AMARA, ALIMAMY OF MORIA FROM 1802 TO 1826

Note: written first in the mid 1970s and never sufficiently revised for publication. It stands here as a piece unfinished. I invite others to read it, but please keep in mind that I have taken on other topics and Moria is no longer a major focus. Bruce Mouser

Few African leaders were as openly opposed to British expansion on Africa’s windward coast or as able to resist British efforts during the early nineteenth century as was Amara, Imam of Moria from 1802 to 1826. For more than two decades, Amara staunchly defended Moria’s control of commerce along the Futa-Scarcies corridor and for the most part succeeded in delaying meaningful British expansion into this area until after his death in 1826. Yet, the circumstances of his election and the divisions which characterized Moria during his reign made this task exceedingly difficult. Less successful were his attempts to restrict British political and cultural influences to the Freetown area, at a time when the British colony was experiencing dramatic growth.

Born into the chiefly Touré family of the Forékaria area in 1769/70, Amara was one of many sons of Mori Morani, founder and ruler of Moria. In 1774/75 Mori Morani sent Amara to be raised in Fuuta Jaloo and to receive a Koranic education at a school in Labé where the future ruling elites of areas neighboring Fuuta Jaloo became sensitized to doctrinaire teachings as well as to changes in Islamic philosophical thought and to the political realities of close proximity to the Fula Empire which ruled the highlands located eastwards of Moria. Among Amara’s cohorts at this school and an acquaintance during his twenty-seven years in the Futa was the future ruler of the Fula Empire, Alimamy Sadu.¹

Amara became known to friends and antagonists both in the Futa and on the coast as a religious fanatic, a strong-willed individual, and an able warrior. Upon his return to Forékaria upon the death of Alimamy Setafa in 1802, the Touré family looked upon Amara as an exceptionally educated person, a teacher and a contender for the Turban of Moria. His experiences in Fuuta Jaloo and his acquaintances with other chiefly families made him an asset to trade and to diplomacy between Moria and its immediate neighbors and to others extending far into the interior.

Amara’s election as ruler of Moria in 1802 occurred at a time when Moria faced unique political and economic problems on the coast, some of which traced from the founding of the state nearly thirty years earlier. Jula traders first appeared in coastal towns in the mid-eighteenth century where they sought to participate in the important salt and Jula trades which had developed between the coast and the interior. Fula Herders in Fuuta Jaloo preferred sea salt for their cattle above the rock salt which came from the Sahara. These Jula initially settled in Baga, Bullom and Susu villages on the coast, provided new and improved markets for local products, and stimulated increased contacts with the interior.

These newcomers, however, represented not only support for new markets but also new business competitors on the coast whose political and philosophical ideas were different from those of their hosts. For the most part the established families of the coast among whom they settled reflected earlier migrations and earlier ideas of rule from the interior. Upon reaching the coast, these earlier invaders had displaced indigenous peoples

September, *Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser*, hereafter cited RGSLA.


or had made alliances with them and had founded new villages.\footnote{Maurice Houis, \textit{La Guinée française} (Paris: Editions Maritimes et Coloniales, 1953), 19-20; Maurice Houis, “Les minorités ethniques de la Guinée côtière Situation linguistique,” \textit{Etudes Guineennes}, no. 4 (1950), 25-28; Claudius Madrolle, \textit{En Guinée} (Paris: Le Soudier, 1895), 291-93.} One Susu group pushed the Limba, Bullom and Temne toward the Scarcies and founded various chieftaincies between the Futa and the Scarcies.\footnote{Houis, “Les minorités ethniques,” 28-29; Jules Huburt Saint-Père, “Petit historique des Sossos du Rio Pongo,” \textit{Bulletin du Comité d’Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l’Afrique Occidentale Française}, XIII (1930), 26-27.} Other and smaller segments of the Susu moved as family units and as traders into the Baga and Bullom coastal towns where they played a role as intermediaries between salt and cola producers and interior buyers. Gradually these latter families, many of whom were only partially Islamized, married into local ruling families and became supportive of their hosts.\footnote{Arcin, \textit{Histoire}, 134-136; Bright, “Journal,” 10, 59.} The Mandingoes were yet another group of families and, more importantly, ones which might challenge the new-found positions of Susus in the long-distance trade.

The antagonisms between the various family groups which occupied Moria and neighboring chieftaincies extended as well to religious differences. Earlier migrants to the coast were animists and some had migrated intentionally to avoid conversion to Islam. The early eighteenth century, however, saw the emergence of a militant and evangelical Islamic movement in Fuuta Jaloo and the creation of a powerful Fula Empire which championed the spread of Islam as well as political hegemony in Fuuta Jaloo.\footnote{More recent interpretations of Fula History in Guinea are Thierno Diallo, \textit{Les Institutions politiques du Fouta Djalon an XIX\textsuperscript{e} Siecle} (Dakar: Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire, 1972), 29-49; Terry Alford, \textit{Prince Among Slaves} (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1977), 3-19.} As the Fula spread their wars of conversion, Mandingoes living along the Futa-Scarcies corridor joined the holy war to extend not only the faith but also their own political and commercial influences.
along the coast. In ca. 1770, for instance, a large force of Mandingoes and their Fula allies seized Bereira, a Susu town, and tried to force its inhabitants to convert to Islam, with partial success. A few years later hostilities broke out between Mandingoes and other Baga and Susus in consequence of activities for Muslim teachers at Wonkapong, the capital of the Baga and Susu state of Sumbuya. According to contemporary Susu account, Muslim teachers who had established a school at Wonkapong had stolen and sold several young Baga and Susu boys presumably to slave traders on the coast. The Susu and Baga in retaliation, razed the school and seized every Mandingo then in Sumbuya. To rescue their brethren, the Mandingoes of Bereira marched toward Wonkapong but suffered great losses. The Susu forces then swept southward to the Morian capital at Forékaria, and defeated an even larger Mandingo army with few losses to their forces.\(^8\) Apparently a stalemate developed, with both side having defended honor and territorial integrity.

The religious antagonisms were even more clearly defined in a skirmish between Sumbuya and Moria only eight years later. Hostilities began innocently enough within Sumbuya with the insurrection of several of its subjects cities, the most prominent being Moribya. The ruler of Moribaya wanted to cede from Sumbuya hegemon and asked the assistance of Moria, promising to convert to Islam if he were successful. Moria promised to help Moribaya, and encouraged by this promise, Kiria, Samaya, Coké, Sougeta and several other towns, joined Moribaya in a declaration of independence. Sumbuya, meanwhile, marshaled its allies to prevent the collapse of its authority on the coast, struck swiftly, and burned every city in rebellion, except Coké. Moria sent in massive reinforcements and pushed the Susus back towards Wonkapong. Once again, a stalemate ensued, but the Moria counter-attack did result in the independence of Moribaya, under the protection but not the yoke of Moria. More interesting was the fact that the Moribaya ruler now refused to

\(^8\) Arcin, *Histoire*, 134-136; Bright, “Journal,” 50-51. Richard Bright who visited Sumbuya and Moria Made an official report to Freetown in which he repeated stories told to him. Bright is an important source of information for the period before 1802.
convert to Islam. Clearly more was at play here than religious motives. The stalemate between Moria and Sumbuya continued into the end of the century.

In the late 1780's the unsteady peace between Moria and its neighbors was nearly broken during a time when a Muslim holy man visited the coast and severely tested the integrity of Moria’s political structure. During a long war in the Yangia Kori mountains to suppress an uprising by slaves, a prophet appeared in Moria and announced himself a Mahdi, the “rightly guided one,” one who would provide religious and political leadership to the people. Alimamy Sitafa, who was ruler of Moria at the time, did not openly challenge the Mahdi; for a the Mahdi enjoyed tremendous success. Fendan Modu Dumbuya, who was the principal military leader of Sumbuya, even traveled to Forékaria to pay him homage. At the same time, Fendan Modu mustered a large force of 1500 warriors to counter a possible renewal of holy war from Moria, just in case. Other supplicants came from as far as the Rio Pongo and the Sierra Leone River. Alimamy Sitafa’s authority plummeted during the Mahdi’s zenith, and only an accident saved Moria from political disaster. By one account, stabbed the Mahdi; with his cloak of invincibility apparently pierced, others sought him out and killed him.

Although Sitafa reestablished his authority after the Mahdi’s death, he was not

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10 The only sources which mention this war are Bright, “Journal,” 60-61; and James Watt, “Journal of Mr. James Watt, in his Expedition to and from Teembo in the year 1794” (unpublished manuscript, Rhodes House Library, Oxford, Mss Africa S.22), 83-93


12 Winterbottom, Account, 248-49

13 Bright, “Journal,” 80-81; Butt-Thompson, “The First Generation,” 6, noted that “The Mahadee Republic was Susu and founded by an ex-slave whose American experience had given birth to a passion for freedom.”
without opponents among Moria’s ruling elite. Moria practice required that only members of the Touré family contend for election to the Turban.\textsuperscript{14} Mori Morani of Forékaria had been the first ruler, and Alimamy Sitafa of Berika had followed him to wear the Turban. Sitafa moved to Forékaria after his election and in consequence established a precedent for all Moria rulers to reside at Forékaria. A third center of Touré strength was Maligia on the Melakori river where Settan Tamani held power.\textsuperscript{15} Maligia was far enough south of the center of Moria that it tended to look toward the Bulloms of Sama and the sea for its commercial prosperity.

Upon his election as ruler of Moria in 1802, perhaps as disconcerting to Amara as internal Moria politics was the growth of outside trading groups among the coastal towns in the late eighteenth century. Two trading entrepôts on the Windward Coast had long maintained commercial contracts with the towns of Moria and its neighbors. One entrepôt was the Iles de Los, only twenty miles west of the mouth of the Moribaya River.\textsuperscript{16} Here approximately a half dozen traders warehoused products for the coastal trade, collected African materials and slaves from contracts on the mainland, and provided secure anchorage for America-bound slavers who sought “good air” and the protection from the sea.\textsuperscript{17} Another long established center of European commerce, with a presence in Moria in 1802, was Bance Island in the Sierra Leone river estuary. John Tilley and Pinches, two English traders who operated a slaving factory on this island, had agents in the towns of

\textsuperscript{14} Arcin, \textit{Histoire}, 139; Bright, “Journal,” 21.

\textsuperscript{15} Bright, “Journal,” 4-5, 12-13.

\textsuperscript{16} The largest among the “islands of idols” were William Island, Factory Island, and Crawford’s Island. Factory so took its name because here several traders had opened trading posts, called factories. Crawford belonged first to Crawford but by the turn of the century was owned by William H. Leigh. The chief of Kaporo on Sangara Peninsula held traditional title to the islands.

\textsuperscript{17} Winterbottom, \textit{Account}, I, 6; George E. Brooks, Jr., \textit{Yankee Traders, Old Coasters, & African Middlemen} (Boston: Boston University Press, 1970), 50.
Moria and Sumbuya. Agent Nevil operated a trading post at Forékaria and agents Samuel Rogers and Demain, both Africans, lived at Wonkapong. Rogers for more than eighteen years.\textsuperscript{18} Another outsider was Mrs. Betsy Heard of Bereira. Mrs. Heard was born ca. 1758 and was of mixed African and European descent, her father had been a slave trader on the Iles de Los. As a girl, she attended school in England but had returned to Bereira by 1794 where she maintained a powerful political and economic position. She was one of the few women on the coast who could command the attention and respect of long distance traders, local leaders, and Europeans. Her premises in Bereira were a gathering place for European and African visitors to her town.\textsuperscript{19} Mrs. Heard also was an authority on “native medicines” and Europeans regularly consulted her on that subject.\textsuperscript{20} By the turn of the century, the rulers of Bereira and Moria recognized her as chief of her section of Bereira.

The three agents of Tilley and Pinches in Moria or Sumbuya in 1802 attested to the importance of trade between Bance Island and Moria and after 1794 to the presence of another source of concern-- a growing English settlement at the mouth of the Sierra Leone River. In 1787 and again in 1792 groups of Black settlers from England or its empire landed at the mouth of the Sierra Leone river and established a center of British influence.\textsuperscript{21} Directing this small group were officials of the Sierra Leone Company whose primary purpose was to make a profit for its activities on the coast. Initially, the Company had


thought that trade would naturally flow to the settlement, unencumbered by long-term traders or trading systems. This soon proved false as Moria and others jealously and naturally protected their control of trading paths and contacts in the interior. Yet the settlement needed food—rice and cattle—and trade soon developed between the Freetown group and the traders of Sumbuya and Moria, with the latter as intermediary between the interior and the coast. The agents of Tilley and Pinches from Bance Island bought cattle and rice which they sold to the settlers.

In an attempt to play a more forceful role in the trade, however, Sierra Leone officials in 1794 sought to circumvent both the agents of Bance Island and the Susu and Mandingo traders of Sumbuya and Moria and negotiated directly with the Fula of the Futa for a new trade path which would link Freetown and Timbo and by-pass the terminals in Moria and Sumbuya. James Watt arrived in the Fula capital early in 1794, suggesting that a new path link Freetown and Timbo by way of Port Loko and that the Company establish a trading post at Timbo itself. Alimamy Sadu warned Watt that Fula protection of trade along the Futa-Scarcies corridor could apply only to that part of a path which lay in Fula country. Watt returned to the coast without the promised new road, but in the company of several Fula notables who wanted to visit Freetown, and along the established Moria path.

News of Watt’s expedition to Timbo spread quickly to Sumbuya and Moria, and the Susu and Mandingo leaders of both areas initiated plans to blunt the Company’s intentions. Fendan Modu of Wonkapong and members of his family visited Freetown


23 Council, 29 October 1793 and 1 January 1794, CO267/2, Pro; Viscountes Knutsford, *Life and Letters of Zachary MaCaulay* (London: Edward Arnold, 1900), 49.

while Watt was yet in the interior, and he apparently decided to station his son Dalla Modu near Freetown to look after Sumbuya’s and Dumbuya family interest at the settlement.\(^{25}\) When Watt later arrived at Forékaria on his way back to Freetown, both Fendan Modu of Wonkapong and Alimamy Sitafa of Moria greeted him, with Sitafa hesitantly suggesting that the Company open a trading post at Forékaria.\(^{26}\) To bring the Company into the Moria trade would undoubtedly result in an adversary in one’s camp, but meanwhile it might forestall talk of a new path.

The development of an adversary relationship between Moria and Freetown intensified a few months later when Company officials and Fula notables who had accompanied Watt to the coast opened discussions about possible links between Freetown and Timbo. According to sketchy British records of these talks, the Fula expressed a preference for the Rio Pongo as a terminal of trade rather than Moria or Sumbuya. As far as the Fula were concerned, Rio Pongo path was outside the zone of sporadic warfare between the Fula and the Yalunka of Sulima and therefore more likely to be open to continuous trade. No discussion of a Port Loko path ensued. But the Fula were sensitive to the political realities of the Futa-Scarcies Corridor and, recognizing that Moria would understandably take offense at being left out of such delicate talks, emphasized that these discussions should be kept secret from Moria leaders.\(^{27}\)

The outcome of these talks was minimal, for trade remained in the hands of those who had held it before, and the volume of trade between Sumbuya, Moria, and Freetown actually increased. The Company established trading posts both in the Rio Pongo at Freeport and at Forékaria in Moria, but without adequate stores of merchandise for trade, the Companies adventures in both of these rivers floundered. Fendan Modu, in contrast,

\(^{25}\) Watt, “Journal,” 121


\(^{27}\) Council, 5 May 1794, p. 158-60, CO267/2, PRO.
extended his family contracts to Freetown itself where his son Dalla Modu operated a major trading post, bringing rice and cattle to the settlement. Still, Freetown’s espoused policy of linkage with Timbo remained thereafter as an impediment to friendly relations between Freetown and to northern neighbors.

Morian opposition to Freetown surfaced briefly in 1801 in connection with a dispute between the Company and some dissatisfied settlers who had joined Tom, ruler of the Temne closest to Freetown, in November of 1801. Tom’s warriors, led by the settlers, had attacked Freetown; but failing to take the settlement they retreated to Maligia in Moria where they sought reinforcements. Sattan Tumani of Maligia was a member of the Touré family and he had considered the 1794 Freetown discussions with Timbo as an upsetting rebuff of Moria in favor of Timbo. Tumani was also concerned that Freetown might establish an alliance with Timbo against Moria. When Tom asked for Tumani’s assistance, Tumani sent his nephew, who was also a son-in-law of King Tom, to negotiate a settlement between Tom and the Company. Tumani’s instructions were apparently less than clear, for Fatima Foday joined the war on the side of Tom and the settlers, and together they attacked Freetown in April 1802. Repeated failure not only ended Tom’s attempt to chastise the Company, but it also brought a loss of face to Moria.

In the course of this latest war, but not in consequence of it, two leaders of the Touré family in Moria had died. Alimamy Sitafa died at Forékaria, and the Turban of

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29 The best accounts of the Nova Scotian Rebellion and the background leading to it are found in Peterson, Province of Freedom; Wilson, The Loyal Blacks; Walker, The Black Loyalists. The fullest description of Moria involvement is in Bright, “Journal.”

30 Bright, “Journal,” 13, 14, 39; Council, 1 July 1802 and 27 September 1802, CO270/8, PRO.
Moria was now vacant at a crucial time in its history. Sattan Tumani of Maligia also died, leaving it unclear whether he had ordered Fatima Foday to negotiate a peace with Freetown or to join with Tom against the settlement. Tumani was known as a master of intrigue and deception even by the Mandingoes of Forékaria. Whatever the definition of Tumani’s actions, Moria had suffered a defeat.

The resolution of the Nova Scotian Rebellion, as the English called it at Freetown, effected Moria Politics. In a great meeting called at Forékaria to resolve this war within the colony and to resolve Moria’s implication in it, family politics within Moria played an important part. Dalla Modu, son of Fendan Modu of Wonkapong, attended as “Envoy from the Governor and Council to the Chiefs,” representing a pro-Freetown position on the part of Sumbuya and its allies. Richard Bright represented the Governor. Amara and his eldest brother were contenders for the Turban as sons of Mori Morani, and both claimed to have been opposed to Sattan Tumani’s alliance with Tom from the start. This Forékaria faction interpreted the war’s failure as a personal defeat for the Maligia branch of the Touré family and indirectly for the Berika branch, for Alimamy Sitafa had failed to keep this from happening in the first place. One of Sitafa’s son, Quia Bubu, had the added political disadvantage of being married to King Tom’s daughter, and that seemed to disqualify him to be Sitafa’s successor. Sattan Tumani’s branch of the Touré family stood in disgrace in 1802 and no member of that branch contended for the Turban. Even the chieftaincy of Maligia (which was entitled to contend for the Turban) stood in disarray, with a young nephew, Senesi, appointed as chief - but under the regency of Sattan Tumani’s brother,


32 Ibid., 21, 38-39.

33 Ibid., 1.

34 Ibid., 27, 34, 36.

Kota Modu.\textsuperscript{36}

With only the Forékaria branch as a acceptable source for the next ruler of Moria, village chiefs in Moria and beyond began to express their preferences. All of the important chiefs of Moria and of Sumbuya and Benna pleaded with Amara’s elder brother, Fendan Modu (not the same as Fendan Modu Dumbuya of Wonkapong) to take the Turban and become the next Alimamy of Moria. But Fendan Modu declined.\textsuperscript{37} The chiefs next offered the Turban to Kalla Modu, elder chief of Bassia, who also turned it down because of his age. In this manner Amara, son of Mori Morani, at 33 became temporary Alimamy of Moria which he would rule from 1802 until his death in 1826. Amara came to power without the overwhelming support of his people. Detested and feared by many Mandingoes, Amara fared little better with others. Alimamy Sadu of Timbo spoke uncomplimentarily about him.\textsuperscript{38} Benna and Sumbuya opposed his election. Sumbuya was particularly concerned that Amara might launch a new holy war to complete the task begun by his father thirty years earlier. The wounds of the election were especially deep at Maligia and Berika which had received such verbal abuse from Amara at the Great Conference. The circumstances of his election seemed to emphasize ethnic and religious differences, differing commercial interests of coastal cities and states, and family struggles within the Touré themselves. In October 1805 when Moria chiefs collected at Forékaria to formally elect Amara Morani as Alimamy of Moria, the chiefs of Maligia refused to attend the ceremonies or to pledge their allegiance to the new ruler. Not until March 1806 did the Maligia, Melikori, Wonkapong and Benna peoples recognize Amara as Alimamy.

From 1802 to 1807, Amara was able to keep the Futa Scarcies trade paths under Moria’s control, but he obtained this success at the cost of intervention in the affairs of Port

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 21, 47, 66.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{38} Arcin, \textit{Histoire}, 139; 14 September 1822, RGSLA.
Loko, a future trade center between Freetown and the interior. In the early years of Amara’s rule, conditions at Freetown gave him little reason for concern. The Sierra Leone Company’s enterprise in the Rio Pongo had ended in 1802 as a result of poor company administration, effective opposition among Pongo-based slave traders, and continuing effects of wars in Europe upon British commerce. An agent of the Company opened a factory at Forékaria and several Nova Scotian settlers moved to Port Loko and into the Scarcies Rivers areas. More evident, however, were Americans who took advantage of England’s European problems to exploit the West African market. Americans arrived with rum, nails, tobacco, barrel stays and sometimes with products of little use to the African market, seeking hides and slaves in return. Some brought products needed by settlers at Freetown, despite the embargo on American commerce along the coast. These were indeed lean years in the Company’s fortune. And the Company could be scarcely blamed alone for its failure.

Another group of Europeans who visited Moria during Amara’s early years as ruler were missionaries of the Church Missionary Society. The first to arrive was Peter Hartwig, a Prussian who had studied at the Berlin Seminary and had enrolled as one of the earliest agents of the Society. Hartwig spent nearly a year in Freetown and nearby with Dalla

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40 Mouser, “Trade,” 54-63.

41 Brooks, Yankee Traders, 50-65.

42 Eugene Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), I, 82-88; Zachary Macaulay to Corresponding Secretary, 10 June 1803, CAI/E1/1, Church Missionary Society Archives, London [hereafter cited CMS]; Missionary Records: West Africa (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1836), 80-81;
Modu before he ventured into Sumbuya and Moria in 1806. At Wonkapong, Hartwig, like Richard Bright before him, recognized that Fendan Modu might appear supportive of schools in his town, but that Arabic and Muslim influences were very strong and would restrict the spread of Christianity. Amara met Hartwig when he visited Forékaria and apparently mistook him for a cattle buyer from Freetown. At Governor Ludlam’s instructions, Hartwig attempted to hire bearers for a caravan to Sulima Country. Fendan Modu of Dumbuya supported the expedition, perhaps interpreting it as an opportunity to replace Amara’s control of trade along the Futa-Scarcies corridor. Amara opposed it because no European had yet visited Sulima, and it was inadvisable to permit Europeans easy access to national paths in the interior. Hartwig was unsuccessful in obtaining his carriers.

Events in 1807 combined to renew Amara’s concern about Moria’s continued control of commerce between Freetown and the interior and about the Company’s objectives in the interior. First came the defection of Peter Hartwig as a missionary attached to the Church Missionary Society and his arrival in exile in Moria. Since his arrival at Freetown in 1804, Hartwig had concentrated upon the study of the Susu language, expecting to establish a mission among that ethnic group as quickly as possible. In time, Hartwig became most proficient in this language and began to develop an appreciation for the different political and social systems outside the Freetown settlement. On several

Samuel Abraham Walker, *Missions in Western Africa Among the Soosoos, Bulloms, etc.* (Dublin: William Curry, 1845), 198.


44 Corresponding Committee to Hartwig, 9 April 1806, CAI/E1/46, CMS; Missionary Records, 81-83.

45 Hartwig to Pratt, 16 August 1805, CAI/E1/16; Hartwig to Pratt, 14 January 1806, CAI/E1/19; Pratt to Hartwig and Renner, 14 January 1806, CAI/E1/21; Rev. Hartwig’s Journal, sent 17 February 1806, CAI/E1/30, CMS.
occasions, Governor Ludlam had sent Hartwig into Moria and Sumbuya with elaborate instructions to report fully on the local economies. Increasingly Hartwig refused to comply with the Governor’s requests on the grounds that they did not reflect the purpose of religious conversion. This antagonism between Hartwig and Ludlam; a lingering illness of his wife, Sarah, and her return to England; and a growing belief by Hartwig that sinister forces were at work in Freetown to keep him from preaching to the Africans combined to lead Hartwig to abandon the settlement in 1807 and to seek the aid of traders and chiefs in Moria and Sumbuya. There Hartwig continued his claims of ill-treatment at Freetown and accusations against Ludlam for using his agents in the northern rivers to spy upon the economies of Moria and Sumbuya. Hartwig became initially an employee of Betsy Heard and a Mrs. Williams, both of whom operated factories at Bereira. Eventually Hartwig became a personal scribe for Amara at Forékaria.

Perhaps partly in response to Hartwig’s accusations against the Company, Amara in December 1807 instigated and assisted a rebellion at Port Loko, led by Brima Konkuri who was a native of Moria and was then a principal in the Mandingo section of Port Loko. Brima Konkuri, with a force of about 500 warriors, had seized Port Loko and declared himself the ruler. By seizing control of Port Loko, Amara assured for Moria that

46 Gov. Ludlam to Venn, 20 March 1806, CAI/E1/41; Corresponding Committee to Hartwig, 9 April 1806, CAI/E1/46; Renner to Pratt, 30 May 1806, CAI/E1/60, CMS.

47 Hartwig to Pratt, 21 July 1806, CAI/E1/71; Hartwig to Pratt, 16 October 1806, CAI/E1/81; Hartwig to Pratt, 12 December 1806, CAI/E1/85; Hartwig to Pratt, 22 December 1806, CAI/E1/91; A. Smith to Pratt, 16 February 1807, CAI/E1/96, CMS.

48 Hartwig to Pratt, 24 March 1807, CAI/E1/98; Nyländer to Pratt, 29 April 1807, CAI/E1/105; Butscher to Pratt, 30 June 1807, CAI/E1/108, CMS.

49 Brian O’Beirne, “Journal of Assistant Staff Surgeon Brian O’Beirne,” enclosed in Grant to Bathurst, 24 September 1821, p. 9-10, CO267/53/14, PRO.

50 “Observations on the Situation of Sierra Leone with respect to the Surrounding Natives,” enclosed in Dawes to Earl of Liverpool, 1 November 1811, CO267/29, PRO.
in any future ventures in the interior Freetown would need include consultation with Moria first. Amara had effectively reduced Freetown’s options with reference to expansion of commerce in its own hinterland and to interactions with Timbo or commercial networks on the Niger River.

After 1807, Amara also became increasingly tied to American markets for slaves, as well as obsessed by what he considered as British attempts to replace his control of Moria by supporting the Maligia (and Senasi led) branch of the Touré family on the coast. The 1807-08 Atlantic trading season had begun sluggishly with only a few ships arriving with goods, but by year-end trade had reached a standstill. The resumption of the Anglo-French war in May 1802 had cut sharply into the shipping of goods from England to West Africa. The United States government, moreover, had placed an embargo on American shipping in late 1807 and thereby curtailed American commerce along the coast. Perhaps of equal importance were bills passed by the governments of Great Britain and the United States that declared the exportation of African slaves from the coast by their nationals to be illegal after 1 January 1808. The immediate effect of these laws was to produce a temporarily depressed coastal market, with slavers in Africa afraid of the effect of the law upon suppliers of slaves to the market as well as Atlantic carriers. Some European traders in Moria and Sumbuya were afraid to leave their factories for any reason, believing that even an innocent visit to Freetown for supplies might result in seizure for past activities or accusations of continued slave trading.

Equally unsettling to commercial prosperity on the Windward Coast was the

51 Brooks, Yankee Trader, 60-61; Walker, Missions, 231-33.
52 Ibid., 58.
change in status of the Sierra Leone Company territory to that of a colony. The company had been a financial failure for several years, a consequence of its own mismanagement, the commercial disruption caused by lingering war with France, and the uncertainty of whether Sierra Leone would or would not become an official colony of Britain. In 1807, enabling legislation in Parliament took control of Company property at Sierra Leone and transformed Freetown into the center of a bustling new colony.55 Henceforth, the Governor of Sierra Leone would be responsible directly to the Colonial Office. Traders and chiefs would encounter no longer a mere company in their dealings with Freetown but now would face the might and influences of the British Empire.

A revival of trade, and particularly that from the United States after it lifted the American Embargo in March 1809, returned prosperity especially to the traders on the Iles de Los who transformed these islands into the center of American commerce along this section of the Windward Coast. Restricted from trading legally with British or French ports by the Non-intercourse Act of 1809, American captains off-loaded cargoes at Iles de Los warehouses, from which smugglers carried goods into Freetown.56 In return for these products, Americans wanted slaves and hides, both important trade items in the Futa-Scarcies corridor.

The traders of Sumbuya and Moria were not alone in their attempts to marshal control of this new prosperity and these new commercial patterns emerging along the coast. Several new traders arrived from America and established trading posts mainly in the Rio Pongo where neither the Susu nor the Baga had developed strong states.57 One of these, William Cunningham Wilson, joined an alliance between traders in the Pongo and the Iles de Los.


57 These include Paul Faber, Stiles Lightburn and William Cunningham Wilson.
de Los, and together they attempted to forge a monopoly for sources of European trade goods and to regulate prices charged Americans for African slaves and products. John Ormond, Jr., W.C. Wilson, and Samuel Samo in the Rio Pongo orchestrated trade in such a fashion as to guarantee prosperity to the entire commercial community, and Charles Hickson and William H. Leigh of the Iles de Los served as warehouses for this trade.  

After a few years during which Moria profited from this trading arrangement, outside events again brought Amara into conflict with the colony. In 1811 Sierra Leone received a new governor, Charles Maxwell, who believed that Britain should assume an active role in suppressing the slave trade along the African coast and especially in those rivers located north of the Freetown settlement. Armed with a new law which declared it a felony for Britons to equip a slaver for the middle passage and encouraged by a flurry of seizures of American slavers on the high seas, Maxwell sent a colonial vessel to the Rio Pongo in September 1811 to seize vessels active in the trade. Maxwell had served at Gorée earlier as a military officer and was in no mood to discuss this matter with African political elites. But the response of Pongo chiefs was unexpected, nevertheless. Rather than allow unquestioned intervention by Britain, the chiefs seized the colonial vessel, held it for more than a month, and delivered Maxwell his first setback at Freetown.

Maxwell, however, was not about to suffer crippling defeat so early in his appointment as Governor. Early in 1812, Maxwell ordered Samuel Samo from the Pongo and Charles Hickson of the Iles de Los seized and held for trial on charges of shipping

58. The Trials of the Slave Traders (London: Sherwood, Neeley, and Jones, 1813), 19-20; Review by “A Gentleman...at Sierra Leone,” Edinburgh Review, XXI (1813), 78.

59. Coupland, Anti-Slavery Movement, 110-11; Crooks, Sierra Leone, 86-87.

60. Renner to Secretary, 30 October 1811, CAI/E2/105, CMS.

African slaves from the Iles de Los during the 1811-12 trading season.\textsuperscript{62} The trial which began at Freetown in April 1812 was open to the public, became the center of attention for several weeks, and was a spectacle of recriminations between Maxwell and the Chief Justice, Robert Thorpe.\textsuperscript{63} The latter dismissed charges against Hickson and eventually pardoned Samo on the technicality that he was a Dutch citizen.\textsuperscript{64} But the lesson was not lost on Amara or other local chiefs. Maxwell was opposed to the slave trade which continued to be an important ingredient for Moria’s commercial prosperity. And Maxwell was willing to use the military might at his disposal to obtain his will.

Following the 1812 trial, Amara’s obsession with Maxwell’s opposition to the slave trade reenforced Amara’s growing belief that, to oppose the trade and to extend British influence into Moria, Maxwell and newly-arrived traders from Freetown were joining with Senesi of Maligia to oppose Amara and to deprive him of the Turban of Moria through intrigue. British and Sierra Leone traders who eschewed slaving had long established themselves in towns located near the coast where schooners and sloops could anchor. The Modu family of Sumbuya and Bullom Shore was also among those who felt themselves deprived of a voice in the internal trade policy of Moria and disadvantaged by that policy. To reverse Amara’s policy of scarcity which curtailed the flow of goods from the interior and thereby increased the value of those goods and Amara’s profits, this group of opponents had rallied (so Amara believed) behind the young Chief Senesi of Maligia, nephew of Sattan Tumani, who had recently become chief in his own right.\textsuperscript{65} Maligia in 1801 had openly opposed Freetown, a policy which had led to political chaos and perhaps

\textsuperscript{62} Maxwell to Bathurst, 1 June 1812, CO267/34/15, PRO.

\textsuperscript{63} Trials, 16-19; Christopher Fyfe, \textit{A History of Sierra Leone} (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 120.

\textsuperscript{64} Trials, 28-29.

\textsuperscript{65} “Observations respecting the Relations of the Colony with the Neighbouring Countries,” in Ludlam to Secretary, 1 May 1808, CO267/24/Misc., PRO; 27 October 1821, RGSLA.
had led to the election of Amara as ruler of Moria. By 1814, however, Maligia had become
the primary center of anti-slave trade and pro-British sentiment in Moria, if for no better
reason than to obtain Freetown’s support against Amara should Forékaria attempt to bring
Malgia to compliance with Morian policy by force.

The 1813-14 trading season began quietly enough but that soon ended with the
seizure of a number of slave vessels who were trading in Moria. Chiefs and traders who
continued to trade in slaves appealed to Amara for protection against the colony, and
antagonists began to marshal their forces. Early in 1814, a large caravan from Moria
arrived at Freetown with rice and cattle, and a number of Moria slaves who were caravan
carriers escaped the control of their owners and requested Maxwell’s protection. Maxwell
willingly granted their requests, and thereby precipitated the first direct confrontation
between Freetown and Moria in more than a decade. Amara was furious at Maxwell’s
policy, which he interpreted as direct interference in African practice. A Freetown
merchant then at Forékaria, Daniel Gospel, had taken sides in Moria politics by openly
supporting Senesi of Maligia. Perhaps in consequence of Maxwell’s freeing of Moria
slaves, Gospel subsequently died a mysterious death at Forékaria. Maxwell responded to
Gospel’s death with a demand for an explanation from Amara of the circumstances of
Gospel’s death. On March 2, 1814, Amara answered Maxwell’s request with a letter
transcribed by Peter Hartwig. Amara accused the colony and Freetown’s traders active in
the northern rivers as meddling in Moria politics, and he warned Maxwell that he, Amara,
had been elected legally to wear the Turban on Moria. Amara also reminded Maxwell that
Moria was a sovereign state, and that as a state was in control of its own commercial policy
that then included permission of traders to buy slaves in his territory, and threatened to
reduce the supply of cattle to the colony by one half and thus double its price if the colony

66 22 February 1823, RGSLA.

67 Ibid.; Maxwell to Bathurst, 1 May 1814, CO267/38/52, PRO.
(Maxwell) continued its policy of interference.\textsuperscript{68}

Maxwell’s lack of response to Amara’s letter of 2 March 1814 was perhaps Amara’s finest hour. By failing to respond, Maxwell had suffered significant failure from an African perspective. Maxwell did not return Amara’s slaves nor were there apologies, but neither was there a victory for either side. Amara remained in control of Moria and used the 1814 incident to portray the British and his opposition, Senesi of Maligia, as antagonistic to Moria’s commercial prosperity and to rally his own trading partners in the interior behind his banner. Maxwell dismissed Forékaria by describing it as a region of “endless palaver” and failed to report Amara’s 2 March letter to the Colonial Office until 1 May 1814.\textsuperscript{69}

While the replacement of Charles Maxwell with Charles MacCarthy as Governor of the Sierra Leone Colony in July 1815 removed one cause of friction between Amara and Freetown, MacCarthy proved to be even more aggressively opposed to Moria (and Amara’s) control of commerce than had been Maxwell, but for a different reason. MacCarthy was obsessed by a belief that Americans were intending to seize control of the Iles de Los and new-found Freetown markets in the Scarcies and Melakori rivers. In response to that obsession, MacCarthy in 1816 attempted to annex the Iles de Los but without success.\textsuperscript{70} Failing to obtain permission to seize the islands, MacCarthy turned early in 1817 to an earlier plan to establish a path to Timbo via Port Loko and thus to deprive Moira and more importantly the Americans of trade through the Iles de Los warehouses. Freetown merchants enthusiastically supported MacCarthy’s plan, for such a path would bypass the Moria towns and transform Freetown into the principal terminal of


\textsuperscript{69} Maxwell to Bathurst, 1 May 1814, CO267/38/52, PRO.

\textsuperscript{70} Robinson, “British Colonial Policy,” 68-73.
trade from Sulima and Fuuta Jaloo. The possibilities of a new Port Loko path first appeared in 1816 when Moriba Kinko Bangura, a Muslim of Susu origin, overthrew Brima Konkuri (an ally of Amara) who had ruled Port Loko since 1807. Brima Konkuri had opposed a Freetown-Timbo path, but Moriba Kinko Bangura willingly supported the colony’s proposal which would bring commerce to his town.\(^71\)

Uninitiated to what Maxwell had declared as ‘endless palaver’ at Forékaria and to Amara’s quick temper, MacCarthy personally revealed Freetown’s plans to Amara in mid-1817 and foolishly asked Amara’s acquiescence to Forékaria’s commercial demise. The 1816-17 trading season had begun as a particularly disrupted one for the Fula traders, for British war vessels had carried out raids in the Rio Pongo and had unsettled commerce between the coast and the interior sufficiently to disturb the Fula.\(^72\) Amara had used this disruption as sufficient excuse to interrupt trade along the Futa-Scarcies corridor, claiming that Senesi was to blame for this state of affairs and asking the Fula to send an army to help him settle, once and for all, those challenges to his authority on the coast. In July 1817, with a Fula army believed to be marching coastward to aid Amara, Lieutenant Stokoe arrived at Forékaria to discuss Moria acquiescence to a Timbo-Freetown path via Port Loko.\(^73\) Amara immediately closed the path to all commerce in retaliation, but did agree to MacCarthy’s suggestion to send the Fula army back to Fuuta Jaloo without the promised assault upon Senesi’s stronghold at Maligia.\(^74\) Blocked in his desire to establish the Port Loko path, MacCarthy now returned to the Iles de Los question where the trader, Charles Hickson, had recently died. MacCarthy claimed that American business interests were

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\(^{71}\) O’Beirne, “Journal,” entry dated 3 February 1821.


\(^{73}\) MacCarthy to Bathurst, 5 August 1817, CO267/45/37, PRO.

\(^{74}\) 18 July 1818, RGSLA.
about to purchase Hickson’s estate and that British commerce required effectively required Britain to annex the islands. Lord Bathurst subsequently approved the scheme, and MacCarthy landed troops on the islands in July 1818.75 By late 1818, Amara now found himself confronted by the colony from two sides - one to the south and the other on the waterside.

The long-awaited Touré war for the control of the turban in Moria began in mid-1819 in consequence of a dispute between Senesi (chief of Maligia) and Sattan Lahi, chief of Melakori town, located a few miles upstream from Maligia on the Melakori River. Lahi had been an early supporter of Amara in 1802 and had profited politically and commercially from this support in the following years. When Senesi became active chief of Maligia, Lahi, as Amara’s agent in the Melakori River, enforced Amara’s policy vis-a-vis Maligia. In mid-1819, Lahi closed the paths at Amara’s direction and refused to permit caravans from the interior to descend to Maligia. Senesi in retaliation blockaded the river below Melakori town and allowed no European manufactures to continue upstream nor trade goods to leave the coast via the Melakori River. As long as the rainy season continued, neither party sought to test the other in actual battle. In November and December of 1819, however, representatives from both factions traveled to Freetown to seek mediation from Sierra Leone officials, but this failed. Early in 1820, in consequence, Amara and his allies collected a large force and twice tried to capture Maligia but failed.76

During the 1820-21 trading season, the debate between Amara and Senesi began to collect more parties to the dispute. Alimamy Abdul Kadur of Timbo was concerned not only about the disruption of trade in Moria but also about a continuing war in the Nunez, and late in 1820 he ordered a Pongo-based European trader to appear at Timbo to discuss a

75 MacCarthy to Bathurst, 2 January 1818, CO267/47/128, PRO; MacCarthy to Bathurst, 20 July 1818, CO267/47/156, PRO.

76 6 April 1822 and 30 December 1820, RGSLA.
new outlet for Fula products, perhaps through the Pongo. Amara again requested Fula assistance to quell Senesi’s rebellion, but this time Abdul Kadur ignored the request - clearly a rebuke to Amara. The colony was also increasingly concerned about disruption in the northern rivers because, while trade interruption with the distant interior might provide a temporary inconvenience, by 1821 the colony was receiving more than two-thirds of its white rice from the plantations of Moria and Sumbuya. Most of this rice producing land was in the area loyal to Amara, but that rice needed to cross lands in dispute before reaching Freetown. Of course, long-distance trade was also of concern to the British. But considerations had mitigated by an opened Port Loko path thus far. Although Pa Moriba, chief of Port Loko, might be willing for his town to become a terminal of long-distance trade, such a path would necessarily pass through towns such as Kukuna which continued to be loyal to Amara and his trade policy. To bypass these towns would lead caravans also into the territory of the Lima, a people ruled by King Bafody who was on opponent of such a path. The Fula refused, moreover, to guarantee protection for any part of the international path which lay outside Fula territory. The constant Fula refrain regarding trade paths had advised Freetown to consult Moria first about the possibility of such a path. A more active role by Alimamy Abdul Kadur in commerce in late 1820, however, encouraged Freetown officials to explore the possibilities of a new path. Bafody had recently died and Freetown discounted effective challenges forthcoming from that quarter. And the Fula seemed willing to discuss such a path on a formal basis. In January 1821 Assistant Staff Surgeon Brian O’Beirne left Freetown for Timbo, traveling overland

77 3 February 1821 and 3 November 1821, RGSLA.
78 22 February 1821, RGSLA.
79 13 October 1821, RGSLA.
80 Ibid.
via Port Loko.\footnote{O’Beirne, “Journal,” and instruction attached from Grant to O’Beirne.}

Amara responded to these events in as vigorous a manner as was possible under the circumstances. Fenden Modu of Wonkapong and Dalla Modu of Bullom Shore had recently declared their support for Senesi of Maligia, an alliance which Amara had surely anticipated.\footnote{2 March 1821, RGSLA.} For Alimamy Abdul Kadur to ignore Amara’s earlier request for assistance was understandable, but for Freetown to snub the most powerful ruler between Timbo and the settlement was a challenge to Amara’s authority. Particularly unsettling to Amara was knowledge that a large group of Fula escorts were awaiting O’Beirne’s entry into Fula country.\footnote{O’Beirne, “Journal,” entries dated 2-12 February 1821.} In consequence, Amara ordered all paths between the interior and the coast to be closed, and he sent 200 warriors to capture O’Beirne before he entered Fula territory and to return him to Forékaria. O’Beirne passed through Kukuna safely primarily because the chief of Kukuna was hesitant to interfere with Fula business, and because the 200 warriors from Forékaria had not yet arrived. O’Beirne arrived at Timbo early in February.\footnote{Ibid., entry dated 17 February 1821.}

Since O’Beirne had escaped Amara’s net and as long as O’Beirne carried on his talks with Abdul Kadur, Amara now attempted to portray himself as a moderating force, one who could accommodate to changing realities of the coast. Through Sattan Lahi of Melakori town, Amara requested a Great Conference to resolve his dispute with Senesi, but Senesi refused to reply, perhaps believing that Freetown was now fully committed to his camp. In any case, the war halted in March and April as both sides planted rice for the mid-year harvest.\footnote{6 March 1821, RGSLA.} Meanwhile Amara used the lull in fighting to mend fences between himself and various rulers in the interior. The chief of Kukuna, Luceni, had failed to
apprehend O’Beirne in February, and Amara apparently had thought it necessary to forcefully remind him of his subordinate relationship to Moria’s commercial policy. Amara knew that the weakest links in his struggle with the colony were those interior towns which had heretofore enjoyed commercial prosperity by accepting Moria leadership in trade. If Freetown were to obtain agreements with these towns, however, Amara might discover that Moria had been bypassed in trade with the interior.

The 1821-22 trading season opened with the Fula apparently believing that Freetown had in fact made agreements with interior towns and that a new path had become established. In October a large Fula caravan arrived at Kukuna from the interior and Freetown-bound, but Chief Luceni divided it into two parts, sending the larger half to Forékaria and thus hedged his bets should events turned sour. Amara also closed all paths leading to Maligia and to Sumbuya, where those paths crossed his territory. Next Amara began to collect his forces and those of his allies for a final campaign in his struggle with Senesi. Luceni, chief of Kukuna, failed to send troops to Amara, perhaps because he believed that circumstances were turning against Amara; whatever his motives, his failure to supply warriors represented a challenge to Amara’s authority. Amara also invited Asana Yari of Sulima to mediate his dispute with Senesi, intending apparently to ignore both Freetown and Timbo.

In December 1821 more than 12,000 warriors encamped near Melakori town in preparation for the Grand Conference. Yaradi, from Sulima, commanded a large Yalunka army and attended the conference as mediator to force all parties to discuss their disputes without bloodshed. Yaradi sent invitations (perhaps more correctly written as an ‘summons’) to each of the parties. Senesi knew that he was walking into a trap if he attended the conference, but he had no choice. When Senesi arrived at the conference

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86 13 October 1821 and 3 November 1821, RGSLA.

87 26 January 1822 and 6 April 1822, RGSLA.
grounds with 300 warriors, Yaradi placed him under arrest.\textsuperscript{88} Conspicuous in his absence was the chief of Kukuna who was attempting to establish a degree of independence vis-a-vis Amara, a precarious move at this particular time, for Kukuna was hardly strong enough to defend itself alone against Moria might. To redress that imbalance, Kukuna addressed a letter to Governor Grant in January 1822, asking that Freetown send a mediator to Melakori town to help resolve Amara's conflict with Senesi.\textsuperscript{89}

Finally invited actually to attend the Conference or to send his emissary, Governor Grant made known Sierra Leone's stand on the matter. In his instructions to Alexander Gordon Laing who went to Melakori as his representative, Grant indicated that Freetown recognized Amara as the legitimate ruler of Moria, that all trade in Moria should go through Forékaria, and that Senesi should accept Amara as his sovereign. At Melakori town, Laing found Senesi in irons but received Yaradi's promise that Senesi would be well-treated. With these assurances, Laing returned to Freetown.\textsuperscript{90}

The Grand Conference was for Amara a significant but short-term victory. Supported by Yaradi and the large Yalunka/Sulima army, Amara obtained the judgment that he needed. Senesi was found guilty of insurrection and was ordered to serve a brief sentence of house arrest at Bukaria near Forékaria. Amara and Yaradi then destroyed Maligia, symbolically ending a war which had plagued Moria for more than five years.\textsuperscript{91} With Senesi taken care of, Amara now turned to Kukuna which had failed to supply the requisite numbers of warriors in the recent conflict. Amara accompanied Yaradi on his return to Sulima and called a second Conference to meet near Kukuna. Here Amara

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\textsuperscript{88} Alexander Gordon Laing, Travels in the Timanee, Kooranko, and Soolima Countries in Western Africa (London: John Murray, 1825), 1-12.
\textsuperscript{89} 12 January 1822, RGSLA.
\textsuperscript{90} Laying, Travels, 12.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 17-19.
\end{flushleft}
chastised his errant ally and explained to Fula representatives who attended the Conference that Yaradi was responsible for the devastation of Maligia, not Amara. The Fula replied that Amara had blundered by bringing the Yalunka of Sulima, who were considered as non-believers, into a dispute among Muslim brothers. When King Asana Yari of Sulima offered to mediate between Amara and Kukuna, Amara subsequently declined, perhaps a direct response to Fula concerns.

On the coast meanwhile, the circumstances surrounding the Grand Conference and the destruction of Maligia and other towns opposed to Amara led to a second phase of the war. A significant number of the coastal towns were now in open revolt against Amara, and they rallied themselves to the combined banner of Senesi, Dalla Modu Dumbuya, and Monga Smila, ruler of Sumbuya. Amara's absence from Forékaria for a number of years also had became a sign of crumbling fortunes, and of his fear of growing opposition to his hegemony on the coast. Principal diplomat within the opposing coalition was Smila who had reacted negatively to the presence of such a large military force from Sulima so close to his own territory. By October 1822, Smila appealed to Freetown not to trade with Amara, but he indicated that trade could be resumed between Freetown and Senesi's allies. By late 1822, the character of the war in the rivers had now changed considerable with Wonkapong becoming the center of a spreading opposition to Amara. Most observers believed that the dry season would bring renewed hostilities on an even more destructive scale.

By February 1823 the war had taken another turn with positive moves an both sides. In late November, Smila had rallied his forces and those of his allies near Wonkapong and had consolidated military power in preparation for the beginning of an offensive. In the Melakori River, Senesi had built a new Maligia larger and more powerful than that one destroyed by Amara. At the same time, Kukuna on the Scarcies River declared rebellion.

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92 30 November 1822, and 28 December 1822, RGSLA
93 3 August 1822, 4 September 1822, and 23 November 1822, RGSLA.
against Amara, and Asana Yari of Sulima now resolved, as a result of Amara's unfriendly response to his earlier offer to mediate the Moria-Kukuna dispute, that Amara could continue without Sulima’s official aid in the whole affair.\textsuperscript{94}

The revolt of Kukuna forced Amara to adopt new means in bringing the Port Loko road under his control and in curtailing trade with Freetown. Since the revolt, Kukuna had begun to ship white rice down the Scarcies River to Kambia where contact with Freetown was fairly secure. To plug this leak in his blockade of trade, Amara allied himself with the Mandingo chief of Magbeti, a Temne-Bullom town below Kambia on the Scarcies River. And Amara threatened Moriba of Port Loko with war if the sale of white rice continued at Port Loko. While these acts were not totally successful, they did force the remaining neutral traders in the rivers finally to join with the alliance which opposed Amara. Taking advantage of these events, Smila of Wonkapong called for a conference of his allies and of non-allied states to meet near Wonkapong in March 1823.\textsuperscript{95}

In May and June of 1823, Smila and his forces conducted extensive military operations in the lower Forékaria River and destroyed or subjugated a large number of towns loyal to Amara. Amara, himself, led a successful defense of Fanjia, the old capital. Driven to desperation in his struggle with the new alliance, Amara now proclaimed this war a return of the old Moria-Sumbuya ethnic-based conflict (of the 1780s) and urged all Mandingoes to rally behind Moria in opposition to the Susus. In June, Amara appealed to the Governor of Sierra Leone "not to interfere in this war," but at the same time asked for "powder, guns, cloths, balls, tobacco, rum and a good umbrella".\textsuperscript{96}

Following the attack on Fanjia, Smila held a conference of chiefs at which they decided that Amara should be invited to a Great Conference at which time he would be

\textsuperscript{94} 30 November 1822, and 28 December 1822, RGSLA.

\textsuperscript{95} 23 November 1822, 1 February 1823, 23 February 1823, and 19 April 1823, RGSLA.

\textsuperscript{96} 16 August 1823, and 6 September 1823, RGSLA.
given the opportunity to step down as ruler of Moria. According to Dalla Modu Dumbuya, chosen to be the spokesman of the allies, Smila sent several letters to Amara who refused them. Dalla Modu also asked that Freetown remain non-involved in the dispute which Modu promised would be resolved in the next dry season. About the same time, Governor Grant sent Major Henry Ricketts and Lt. Austin to Forékaria to ask Amara to reopen the road and allow the cultivation of white rice and to suggest that the Sierra Leone government was willing to mediate the dispute between Senesi and Amara that was paralyzing commerce in the northern rivers. In two letters to Governor Grant, Amara indicated that the war in the rivers was no longer between himself and Senesi but was now between Moria and Sumbuya. According to Amara, Smila of Wonkapong and Dalla Modu of Bullom Shore had attacked Moria while Amara was settling a palaver at Kukuna and that the alliance against him had spread as far as Port Loko. Concerning the cultivation of white rice, Amara replied that he was actively recommending its growth to his towns, but he indicated that trade in all commodities had stopped in the interior because his people were afraid that Dalla Modu would attack their caravans and canoes. In a sense, Amara attempted in these letters to resolve basic differences with the colony in order to prevent Sierra Leone interference in the war on the side of Senesi and his allies.

The success of the June offensive against towns on the Forékaria River and Amara's attempt to identify the struggle as between Sumbuya and Moria drew to Smila and Dalla Modu a number of new allies who apparently had been neutral in the dispute until then. Several important chiefs, including William Fernandez of Bramaya near the Rio Pongo, offered assistance totaling more than 6,000 armed men. Amara, on his part, was

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97 6 September 1823, RGSLA.

98 Fyfe, History, 159. Briefly mentions the role of rice measures in this war.

99 6 September 1823, RGSLA.

100 William Fernandez was of Afro-Portuguese descent and a Christian. 4 October 1823, RGSLA.
busy in the Scarcies, collecting allies who would create diversions near Freetown. Scouts from Amara were reportedly mustering a larger force to attack the base of Dalla Modu's strength on Bullom Shore, across from Freetown itself. By December 1823 the competing alliances were extensive. Dalla Modu's forces stretched along the coast from the Rio Pongo to Bullom Shore near Freetown, a distance of about 120 miles. Amara's allies included Benna, several thousand Sulima mercenaries and Mandingo settlements in the Scarcies River and on Bullom Shore. Neither Amara nor Dalla Modu wanted a fight to the finish; trade had been severely damaged by the protracted war, and reopening of the Rio Nunez had removed the critical importance of the trade routes via Port Loko and Moria. In an attempt to attract to his side those Mandingoes who had joined with Smilla, Amara opened paths to Melakorí River in December 1823 and to Maligia a few months later. In this manner, Amara sought to describe the war more accurately as a ethnic Mandingo-Susu conflict.101

The Summer months in 1824 were periods of temporary conciliation between opposing forces in the rivers as trade resumed as a result in part of new wars in the Rio Pongo. Amara, convinced that his position in Moria was more secure, now called his own "Great Congress" to meet at Forékaria in October 1824 "to arrange the peace between him [Amara] and Sanassee, Dalla Modu, etc" and invited the colony to send mediators to the conference.102 Amara built "an excellent road from Fonuarie to Melicourie for the equestrian amusement" of the colony's representatives.103 With roads opened as far as Maligia, many of the towns in opposition to Amara returned to the side of Moria and the conflict now took on more the character of a Moria-Sumbuya contest. In April 1825 soldiers from Wonkapong attacked and burned the old capital of Fanjia near Forékaria, and

101 Ibid.; 6 December 1823, and 6 March 1824, RGSLA.
102 18 September 1824, RGSLA.
103 Ibid.
Amara collected a large force to revenge this act of war.\textsuperscript{104} In August or early September 1825, however, the war took a turn against Amara who again closed the roads via Moria to Freetown. Governor MacCarthy sent Lt. Parker to Forékaria to investigate the causes of this disruption of trade, but Amara disclaimed any responsibility for the act and blamed Chief Lahi of Melakori town who, Amara claimed, wanted all the trade to go through his town.\textsuperscript{105} By late November Sumbuya forces moved to within striking distance of Forékaria and, according to traders in the area, awaited only the beginning of the dry season to besiege the capital. According to some observers, the war had reached an impasse which could be resolved only by direct British mediation, for Amara would always have a hinterland in Benna or Sulima where he could reorganize his forces should he lose the capital of Forékaria.\textsuperscript{106}

Events in Moria in 1826 were shaped in part by an important contest for power at Port Loko. In November 1825 Moriba, a sometime supporter of Freetown-Timbo path via Port Loko, died and the future of the colony's association with the interior was now in question. Two factions emerged to contest for the leadership of the town of Port Loko. One side was led by Roniah, alias Yacobi, a resident of Port Loko but who was formerly a servant to slave traders in the Rio Pongo and Iles de Los. Amara who wanted a strong man at Port Loko and one who would create problems for the colony now supported Roniah's candidacy.\textsuperscript{107} Fatima Brima, a nephew of Moriba and relative of Brima Konkuri who had been deposed by Moriba in 1816, led the opposing faction.\textsuperscript{108} In early December, Roniah

\textsuperscript{104} 10 September 1825, RGSLA.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} 26 November 1825, RGSLA; Amara also had obtained mercenary troops from Sulima, Koranko and Sangara, and inland trade was now firmly under his control.
\textsuperscript{107} 3 December 1825, RGSLA; Laying, Travels, 74; Turner to Bathurst, 20 December 1825, CO267/66/91, PRO; Campbell to Bathurst, 9 March 1827, CO267/81/108, PRO.
\textsuperscript{108} Laing, Travels, 76; Turner to Bathurst, 20 December 1825, CO267/66/91, PRO
was selected as the new ruler, and this news was received with dismay by Governor
Charles Turner who had taken office at Freetown in February 1825. Turner indicated in his
report to the Colonial Office that in order to maintain the colony's interest in the area, he
had taken the colony's "vessels" up to Port Loko as a "show of force" to help bring about a
conciliation of rival factions. Turner, who believed in direct action, "rejected" Roniah as
being unacceptable to the colony and he asked the chiefs of Port Loko to elect Fatima
Brima as its new ruler. Rather than chance a civil war should he refuse, Roniah resigned as
chief, and Turner installed Fatima Brima as the new ruler of Port Loko. In addition the
chiefs of Port Loko asked that Port Loko be placed under "British Protection". Turner
agreed to this proposal and signed a treaty with Fatima Brima and Dalla Modu Dumbuya to
this effect.\footnote{Turner to Bathurst, 20 December 1825, CO267/66/91, PRO.}

Turner's active interference in the Port Loko chieftaincy dispute brought a
new dimension to the war between Amara and his enemies - an expansion of territory under
British protection upon the coast and territory taken from Moria’s believed sphere of
influence and hegemony.

The event which brought Freetown intervention at the mouth of the Melakori River
in 1826, however, was not the war between the Mandingoes and the Susu but rather a
conflict of land rights between two European merchants in that river. From the beginning
of the Amara-Senesi dispute, legitimate traders from Freetown had allied themselves to
Senesi and had begun to establish factories in the lower Melakori River. In 1816 John
McCormack, who had large timber rights in the Sierra Leone and Scarcies Rivers,
established a wharf at the mouth of the Melakori River where he loaded timber aboard
ocean-worthy vessels, and the exporting of timber increased steadily thereafter.\footnote{Peter Leonard, Records of a Voyage to the Western Coast of Africa in HMS Dryad
(Edinburgh: William Tait, 1833), 71; James Boyle, A Practical Medico-historical Account
of the Western Coast of Africa (London: S. Highley, 1831), 251.}

The company of Macaulay and Babington which had a factory on Crawford’s
Island, Iles de Los, in 1823 moved their major operations to Matakon Island at the mouth of the Forékaria River. From this point they shipped cattle from the Fula trade to Freetown aboard canoes and small vessels. Apparently Macaulay had negotiated with Smila of Wonkapong for trading rights on the island, and he considered that his contract with Smila as legally binding. William Henry Savage and Stephen Gabbidon, two Eurafrican traders from Freetown, knew that control of Matakon Island also translated into a lucrative contract with the colony for cattle. In late 1825 or early 1826 Savage and Gabbidon signed a treaty with Amara granting Matakon to them "in perpetuity," in exchange for an annual rent.111

The contest over conflicting claims to Matakon Island and renewed activities by Amara against caravans from the interior brought a crises and eventually a resolution to the protracted conflict along this section of coast in the summer of 1826. Amara seized and sold the scouts to a large caravan from the interior, and trade with the interior halted in consequence. Conditions steadily worsened until a large segment of the ruling Touré family and many chiefs of Moria and the Wonkapong Susu sent delegations to Freetown, asking the English to mediate the war as they had done at Port Loko. In June 1826 Kenneth Macaulay, acting as governor of the colony, met the contending parties in the rivers and signed a treaty which ended the war which had lasted nearly twelve years. Amara agreed to give up the chieftaincy to whomever a newly-convened Conference of ruler selected and to guarantee free trade and rights of traders to establish factories in his towns. Additional articles included free travel to Europeans into the interior via the rivers, an ending of the slave trade, and the return of Matakon Island to Moria’s control. The British negotiator also obtained a cession of land to include territory up to one mile from the seaboard and all the rivers and waters in Moria and Sumbuya.112

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111 Campbell to Bathurst, 15 September 1826, CO267/73/28, PRO; Commissioners General Report No. 4, 29 April 1823, FO84/21, PRO.

112 Macaulay to Bathurst, 4 July 1826, CO267/72/57, PRO.
With the major differences in the rivers resolved, the chiefs (in Conference) permitted Amara to remain as ruler at Forékaria and to keep the Turban. But Amara had suffered defeat both in battle and at the Conference. His long struggle to maintain Forékaria as the center of trade between the interior and the coast had clearly failed. A new commercial and political center at Maligia now flourished in the Melakori River, and Wonkapong had become the center of a commercial network stretching from the Rio Pongo to Freetown to the south. When Amara became the ruler of Moria in 1802, Freetown was not yet a colony. By 1826, Freetown had changed considerable and had obtained extraordinary mediating authority in local chieftaincy disputes. During that quarter century, Amara had conducted an aggressive commercial policy and had helped to shape a hesitant British policy toward Moria by his strong actions. Each year, however, brought the Sierra Leone colony closer to Moria and eventually into direct conflict with Amara. For the most part, Amara successfully forestalled British control of the coast north of the Scarcies rivers until the last days of his reign. In June of 1826 the chiefs had asked Freetown to mediate an internal struggle which had torn the coast and the fabric of Moria for more than a decade. On 19 December 1826, Alimamy Amara, ruler of Moria, died at Forékaria.\[^{113}\]

\[^{113}\] Campbell to Bathurst, 2 February 1827, and enclosures, CO267/81/94, PRO.