WHO AND WHERE WERE THE BAGA?
EUROPEAN PERCEPTIONS FROM 1793 TO 1821

BRUCE L. MOUSER
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—LA CROSSE

By the end of the eighteenth century the Baga, or peoples of the seaside (the bae raka), were already long-term residents of mangrove islands located between Guinea-Bissau and Iles de Los—the northern half of Guinea-Conakry's current coast. That fact is well known and accepted by everyone interested in the ethnohistory of this part of Guinea. What is less clearly documented or understood is how far they extended inland, the context of that residence which allowed

1 In December 1997, a multi-disciplinary conference at the University of Lille convened to share research on the topic of early migrations of peoples located on the Upper Guinea coast of west Africa. In keeping with the conference theme, I offered a paper entitled “Baga Boundaries: European perspectives, 1793-1821.” As a historian, my purpose was to clarify what peoples were perceived as Baga during that 30-year period and where those Baga were located, as precisely as sources would allow. I was not particularly interested in entering into the colloquy with those who relied heaviest on documentable sources versus those who swore by oral traditions. Nor was I concerned about reconciling first-hand and European-generated reports with oral traditions collected later. My purpose was to identify the Baga and to put them in a place. George Brooks, who read my paper before I presented it at Lille, warned me that my fix on “boundaries” might be neither understood nor welcomed by conference participants, whom he believed to be more interested in “identity construction.” I sensed that reality at the conference. When I revised my paper for inclusion in the conference proceedings, I broadened my focus from where the Baga were located, to who and where they were during that 30-year period. My paper’s full transformation occurred, however, when it appeared in Migrations anciennes et peuplement actuel des Côtes guéennes, edited by Gérald Gaillard (Paris, 2000), as “Qui étaient les baga ? perceptions européennes, 1793-1821”, translated by Odile Hanquez Passavant. In her own article on the Nalu of the Rio Nunez, Passavant (ibid., page 386-87) interpreted my paper as suggesting a model for consideration and placed it within a perspective advanced by Brooks, Landlords and Strangers (Boulder, 1993), 28, to the effect

them to operate economically and socially with guests upon their lands, and perhaps how outsiders influenced their characteristics, within a historically definable period. Drawing on observations from first-hand accounts written between 1793 and 1821, this study attempts to answer these questions and to suggest assumptions about the Baga experience and conclusions for particular Baga groups by 1821.

This paper flows from a longer and broader study of peoples and commercial activities in the Rio Nunez to the 1750 to 1865 period, that period just prior to establishment of French suzerainty. It also emerges from a historian’s desire to assign ethnic groups or at least ethnic types to identifiable regions and to understand relationship traits that may have led to the self-consciousness of group identities that “western Africans opportunistically redefine their identities in response to changing circumstances.” While I have no argument with Passavant's translation of the paper per se, it is clear that my earlier and primary interest in boundaries had been subordinated to a more conference-focused discussion of “identity.” Only in a few instances did Passavant err in translation—circumstances that resulted entirely from ambiguous writing on my part. In this venue, I present the paper in a more precise form, with comments in footnotes to reflect inadvertent errors in the translated version, trusting that the redefined title, clearer wording, and this note better convey my intent.

In 1967 P.E.H. Hair, “Ethnolinguistic Continuity on the Guinea Coast,” JAH 8, 2(1967), 248, noted that early sources were “vague” about extent of Baga occupation and cautioned that most reports described navigation landmarks that provide limited guide to appropriate coastal limits. From these records, however, he concluded that there was “no evidence in the early sources that the Baga in these centuries ever occupied more than the beaches and a very thin slice of the interior.” This paper attempts to suggest interior limits with reference to specific site locations or perceived zones of influence, as noted by Europeans who visited these rivers during the 1793-1821 period. The “Introduction” in Fredrik Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries (Boston, 1969), 9-38, is particularly helpful in defining boundaries as they relate to culture traits and ways many are modified or maintained when interacting with similar/dissimilar groups. In “The Internal African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture” in The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington, 1989), 3-84, Kopytoff succinctly described dangers inherent in labeling groups as “tribes” or ascribing to them cultural and physical attributes or a group identity that might not have been apparent with the group before the coming of colonial regimes, those who found such anomalous rural communities not fitting the “tribal model.” European descriptions from the 1793 to 1821 period are reasonably suspect as falling into a similar European compulsion to group peoples where perhaps a notion of “tribe” or nation was non-existent. Despite these concerns, I have reported here their observation with an understanding that a self-consciousness of group identities may not have been present among the Baga themselves.

Bruce L. Mouser, “Trade and Politics in the Nunez and Pongo River, 1790-1865” (Ph.D., Indiana University, 1971).

Map 2. “Coastal Guinea/Conakry.”
have operated during a specific period. The Baga were likely minor players in political and commercial transformations that accompanied the rise of slave trading or establishment of new markets for commodities’ traffic occurring with its decline in the late 1830s. As producers of rice, salt, and livestock, and collectors of cola, however, and as ‘first-comers’ with claim to land through which commerce with the interior inevitably flowed, the Baga favorably served trades that found their basis in both trades and that attached interior markets to those of the coast.4

The earliest account of Nunez Baga (Baga-Sitem, Baga-Kapatchez) dating to this period (1793-1821) comes from the log of the Sandown, commanded by Samuel Gamble, who spent nearly a year on this coast in 1793-94.5 It is reasonable to generalize that the Nunez Baga were not a people to whom slave-ship captains set their objectives during these years. The banks of the Nunez for nearly fifty kilometers upstream were lined with swampy lowlands, with few villages located along its banks. The most important sources of slaves, ivory, gold, and other commodities sought were located near Kacundy, later known as Deboka/Boké. The lower river and its peoples were obstacles to be crossed before reaching a greater objective, the trading centers of the upper river. Those captains who entered the river invariably noted the rocks, sand bars, islands, and reefs, but seldom mentioned peoples of the lower river. In late Septem-

4I have not attempted in this paper to reconcile first-hand accounts from 1793 to 1821 with Baga/Susu traditions as interpreted by André Arcin, Histoire de la Guinée Française (Paris, 1911), 129-35, nor his headmen lists of 167-68. I do not claim to be an ethnohistorian of this region of the coast. My research has focused on European, Euro-African, and African traders during the 1750 to 1865 period and on relationships that they established with indigenous hosts. In that writing, however, the identity and circumstance of particular hosts has been an important consideration.

5Samuel Gamble, “A Journal of an Intended Voyage, by Gods permission, from London towards Africa from thence to America in the good Ship Sandown by me Samuel Gamble, Commander,” Log/M/21, Manuscript Division, National Maritime Museum-Greenwich (hereafter cited as “Sandown”). Indiana University Press will soon publish Gamble’s journal, edited by me. Brooks, Landlords and Strangers, 276-77, reviewed accounts by Almada (1594), Donelha (1625), and Barreira (1606), all of whom described Baga commerce and relations to Europeans/neighbors, without reference to specific site locations. In private correspondence, P.E.H. Hair cautioned about using linguistic and ethnographic designations for particular Baga groups when describing them ca.1800, especially when such classifications did not appear in literature until a much later time. Hair considered it better to use geographic designations for groups; I have attempted to incorporate his suggestion in this writing by locating groups both according to river areas and to later-used ethnographic/linguistic groupings.
ber 1793, however, Gamble and his crew anchored the Sandown off Bania Point, restfully explored the neighboring left bank near the entrance of Bania Creek, and made these observations:

Wednesday Morn25th at day break sent the Blacks out upon the furraging order, and to see if the Pinnace was in sight. At Sun rise saw her at an Anchor[,] she having seen our fire in the night, came to[,] fir'd two Musquets[,] and she came in. At 8 the Blacks return'd with a Plentiful supply of Shell fish, Crabs, and Turtles eggs. set them to

6“Sandown,” 52r-53r. See also John Matthews, A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone (London, 1966[1788]), 12-13, for a 1785 account of stock/poultry raising among these Baga. Matthews also described them as “very industrious in planting rice, making cloths, salt, and in fishing, and trading for ivory...” A report similar to that given by Gamble is found in Major William Gray and Staff Surgeon Dochard, Travels in Western Africa, in the Years 1818, 19, 20, and 21 (London, 1825), 4-5. Dochard was a member of an expedition that attempted to reach Timbo and Segu through the Nunez path in 1816-1817. In December 1816 Dochard noted the following: “While waiting for the tide at the mouth of that river [Nunez], we visited a small island formed by the alluvial matter brought down with the stream, and collected by a ridge of rocks which run nearly across its embouchure. It is called Sandy Island, from its soil being almost wholly composed of that substance. It is about a mile in length, and from a quarter to half a mile in breadth, having a gentle rise towards the centre, where it is covered by a grove of palm trees. We met on it a party of about twenty of the Bagoo tribe, who had come thither to collect palm wine, for the celebration of a mournful ceremony over one of their chiefs, who had died a short time before. At a little distance from the spot where we met them, there is an arbour, on approaching which we were stopped, and told the place was sacred, as it contained their idols; of those we could not obtain even an indistinct view. Tallabunchia, which we also visited, is situated on the north bank of the river, about four miles above Sandy Island, in a plain, beautifully shaded with lofty palm trees, and a great profusion or orange, lime, plantain, and bananas. The town is straggling and irregular, and contains about 200 inhabitants. The houses are about sixteen feet high, and divided, by a partition of split cane, into two apartments, one of which serves as a store for their rice, &c. and the other for a dwelling. The men are strong and well formed, but of an extremely savage appearance; their whole apparel consists of a fathom of cotton cloth wrapped around their waists; they practise cutting the incisor teeth and tattooing the breasts and arms; holes are pierced through the whole circle of the ear, in which are inserted bits of a course kind of grass. The dress of the women is still less decent or becoming; a strip of cotton bound round the loins, in the shape of what surgeons call a T bandage, is their only covering; a band of twisted grass round the upper parts of the thigh, one immediately above, and another below the knee, with one over the ankle, constituted the female ornaments. The children were quite naked, and had large copper rings hanging from the cartilage of the nose.” In Passavant's translation, the impression is given that both Gray and Dochard were members of the 1816-1817 Nunez Expedition. That error resulted from unclear writing on my part. Passavant also translated the textual material from both Gamble and Gray/Dochard into French; while I find no particular fault with her translation, I believe that it would have been better to have left quoted material in English, especially that selection written by Gamble.
work roasting, boiling, and frigaseeing them, as best suited their Palates. having Breakfasted hearty tho upon such a rude spot we cleared our tent and every thing into the Boats and proceeded up the river to the Town of Bania about 8 Miles up the river to a Small creek that leads up to the town which is not large tho full of inhabitants, great numbers of them diseas'd[,] their Legs swell'd as thick as their body has well as in other parts afflicted the same. both Men[,] Women & Children are by far the ordinaryst set of beings I ever saw[]. Perhaps the nature of their situation which is in a narrow creek surround'd by Mud and swamps may greatly contribute to it. They are equally as filthy and beastly as ugly, the Men all dress in the same manner that Women do on different part of the Windward Coast. The Women all go Naked excepting a Small slip of Cloth about a yard long and 3 fingers broad which they call a Tuntungee (and never wash it its wore out). Their houses are Miserable[] The chief of their employment seems to be in cultivating rice[,] Making Salt, and tapping their Palm wine tree[,] This latter appears to be their God. They are a tribe of Bagos, peculiar to them selves, follow their own laws, never make Slaves, or sell any. They breed great quantities of Stock, but seldom make use of any them selves. only when either their Parents, some near Relation, or King dies then they Kill their cattle some time after they are dead to make what they term Sarriose or the last tribute to the dead, which often ends in a debauch, their principal dish is Rice & fish. We saw here at the Chief of the Towns house who seem'd a near Relation. A White Negro Boy he appear'd to be greatly affected in his eyes by the rays of the Sun and in great pain to explore any object he seem'd a great eye soar [sic] amongst them[]. They frequently urg'd us, to take him with us. we staid here till 10 OClock at Night[,] having bought 5 Dozen of Fowls, for Knives, Beads, & CO[untry] white cloths. when we was very glad to get away having been from our first entering their town expos'd to trouble Vices and as much admir'd for a Curiosity as the Crew when in England, especialy by the Ladies who where very attentive. Those that carried long wands in their hands, as tokens of their Celibacy. we where follow'd every where by Women & Children[]. The Boys from 4 Years and upwards all carried Bows & Arrows, w[h]ether they are expert or not with them I cannot tell. The Men appear'd rougeishly inclind in their dealings. We receive'd several presents of Palm wine. made them a return for it and left them and proceeded down the Creek into the River and to our old landing spot. during the whole of this Night we where in a state amongst the wretchedest Creatures living[]. The Musquetos harrass'd and bit us to a degree of severity[.] at 4 we came to an anchor at our old spot[,] found our fire still burning[,] at daylight Thursday 26th landed[].

Gamble also described methods that the Baga used to grow their wet-rice and produced a chart that demonstrated their techniques.7

7"Sandown," 55°-55°.
The Bagos are very expert in Cultivating rice and in quite a Different manner to any of the Nations on the Windward Coast[.] The country they inhabit is chiefly low and swampy. The rice they first sow on their dunghills and rising spots about their towns[.] when 8 or 10 Inches high transplant it into Lugars made for that purpose which are flat low swamps, at one side A they have a reservoir that they can let in what water they please[,] other side B is a drain cut so that they can let of[f] what they please. The Instruments they use much resembles a Turf spade with with [sic] which they turn the grass under in ridges just above the water which by being confind Stagnates and nourishes the root of the plant. Women & girls transplant the rice and are so dextrous as to plant fifty roots singly in one minute[,] when the rice is ready for cutting they turn the water of[f] til their Harvest is over[,] then they let the Water over it and lets it stands three or four Seasons it being so impoverishd[,] Their time of planting is in Septr and reaping.

These fragments from Gamble's journal make clear several 'outsider' perceptions about the Baga, in this case Baga-Sitem of the probable Dougoubona/Kakouli/Kouli River. Apparently already acquainted with European trade, these Baga were curious about Gamble and his largely "African" crew. They dressed in the fashion customary to other Baga along this coast and grew rice, produced salt, and raised livestock in surplus which they used in trade. Their demands for European goods were already known (knives and curiosities), and they wanted country cloth produced locally along the coast. They received Gamble in a welcome fashion; Gamble mentioned no apprehensions about his safety, nor for his men or possessions. But of greater interest is Gamble's observation that these Baga were different from their neighbors. The Nalu he later described in disparaging terms, while complimenting the Baga for being "peculiar to them selves," seemingly little touched, as a consequence of their geographic isolation, by the self-serving commerce that characterized factory-life upstream at Kacundy/Boké. Separateness meant adherence to "their own laws;" certainly the observation that they neither held slaves nor sold them was unusual for peoples in this area.8

8In Theodore Canot, Adventures of an African Slaver (New York, 1969), 124, Canot, (ca. 1827) noted that the Baga "neither sell nor buy each other, though they acquire children of both sexes from other tribes, and adopt them into their own, or dispose of them if not suitable." (Canot's emphasis). According to Adam Afzelius, Adam Afzelius: Sierra Leone Journal 1795-1796, ed. Peter Kup (Uppsala, 1967), 104, Thomas Cooper, who operated a factory near Tokekerren in the Rio Pongo, made a distinction between the Kapatchez people and the Baga and told him that neither "the Baggos nor the Capatches sell any of their own people or Nation."
Perhaps Gamble was describing their marginal character during a specific period and place, for later in his journal he described an incident in which Jolof slaves on board the *Venus of New York*, commanded by Captain Hammond, had rebelled and taken flight into Baga territory, where the Baga seized them; whether the Baga intended to return them to the *Venus* or to retain them is unclear in Gamble's journal. But perhaps the Baga simply offered them refuge. Complicating this analysis is Gamble's failure to indicate which Baga group had detained the Jolofs.

Equally important are Gamble's comments about rice-raising. Daniel Littlefield, in his book on rice cultivation techniques used in the American South during the Antebellum (pre-Civil War) period, used Gamble's description to draw a parallel between African and American practice, leaving the impression that perhaps this method came from the Nunez. Roland Portères noted instead that this technique, which Gamble described so well, became known to coastal peoples from the Sine-Saloum to the Melacorée, a considerable distance and covered by many diverse peoples.

James Watt visited the Nunez at the same time as Gamble, and in his journal of an expedition made from Boké to Timbo in 1794, he failed to mention the Baga at all, perhaps because he saw none while onboard his transport to Boké. His journal, however, contains ample mention of rice and salt trades between the Nunez and the Fuuta Jaloo and beyond. Watt noted that rice came coastward, rather than in the reverse, with Fula bearers, often numbering in the hundreds of persons, carrying large baskets of rice to exchange for equal quantities of salt from the coast. In his account of discussions with Almaami Saadu of Timbo, he noted that Saadu was so dissatisfied with low prices paid for slaves by Nunez traders, that "he would have shut up the path altogether were it not for the want of salt."
Clearly, the Fula did not buy Baga-grown rice at Kacundy; instead, the most important item for purchase was salt that they needed for their cattle in the uplands. Salt came from the lowlands, one of which was the territory of the Baga-Sitem; the Rio Kapatchez was well known similarly as an area accessible by schooners and occupied by peoples who produced significant quantities of salt.

Nunez traders also moved latitudinally along the coast, to commercial contacts in rivers north of the Nunez and southward to the lowlands of the Morebaya and Melacoree rivers. All of these areas were involved in salt production. Whether the Baga-Sitem were the only producers of Nunez-demanded salt is unclear, but highly unlikely considering the huge demands required by Fula merchants and by the fact that salt occasionally entered the upper river's commerce via ships carrying salt. Watt also observed that salt, especially bar-salt, was used as currency in both the Nunez and the Fuuta Jaloo and that cola was in high demand in areas inland beyond the Fula. The only cola producing area of the Nunez was located within Baga-Sitem and Baga-Mandori (north of the river) territory, but the Nunez is normally considered the northernmost limit of cola production. Clearly, except for salt, the Baga-Sitem were minor/insignificant players in the river's overall commerce at the turn of the century.

It is unlikely that large numbers of Baga-Sitem became commodities in the slave trade during this period. In 1794 Watt observed that many bearers (presumably non-Fula) who carried rice and commodities coastward also became commodities themselves, should their labor not be required on the return to the highlands. He was told in Timbo that a principal cause of wars in the Fuuta Jaloo was to gather slaves with which to barter for guns and powder; clearly, the quanti-

14"Sandown," 73°.
15Ibid., 71°, noted that a salt ship had arrived at Walker's factory from Liverpool, the Zephyr. In the original version, this sentence concluded with the words "from England." Subsequent research has clarified that a likely source of salt was the island of Maio in the Cape Verdes. By the late seventeenth century, a major shipping center on that island became known as Porto Inglez. It is likely that British vessels carried salt and other goods to the coast. For the latter see Brooks, Landlords and Strangers, 163; T. Bentley Duncan, Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verdes in Seventeenth Century Commerce and Navigation (Chicago, 1972), 186-89.
17In about 1827 Theophilus Conneau, A Slaver's Logbook or 20 Year Residence in Africa (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1976), 103, reported that "a Foulah law protects them [Baga] from foreign violence (being salt-makers, this is their prerogative). Salt is regarded in the Interior as one of the greatest necessities of life, and its makers are under the safeguard of this law."
ties of rice and ivory exported were not sufficient to purchase both salt and other goods wanted in return—guns and powder would require slaves in exchange. Indeed, at nearly the same time, Captain Gamble complained frequently that slaves seemed not to be in sufficient supply in the Nunez, that it was necessary to collect slaves from the Pongo and as far south as the Sherbro River. Perhaps, insufficient numbers alone made the Nunez Baga immune to raids from coastal merchants, but more likely, as noted by Gamble, these Baga were well-armed and were important additional sources of salt and therefore integral to continued profitability of commerce in the upper river.

Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society rarely mentioned the Baga-Sitem in their records, and seldom in flattering terms. Leopold Butscher in 1811, however, encountered the Nunez Baga when the vessel on which he had sought passage to the Nunez needed to land onshore for water and provisions, and they stopped at a small Baga village near the Nunez's mouth. Butscher described the anchorage there as muddy, commenting that the Baga came into the water to carry them ashore. To Butscher, his hosts were friendly and offered them palm wine in great abundance. His informants, among whom was John Pierce, who was then a prominent "headman" among the Nalu, told him that the Baga occupied the seashore and that the Nalu and Landuma held the upper river. Butscher did report that on one occasion Fula warriors were looking for runaway slaves (Mikhi-Fori) who had escaped into the upper Kapatchez River area (clearly Baga lands) and that in their quest for these runaways, the Fula had seized Baga who were working on rice plantations. The tone of Butscher's report did suggest, however, that such seizures were unusual and unexpected, at least among the Baga.

The character of the Baga-Sitem, the extent of their lands, or their interethnic relations for the 1793-1821 period are difficult to recon-

18Watt, Journal, 62'–63', 94', 101'.
19"Sandown," 67', 71', 71'.
20CMS, CA1/E2/103, Butscher to Secretary, 22 October 1811. Elizabeth Donnan, Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America (4 vols.: New York, 1965), 4:513, noted that the Doris imported 70 slaves to America in 1806, composed of "Mandingos, Soozees, Ballams, Bagos, Naloose Negroes," but did not provide relative numbers of Bagas within that list. Letters and reports from missionaries attached to the Church Missionary Society are crucial sources for information about the Baga and Susu peoples of the region. In my research I read these materials primarily to learn more about non-African merchants and their activities; missionary reports are particularly rich, however, in information about indigenous religious and customary practices. No serious ethnohistorian should avoid reading these materials.
struct from the documented sources cited above. Clearly, traders at Boké warned visitors that overland communications between the Nunez and the Pongo were difficult and dangerous, considering the armed status of peoples in the area, whether Baga, Nalu, Landuma, or runaway slaves located between the upper Nunez and the Bangalan branch of the Rio Pongo. The Baga-Sitem, therefore, were sufficiently isolated during this period to permit maintenance of boundaries of marked cultural differences.

The first lengthy observations of Pongo-based Baga, the Baga-Kakissa (also called the Baga-Sobane) and Baga-Koba/Marara, come also from travelers [see Map 1]. More particularly, they come from missionaries or those interested in establishing schools or in learning the Susu language, which they considered to be the principal medium of trade north of the Sierra Leone River and the anticipated language of conversion. If the Baga-Sitem were peoples whom captains only occasionally met, the Baga-Kakissa were far different, for narrow feeder estuaries into the Rio Pongo flowed directly through their lands. Consequently, Europeans were interested in them, but more interested in Susu speakers who lived behind them perhaps as close as fifteen kilometers from the shoreline. In 1800 the main estuary of the Rio Pongo divided the Baga-Kakissa from the Baga-Koba/Marara, the latter occupying the area southward to the mouth of Konkouré (Dembia) River.

At the mouth of the Pongo River, the Baga-Kakissa occupied lands whose characteristics were similar to those of their linguistic kin in the Nunez, isolated lowlands with meandering streams, mangrove swamps, and numerous islands. Between the Koumbalan River and Cape Verga, however, the mangrove coast gradually narrows, and the character of the land is more amenable to occupation and is less ecologically isolated. In consequence, the former area became sparsely populated with few villages, while the latter came to have the largest

---

21In "Les langues de la Guinée," Cahier d'études de langues Guinéennes 1 (1996), 6-8, F. K. Erhard Voeltz wrote that the Baga-Kakissa, Baga-Marara, and Baga-Sobane were virtually identical to Baga-Sitem. Voeltz suggested that the term Baga may derive from the Susu baé (sea), plus raka (of the)=baeraka (those of the sea), used to designate those who lived along the Guinea coast. Maps drawn before 1850 show Marara Island as located south of the Sand Bar or main entrance to the Rio Pongo at that time.

22Matthews, Voyage, 12-13, called these the Caxa Islands. Perhaps following his lead, Peter McLachlan, Travels into the Baga and Soosoo Countries in 1821 (2d. ed.: ed. Bruce L. Mouser and Ramon Sarró (Leipzig: University of Leipzig Papers on Africa, History and Culture Series, No. 2 1999), 1, notes 5 and 46, called the Baga-Kakissa the Caxas.
settlements of Baga-Kakissa along this coast. Above the islands (called Caxa on early maps) began a more hospitable land claimed by Baga-Kakissa but occupied principally by peoples who identified themselves as Susu. Missionaries seldom ventured into lands identified as Baga-Kakissa, but they did visit neighboring Susu villages because Susu was the anticipated language of "religious conversion" and because "scholars"/students and converts/patrons increasingly came from Susu speakers or from traders who lived among them. Those reports from 1796 to 1817 designate Susu settlements and only incidentally Baga-Kakissa ones, and, therefore, do little to distinguish a boundary maintained along linguistic lines or define relationships in the region above the Caxa islands.

Another important consideration is the character of Atlantic commerce near the mouth of the Pongo and possible reasons for ethnic accretion or change occurring during the mid- to late-eighteenth century. As long as Europeans were willing to use "coasting" practices along this shoreline, any estuary into the Pongo would suffice, or at least not be a hindrance to commerce. By mid-century, however, shippers began to use larger vessels, and the Pongo's main estuary became problematic because shifting sand bars and treacherous tides were present there, making it dangerous for vessels of deep drafts to enter the river. The Modeba (Mud) and Dangara (Cassinsin) estuaries, located north of the Pongo's main "sand bar" entrance, were fed by streams with slower currents and, while muddy, had softer bottoms which meant that larger ships used them, subsequently winding their


24 Church Missionary Society records are kept in two depositories: the society's headquarters in London and the University Library, University of Birmingham. Earliest records are housed at the Birmingham site. The latter are arranged in categories of committee minutes of the home society, sub-committee minutes for committees that dealt with particular mission stations, outgoing correspondence to missionaries, incoming letters from the missionaries, and miscellaneous/special reports. Missionaries were required to maintain regular correspondence with the patron society and to keep journals in which they summarized observations over a longer period. All these records are indispensable to a reconstruction of Pongo history. The society also published periodic reports that contained extracts of missionary letters. Lengthy selections are found in Samuel Abraham Walker, Missions in Western Africa Among the Soosos, Bullions, Etc. (Dublin, 1845) and Church Missionary Society, Missionary Records: West Africa (London, 1836).

25 Edward Bickersteth, "Journal of the Assistant Secretary," Missionary Register (March 1817), 102, entry dated 22 March 1816. See also Afzelius, Sierra Leone Journal, 100-01, for preferred use of the mud bar.
way to factories nearby or to the river’s main branch and further upstream to factories in the Bangalan and Fatala rivers.

By the end of the eighteenth century, several new towns/factories had developed in the headwaters of the Modeba and Dangara rivers. These were called Kissing, Charleston, and Boston (see Map 1), but Europeans/Americans or Africans who operated these factories apparently negotiated guest/host contracts with hosts who were Susu speakers and who accepted the protection of Susu rulers of nearby Tiyé. Whether these hosts were Baga or Susu is unclear in the sources. The landlord at Kissing in 1794, for instance, was Mangé Brama (Ibrahima). In 1796 Adam Afzelius visited this section of the river and noted that Tiyé was only the latest Susu capital governed by the Kati family, the first being located further inland above the town of Domingya. He wrote:26

The Susoo people, among which he [Thomas Cooper27 at Freeport/Tokekerren] lives and which inhabit the Río Pungas at least 150 miles up the country, are not so great beggars, and tho' slow and difficult to deal with, not half so much as the Foulahs. They [Susu] lived formerly more to the Southward but have of late extended there [their] dominion toward the north, driving away the aborigines and Bagas towards the seashore.

Afzelius’ reference to a recent “of late” population shift may have been correct, or at least provides a partial explanation until better sources are discovered. As long as ships visiting the coast remained small, with shallow drafts, the headwaters of the Modeba and Dangara rivers would have remained unimportant to commerce in the river. But once shipping techniques changed, the Susu, as active participants in and financial profiteers from the trade, extended their commercial networks coastward, displacing or establishing new and mutually advantageous relationships with Baga hosts along this section of the Modeba and Dangara rivers. This probably was occurring in the 1750-90 period. This does not, however, provide a boundary between Baga-Kakissa and Susu-Sumbia occupied lands; the more probable answer would suggest that the Kati lineage or at least more Islamized and polyethnic hosts (perhaps both Baga and Susu) exercised effective influence over remaining predominantly Baga villages and territory, with a significant segment of more-traditional Baga

26Ibid., 103.
27For extensive treatment of Thomas Cooper’s career in the Río Pongo from 1795 to 1800, see Bruce Mouser, “Trade, Coasters, and Conflict in the Río Pongo from 1790 to 1808,” JAH 14(1973), 45-64.
moving to the more isolated region north and west of the Dangara River.\textsuperscript{28}

The question of land ownership and identification of hosts in the Pongo who were more than nominal owners of land is complicated by descriptions of host/guest relationships that may reflect other patterns existing at the end of the eighteenth century. These were patterns understood by hosts who considered themselves as "first-comers," but complicated by guests who imported similar host/guest expectations, placing them atop those set by Baga customary practice or replacing them with a new set that contained similar or complementary ideas from both Baga and Susu practice. Oral traditions identify the Baga as the original inhabitants of the coast and as rightful "first-comers" who established ownership claims over vast tracts into the interior. Forced coastward, they surrendered land to those who followed; these displacements, however, were not enough, at least for the Baga, to deprive them of claims as rightful owners of land.\textsuperscript{29} Susu, or others, followed the Baga coastward and facilitated exchange of coastal produced goods for commodities from the interior. These newcomers also provided Baga with improved opportunities in lands that they may have considered marginal or transitional and gradually became guests of hosts with existing land claims. Relationships/agreements between guests and hosts still need to be renewed periodically and certainly contain expectations for all parties and payments of a substantial or nominal fee or occasionally a marriage alliance.

That such formalities continue between traditional Baga hosts and guests, perhaps ought to suggest that no less would have occurred two centuries earlier when Baga hosts outnumbered guests and perhaps were in positions to reject agreements completely. Odile Georg suggested that the earliest known Susu royal lineage of the Rio Pongo, the Bangu/Bango/Bangura, was "of Baga origins."\textsuperscript{30} Perhaps the emergence of the Bangura lineage represented development of a new hierarchy that temporarily permitted Baga and Susu institutions to co-

\textsuperscript{28}Mahawa Bangura, "Contribution à l'histoire des Sosoe du XVIe Siècle" (Mémoire de diplôme de fin d'études supérieures, 1971-72: Institut polytechnique Gamal Abdel Nasser, Conakry), 70ff., suggested that the growth of Susu influence in the Pongo region was not the consequence of violent collision between Baga and Susu, but rather the result of slow assimilation and accommodation. This is more in line with my "Accommodation and Assimilation in the Landlord-Stranger Relationship" in \textit{West African Culture Dynamics}, ed. B. K. Swartz and R. A. Dumett (The Hague, 1980), 497-514.

\textsuperscript{29}For a recent interpretation of proto-Baga or Baga migrations, see P.E.H. Hair, "The History of the Baga in Early Written Sources," \textit{HA} 24(1997), 381-91.

exist, but within a polyethnic structure dominated by Susu newcomers (the nephews or sons-in-law) who established land claims by fusing with earlier Baga “ground kings” (their uncles). Perhaps the Susu-Kati lineage which “usurped” power from the Bangura was itself only one step further removed from a Baga source, or were Baga fabrications representing the evolution of a more complex system with first-comers and later-comers which recognized increasingly shared rights over land use, but continued rights of land ownership. Certainly, by 1800 one might chart land claims, or host/guest claims, on the right bank as follows:

a) Baga-Kakissa: first-comers and owners of land;
b) Susu of Bangura/Bangu/Bango/Kati lineages: acquire rights to hold land and disburse its use, as long as respect was given their hosts but increasingly becoming landowners;
c) traders/missionaries/Sierra Leone Company: guests of those who claimed to have rights for disbursing the use of land.31

Information about the placement of Baga-Koba/Winara is more complete for this period because of insightful reports written by missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, who maintained missions and schools at Bassaya, Kalara, and Canofee in theFatala River from 1808 to 1817, and at Bouramaya (Bramaya) on the Konkoure River and at Kaporo on Kalum peninsula for shorter periods (see Map 3).32

31Bangura’s description (“Contribution,” 83-84) of assimilation and accommodation between Baga and Susu, of Susu acceptance of Baga patterns, and of Baga acceptance of Susu as the language of commerce is very helpful to understanding the dynamic of accretion and change occurring on this coast. Bangura (ibid., 90) observed that the problem of Susu identification is unique because everyone is Susu; but if asked, everyone will identify himself more specifically as Baga, Nalu, Landuma, Susu, or other ethnic group. Bangura (ibid., 99-100) also made a distinction between “right of soil” and “right of use.” In 1821 McLachlan, Travels, 17, notes 79-80, identified the Pongo Susu as “Yamfa Susu.” Along this coast, yamfayamfu is a creolized word that translates as “trouble.” Perhaps McLachlan used the term to mean that these Susu were “troublesome,” or he may have meant that they were different from other Susu, with institutions and traits that brought direction/cohesion to Susu and Baga in the area. In effect McLachlan may have been describing a distinct newly-fused group of Susu/Baga whom he called “Yamfa Susu.”

32In his Fifty Years in Western Africa: Being a Record of the Work of the West Indian Church on the Banks of the Rio Pongo (London, 1900), 127, Alfred Barrow mentioned a report by the Reverend P.H. Doughlin, ca.1885, who divided the Baga into the Koba Baga, Kakisa Baga, Black or Naked Baga, the Mikh-ii Fori, and Kálam Baga, and described the peoples of Bouramaya as Susu. In 1875 Thomas George Lawson, an official of the Sierra Leone Colonial administration, submitted a report, “Information relative to the neighbouring countries,” in which he
This area south of the Rio Pongo was also better known to European ship captains and to officials from Sierra Leone because of a prominent presence of Luso-Africans who were a political and commercial force in this region. John Matthews' description of 1785, for example, focused almost entirely on those persons of Portuguese descent and with particular Bissao connections, who exercised political/economic influence over coastal communities.33

Sierra Leone Company records and correspondence from 1794 to 1802 identified the Gomez family of Bakiya (Bakia) as an important family/lineage with authority (or sufficient powers) to call conferences and negotiate agreements between headmen located between the Pongo and the Konkouré rivers, with the Fatala River serving as an inland boundary of sorts, where Baga and Susu headmen acted as hosts to non-African guests. Whether Baga were the only peoples coastward from this line is uncertain, because these records do not clearly designate villages as Baga.34 But it is clear that headmen who identified themselves as Baga or Susu were located on both banks of the Fatala River and that Europeans north of the main branch of the Rio Pongo on the right bank as far as Hell's Gate (where the Fatala joins the Big Pongo) negotiated their host/guest agreements with the Susu designate rulers at Bara/Tiyé or with hosts who recognized Bara/Tiyé as nominal centers of the right bank. Those non-Africans trading in the Fatala negotiated their arrangements with headmen (Baga or Susu) who "sat down" under the protection of Mangé Baké of Bassaya/Lisso, and Baké spoke Susu but identified himself as Baga on issues of land rights.35 Traders in the Bangalan (Rio Baladi) branch of
the river apparently were beyond Tiye's effective control, and they negotiated their agreements with a Susu/Baga headman at Farénya or Bara (Bango/Bangura) or with a Fula governor who resided in the area. 36

Mangé Bake's territory of influence centered at Bassaya/Lisso and extended further up the Fatala River to Canoffee and Kalara, and perhaps as far as Korita, although Korita is not mentioned specifically in Company records or in Church Missionary Society reports. His period of rule is not certain from records thus far researched, but those records do cover 1794 to 1826, and Bake remained in place during unclear in the sources; however, Bickersteth, "Journal of the Assistant Secretary," Missionary Register (1817) 108-10, noted that when he sought to travel from Bassaya to Bouramaya overland, it was necessary to go by canoe to the Tibola Creek, upstream to Ganganta and then overland to Kambaya, then to Bouramaya. This report may indicate that Bake's authority extended only to settlements along the Fatala River and not more than a few kilometers southward. See also CMS CA1/E2/90, Wenzel's Journal, passim; on one occasion the headman of Kalara threatened to "set down" under Kati of Tiye, should Mangé Bake not honor a promise given to the missionaries. In CMS CA1/E3/39, Renner to Secretary, 24 December 1812, every reference to Bake suggested that he had authority to summon Susu headmen to palavers at Bassaya. Bake (CMS CA1/E3/116, Wilhelm to Secretary, 19 February 1814) again summoned an exclusive "Susu palaver" to meet at Lisso at which charges against the missionaries would be discussed. An earlier report, An Account of the Colony of Sierra Leone, 1795, 137, described Bassaya as a town surrounded by Baga peoples. In 1826 Bake witnessed a legal document drawn with reference to the estate of John Fraser, signing his name in Arabic script. I am indebted to Daniel Schafer for this 1826 reference that he located in the Florida State Archives and that I have not yet seen. In 1796 Afzelius, Sierra Leone Journal, 104, 108, wrote that the Baga/Susu ruler of the Bangalan branch had attempted to obtain relief for a relative who was then in Bake's control, but was unable to accomplish it. This would suggest that a clear distinction separated the powers and territories of the Bangalan Susu and those of the Baga of the Fatala. Later Afzelius noted that "he [Bake] is a Bagga-man it seems the only one remaining of the Chiefs, since the Bagos were drove out of the Country—Mungo Kerrepha's [Susu] dominions are extended to Hells [G]ate, to the Bagoes, over Kissing etc. Bangalan etc."

36See Mouser, "Trade, Coasters, and Politics." Recently discovered genealogical data in the archives of the Congregation du P.P. du St. Esprit also suggest an independent center of landlord relationships in the Bangalan branch of the river; these records are currently undergoing analysis with Victoria Bomba Coifman. See also CMS CA1/E3/39, Renner to Secretary, 24 December 1812; CMS CA1/E3/99, Renner to Secr., 5 November 1813; CMS CA1/E6/53, Renner to Secretary, Journal, 5 February 1817. In "A Map of the Pongas Country in West Africa, Shewing the Stations of the West Indian Mission," (ca.1860), six royal towns are listed—Tiah (King Katty), Bara (King Bango), Lisso (King Bango), Bashia (King Allafah), Yenungia (King Simo), and Bramia (King Jelloram [Fernandez]), suggesting a polycentric political system. Reconstruction, based on data from this map, West Indian Mission records, and Congregation du P.P. du St. Esprit records, remains to be completed.
this entire period. At first mention, the most powerful person other than Baké, on the Pongo’s left bank, was a Luso-African named Emmanuel Gomez, Jr. of Bakiya on the Sandoro River, about fifteen kilometers due east of the main branch of the Rio Pongo. Between 1794 and 1802, Gomez forced Baké’s hand on several occasions by promising military support should Baké get into difficulty with European or Euro-African traders in the Bangalan River, with Susu/Baga from Tiyé, or with Fula who followed the Fatala coastward to factories in the Pongo, in consequence of Gomez’s directives and protection.

Records for 1808 to 1817 are more complete than those of the 1794 to 1802 period, and these support earlier observations of effective Baké/Baga/Susu control of the southern and eastern bank of the Fatala River and contain some (but limited) information about the composition of villages in the area. Bassaya, for example, was composed of two towns, the “old Bashia” that comprised mainly Susu, while the main Bassaya was Baga.\(^{37}\) One obtains the impression that “being Baga” was something of a political statement. It meant that a headman identified himself as “outside” the control of both the Bara/Tiyé-based Susu/Baga and Susu/Fula of the Bangalan branch. “Being Baga” also reinforced customary rights to land as “first-comer,” thereby reminding non-African traders and late-comers of rightful authority in the region.

Missionary records continued through 1817 to divide children/scholars at its mission schools along ethnic lines, identifying most as “mulattos,” but many they listed as Susu, Baga, or others.\(^{38}\) By 1816, however, nearly every student spoke Susu, clearly attesting to an accelerating shift to Susu as the region’s principal language and perhaps a declining cultural-base for Baga in this section of the Fatala River. Whether the Baga spoke Baga or Susu or were bilingual, however, did not change the fact that certain lineages would continue to be identified as “first-comers,” with customary rights to act as hosts to Europeans or later-arriving Africans from the interior.

The principal difference between the 1794-1802 description of political and military prowess and that of 1808-17 was found in the absence after 1807 of prominent references to Emmanuel Gomez, Jr., or of Bakiya as a principal base of power, and the appearance of another

\(^{37}\) Bickersteth, “Journal of the Assistant Secretary,” 106.
\(^{38}\) CMS, CA1/E2/92, Wenzel to Secretary, 12 July 1811; CA1/E2/103, Butscher to Secretary, 22 October 1811; CA1/E4/70, List of Wenzel’s students [1814]; CA1/E4/74, Wilhelm’s Journal, Account of the Children at Bashia; CA1/E5A/68, List of the Children in Canoffee School.
Luso-African, William Fernandez (1775-1823) of Bouramaya, who intervened forcefully to facilitate compromise and obtain consensus when disputes developed between the missionaries and Mangé Baké. Generally, when the former explained about their differences with Baké to Fernandez, the latter sided with the missionaries, and a messenger sent from him to Baké was sufficient for Baké to change his mind. It was Fernandez who, in response to a threatened punitive expedition into the lower Fatala by Fula warriors in 1813, called a grand palaver (conference) of all Baga and Susu chiefs on the left bank of the Rio Pongo and marshaled resources to repel such an assault on his and their domains. The absence of Gomez after 1807 may indicate little about a declining influence of Bakiya; it may instead say more about the nature of leadership on the left bank for this period. Perhaps, instead of describing a single group of Bagas as Marara/Koba in this region, one should be dividing these people into at least three groups: Baga-Fatala of the upper river who were rapidly losing visible attributes identifying them as Baga; Baga/Luso-Africans of Bakiya and Bouramaya who by 1800 had become bigmen; and Baga-Marara/Koba of the coast.

By 1821 the Baga-Marara/Koba occupied the mangrove and geographically isolated islands of the coast on the left bank of the Rio Pongo. But even here, those on the inland edges of these islands were accommodating themselves to economic opportunities not available to more isolated members of their group. McLachlan noted in 1821 that the Koba hired themselves as laborers/seamen and produced palm oil for coastal markets. As laborers/seamen, these Baga worked outside their home groups and adjusted to patterns prevailing in Luso-African, European and other communities. Perhaps canoemen would not have been expected to adjust to outsider customs, but those who practiced more sophisticated trades (pilots, coopers, carpenters) would have been required to reside outside their central areas for longer periods and to adjust to other patterns. Such occupations also afforded opportunities to change ethnic identification as a way, perhaps, to improve opportunities.

In the second group, the Baga/Luso-Africans and those who identi-
fied themselves as belonging to their camp, effective power at the top was held within an extended family of Portuguese traders who had intermarried within prominent Baga-Koba lineages. These Baga/Luso-Africans were able to provide themselves and Baga-Koba to their coastside with protection against interior peoples and deliver extensive opportunities made available through participation in the Atlantic/coastal trade at the same time. Clearly, Fernandez in 1816 did not see himself as European or "mulatto" nor identify with those merchants at Kissing or Domingya, or in the Bangalan branch of the Pongo. He was an "African," with the welfare of his people, property, and lands foremost in his vision. Whether he saw himself as Baga is less certain; perhaps he only saw himself as modern or a "bigman," representing a new group that dominated domestic politics/power, protected his interests and those of his "retainers" or subordinate headmen and perhaps his hosts, and adjusted to economic/political changes occurring in the Atlantic trade. Bickersteth's report of his 1816 visit to Bouramaya and Bassaya essentially supported the above analysis.

Events in the Pongo after 1812, however, changed circumstances, placed missions and schools in the Fatala in jeopardy, and lessened Fernandez's defense of the missionaries. From the beginning of the missions, the Church Missionary Society, whether rightly or wrongly, had published extracts from missionary letters and journals in its reports, and some of these were critical of Mungé Baké and those in his camp and revealing in ways that the slave trade operated in the Rio Pongo. In some instances, these published reports (and rumored private letters from missionaries to friends at Freetown) provided commanders in the Royal Anti-Slavery Squadron with suggestions of whose factories were selling slaves, names of factors who were breaking English and American laws against the slave trade, and names of landlords/hosts who might be actively supporting that trade.

Most descriptions of the Baga portray them as rice and palm-oil producers. The precise market for Baga rice is less clear. Settlers at Freetown, for instance, preferred white rice that Fula bearers brought from the interior or polished rice produced in Sumbuya. Husk or red rice generally brought only half the price of white rice at the Sierra Leone Company's Pongo store, clearly suggesting that Baga rice had limited market appeal. Its low price, relative to other food products along this coast during the heyday of the slave trade, however, may have make it very attractive to captains who needed to provide inexpensive food for their slave cargos during the period of loading and transporting to the Americas. Portuguese traders were the brokers between these two groups and gradually gained for themselves a position within the power structure of this coast.

CMS CA1/ED/40, Wenzel to Secretary, 10 November 1814. Wenzel warned that these extracts might find their way into the hands of headmen whose continued support might, thereby, be placed in jeopardy.
1813, 1814, and 1816, vessels of the Royal Squadron raided factories in the lower and upper river and effectively forced hosts to defend European guests against those who sought their destruction. Traders having agreements with Baké or with those headmen within his region ultimately appealed to him for protection and charged the missionaries with secretly reporting their every move. Gradually, from 1814 to 1816, Baké tried to protect commerce and, at the same time, to bring the missionaries under control, but he had little success. By 1816 many traders had withdrawn their children from the mission schools. During the same period, several buildings at the Bassaya mission/school were set ablaze, making it clear that local support for the CMS mission at Bassaya was collapsing; Baké had sanctioned these attacks, perhaps only in an indirect fashion by not opposing them.

By 1815, Fernandez also recognized that he could no longer defend the missionaries at Bassaya, especially once their support among traditional and local hosts had evaporated. This support had been further damaged by the revival of an older claim of property use for the land on which the missionary school at Bassaya was located. John Ormond, Jr., of Bangalan claimed that his father’s factory had stood on that very spot, and he demanded his right to the land. Even Fernandez eventually supported Ormond’s right as “first-comer.” As mediator in this dispute, Fernandez discussed with Bickersteth the possibility of re-establishing a school at Bouramaya and of closing the Bassaya mission/school. This effectively led to the ending of the Bassaya experiment in 1816 and the closing of the Canofee and Kalara schools a year later. Peter McLachlan’s 1821 comments about the Baga-Koba specifically, are minimal and add little to an understanding of bases of power or types of boundaries present among this group.

---

44 CMS CAI/E3/99, Butscher to Secretary, 5 November 1813; CMS CAI/E3/100, Butscher to Secretary, 10 November 1813; CMS CAI/E3/108, Wenzel to Secretary, 12 December 1813; CMS CAI/E3/113, Klein to Secretary, 6 January 1814; CMS CAI/E3/116, Wilhelm to Secretary, 19 February 1814; CMS CAI/E4/63, Butscher to Secretary, 14 December 1814.
45 CMS CAI/E3/113, Klein to Secretary, 6 January 1814; CMS CAI/E3/116, Wilhelm to Secretary, 19 February 1814; CMS CAI/E4/10, Wenzel to Secretary, 14 April 1814; CMS CAI/E4/74, Wilhelm’s Journal, 6 December 1814.
46 Bickersteth, “Journal of the Assistant Secretary,” 161-63, noted that Fernandez had defended mission stations in the Fatala River during discussions with headmen, but had privately recommended new schools only in towns supervised directly from Bouramaya.
47 McLachlan, Travels, 10, stated, in totality: “The Coba Baga are a race of people who inhabit a part of the north bank of the river Dembia [Konkouré], near its mouth: what I have already said regarding the former tribe [the Baga-Kalum] may
The Baga-Kalum (also called the Baga-Sangara and Baga-Sumbia) should have been easier to define because of physical characteristics of the area and the limited land space available for settlement. But that apparently was not to be so simple for the period of this study. The first to describe this group, if one separates the Iles de Los-Baga as a distinct subgroup, was Jonathan Klein, who established a school near Kaporo, an important town belonging to Mangé Boye Demba, recognized ruler of the Baga-Kalum between the Melacorée and Doumba/Dubreka rivers. Klein was also the person who operated the short-lived school at Bouramaya between 1814 and 1815. Klein’s letters and journals certainly contain much on the character of Baga occupation and politics of this area and should be given more attention than they have received thus far.

Bickersteth visited this area in 1816 and, in his published report, he described the strip of land on the northwestern base of the Mania/Sangara hills as densely populated, and Kaporo with 59 houses and perhaps as many as 400 inhabitants, a significant size for this time and place. The residents of Kaporo he described as primarily Baga, but all spoke Susu; indeed the headman of Kaporo and immediate landlord of the missionaries was Mangé Seaka, a Muslim. Bickersteth described Mangé Demba’s influence as extending nearly 150 kilometers (“90 miles”) along the coast and inland some 320 kilometers (“200 miles”), an area that clearly would have duplicated some of that claimed by William Fernandez of Bouramaya. Perhaps, in the nature of things here, Demba was actually Fernandez’s landlord. Demba also claimed ownership of the Iles de Los, which will be discussed below. Demba’s residence was at Tumania, in the highlands of the Sangara hills. Clearly, by 1816 neither language, dress, nor religion be applied to this, and also, with every degree of propriety, to those in the Rio Pongos, with this exception, that the two last tribes are a much more brave and warlike people [Kalum and Koba]." In Sierra Leone Archives, Colonial Secretary’s Letter Book, Colonial Secretary to King Jellorum Fernandez, 28 September 1860, Bouramaya and the Bouramaya [Konkoure] River are specifically designated as belonging to the “Cobah Baggars.”

Bangura, “Contribution,” 161-65, wrote that Mangé Demba [Boye Demba] was the descendant of Mangé Tomboli who married his daughter, Maboye, to Sumba Tumani Dumbuya, a Susu. Three sons of this union, Demba, Kanta, and Sangara, were given sections of the coast to rule, but Demba was given jurisdiction over them all. Demba was, according to Bangura, of mixed descent and this perhaps helps to explain the preponderance of Muslim headmen among the Baga-Kalum during the period covered in this paper. Voeltz, “Langues de la Guinee,” 6, wrote that the Koba and Kalum languages are essentially the same.

Bickersteth, “Journal of the Assistant Secretary,” 100. Bangura, “Contribution,” 161, stated that his residence was at Tomboli, perhaps Tomboleya.
were distinguishing traits dividing Baga-Kalum from those who identified themselves as non-Baga.

Klein's observations placed the Baga-Kalum in closer contact with Muslim teachers and traders than may have been the case at Bouramaya.\(^5\) It was common for Mandingos from Moria (Forékariah), Susu from Sumbuya (Wonkapong), and traders from the far interior to visit Kaporo or pass through Demba's territories on their way to Dubréka or to the Konkouré River, apparently intending to visit or make trade with Fernandez at Bouramaya. In his 1816 report to the Society, Klein listed Kippy, Rodoma, Robanne Fria (Rogbane), Cassuna, Dicksing (Dixinn), Kamaing, Tumbo, and Butabina (Boulbiné) as towns located between Kaporo and the Ile Tumbo and within a day's walk from the mission settlement. Northeast, within a day's walk, were Nuneo, Kapporoo-Kungy, Kompy, Sambia (Simbaya), Kobia (Kobaya), Backy-Singnia, Foddia, Hansmania (Ansoumanyia), Kasson Borimania, Debrica (Dubreka), Domia, Maffia, Kaeca, Kapaeleng, Kundja, and Tumania.\(^6\) Unfortunately, Klein did not indicate the ethnic composition of these towns, but he did note that nearly all of the headmen were Muslims and suggested that when the Society sent religious literature to Kaporo for distribution, it also send tracts, printed in Arabic, for headmen.\(^7\)

McLachlan's report of his 1821 visit to Kaporo and travels to Bouramaya contains more particular comment about the Baga-Kalum and mention of more towns, some of which he specified by ethnic group. First he observed that there were Baga towns, Baga towns with some Susu living in them, Susu towns with some Baga, and Susu towns. Those towns in the highlands appeared to be Susu, but those on the coast were of mixed descriptions; Baga towns located near Susu ones seemed to be in better condition. Kaporo was Baga, but had a Muslim headman. Dubréka was Baga, with a population of approximately 500 persons. North of Dubréka were the towns of Kontiah (Baga), Télémaya (Baga), Yatiya (Baga), Bonéya (Baga) and Taban (Susu). He identified Taban as populated by 700 to 800 people; the headman of Taban was named Andrew. The ethnic group that occupied lands between Taban and Bouramaya was primarily

---

\(^5\) Whether Muslim clerics or visitors came to Bouramaya in large or frequent numbers is unclear at present. See CMS CA1/E5A/60, Klein to Secretary, Kaporo, 1 September 1816, for entries mentioning Muslim clerics visiting Kaporo.

\(^6\) CMS, CA1/E5/147, Reports of the Missionaries, Klein. In his journal of 1817, CMS CA1/E6/101, Klein mentioned many other towns, but failed to give their ethnic group. This journal needs to be read more carefully.

\(^7\) Bickersteth, "Journal of the Assistant Secretary," 100.
Baga (towns of Kangoleyia, Yoniya, and Wassou), although they dressed in the Susu fashion.53

Assuming that McLachlan’s observations were accurate, the lands of the Baga-Kalum would have covered territory from Ile Tumbo to Bouramaya itself; but these lands were occupied by Baga with many Susu traits or by Susu. The latter may simply have represented outposts of Susu whose nominal capital was located south of Kalum at Wonkapong (Sumbuya) or with ties further south to Moria. Or they may have been Baga who identified themselves as Susu when it was to their advantage to do so. His description, however, does attest to the mixed character of the region, with the general population claiming to be Baga and headmen already converted to the faith of more powerful neighbors to the south. This area, therefore, was perhaps more allied politically, socially, and economically with the Sumbuya Susu than to the Baga-Koba to their northwest.54

53McLachlan, Travels, 18-22, identified the Susu of Taban as Kabitah-Susu (blacksmiths).
54After this section was written and submitted for inclusion in the conference proceedings, I located and annotated a brief 24-page report compiled by Leopold Butscher in which he summarized observations about peoples located between the Scarcies and Nunez river. That narrative may have been intended for Bickersteth's use in preparation for his visit to west Africa in 1816/17. In the report (Account of the Mandingoes, Susoos, & Other Nations, c.1815, ed. Bruce L. Mouser, University of Leipzig Papers on Africa, History and Culture Series, No.6(2000), 12-14, notes 50-62), Butscher linked the region between Ile Tombo and the Dubréka River directly to the Sumbia/Zumbia Susu whose political center was located at Wonkapong in the upper Quiaport/Soumbou River. Butscher described Dubréka as one of the three “considerable towns” of Sumbuya and as having a population of about 1,000, most of whom were Moslems. Butscher's ca.1815 account, while ostensibly contrary in analysis to those provided by Klein (1816), Bickersteth (1816-17), and McLachlan (1821), reflected the ambiguous nature of reality within the region as described in the text above. Whereas others apparently linked “Susu-ness” to Islam and “Baga-ness” to animism, Butscher appeared to have emphasized political and economic associations rather than language or religion. Butscher also described the region between Dubréka town and Bouramaya as occupied by a separate people whom he called Kanias. McLachlan, Travels, 21-22, in 1821 mentioned that the Susu of Taban were “considered by the chiefs as a distinct tribe,” perhaps rephrasing the ambiguity described in the text. In a private discussion with Ramon Sarro, Sarro mentioned that a resurgent Baga identification has recently occurred within this region, partly in consequence of increased migration into the area and urban development from Conakry and partly in reaction to a perceived loss of property rights by those who claim privilege as “first comers.” In this instance, Baga-ness does not refer to language identification, for the use of Baga has nearly disappeared. In effect, an identity transition from Baga-ness to Susu-ness which occurred among the Baga-Fatala between 1793 and 1821 might have been occurring among the Kalum peoples at the same time or may have already taken place, with political and economic ties more firmly installed with the Susu of Sumbuya than with peoples of Bouramaya or elsewhere in the Rio Pongo.
The ethnic and political character of the Iles de Los in the 1793 to 1821 period is ambiguous, despite the fact that accounts of the islands and their peoples are numerous, even for much earlier periods. Located but a few kilometers off the coast from Turnbo Island, these islands were frequented by European voyagers as early as 1461 (Ca da Mosto), and they continued as important points of reference and sources of commodities, fresh water, and protection for sail-driven vessels for the next four centuries. By the mid-eighteenth century, traders regularly negotiated their "relationship" with a resident Baga host generally located on Tamara Island, the westernmost island in the chain. This person was Thomas Williams in 1793; but Williams was considered subject to Mangé Demba of the Baga-Kalum. In 1793/94, Samuel Gamble visited the islands and described them as having a mixed population, however small (approximated at 800 persons, with 600 of that number located on Tamara Island) that it was. The majority of its people were Baga, but there were significant numbers of Europeans and their offspring, and an unspecified number of slaves that were either Susu or Mandingos or of mixed descent. In 1793/94, the islands continued as an important bulking center for the slave trade, as well as for trade in other commodities coming from the coast.

The fact that the islands were important to trade and inevitably a source of revenue for coastal people, whether as hosts or traders, meant that property rights and duties owed to hosts were often contested. As noted above, Mangé Demba claimed traditional ownership to the islands, but rights to customs, anchorage, salt, or trade could be controlled by another person or persons. Although Mangé Demba held the superior claim to ownership, European guests generally made their agreements with Thomas Williams or, as of 1815, with Mangé Amurah, who lived on Kassa (Factory) Island near the CMS mission station. Control over salt towns within Mangé Demba’s lands was contested at the turn of the century by Mori Kanu of Samo/Tanéné (south of the Melacorée River) and Fendan Modu Dumbuya of Wonkapong, and Fendan Modu traded regularly with merchants

55. Brooks, Landlords and Strangers, 279; and numerous articles by P.E.H. Hair.
58. Sandown," 118‘.
59. Ibid., 71‘, 88‘, 89‘, 118‘.
60. McLachlan, Travels, 7, described Amurah as the best scholar among the Baga. See CA1/E5/123, Klein to Secretary, 27 May 1816.
located on the Iles de Los. These ambiguous claims made landlord/stranger agreements on the Iles de Los difficult to maintain and protect. Missionaries, in 1815, made their rent payments to Mangé Amurah, perhaps suggesting either that Tamara Island and Kassa Island were treated separately, or that Williams was no longer a resident on the islands. The reports by Bickersteth and McLachlan, as they explain the ethnic composition or political status of the islands, say little and further research of this topic needs to be undertaken.

In summary, the sources consulted in this paper suggest that some groupings, as suggested by Frederick Lamp, need to be adjusted when considering the locations of Baga or Baga influence along the coast for the 1793 to 1821 period. Unfortunately, information about regions of effective occupation for the Baga-Sitem is unclear, especially the placement of a physical boundary dividing them from the Nalu, Landuma, or Susu peoples in their hinterland. The Baga-Kakissa were located in approximately the area that they held ca.1900, but that may have been a consequence of a recent (1750 to 1790) Susu migra-

61 George E. Brooks and Bruce L. Mouser, “An 1804 Slaving Contract Signed in Arabic Script From the Upper Guinea Coast,” HA 14(1987), 341-47. In “Treaty of Peace and Amity,” signed between Britain and Mangé Demba on 6 July 1818, Dala Mohamed Dumbuya was listed as a “chieftain” of the Baga-Kalum, a status suggesting more than minor Dumbuya influence in this area. See PRO, CO267/47/156, McCarthy to Bathurst, 20 July 1818, enclosure. I have intentionally concluded analysis of property rights on the Iles de Los before the signing of the 1818 treaty that, following the protocol of European treaty-making, technically ceded the islands to Britain.

62 Letter and journals from missionaries at the Iles de Los need to be researched more systematically for a clear understanding of the nature of landlords on the islands during this period. In CMS CA1/E3/108, Wenzel to Secretary, 12 December 1813, Amurah was described as a Bullom whose father had sent him to Fula country for an education; he was a “Mahomedan preacher, and a teacher of Arabic. At the death of his father, he obtained his paternal inheritance the Isles and established it by a decision of arms.” The above is unsubstantiated by other sources and contains contradictions of normal inheritance patterns along this coast. The status of Amurah and Tom Williams is further complicated by two other documents. In Alexander Smith, “Journal of a Voyage from Sierra Leone to the River Kisi Kisi . . . 1805,” ms.9, Sierra Leone Collection, the University Library, Manuscript Division, University of Illinois at Chicago, Smith noted the arrival at Forékariah of “Amara King Tom of the Isles de Los.” In this case it is unclear whether Smith meant that Amurah and Tom were different persons or perhaps the same person. In PRO, CO267/47/156, McCarthy to Bathurst, 20 July 1818, enclosure “Treaty of Peace and Amity,” dated 6 July 1818, Tom’s name is absent from signatories to the treaty of cession. For this paper, I have intentionally refrained from discussing terms of cession contained in the 1818 Treaty and continuing payments to hosts, despite the claim of “absolute cession” of the islands to Britain.
tion coastward or evolution of a new "Yamfa Susu" (Baga/Susu) hierarchy centered at Tiye (ca. 1795). The largest discrepancies with regions suggested by Lamp are in the placements of the Baga-Koba and Baga-Kalum. The Baga-Koba, for the 1793-1821 period, apparently occupied a much larger space, bordered by the main branch of the Rio Pongo and the Fatala River (as far as Kalara) on the northwest and north, a near straight line from Kalara to Bouramaya on the northwest, and the Bouramaya River on the south. Perhaps this group can be better understood by dividing them into three groups: the Baga-Koba, the Baga-Fatala (River), and the Baga/Luso-Africans of Bakiya/Bouramaya. The Baga-Kalum occupied, with increasingly mixed populations of "Susuized" Baga and Susu, the area from the Bouramaya River to the Ile Tumbo, with the Iles de Los Baga included as a subject subgroup.

These reports indicate little about state building among the Baga-Sitem or the coastmost Baga-Kakissa; perhaps there was none during this period. That is far different, however, than the case among those around Tiye or on the Pongo's left bank to the Ile Tombo. These latter groups appear to have been increasingly structured, with paramountcies operating among all groups and with headmen or "bigmen" who were able to hold/host regional and international palavers and enforce agreements. The latter Baga (whether Yamfa, Fatala, Koba, or Kalum) were also apparently well integrated into the commercial life then existing along this coast; Baga regularly served as hosts to European and American guests wishing to establish residence among them and profited directly, in the case of the Yamfa, Fatala, or Luso-Africans, or indirectly, as with the Koba and Kalum headmen, in the international trade that came through their territories. The impact of these contacts on the economies and social traits of these peoples needs further investigation, much of which can be done within the voluminous records of the Church Missionary Society.