 1822 that it was impossible for Laing to go to Koranko country from Solimana without taking salt along to pay his way.<sup>20</sup> Tobacco from the coast was also sold to the Koranko by the Solima.<sup>21</sup>

Much of this trade took place in Falaba and was personally controlled by the manga. It could not occur without his consent and his presence. When traders arrived in any part of the Solima state to do business, all the goods brought by them were taken to the manga's trading house which served as the market.<sup>22</sup> Word was soon circulated around Solimana that a market was about to be called, naming the articles to be traded. On a fixed day, all who intended business went to the manga's trading house. Under his personal supervision, the trade was executed and payments made to

him. He then deducted duties and returned the rest to the traders, who returned to their own countries sometime later.<sup>23</sup>

### Valuation of Commodities

The way goods were valued in this regional trade centered on Falaba is now difficult to determine. Values were understood in terms of the relative scarcity of these commodities. Whether there was a currency medium or not is uncertain, although some sources claim that iron bars were used.<sup>24</sup> It is definite, however, that the rates of exchange were worked out in proportion to the amount and value of the goods exchanged. By the 1870s, for instance, a roll of locally grown cotton was worth three heads of tobacco in Kono country, four in Koranko, and eight in Falaba.<sup>25</sup> Translated into cash (which was possible by this time), the roll of cotton was worth one dollar or four shillings sterling in Falaba.<sup>26</sup> Within this interregional economy then, the farther away one moved from the important commercial center of Falaba, the less expensive locally produced goods became. An enterprising businessman could travel to Kono country with six heads of tobacco to buy cotton, getting sixteen heads in return if he executed the trip successfully and returned to Falaba. In the 1820s, the value of goods taken by the Soso to Falaba would rise two hundred percent by the time they reached Falaba.<sup>27</sup>

The Solima and Long Distance Trade

By the 1870s, the Solima had become involved in extensive long distance or "through" trade<sup>28</sup> with the colony of Sierra Leone at its capital, Freetown. This colony had, throughout the nineteenth century, been keenly concerned to attract trade from the distant hinterland by sending missions to the interior and, later in the century, by paying annual cash presents called stipends to distant interior rulers.<sup>29</sup>

While long distance trade to Freetown from Futa Jallon, neighbors of the Solima Yalunka, improved during the nineteenth century,<sup>30</sup> such trade with Solimana was carried on at a very small scale after Gordon Laing's visit to Falaba in 1822. The first caravans from the Solima area were reported in the Sierra Leone colony in July 1824. They were made up of "Soolimas and Koorankos."<sup>31</sup> Long distance trade through Solimana was interdicted by laws against traders going through the state. In 1822 it was reported in Freetown that "the Sangaras . . . have been obliged to barter their gold and fine cloths in the Soolima and Fouta countries for European articles, the natives of the latter countries. . . preventing their approach to the waterside."<sup>32</sup> But while trade with Futa improved, Gordon Laing's efforts did not change the Solima situation. Solima's trade was apparently satisfied by the relay systems centered on Falaba.

### The Katimbo Market

By the 1860s, patterns of trade from Solimana had been changed. Solima trade was now moving southwards to Katimbo, a market town within the Biriwa Limba state some sixty miles from Falaba. Allen Howard has remarked on the absence of market places in this general area which he calls the Sierra Leone-Guinea plain.<sup>33</sup> If a market place could be described as "an authorized public concourse of buyers and sellers of commodities meeting at a place more or less strictly limited or defined, at an appointed time,"<sup>34</sup> then Katimbo could definitely be described as a market place. In 1869 a British traveller, Winwood Reade, passed through Katimbo and described it as "a market town frequented by Foulahs who go there to sell cattle for slaves."<sup>35</sup> By the 1870s, two French travellers recorded this observation of the Katimbo market: "There is an important market at Katimbo; Limba take salt from the coast there; Foulahs and Mandingoes carry cattle, while the Sangarabs take there gold from Boure as well as rolls of cotton."<sup>36</sup>

The market at Katimbo must have been readily obvious and marked for it to be specially mentioned by foreign observers. While mechanisms of trade are not indicated in detail (obviously because these visitors did not stay long), prominent articles of trade are named. Howard's generalization about markets in this area therefore does not hold. Even as far north as Saraya in the Yalunka country of Baleya east of Futa Jallon, a market was reported in the same

period where "foreign as well as native goods were daily exposed for sale."<sup>37</sup>

By the 1860s at least, the Solima were taking their trade to Katimbo. Why this change in trade patterns took place remains a matter of conjecture. But this period saw the rise of the Hubu, Fula rebels from the Futa Jallon state. The Hubu were fanatic Muslims who set up a separate community between Futa and Solimana. From there they proceeded to disrupt trade going to and from Solimana.<sup>38</sup> The activities of the Hubu might have adversely affected much of Solimana's westerly trade; thus the attraction of Katimbo could have become stronger. By the late 1860s, it was reported by interior visitors and the Solima and Sankaran themselves that they were taking their trade to Katimbo.<sup>39</sup>

From Katimbo, the pull of the British from the Sierra Leone colony added the extra impetus to draw trade from Solimana to Freetown. Since its inception, the Sierra Leone colony had depended on trade with its hinterland for sustenance. As indicated earlier, every effort was made to encourage traders in produce and other commodities to direct their routes to Freetown instead of to other ports like Melakori where this trade was unlikely to benefit the colony. Missions to the interior were intensified by the 1870s. Between 1869 and 1873, for instance, five missions were organized in the colony and four of them reached Falaba, the capital of Solimana.<sup>40</sup> All of these visitors passed through Bumban, the

capital of Biriwa Limba where Katimbo was situated and where traders were urged to take their goods on to Freetown where they would fetch a better price. These visitors also ensured that they were accompanied on their return journey by trade caravans. Blyden went back to Freetown in the company of three thousand traders from Falaba.<sup>41</sup> Thus old laws were relaxed and long distance trade started to flow through Falaba.

#### Nature of Long Distance Trade between Solimana and Sierra Leone

This trade from and through Falaba was based on three major commodities. Two of these, gold and ivory, had been important since the beginning of the century. Reports on the 1870s also mention hides, which were not taken to Sierra Leone in the 1820s.<sup>42</sup> The volume of the trade was usually recorded in Sierra Leone in terms of these commodities. Caravans coming from Segou, Boure and Kankan principally brought the gold and ivory. Sankaran traders brought gold from Boure, but they also took ivory found in their country, and hides, for Sankaran country abounded in cattle, and rubber. Hides, cattle, kola nuts, calabashes, and country cloth were also taken to the colony by the Solima traders. These traders would also carry for sale some of the gold and ivory which they got as tolls from caravans passing through Falaba.

Not all of these goods reached the colony. Some cloth, condiments like kenda, and other smaller items were used by the traders to pay tolls en route or to trade for food to sustain them on the

journey.<sup>43</sup> Even in Freetown, some of these goods were not for export. In similar manner, they were used to sustain the growing numbers of interior peoples found in the colony.

When these traders got to Sierra Leone, they were met by "balance brokers" who gave them lodging and introduced them to the merchants.<sup>44</sup> The traders were often cheated by the balance brokers, and attempts to bypass them and trade directly with the merchants only resulted in the traders being insulted. As traders from the Sankaran and Falaba areas complained, these grievances led them for a time around 1870 to take their trade to Melakori or stop their trips at Katimbo.<sup>45</sup>

The goods were traded with trading houses, principally those of C. A. Verminck (French), W. Grant (Krio), Messrs. Randall and Fisher (a Krio/British company).<sup>46</sup> It was principally a barter system, for the traders from the interior did not need cash. All they wanted were goods to take back to their countries. Not being familiar with a cash economy, they could be more easily swindled if they took cash to buy in the colony the goods they needed. The trading houses thus "protected" the traders' interests by doing transactions in the form of exchanging goods. One group of caravans in January 1879 traded with some of the houses, and their goods were "exchanged principally for guns, birding and fuses, powder, flints, red comforters, tafetty and other cotton goods."<sup>47</sup>

This trade benefitted both sides and increased rapidly, as the figures for the 1870s would show, contrary to Wylie's

contention.<sup>48</sup> Though there was a decrease in the number of caravans which reached the colony in 1875 and 1876, the numbers might be deceptive, for some caravans travelled with donkeys and asses laden with unusually heavy loads. Two hundred such asses were reported as having accompanied caravans as far as Kambia in 1879.<sup>49</sup>

The trade came to the colony largely in the first three months of the calendar year, that is, in the middle of the dry season.<sup>50</sup> This was so because these caravans came from distant areas and usually left their towns at the end of the rainy season and the harvest (about December). They also had to return before the next farming season, before the start of the rains in May. Some caravans travelled during the rains, but these were usually few and far between. In normal circumstances, therefore, the figures for a whole year show that the total for the first three months was greatly disproportionate to that for the rest of the year.<sup>51</sup>

An idea of the value of this trade to the colony could be had if it is realized that in a single month caravans could bring gold valued at \$5,000 (1400 pounds sterling),<sup>52</sup> which of course does not take into account the other important commodities of trade. The value of the trade to the Solima was in providing scarce goods which could not be produced locally. The use of firearms was widespread in the interior by the 1860s. Winwood Reade was greeted in Falaba in 1869 by a salute from the guns of about two thousand warriors,<sup>53</sup> although the art of making guns was not yet popular

with the Solima. Cloth produced locally was not sufficient to fill demands, and it was supplemented with imported cloth.

It is difficult to estimate the amount of revenue accruing to the coffers of the Solima state from the caravan trade. The closest one could get to this figure in terms of the current value in cash would be to use an estimate of the revenue obtained by Suluku, ruler of Bumban in the powerful Biriwa Limba state. Bumban was an important way station on the road from Falaba to Sierra Leone. Reports on Biriwa show that Suluku collected dues from passing caravans by stationing customs collectors on the bridge crossing the Rokel River into Bumban.<sup>54</sup> These duties were not fixed, but usually amounted to "about 200 bars a day," a bar being the equivalent of one shilling.<sup>55</sup> This would obviously be in the peak season. Bumban was fed almost solely by caravans which had already gone through Falaba, while other caravans through Falaba went by the Tambacca route to Samaia and did not reach Bumban. The manga of Solimana was always considered more important than the ruler of the Biriwa, so that one would expect higher tolls to be paid to a more important ruler. Thus, all factors considered, the revenue from the caravan trade for the Solima would be greater than that for Bumban. If one adds to this revenue from Falaba-produced hides, ivory, and other goods, the revenue becomes even greater. This income meant more in value in Solimana than it would have meant in Sierra Leone at that time, for the scarce commodities were all it provided for.

The Government at Falaba and Long Distance Trade

With this kind of revenue derived from long distance trade, the manga at Falaba was concerned to improve all conditions related to the trade. Manga Sewa was aware of the importance of this trade and did all in his power to safeguard it; trade prospered during his reign. Since much of the caravan trade going through the Solima state had to pass through Falaba, the tolls were paid there.<sup>56</sup> This meant an increase in the volume of administrative matters being handled at Falaba, and was undoubtedly one of the reasons for the separation of the administration of the state from that of the town of Falaba by the 1870s.<sup>57</sup> New officials were appointed to supervise matters relating to trade. Simiti Fila, described in the records of the Sierra Leone colony as the accredited messenger of Manga Sewa, could be seen as one of these new officials.

Simiti Fila was himself a Samura, the brother of the ruler of Kaliere, one of the northern border towns in the state.<sup>58</sup> Fila seems to have come into prominence in the late 1860s in all matters relating to long distance travelling and the caravan trade. He was thus a principal guide as well as an accredited messenger. Some of his activities were summarized in the presentation of accreditation to the governor of Sierra Leone in 1880:

In March 1873 he came with 3000 caravans with articles to trade, in March 1875 when he last visited here he came with twenty-six others with a special message to the Governor, and is the person who accompanied the late Winwood Reade

sent by this government to visit Falaba as far as to Segu and the source of the Niger (1869), and it was he who brought Mr. Blyden down when he was sent to Falaba in 1873.<sup>59</sup>

In addition, it was Simiti Fila who accompanied the French travellers, Zweifel and Moustier, through Koranko country to the source of the Niger in 1879.<sup>60</sup> Fila was also recognized as the principal messenger of Sewa of Falaba by the various rulers of the towns with which the Solima had trade contacts.<sup>61</sup> That Fila's job was related chiefly to areas concerned with trade is reflected in the fact that when he was taking Zweifel and Moustier to the source of the Niger in 1879, Fila's knowledge of the route to the Niger -- which was unnecessary for trade activities -- was scanty not long after they had left the borders of Solimana.<sup>62</sup> If Fila was the principal messenger, other state messengers must also have existed to handle minor matters in relation to long distance trade. And traders specializing in long distance trade also emerged.<sup>63</sup>

The increase in the volume of long distance trade also brought with it the attendant problem of protecting caravans. Soldiers were required for this purpose. Thus the burden of administration increased from all angles. Oral traditions in Falaba relate that in the rule of Manga Sewa, Falaba ceased to participate actively in agricultural production.<sup>64</sup> It then became solely an administrative center, and tribute and taxes in produce grew enough to maintain the increased population at the capital. It was necessary to maintain a standing army, whereas formerly the army was constituted

by drawing levies from various towns in time of need. This standing army was an army of Yalunka alone, for the Samura said that no other ethnic group was allowed to guard Falaba.<sup>65</sup>

The number of warriors in Falaba led visitors to conclude that the town was inhabited only by them.<sup>66</sup> While this would seem to suggest a very warlike propensity, the situation did not appear to be such by the 1870s when a standing army was maintained. Winwood Reade commented after his 1869 visit to Falaba that:

In recent times, such large revenues have accrued to the crown from the tribute of passing caravans, that Sewa pursues a policy of peace and negotiates with his neighbors to keep the road open, so that the Sangara traders may have free access to the country of the sea.<sup>67</sup>

The Rev. Williams, who visited Falaba three years later, made a similar observation:

In conversation with Mohammadu and Barr, they said that they would be glad to visit the colony to trade but could not, being warriors. They complained of their present poor condition, consequent on the king's unwillingness to send them out to besiege other towns as formerly which deprives them of opportunities to acquire "money" (foreign commodities) by the sale of the captives of war.<sup>68</sup>

These comments by interested observers show that these warriors were not maintained in order to wage constant warfare. They were probably intended partly to give the manga a stronger bargaining hand in relation to those countries through which the trade routes passed, and also to serve as a deterrent to would-be attackers. If these soldiers stayed permanently at Falaba, it is

possible that they had their families with them. This would have meant a substantial increase in the population of Falaba. The increase was noted by travellers to the capital throughout the nineteenth century. In 1822, Gordon Laing put the population at about eight thousand, while it seems to have risen to about ten thousand by the 1860s. By the time Falaba was destroyed by the forces of Samori in 1884, the population was estimated at about fifteen thousand.<sup>69</sup>

#### Trade and External Relations

The commercial interests of the Solima state were therefore well served by the government at Falaba. Much of the external relations of the state by the 1870s was connected with this trade. In 1871, for example, a joint letter was written by the rulers of Sankaran, Solimana, and Biriwa Limba, complaining about the activities of the balance brokers in Sierra Leone towards traders from these areas. The Arabic letter was taken to Sierra Leone by Samuel Savage Bowling, an agent of the governor of Sierra Leone, accompanied by the son of the ruler of Bantun in Sankaran country. The letter threatened concerted action in diverting trade from Sierra Leone if nothing was done to stop these malpractices.<sup>70</sup> Another example of external relations pertaining to trade occurred when Manga Sewa sent a mission to the almamy of Futa in 1872 to discuss ways of ending the Hubu menace to trade.<sup>71</sup>

These examples give an idea of the trend that Solima alliances were taking. In the 1820s, the Soso around Moria were a very important ally and the Solima sent armies to aid these people.<sup>72</sup> But by the 1860s, the southerly Biriwa Limba around Bumban were the most important ally. The trade through the Biriwa state had largely replaced that with the Soso, and alliances had consequently been reworked. No longer did the Solima take a keen interest in the affairs of the Moria even though that area was affected by widespread wars for over twenty years, starting in the 1860s.<sup>73</sup> Though Soso traders still went to Balaba, they realized that their position as intermediary had been destroyed, and they were using every possible means to get it back.<sup>74</sup>

### Conclusion

An exploration of commerce around northeastern Sierra Leone would indicate a very dynamic system, dependent for long on the political situation of the area and the ability of the Solima Yalunka to control trade. While outside forces like the Sierra Leone colony exerted a pull, Howard has rightly concluded that one must look more to the internal dynamics of systems in the Sierra Leone hinterland in attempts to understand the development of local trade.<sup>75</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>L. H. Donald first presented this idea in "Changes in Yalunka Social Organization: A Study in Adaptation to a Changing Cultural Environment," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1968). Allen Howard adapted it, indicating the area contained only chiefdoms by the later nineteenth century. See his "Big Men, Traders, and Chiefs: Power, Commerce, and Spatial Change in the Sierra Leone-Guinea Plain," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972), especially pages 154, 157. See also Howard, "The Relevance of Spatial Analysis for African Economic History: the Sierra Leone-Guinea System," Journal of African History, XVII, 3 (1976), 369.

<sup>2</sup>Howard emphasizes regions towards the south in the general area he calls the Sierra Leone-Guinea plain. This plain includes the region described here as northeastern Sierra Leone and areas west and southwest of it.

<sup>3</sup>C. M. Fyle, "Solimana and its Neighbors, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1976), chapters 1 to 3.

<sup>4</sup>C. M. Fyle, "The Kabala Complex: Koranko-Limba Relationships in Sierra Leone," in A. Abraham, Topics in Sierra Leone History (Freetown, 1976).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Yves Person, Samori; Une Revolution Dyula (Dakar, 1968), I.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of this dating, see Fyle, "Solimana," appendix I.

<sup>8</sup>Interregional trade involves trade between disparate political or ethnic regions. Either or both recognized political or ethnic factors might define a region.

<sup>9</sup>For the local salt industry in the Samy area, see R. R. Glanville, "Salt and Salt Industry of the Northern Province," Sierra Leone Studies (hereafter SLS), 16 (1930), 52ff.

<sup>10</sup>See Tonko Limba traditions in C. Magbaily Fyle, "Oral Traditions of Sierra Leone," (Niamey, forthcoming, O.A.U. Centre for the Study of African History and Languages by Oral Tradition).

<sup>11</sup>V. R. Dorjahn and A. S. Tholley, "A Provisional History of the Limba with Special Reference to the Tonko Limba," SLS, 12 (1959), 273-283.

<sup>12</sup>Fyle, "Oral Traditions."

<sup>13</sup>Oral Interview, Yatay Songkong Fofana, Tenentiliya, Sulima Chiefdom, Sierra Leone, 18 January 1973.

<sup>14</sup>A. G. Laing, Travels in Timanee, Kooranko and Soolima Countries (Longmans, 1825), 401.

<sup>15</sup>For a description of this mode of trade, see R. Gray and D. Birmingham, "Introduction," Pre-Colonial African Trade (London, 1970).

<sup>16</sup>Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser, 3 August 1822.

<sup>17</sup>Oral Interview, Karamoko Osman Kamara of Firia, Musaia, Dembelia Chiefdom, Sierra Leone, 9 April 1973.

<sup>18</sup>Laing, Travels, 279.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 277-278.

<sup>21</sup>There was a substitute for Tobacco called tankoro, grown and blended in both Yalunka and Koranko countries.

<sup>22</sup>This type of market would come close to Hill's definition of a "trade market," though this did not actually serve long distance trade. See Polly Hill, "Markets in Africa," Journal of Modern African Studies, I, 4 (1963), 441-453.

<sup>23</sup>Laing, Travels, 356-357.

<sup>24</sup>Oral Interview, Foday Brema, Falaba, Sulima Chiefdom, Sierra Leone, 15 May 1973.

<sup>25</sup>J. Zweifel and M. Moustier, Voyage aux Sources du Niger (Marseille, 1880), 59.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 134. In the 1820s, the silver dollar in the colony was valued at five shillings (Macarthy to Bathurst, 21 June 1822, PRO, CO-267/56). In 1879, the dollar was valued at three shillings and seven pence in London, and four shillings, two pence on the

West African coast (Pike to Asst. Col. Sec., 26 August 1879, PRO, CO 879/18/239). By 1897, its value in Sierra Leone was still at four shillings (Acting District Commissioner Koinadugu to Governor, Road and Trade Report, December 1897, Native Affairs Department Paper NADP, Sierra Leone Archives SLA ).

<sup>27</sup>Laing, *Travels*, 372.

<sup>28</sup>Howard mentions this term, in "Big Men, Traders, and Chiefs."

<sup>29</sup>Evidence on this is scattered through C. Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone (Oxford, 1962).

<sup>30</sup>See Fyfe, "Solimana," chapter 4.

<sup>31</sup>Royal Gazette, 24 July 1824.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 3 August 1822.

<sup>33</sup>Howard, "Relevance of Spatial Analysis," 373.

<sup>34</sup>Hill, "Markets in Africa."

<sup>35</sup>Winwood Reade, African Sketchbook (London, 1872), 397-398.

<sup>36</sup>Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 34; the translation is mine.

<sup>37</sup>Rev. Williams, Report on Mission to Kankan, Local Letters to Governor, 1872, SLA.

<sup>38</sup>See Fyfe, "Solimana," chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup>Local Letters, Letter from Bantun, Sangara, 16 November 1871, SLA; Kennedy to Kimberley, *Bowling's Journal*, 16 January 1872, PRO, CO 267/315.

<sup>40</sup>Kennedy to Kimberley, *Bowling's Journal*, 16 January 1872, PRO, CO 267/315; Blyden's Report on Expedition to Falaba in Pope Hennessy to Kimberley, 1 September 1872, PRO, CO 267/316; also instructions to Capt. Portier for his mission to Fálaba in Kennedy to Kimberley, 29 March 1871, PRO, CO 267/310; this mission never materialized.

<sup>41</sup>Lawson to Governor, Government Interpreter's Letter Book (GILB), 21 August 1880, SLA. Caravans at this time was merely another word for traders.

<sup>42</sup> Lawson to Governor, GILB 31 January 1879, SLA, gives a good example.

<sup>43</sup> Rev. Williams' Report, 1872.

<sup>44</sup> Rowe to Granville, 19 June 1886, Governor's Despatches, SLA.

<sup>45</sup> Local Letters, Letter from Bantun, Sangaran Country, 16 November 1871, SLA.

<sup>46</sup> Lawson to Governor, GILB, 31 January 1879; 27 February 1880, SLA. See also Fyfe, History, 289, 383.

<sup>47</sup> Lawson to Governor, GILB, 31 January 1879, SLA.

<sup>48</sup> Lawson to Governor, Local Letters, 4 July 1878, gives this information:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Caravans</u>
1874	3,110
1875	2,741
1876	1,200
1877	8,698
1878	9,587

Wylie's contention of a decreasing trade during this period, unsupported by these figures, could be found in Kenneth Wylie, Political Kingdoms of the Temne (New York, 1977), 113.

<sup>49</sup> Lawson to Governor, GILB 1 April 1879, SLA.

<sup>50</sup> There are two seasons in the Sierra Leone area, the rainy season (May to October), and the dry season (November to April).

<sup>51</sup> The 1875 figures, for example, show that the January to March total was 1,881, whereas for April to December the total was 860 (Lawson's memo, Local Letters, 1 July 1875, SLA).

<sup>52</sup> Lawson's memo, GILB, 27 February 1880, SLA. This figure was the estimated value of the goods given to the traders. The value of the gold could be higher.

<sup>53</sup> Reade, Sketchbook, 409.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 463.

<sup>55</sup> Lawson to Governor, Momodu Wakka's Report on Visit to Bumban, Aborigines Department Minute Paper (ADMP), 6 December 1886, SLA.

<sup>56</sup>Some trade through the Solima state went through towns outside Falaba, the capital. But these towns were firmly under the control of the capital, headed by the manga's brothers who resided at the capital. Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 63.

<sup>57</sup>Fyle, "Solimana," chapter 3.

<sup>58</sup>Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 65.

<sup>59</sup>Lawson to Governor, GILB, 21 August 1880, SLA.

<sup>60</sup>Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 60.

<sup>61</sup>Lawson's memo, GILB, 9 June 1882, SLA, where SuluKu describes Fila as Manga Sewa's chief messenger.

<sup>62</sup>Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 73.

<sup>63</sup>See the quotation on page 17, above.

<sup>64</sup>Oral Interview, Foday Brema, Falaba, Solima Chiefdom.

<sup>65</sup>Oral Interview, Foday Brema and Sana Samura, Falaba, Solima Chiefdom, Sierra Leone, 16 October 1972.

<sup>66</sup>See Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 62, for an example.

<sup>67</sup>Reade, Sketchbook, 412.

<sup>68</sup>Rev. Williams' Report, Local Letters, 1872, SLA.

<sup>69</sup>The estimate for the 1860s is computed from Reade's remark on the number of soldiers (2,000), their families, other officials, the manga's household, citizens of Falaba, etc. The final one for 1884 is made by Captain Kenny who visited the site of the destroyed Falaba (Kenny to Colonial Office, 29 May 1892, CO African 422, PRO).

<sup>70</sup>Local Letters, 17 November 1871, SLA.

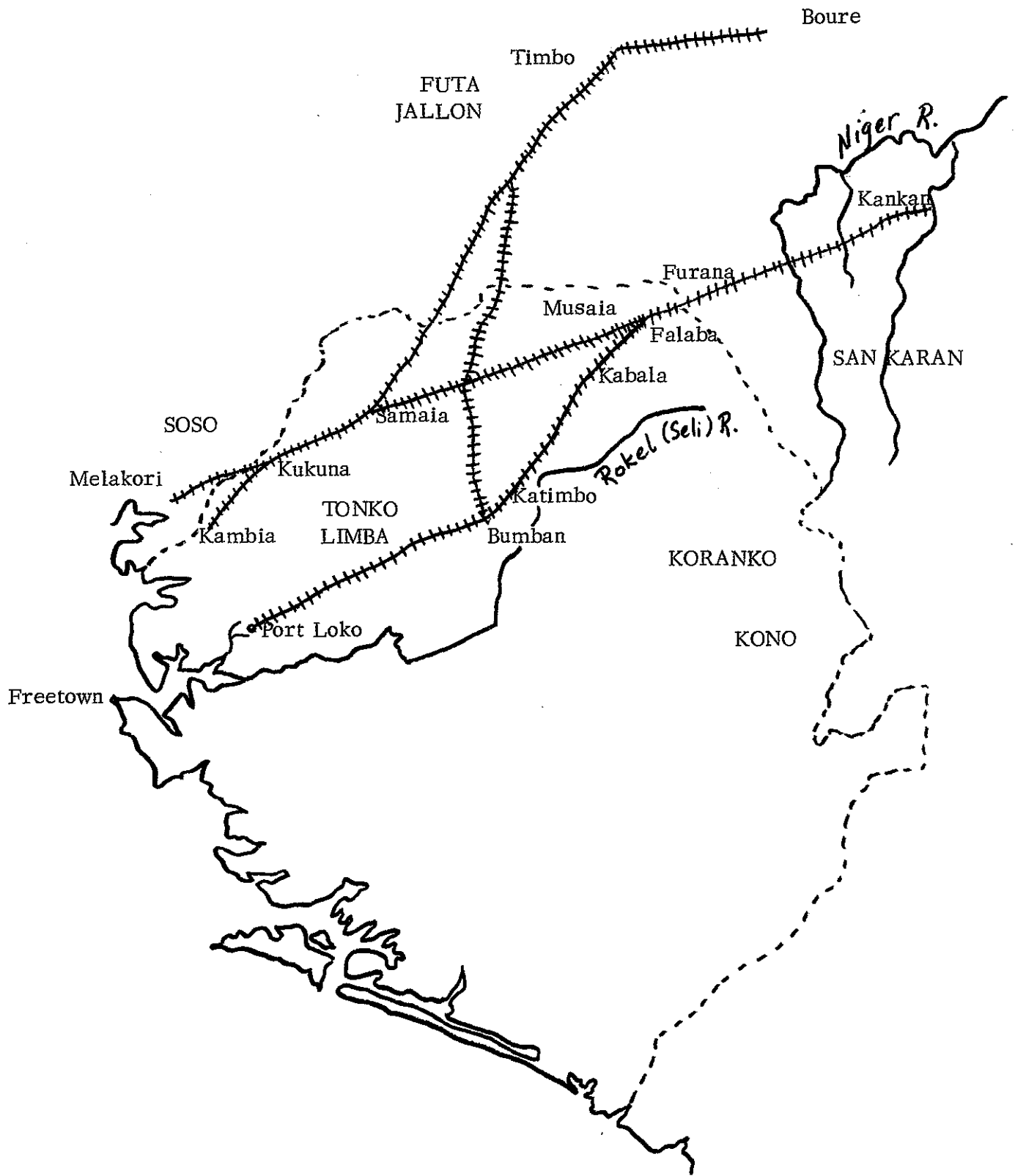
<sup>71</sup>Blyden, Report on Mission to Timbo, PRO, CO 267/320.

<sup>72</sup>Laing, Travels, 6-17.

<sup>73</sup>For the wars in the Moria between 1865 and 1885, see Howard, "Big Men, Traders, and Chiefs," 304-311.

<sup>74</sup>Zweifel and Moustier, Voyage, 59, 82. The Soso traders were reaching far into Koranko country to obtain goods, while at the same time they tried to get the French travellers into trouble because they felt these travellers were responsible for destroying their own role as middlemen.

<sup>75</sup>Howard, "Big Men, Traders, and Chiefs," 182ff. A different emphasis is found in E. A. Ijagbemi, "The Freetown Colony and the Development of Legitimate Commerce in the Adjoining Territory," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, V, 2 (1970).



PRECOLONIAL TRADE AND TRADE AREAS IN NORTHERN  
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