

The Chiefdoms of Sierra Leone

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Abstract¹

In this manuscript, a companion to Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson (2013), we provide a detailed history of Paramount Chieftaincies of Sierra Leone. British colonialism transformed society in the country in 1896 by empowering a set of Paramount Chiefs as the sole authority of local government in the newly created Sierra Leone Protectorate. Only individuals from the designated “ruling families” of a chieftaincy are eligible to become Paramount Chiefs. In 2011, we conducted a survey in of “encyclopedias” (the name given in Sierra Leone to elders who preserve the oral history of the chieftaincy) and the elders in all of the ruling families of all 149 chieftaincies. Contemporary chiefs are current up to May 2011. We used the survey to reconstruct the history of the chieftaincy, and each family for as far back as our informants could recall. We then used archives of the Sierra Leone National Archive at Fourah Bay College, as well as Provincial Secretary archives in Kenema, the National Archives in London and available secondary sources to cross-check the results of our survey whenever possible. We are the first to our knowledge to have constructed a comprehensive history of the chieftaincy in Sierra Leone.

¹Oral history surveys were conducted by Mohammed C. Bah, Alimamy Bangura, Alieu K. Bangura, Mohammed Bangura, Shaka Kamara, Solomon Kamara, Bai Santigie Kanu, Salieu Mansaray, Michael Sevalie, Alusine M. Tarawalie, and David J. Walters, and Lyttelton Briama, who managed the team. We thank Peter C. Andersen, Lyttelton Briama and Sheik A.T. Rogers for helping us check local spellings, and also the assistance of the staff at the National Archives at Fourah Bay College, and at the Provincial Secretary’s office in Kenema. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the NBER Africa Program and the International Growth Center.

Part I

Introduction

Chapter 1

Preface

This manuscript is a companion to Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson (2013), which studies the effects of the chieftaincy institution in Sierra Leone on economic development and social outcomes. The basis for the paper was a three year research project that reconstructed the detailed histories of Sierra Leone’s 149 chiefdoms. In this manuscript, we provide those histories. The chieftaincy in Sierra Leone was established in 1896, when Governor Cardew transformed society by empowering a set of Paramount Chiefs as the sole authority of local government in the newly created Sierra Leone Protectorate. The chiefs remained effectively the only institution of local government until the World Bank sponsored creation of a system of local councils in 2004. Under the system, chiefs are elected for life by a Tribal Authority made up of local notables. Only individuals from the designated “ruling families” of a chieftaincy, the aristocracy created and given exclusive right to rule by the British at the initiation of the system in 1896, are eligible to become Paramount Chiefs.

With the intent to study the effects of this institution, in 2011 we conducted a survey of “encyclopedias” (the name given in Sierra Leone to elders who preserve the oral history of the chieftaincy) and the elders in all of the ruling families of all 149 chieftaincies. Our goal was to obtain a history of each chiefdom, and of each of the ruling families, who compete for the chieftaincy when the chief dies, not unlike political parties. Though detailed records of some chieftaincy elections exist, many were destroyed during the war when the Provincial Secretaries’ offices in Bo and Makeni were razed, making the written record insufficient to construct such a history. We used the survey to re-construct the history of the chieftaincy for as far back as our informants could recall. This included the names of the Paramount Chiefs, which ruling family they were from, and the dates they were elected. We also collected information on the origins of the chieftaincy and of each of the ruling families. We used (the unfortunately highly incomplete) archives of the Sierra Leone National Archive situated at Fourah Bay College, as

well as Provincial Secretary archives in Kenema, the National Archives in London and available secondary sources to cross-check the results of our survey whenever possible. Of the secondary sources Fyfe (1960) is the most fundamental because it gives a very comprehensive history of 19th Century Sierra Leone with a lot of discussion of native rulers. Alie (1990) is also useful. Other sources cover different regions in the country. Abraham (1979, 2003) is authoritative on Mendeland in the south of the country, see also Little (1951), Wylie (1977) covers Temne country in the north, Finnegan (1965) and Finnegan and Murray (1970) on the Limba country on which see also Fyle (1979a,b), and Fanthorpe (1998), Howard (1972, 1976) studies the 19th century of the Guinea border country in the northwest and Lipschutz's (1973) study focuses on the northeast.

To write down, for the first time, the oral traditions of so many chiefdoms requires great care. As Vansina (1981, pg. 143) cautions, in studying an oral tradition one must return to the oral text many times, from many angles, in order to ensure one has transcribed it accurately: "It must be listened to, learnt by heart, inwardly digested like a poem, and carefully examined to make it yield up its many different meanings." In our survey work we attempted to adhere to the spirit of this advice. The surveys were conducted by a team of researchers with local language skills. Upon entering each chiefdom, researchers constructed the lists of families, previous chiefs, and origin stories of each of the families through extensive interviews with local oral historians. Researchers were then required to visit members of each ruling family, in order to ensure that a balanced perspective on the family's histories and the history of the chiefs was given. They operated in teams of two, alternating partners, to maintain quality checks on each other's work. At times, chiefdoms were revisited when there were ambiguities in the stories.

Given the scope of the study, there was limited time to spend in each chiefdom, and so the accounts are undoubtedly lacking in certain details that would be discovered in a deeper ethnography of any particular chiefdom. Nonetheless, we are confident that the stories below do provide a detailed history of each chiefdom, as it is understood in the chiefdom today. Researchers' notes were checked against the written historical record whenever possible, and, as discussed below, the oral traditions recorded by our team are frequently corroborated by the written record.

Before moving forward, there is a normative consideration that must be made about the project. The chieftaincy as it exists today in Sierra Leone and elsewhere is a construction of colonialism, and indeed one that has been strongly criticized. This criticism focuses on the ways in which colonial policies of indirect rule warped indigenous political institutions by removing key elements of accountability (e.g., Ashton, 1947, Gluckman, Mitchell and Barnes, 1949, Hill,

1963, and Crowder and Ikime, 1970) a situation which perpetuated itself after independence (Migdal, 1988, Berry, 1993, and Mamdani, 1996). There is an open question then as to whether constructing these history of these institutions is, in an of itself, a project that further perpetuates the malign legacy of colonialism.

There were indeed attempts in colonial Africa to shape the histories of chieftaincy institution to meet the needs of colonial administrators. A particularly striking example of this is given by Geschiere (1993), who studies the chiefs of Cameroon. In the Maka area of the south-east, people before colonialism lived in “autonomous family villages under the authority of family elders.” The French government began to impose its authority in 1914 at the end of a protracted conflict by appointing young men with no legitimacy to rule in the eyes of their people as chiefs of the villages. It was as if new leaders had been created out of thin air. The government then activated a project of ‘traditionalising’ the instituion, to use Geschiere’s phrase, actively constructing histories to legitimate the chiefs they had appointed:

“Several French officials [...] recorded a ‘tradition’ describing how the ancestor of all the Maka, called ‘Makas’, fled from the north before the Fulani invasions and settled in Atok. Both Beyenne, the first chief of Atok under the Germans, and Beyenne’s nephew, Effoudou, who held the chieftaincy uninterrupted from the end of the 1920s until 1982, were direct descendants of this ‘Makas’. Effoudou himself conserved this ‘tradition’, hand-written in a notebook. In the 1970s, he had his clerk read it aloud to visitors on request. Of course, other informants vehemently disagreed with this tradition. According to them, the real origin of the chieftaincy in Atok was more prosaic: Beyenne was captured by the Germans and became their servant. Later they installed him as a chief. Moreover, there are other elements—such as the flight of ‘Makas’ from the Fulani—which seem historically dubious.” (Geschiere, 1993, pg. 156).

No such project of historical reconstruction was undertaken in Sierra Leone, and indeed the Maka continue today to reject this false history, but it is still a concern that by writing down heretofore unwritten histories, we are perhaps unwittingly legitimating a particular narrative, or, more insidious, one that is itself a colonial construction.

We do not believe such concern is valid. First, the design of our survey took such concerns into account. We made sure to interview members of each family in each chiefdom, in order to construct a balanced view of the chiefdom’s history. When there was disagreement or uncertainty about a particular item, we have noted this, but in general oral histories proved

to be remarkably coherent within chiefdoms, so it is a well-defined statement to say we have constructed 'consensus' histories. Even in cases of great conflict between families, for instance in the extreme example of Nomo chiefdom where the original ruling family split in two because one brother raped his own brother's wife causing a feud, there is consensus about the origin of the conflict. It is also worthwhile to observe that oral histories recorded in other sources match remarkably well to ours, the most notable example being Abraham's (2003) study of pre-colonial Mende land, which was undertaken using similar informant interview methods to ours. We have done our best to construct the history that is available; whether they are in some sense colonial is an untestable hypothesis.

Second, there is a very concrete sense in which, as time moves forward, having a written history of the chieftaincies can be helpful. Chieftaincy elections are fiercely contested, and there are often protracted arguments over whether or not an aspirant has a sufficient family link to a ruling family, some of which have ended in violence. Indeed, the chiefdom archives are certainly the most well used section of the National Archives in Freetown, as at election time chiefdom staff frequently pour through the old files, searching for the name of a particular candidate's parent on a previous election document. Further documenting what is agreed upon today can only help in reducing future conflict in future elections.

This manuscript is organized as follows. The next chapter contains a brief overview of the chieftaincy institution in Sierra Leone. Then, part II of the book details the histories of each chiefdom and its ruling families. For each chiefdom, the history of the chiefdom is given first, and followed by a list of the ruling families, and the relevant details.

Chapter 2

The Chieftaincy in Sierra Leone

Details about the legacy of the chieftaincy institution, and its effects on Sierra Leone today, are provided in detail in Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson (2013). For the purposes of his manuscript, we provide below only detail about the creation of the system of Paramount Chiefs, and institutional details about how it functions. The colony of Sierra Leone was established in 1788, primarily as a settlement for freed slaves from the Americas and Caribbean. The boundaries of the colony initially extended little beyond the environs of the main settlement, Freetown. While Portuguese and later British traders had interacted with locals, the nature of these relationships had been primarily economic; treaties were signed protecting property rights and trade routes, but the sovereignty of local peoples over their territory had been recognized unequivocally.

This changed in 1896, when Governor Cardew of the colony unilaterally declared a Protectorate over the interior of the country, declaring that signatories of previous treaties with the government, then recognized as “native chiefs” with full political autonomy, were now subordinate to the Government in Freetown.¹ The colonial government proceeded to establish a system of indirect rule, assessing a house/hut tax in 1898, and often imprisoning various chiefs who refused to pay (Chalmers, 1898). Though the Cardew’s declaration of a protectorate sparked the violent “Hut Tax Rebellion” led by Bai Bureh of Bureh chiefdom and others, the government was largely successful in suppressing opposition. Over the next decade it had established the chiefdom, led by the Paramount Chief, as a unit of indirect rule that would be an almost exact example of the model later described by Lugard (1922). The law of Sierra Leone now made the Paramount Chiefs responsible for the arbitration of land and legal disputes, the collection of tax revenue, and the general welfare of their people.

After the declaration of the Protectorate, the colonial government established a formal system of succession in the chieftaincy. Paramount Chiefs rule for life, and are elected by vote of the

¹The appendix in Goddard (1925) lists the treaties and signatories.

“Tribal Authority”, a group comprising the members of the chiefdom elite. The authority also includes the “chiefdom speaker”, an aide to the chief. Chiefdom speakers will often temporarily take on the role of “regent” or caretaker once a chief dies. At the turn of the 20th century these authorities were small groups of approximately 5 to 15 headmen and “sub-chiefs” of the various towns and villages within the chiefdom. Their numbers have expanded over time. By the 1950s, voting roles in Paramount Chief elections comprise 40 to 60 members. The 2009 Chieftaincy Act provides that there must be one member of the Tribal Authority for every 20 taxpayers. Still, however, the tribal authority comprises mostly members of the rural elite; they are not elected by these taxpayers and neither is the chief.

After the declaration of the Protectorate, the ruling family became the unit of political competition within the chiefdom. Ruling families can trace their descendants to the leaders of the chiefdom at the turn of the 20th century, when the institution coalesced and began to “ossify”, to use Abraham’s (2003) phrase. Only members of ruling families are eligible to stand for election. The 2009 Chieftaincy Act stipulates that a person is qualified to stand as a candidate if he or she was born in wedlock to a member of a ruling family. “Where tradition so specifies”, this requirement is expanded slightly to include anyone with “direct paternal or maternal lineage to a member of a ruling family, whether born outside of wedlock or not”. A ruling family is recognized as one that was established by independence in 1961.

Across chiefdoms there is a consensus on the number of ruling families, though there is no official list even in the ministry in charge of the elections. A particular person’s membership in them is at times contested since most people do not have written birth certificates or other definitive methods of proving their legitimacy. These disputes are resolved in cooperation with the Provincial Secretary², and often hinge on whether the aspirant can show his or her relative was recognized by British officials as being legitimate to stand for election before independence, and thus was a member of an established ruling family. Before the 2009 Act, elections were administered under a customary law that maintained the same basic principle: only members of established ruling families could stand.

One source of variation in the number of families requires discussion. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the colonial government amalgamated certain smaller chiefdoms in order to make the collection of revenue and their administration by the District Commissioner more efficient. Before amalgamation, each of these chiefdoms had their own Paramount Chief and ruling families;

²This is currently an office in the Ministry of Rural Development, Internal Affairs and Local Government, but has its history as an office of the colonial administration. The persistence of the colonial legacy is highlighted by the fact that central government still uses the administrative structure of the colonial government to interact with the chiefs.

when they were merged each family joined the larger chiefdom.

The fact that leaders under indirect rule derived their authority from the colonial government, and not their people, opened up opportunities for corruption, or at the very least irresponsible behavior, the consequences of which are examined in Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson (2013). In that paper, we show that places with fewer ruling families have significantly worse development outcomes today—in particular, lower rates of educational attainment, child health, asset ownership and non-agricultural employment. Surprisingly, however, we find that these powerful chiefs’ authority is highly respected among villagers, and their villages have higher levels of “social capital,” for example, greater popular participation in a variety of “civil society” organizations and forums that might potentially be used for keeping chiefs accountable. We argue that these seemingly paradoxical results reflect the capture of civil society organizations by chiefs. Instead of acting as a vehicle for disciplining chiefs, chiefs have structured these organizations to control society. In places with fewer families, this has had deleterious consequences.

Though the British did create local councils as a counterweight to chiefs’ power, they were quickly dominated by the chiefs and were abolished after independence with the chiefs remaining as the sole conduit through which the government interacted with the people (Tangri, 1978). Cartwright (1970) discusses the role of the chiefs in Sierra Leone’s Legislative Council in 1947, which formed the basis for the Parliament at independence in 1961. Council representatives for the Protectorate were chosen through a process of indirect elections, at the base of which was the Tribal Authority, meaning that the Protectorate was “under the control of chiefs rather than effectively controlled by a popular electorate.” It was not until 2004, under a World Bank sponsored post-war governance reform, that a system of democratically elected local councils was established to liaise with the central government in determining health, education and agriculture expenditure in rural areas (Casey, 2007).

Part II

The Chiefdoms of Sierra Leone

Chapter 1

Bo District

1.1 Badjia

This chiefdom traces its history to a hunter named Kinnei Kandovo, who is said to have migrated from present day Kono district, to the east. Kinnei Kandovo came with his brother, Kena Gutu (meaning 'short man' in the Mende language). Kinnei accepted a short staff from the colonial officials and became the first paramount chief, taking the name Kinnei Hindowa, meaning a 'strong man' in Mende. The chiefdom has two houses, Hindowa and N'kpoki, who have alternated power by tacit agreement, since Kinnei Hindowa was crowned during the 19th century. The current chief, Samba Bindi Hindowa, was elected in 1989. In 1995, he fled the chiefdom after an RUF attack on nearby Gerihun, only to return in 2001. Compulsory labor on his farms is still reported to be common place in the chiefdom.

Hindowa This family traces the lineage of Kinnei, and is based in the town of Kpuwabu.

Npoki This family, based in the town of Njama Qui, is thought to be indigenous to the area, or at least to have settled before Kinnei's arrival. N'kpoki was a confidant of Kinnei's and Kinnei passed the throne to N'kpoki upon his death. It is likely that this agreement to pass the throne was established with the assistance of the British.

1.2 Bagbo

Bagbo traces its origins to Boima Jah, a warrior and hunter who was chief from 1847 until his death in 1884. Local historians memorialize his military prowess in their interpretation of the word Bagbo, which they take to mean in Mende: 'don't be weak/lazy while sleeping'; one must be vigilant, even while resting, of the potential for enemy attack. The chiefdom

today recognizes 10 four families; Jah, Koker Colia, and Idriss, the former two of which have dominated the chieftaincy.

The current chief Dauda Alhaji Kawa Jah II, was elected in 2003. The chieftom was without a chief for some time during the war, when it was a major site of war violence. Then chief Sesay M. Coker, fled the chieftom once in 1991, when rebels first emerged in nearby Bum chieftom, and again in 1994, when fierce fighting began in the area. He died in Freetown in 1996, and in 2002 his remains were carried back to the chieftom for burial. The chieftom administration receives some surface rents from small scale mining.

Jah This family traces its origin to Boima Jah, and has its headquarters in Jimmi town.

Idriss Boima Jah did not have any sons, and after his death there was no immediate successor. Idriss, the chieftom speaker, succeeded Jah as regent chief. Though Idriss had no blood relationship to Jah, he was so respected for his service that his family has come to be considered a ruling family. His family, though able to contest elections, has not ruled since.

Coker After Idriss's death in 1897, Kenh Coker was elected chief. His mother was a daughter of Boima Jah who had married into the Coker family. Kenh Coker had a long rule from until 1942, and, at least in 1912, received a stipend from the government .It is perhaps the case however, that it took some time, for Coker to be viewed as legitimate. Files from the District Commissioner in 1906 list Coker as "regent", and not Paramount Chief, indicating that even 9 years after Idriss's death, he was not viewed as a full chief. This view did not last forever, though, as his family held the chieftaincy twice after Kenh Coker's death. This family's headquarters is in Yengema.

Colia The Colia family, which follows the lineage of another family living in the chieftom at the time of Boima Jah, has contested but never won a chieftaincy election. It shares a connection by marriage to the Coker family.

1.3 Bagbwe

The first paramount chief of Bagbwe was Mamie Kanda, a *sowei*, or leader of a Mende Bondo society. She was supposedly very beautiful, and had developed a following in the region. Like other Bondo leaders of her time, she had initiated many girls into her society, and married them off to men in other towns as a means of forming strategic alliances. She had her base in

Benduma town in Bagbwe. When the colonial officials arrived she became their cook, and was 11 made the first chief of Bagbwe in 1853. The chieftom, however, has since been dominated not by her descendants, but rather by members of the Gbenga ruling family. Chief Gbenga, that family's fore bearer, was an indigene of the area before Kanda's arrival. He was thought to oppose the rule of the British, and so his family, despite its position in the chieftom was not able to stand for election until after the death of Kanda, whom the British favored. There are two other families, Dogbokeh and Kobba, who are viewed as having the right to stand, but have neither held the chieftaincy or participated in the most recent elections. The current chief is Maijien Gbenga, a Mende elected in 1979. He fled the chieftom in 1992 during the war, and returned in 2000.

Mabajia Madam Mabajia was the younger sister of Mamie Kanda. After Kanda's death, Madam Mabaija was elected chief. Her name appears in the 1912 chieftom records, but with a caveat that there is another influential chief in the chieftom. This could be a reference to the Gbenga family, which ascended after Mabajia's death.

Gbenga The Gbenga family traces the lineage of the first Chief Gbenga, and has dominated the chieftaincy since Mabajia. The family's headquarters is in Kpeitema.

Dogbokeh Dogbokeh was a Muslim warrior from Tikonko chieftom who allied with Gbenga in his stand against the British. His family's headquarters is in Bagbe.

Kobba Kobba was another warrior and prosperous farmer who migrated from Valunia chieftom to settle in Kpeitema village alongside Gbenga at the turn of the century. He allied with the British during the Hut Tax rebellion.

1.4 Baoma

Baoma chieftom traces its origin, and its two families, to two powerful Mende warriors called Bojoko Demby and Farkondo. These two warriors were thought to have conquered the indigenes some time during the 19th century, and divided the chieftom between themselves.

There is a tacit agreement to alternate the chieftaincy between the descendants of the two warriors, which has been honored since Farkondo offered his cousin as first chief to the British. When the British first arrived to sign a treaty, Bojoko resisted, and his headquarter town of

Gerihun was burnt to the ground. Farkondo accepted peace when they arrived in his town afterwards.

Alluvial diamond mining was prevalent in the chiefdom before the war, and there was heavy violence beginning in 1992, when RUF fighters massacred approximately 200 people in the Court Barrie of Gerihun. In 1997, paramount chief A.S. Demby was murdered by the RUF. The chief to follow him, Nabieu Demby, a Mende, was elected in 2002 and died in 2010, after which he was replaced by a regent, Reverend Samuel Lusenie.

Demby This house traces its origins to Bojoko Demby. Its headquarters is Gerihun.

Farkondo This house includes the descendants of Farkondo, and has its headquarters in Blama.

1.5 Bumpeh Ngao

This chiefdom is very diverse, home to Temnes, Mendes and Sherbros. Those there today trace their origin to a warrior named Bandabla Jei, a successful hunter and fisherman, who came from the east with a hunting party and established himself as a local leader. Jei eventually fled as other stronger invaders overcame him and took over the chiefdom. He is said to have fled down river in a canoe, never to be heard from again.

The chiefdom today has five recognized ruling families, all of whom trace their origin to Gbekpa, a prosperous man with many sons who established himself in the late 19th century, sometime after Jei fled. Reports from the 1912 chiefdom records indicate that at the beginning of the century there was not one dominant chief in the area, but rather many sub-chiefs, each with his own area. This likely reflects outcome of the series of battles forcing Jei to flee, with many warriors partitioning the area among themselves.

The name Bumpe is said to refer to the flatness and fertility of the land. Harvest is said to generally come early there. There was substantial violence there during the war, and the chiefdom headquarters was burnt to the ground. The chief today is a Mende named Tommy Kpasowa. He was elected in 2002. The chiefdom had been overseen by regents since the death of chief Barka in 1992.

Gbekpa/Barka This house traces the lineage of Barka, one of the many sons of Gbekpa. All other houses trace their legitimacy to connections with this house. Its headquarters is at Bumpeh.

Kposowa The great grandfather of this family was an advisor to Gbekpa, and given legitimacy because of his service. The current chief is from this family, and makes his headquarters in Bumpeh.

Jongo This house traces the lineage of a cousin to Barka, and also has its headquarters in Bumpeh.

Kpandoma The great grandfather of this line was cousin to the Bakar, and they also have their headquarters in Bumpeh.

Makavoray This family is also related to Barka, and has its headquarter at Serabu.

1.6 Gbo

The first Paramount Chief of Gbo chiefdom was a Mende warrior named Momoh Babay Songha. Local legend is that he came from Dumagbay village in Pujehun district, and established first a fortified settlement at Gbajima along the Tabe river. From there he launched his attacks on the surrounding sections, eventually conquering them with the help of another warrior Gibao Nuyaba, who would later become his brother in law.

Three families have dominated this chiefdom, two of whom trace their lineage to Songha and Nuyaba, and another that traces the lineage of indigenes of the area, who settled there before Songha's arrival. The chiefdom was attacked by RUF troops in 1995, causing then Paramount Chief Alfred Lamba-Foray to flee. The current chief, Madam Ruth Tutu Songha II, was elected in 2009. She is a Mende and a descendant of Momoh Babay Songha.

Songa This house traces the lineage of Momoh Babay Songha, who was first to be recognized as chief by the British. Nagbena is their headquarters.

Nuyaba Nuyaba house arose through marriage. When Songha died, his younger sister was to be crowned chief. The story is however that she handed the power to her husband because she "lacked the heart to rule". Dodo is their headquarters.

Foray . The Foray ruling family traces its lineage to the residents of the area who settled before Songha arrived. They had a contentious relationship with the colonial officials, and early on were banned from taking part in chieftaincy elections. Later however, they were allowed to contest and eventually their candidate, Alfred Lamba-Foray, was elected in a 1975 election. He

ruled until 2008. They contested, but lost the most recent election to a Madam Ruth Tutu Songha II.

1.7 Jaiama Bongor

Jaiama Bongor is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Jaiama and Bongor. Jaiama was founded by four warriors named Makaya Gbongon, Jab Mendegler, Toneyamusa and Gbao, who came from Kailahun, settling in a fortified spot along the river, which they named Jaiama, meaning “by the river” in Mende. Bongor was founded by two other warriors, Vandi Kain and Musa Bogbe Tombo Kandor, who came in a war party from Sherbro land to eventually settle at Wasa Tellu. The chiefdom has seven families, all of whom link themselves to these original invaders. The first chief of the chiefdom was Vandi Kain, known also as Kai Kai.

After the amalgamation, B.A. Foday Kai, a relative of Vandi Kain ruled the chiefdom from 1952 to 1989. The chiefdom was then without a leader leading up until the war, when its headquarters at Tellu became a major base for the Kamajor militia group, who established a site for their initiation ceremonies nearby. Hinga Norman, leader of the Kamajors actually appointed himself chief there briefly in 1993. Norman left in 1994 and was followed by a series of caretakers until Paramount Chief Mohamed K. Gbao, a Mende who traces his lineage to the original invaders of Jaiama, was elected in 2002.

Kai Vandi Kain (Kai Kai) was the originator of this house, and was the first crowned first chief by the British in 1906. ¹

Musa The Musa family traces its lineage to one of the original warriors who settled at Tellu with Vandi Kain.

Jabbie The Jabbie house traces its origin to the settlement of Jaiama. Jabbie was a section chief in that area.

Gbao This house also traces its lineage, and is named for, a member of the invading war party at Jaiama.

Toneyamusa This house also traces its lineage, and is named for, a member of the invading war party at Jaiama.

¹1904 Railway District Election

Pokawa This house also traces its lineage to Jab Mendegler, a member of the invading war party at Jaiama. Mendegler was the first chief of Jaiama, Pokawa was his son.

Bassie Kateh Kateh was humble business man appointed speaker by Pokawa. At the time, it was custom in that a chiefdom speaker automatically becomes paramaount chief when the paramount chief dies, and so Bassi Kateh was able to establish a house. His family has not held a seat since, however.

1.8 Kakua

Kakua is the chiefdom surrounding Bo town, today Sierra Leone's second largest city. The founder of this chiefdom was a warrior and hunter called Kolobombor who came from what is today Guinea. He travelled through Kono and settled at Bojohn Street, in Bo town. He gave birth to several children, prominent among them were Pessima and John. Bo in Mende means clay soil. At the time of settlement, Bo was a fertile swamp. Bo town grew up quickly as an important trading stop along the railway line, which was brought there in 1903. Bo was an important educational center for the country, as well, as Bo Government Secondary School was established there in 1906. The school was an awkward attempt to educate the sons of chiefs and future local leaders while keeping them in their "native" environment. Fyfe writes, "here the doctrines of Blyden, Burton and Rousseau united uneasily to inculcate the dignity of labour while eschewing the indignity of becoming educated. The boys were to retain what was deemed their native simplicity of manners uncontaminated by pretensions of intellectual superiority Creole schoolmasters were excluded: English men, styled 'education experts', did the teaching in a school which turned a contemptuous back on a century of West African education." (Fyfe 1962, pg. 616)

The administrative purview of the Paramount Chief of Kakua today is confined to the area outside Bo town, as the town council now administers the city itself. The chief however is still a fixture in local life. The chiefdom today recognizes seven families. The present chief is Prince Lappia Boima, a Mende elected in 2010. The chief during the war, Gbondoh Boima II, did not flee during the conflict, and instead helped house many other chiefs who fled from their more remote chiefdoms.

Pessima Pessima was the son of the warrior Kolobombor who founded the chiefdom. Along with his brother Bojohn, he made an initial set of agreements with the British.

Bojohn Bojohn was the younger brother to Pessima, and succeeded Pessima on the throne.

Sandi Sandi was a nephew to both Bojohn and Pessima, the son of their younger sister, and inherited the right to stand through matrilineal descent.

Kamada Gbongay This family traces its origin to Joe Kamada Gbongay, whose father Gbongay N'dindi migrated from Kayema in Kono District, fleeing the wars of the early 20th century. Joe was enlisted in the native civil service as Court Messenger and rose to the rank of a Sergeant Major, and later transferred to Bo town, where he worked as an interpreter of great political influence, and was eventually crowned chief. He ruled for only six years, before his death in 1934.

Boima Joe Kakpindie Boima was also the nephew to both Pessima and Bojohn. He was to succeed Sandi as chief, but was too young at that time. Joe Kamada Gbongay made use of that opportunity to ascend to the throne. After Joe's death in 1934, Joe Kakpindie ascended to the throne.

M'bamba M'bamba was the husband of Sandi's younger sister, and was allowed to contest through the right of his wife. His wife madam Sandi asked her husband to stand for election after Joe Kakpindie's death.

Hotagua He was a grandson to Pessima, and gained the right to stand through his mother who was the daughter to Chief Pessima.

1.9 Komboya

Komboya traces its origins to a group of warriors who conquered the area, arriving from Kono. The leader of the warriors was Pa Tommy Korvegor who was the first to meet the colonial officials, and was given a short staff to signify his role as the first paramount chief.

In 1997, the Paramount Chief of Komboya, who had played a role in brokering peace between the Kamajors and the Sierra Leone Army (SLA), was invited to a meeting with the SLA in Bo Town. There the soldiers opened fire and killed him. The current chief is Alhaji Alfred Ndoko Demby, a Mende elected in 2009.

Jongay After the death of Korvegor, another warrior from the original war party named Jongay was selected as chief, beginning this family. This family has its headquarters at Kema.

Demby Demby house traces its origin to Pa Tommy Korvegor, and has its headquarters in Gbarama village.

Lagbenior This ruling family also traces its origins to the original war party. Its member, Musa Lebbie Lagbenior, succeeded Jongay at the throne. They have their headquarters at Kpanjama.

1.10 Lugbu

It is believed that the father of the first paramount chief Samuka Nallo was a warrior and hunter who came from Sudan, travelling through Liberia and entered Sierra Leone through Pujehun, though this story is difficult to verify. He settled at a place called Geakoibu, a Mende phrase meaning “under the Geakoi”. Geakoi is the name of a tree that grows in the swamp forests of the area. Abraham (pg. 59) notes that Samuka was involved in disputes with other local chiefs during the Mende wars of the 1870s.

This chiefdom has two families, both related to Nallo. One, however, has dominated the chieftaincy. The current chief is Alhaji Mohamed Alie Nallo, a Mende elected in 2009. The chiefdom receives some rents from small scale miners. The chief during the war Amidu J. Nallo IV, fled at various points during the war, leaving first in 1991, to return in 1993, and then left again for Freetown in 1994.

Nallo This family traces its lineage directly to Samuka Nallo, and has dominated the chiefdom since the early 20th century.

Magawo Magawo was the younger sister of Samuka Nallo. She took over chiefdom immediately after the death of her elder brother. Though her family retains the right to stand in elections, her descendants have been unable to win since her rule.

1.11 Niawa Lenga

The first chief of Niawa Lenga was N’jibao, a warrior thought to be indigenous to the area. There is no tradition describing his migration from anywhere. He gave the area the name Niawa Lenga, which literally “Niawa’s children”, but is interpreted also as “men are here” or “you will meet strong men here”. He was involved in the Mende wars of the mid to late 19th century, and eventually signed a peace treaty brokered by the British in Moyamba. Initially, he was at first given a short staff by the British, recognizing him as a lower status paramount chief, subordinate

to Madam Yoko, who controlled the larger Kpaa-Mende state of which Niawa Lenga was a part. Later, he was given a long staff by Madam Yoko recognizing his ascendance to full chief status, as her influence began to decline during the 1910s. The chiefdom today has five ruling houses, all of whom trace their lineage to allies of Niawa Lenga. The current chief is Alhaji George N'jibao, a Mende elected in 2001. The chief during the war, Madam Sufi Nail, fled the chiefdom for two years in 1991 until 1993.

N'jibao This family traces its lineage directly to N'jibao, and has its headquarters at Sahn.

Yoki This family traces its lineage to one of the warriors who fought assisted N'jibao in protecting the chiefdom during the Mende wars.

Nali Nali was another warrior assisted N'jibao. His town is Vagbema in the Nbanba section of the chiefdom.

Kulagbanda This family traces its lineage to Pa Manroviawho assisted N'jibao. Their headquarters is Gogbebu town in the Upper Niawa section of this chiefdom.

Mone Pa Mone was another warrior who assisted Njiabo. Their headquarters is Gogbebu town.

1.12 Selenga

Selenga was established by a warrior named Sei, who was a member of the military expansion leading to the Kpaa-Mende state ultimately led by Madam Yoko. (Abraham, pg. 136). Selenga means literally Sei's children in Mende. Oral history in the chiefdom, however, is scarce and connections between the existing families and this warrior are difficult to define precisely. Since the late 19th century, the chieftaincy has alternated two houses, both are headquartered in Damballa. The current chief is Desmond Kargobai III, a Mende elected in 2010. The chief during the war, Hannah Yamba Ngokaowa, fled briefly to Bo during the war. She died in 2008.

Kargobai This house traces its origin to the first Paramount Chief Kargobai I.

Ngokawa This house traces its origins to the origin of the chiefdom, and is agreed to have been established at the time of Kargobai I.

1.13 Tikonko

Tikonko was a powerful Mende chiefdom in the Upper Bum basin with a professional army, as documented by Abraham (2003, p.g 58). Ndawa, a famous Mende, warrior was raised in one of Tikonko's three fortified towns. Local legend details the ferocity of the local warriors. One story, confirmed in Fyfe (1962, pg. 584) recalls a local Muslim warrior, Allie Limbo, who ordered the capture of all local missionaries in 1896. Christian missionaries, mainly Creoles, and other christians were captured and thrown alive into a well. Allie Limbo was arrested and send to face trial in Bandajuma, but was seriously tortured and beaten to death by colonial police on the way.

The chiefdom today has four houses, each of which trace their lineage to the four sons of Momoh Kukuwa, a Tikonko leader at the turn of the 19th century. All families are remembered as being unfriendly to the British, in keeping with the chiefdom's fierce tradition. The current chief is Joseph Kangbai Makavoray, a Mende elected in 2002. The chief during the war, Michael Kinawa Gigba, died of natural causes in 1993 and the office was held by a regent chief until 2002.

Kangbai Kangbai was the eldest son of Kukuwa, and

Sandy Sandy was the second son of Momoh Kukuwa, and the first chief to be recognized by the British in a treaty signed in 1896. Though he is remembered as not having been a friend to the British, notes on the chiefdom from 1899 by colonial officials indicate that he was in fact loyal during the rebellion.

Gigba Gigba was the third son of Momoh Kukuwa. He took power after his elder brother Sandy.

Gainah Gainah was the fourth and last son of Momoh Kukuwa.

1.14 Valunia

Valunia is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Lunia and Vangelu. Lunia traces its origin to Vonjoe, a warrior from Kono. The local legend is that Vonjoe was invited to attack the area by a local woman named Ndawama. Ndawama, wishing to punish her husband for having an affair, invited Vonjoe to drive him from the area. Vonjoe was successful, and encouraged to stay by Ndawama, settling ultimately on a high piece of land near Mongere. Vangelu chiefdom was

founded by Pa Mokuwa, another warrior from Kono, who arrived separately with his brother Gbanie. They settled in Mandu. There are five families today in the amalgamated chiefdom, two linked to Vangelu and three linked to Lunia.

This chiefdom was a cite of great violence during the war. A major RUF base called Bokurr was there, and then chief Madam Veronica Ndawama fled the chiefdom in 1993. She returned to die in 2002, and was succeeded by James Borbor Ngolo Vonjo, like her, a Mende.

Vonjoe This ruling family links itself to Vonjoe, the warrior first given the staff by the British.

Ndawama This ruling family links itself to Ndawama, the woman who invited Vonjoe to move to the chiefdom.

Kamara This ruling family developed as a result of marriage between the Kamara and the Vonjoe families. Bashiru Kamara was the son of a daughter of Vonjoe himself and a member of the Kamara family. He became chief of Lunia after Vonjoe's death.

Fefegula The Fefegula family links itself directly to Pa Mokuwa.

Gbanie The Gbanie family are the lineage of Gbanie the brother of Pa Mokuwa.

1.15 Wonde

Wonde was a warrior settlement established during the Mende wars with a large domestic slave population, and the site of a deep anthropological study by Ferme (2001). The relationship between Wonde and the British officials, who had established a police barracks at nearby Bاندajuma in 1888, was developed by a man named Pa Saffa Koroma, who became an interpreter for the British. He was instrumental in demarcating local chiefdoms as the British consolidated the chieftaincies during that period. One story illustrating Koroma's influence is that he even gave some of Wonde's territory to a neighboring chiefdom, because he was having an affair with the chief there.

Saffa Koroma laid the foundation for the chieftaincy by introducing two indigenes of the area, Boakei Ngewai and Kennie Kargoi, to the British, and acting as interlocutor between them and the British. He gave them symbolic gifts to symbolize their roles the British envisaged for them as leaders of the new chiefdom. The first item was a chain with which one could jail criminals, a symbol of the Paramount Chief's role in the course. The second was a bell, to be used to

call people to meetings. Keeney and Ngewai were also given a paper by the British, which they kept. Later they were summoned by the British to Banadajuma for one of them to receive the staff of the chieftaincy. Kennie sent his nephew Boima Magay, the son of a warrior Machay, to receive the staff and become the first chief. Boima Machey became the first paramount chief in 1898, taking the name Boima (Dohrwei in Mende), meaning leader. The chief during the war, Keifala Daboh II, fled the chiefdom in 1993 during the war and died in Freetown in 1996. The current chief is Mohamed Ishambe Kargoi, a Mende elected in 2003.

Manyeh This family traces its origins to Boima Machey, the first chief.

Kargoi This family traces its origin to Pa Kennie Kargoi. His son, Saidu Kargoi became the first chief from this family, succeeding Boima Machey.

Daboh This family is said to have arrived from Guinea in the early 20th century, settling in Gboyama, a town separate from the bases of the other two families. They were established residents of the chiefdom, however, and were able to hold two seats in the chieftaincy under Keifala Daboh I and II.

Chapter 2

Bombali District

2.1 Biriwa

This chiefdom has a long origin myth that traces with many battles and changes in authority. The original ruler was a chief called Morie who lived in the southern part of the chiefdom. He was overwhelmed, however, by attacks from a man called Sarawa from Guinea. Sarawa had a son Wusei, who had a son Sankalay, who had two sons called Suluku and Bubu. Suluku, the younger brother was the first Paramount Chief when the British began handing out staffs. Lipschutz (pg. 37, 1973) notes that Suluku is the best remembered figure in the history of the late 19th century. He rose to prominence in 1871, when a group of chiefs along a trade route north of Biriwa recommended him to the government in a joint letter to the governor. He was a skilled politician, and a frequent interlocutor between the government and the other chiefs of the region.

The election procedure in this chiefdom is notable for its use of ceremony. The election begins by all candidates entering a shrine in the bush, where they each present a single sheep to the oracle. If a candidate's sheep is able to shake its body six times before the oracle, that candidate will win the throne. A ballot is used to confirm the result decided in front of the oracle.

The chief during the war, Foday Kalawa, a Limba, fled for some years and died in the chiefdom in 2002. As of June, 2011, a replacement had yet to be found, and the office has been held by a succession of regents. The lack of a chief is in some part due to controversy over the legitimacy of particular candidates. In particular, a candidate Maadi Issa was elected in 2007 but the legitimacy of his claim to a family has been disputed. Some argue that he was imposed unfairly by post war president Tejan Kabbah.

Kalawa This family traces their origins directly to Sarawa, and have their headquarters in Bumba town.

Bubuyan the Bubuyans, also affiliated with Bumba town, trace their origin to Bubu the eldest son of Sukulu.

Pompol This house, affiliated with Kambai town, was later established in this chiefdom through marriages to the descendants of Suluku.

2.2 Bombali Shebora

Bombali Sebora is the chiefdom surrounding the Northern province capital of Makeni. It is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Bombali, whose headquarters was then Makeni town, and Sharay, a smaller adjoining chiefdom. The amalgamation began after an insurrection in 1955 against domestic slavery led by a slave named Teperr against the chiefs of both Sharay and Bombali. Domestic slavery was prevalent across the country up until independence, and has a particularly deep legacy in the area around Makeni (Arkley, 1965). Searching for ways to quell the revolt, the District Commissioner concluded that in order to reduce the chief's dependence on slavery for revenue he would have to expand the tax base of the chiefdom. An amalgamation was proposed.

Bombali Shebora was originally settled by a warrior named Pa Keni, for whom Makeni is named. He came from the Banka Susu region. Sharay was founded by a warrior named Bai Framatas, who came from Guinea to settle in Robanka. Sharay was very small and today comprises only one section of Bombali Shebora. All of the four ruling houses of the amalgamated chiefdom are from Bombali Shebora, and claim blood relation, perhaps all the way back to Pa Keni. The present chief is Bai Shebora Kasanga II, a Temne elected in 1993. He fled in 1998, when the RUF attacked Makeni, returning in 2001.

Masimbo Masimbo was formed by Bai Simbo Kitty, who settled in a town nearby Makeni called Pate Bana Masimbo, and was the first chief to be given the staff.

Marank Marank traces the lineage of Bai Mark, younger brother of Bai Simbo Kitty, who made his headquarters in a town called Pate Bana Marank. He succeeded his brother on the throne.

Maboleh Maboleh traces the lineage of Bai Yema Maboleh, another brother of Bai Simbo Kitty who succeeded Bai Mark on the throne.

Mabureh This house traces the lineage of Koray Bureh, a son of Bai Simbo Kitty, who was fourth chief of Bombali.

2.3 Gbanti Kamaranka

Gbanti Kamaranka is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Gbanti and Kamaranka, that have always shared control over the area. The amalgamation was encouraged by colonial officials, but gained internal support because of a history of friendship between the early paramount chiefs of the two chiefdoms, Kandeh Bangura of Kamaranka and Kandeh Turay Enthura of Gbanti. One story shows their ability to cooperate in the adjudication of legal disputes. A subject of Bangura's was convicted of adultery and a fine levied against him. The subject refused to pay and Turay Enthura assisted in exerting pressure on the subject to pay the fine. When Kandeh Bangura died, he handed control of his chiefdom briefly to Turay Enthura, before a replacement could be found.

Gbanti traces its origin to a group of Loko warriors who migrated from Sanda Loko to conquer the Temne residing in the area. After conquering the territory of Kunthai, they proceeded to Makomray, which was so named because there they witnessed the birth of an animal called an "oray" in Temne. The brother of Pa Freswa, Pa Gbais became the first chief of Gbanti. When Pa. Gbais died, a confidant of his named Pa. Allie Tagbara was asked to be the chief. He refused and recommended that they crown his brother who was residing at Sanda Magbolontor. His brother was crowned and took the name Kandeh Paria. The name Paria references the fact that he was brought to Gbanti to be crowned at midday during the peak of the sun. He was the first chief to be recognized by the British.

Kamaranka chiefdom was established by another warrior from Sanda Loko, who established a chiefdom originally called Korma. The chiefdom today has five families. Only one is from Kamaranka. The current chief is Kandeh Paria Ka-Walei, a Temne elected in 2010. His predecessor was Kandeh Bangura, elected in 1959, who died in 2005.

Turay This ruling house traces the lineage of section chief Kandeh Thuray Enthura who also migrated from Matotoka to settle in Makomray in the Gbanti chiefdom. When Kandeh Thuray came he married the sister of Pa. Alie Tagbara, a local Temne leader. When Kandeh Paria

died, Thuray Enthura was made chief through the legitimacy of his wife, as in Temne tradition women are not allowed to be crowned chief.

Paria Kamara This family traces the lineage of Kandeh Paria, who was crowned at the request of his brother.

Fullah This house traces the lineage of a soothsayer called Obai Fullah, a stranger to the area. He was able to predict the impending death of Pa. Gbais, and was briefly appointed chief afterwards. Obai Fullah's family has been since recognized as a ruling house, but has not since held the throne.

Bangura This house traces its lineage to Kandeh Bangura, the first chief of Kamaranka.

Sesay This ruling house of Gbanti also became a ruling house through marriage when Pa. Morlai Gbank married the daughter of the Paria Kamara family. It has the right to run, but has never held a seat.

2.4 Gbendembu Ngowahun

Gbendembu Ngowahun is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Gbendembu and Ngowahun. The amalgamation resulted from a revolt against the chief of Ngowahun, Kandeh Kpanga. He was a prosperous farmer who frequently compelled his subjects to work without pay, and often beat his sub-chiefs. In something of a coup, the sub-chiefs lodged a complaint with the District Commissioner in Batkanu, then the district headquarters. The DC investigated and suspended Kandeh and annexed the chiefdom to Gbendembu. Chief Kandeh Baba of Gbendembu took over the affairs of the amalgamated chiefdom.

Gbendembu itself was founded by a warrior called Foday Kargbo who is said to have come from the forest region around present day Kamakwie. He traveled with a small group of close relatives. While traveling through the forest, he met a very big tree called "Gbendei" in Loko. He decided to rest under this tree, which became his home in Gbendembu, which means literally "under the Gbendei". Ngowahun was founded by another Loko warrior called Kobawa. He fought his way through the bush from what is today Yoni chiefdom, eventually settling in Ngowahun. The chiefdom today has four ruling families.

The chief during the war, Kandeh Osaio Kamara, did not leave, but instead hid within the chiefdom. His office, however, ceased to function. The current chief is Kandeh Baba Kiha, a

Temne elected in 2010.

Kargbo This ruling house traces its lineage to Foday Kargbo, the man who founded Gbendembu.

Sesay This ruling house traces the lineage of Kiha. Kiha was the second in command to Foday, and was the one selected by Foday to become paramount chief when the colonial officials asked his family to present a leader to become the first chief.

Kanu This ruling house was begun by Kobawa, the founder of Ngowahun chiefdom.

Kamara This ruling house traces the lineage of Gangay Osaiyo. Gangay Osaiyo was great Loko Warrior who fought alongside Pa. Kobawa during the war for territories. He was crowned the second paramount chief of Kamaranka when Kobawa died.

2.5 Libeisygahun

Libeisygahun is an amalgamation of three chiefdoms, Mafonda, Gombahun and Makerembay. It is recalled that the amalgamation was proposed to increase the tax base. This was particularly important for Mafonda and Makerembay, which were very small. A more malign reason, however has been proposed by some residents. At independence, the chiefdoms were the administrative unit of the Legislature. Some suggest that amalgamations in the North were proposed by the Southern dominated SLPP independence party in order to reduce the representation of the North in Parliament and ensure Southern dominance. Such claims, however, are hard to verify as there are few records of the SLPP's internal strategy.

Gombahun chiefdom was founded by the warrior Gomba who came from Gbakimbu in a region called locally as Sanda Chendarr. The chiefdom is named after him. He had two sons, Yankay Bango and Yankay Sorgo, who established the town of Batkanu which is now the chiefdom headquarters of Libeisygahun chiefdom. For a time, Batkanu was the district commissioner's office in Bombali, before the office was moved to Makeni. Yankay Sorgor was the first chief of Gombahun to be recognized. When he was crowned, he took the name Yankay Lasarie. Mafonda chiefdom was founded by a great warrior who came from Guinea named Bai Tombo Farama. Bai Tombo travelled through Kambia, and members of his family settled there, before he moved on through Dibiya, and then to Mafonda, where he established his own headquarters in Kessonka town, and was recognized as the first chief. The Farama's still maintain family connections to

other Faramas in Kambia district. Makerembay was founded by Kerembay, a warrior who also came from Guinea. He established a small settlement in the area. The current chief is Yankay Kargbo II, a Loko elected in 2001. The chief during the war was Yankay Gbantoko Sesay II. He died in 1999.

Yankay Kargbo This family traces its legacy to the first recognized chief of Gombahun, Yankay Laserie.

Gbantoko Sesay This family traces its legacy to a warrior who fought alongside Yankay Laserie. A member of their family became chief after Yankay Laserie died.

Farama This family is the lineage of Farama, the founder of Mafonda chiefdom.

Dainkay This family emerged in Mafonda through marriage. Dainkay married a daughter of the Farama family. When the chief Bai Tombo died it was the turn of the daughter to take the throne. She requested it be passed to her husband instead.

Kanu This family traces its origins to the Kerembay family that initially established Makerembay.

2.6 Magbaiamba Nдорhahun

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two Loko chiefdoms, Nдорhahun and Magbaiamba.

The first chief of Magbaiamba to be recognized was Alimamy Baimbah, an indigene of the area, for whom there is no memory of migration. At the end of the Hut Tax War, Alimamy was summoned to Mahongbo Pondoni near Makeni, where he was told that he would be Paramount Chief. When Baimba returned to his people, he told them what the British had said, and they accepted his rule.

Nдорhahun was initially settled by Kawa Conteh, who gave the name to the place, meaning place of palm trees. There is no memory of Conteh having migrated from anywhere. His people are likely one of the few groups of Lokos able to repel the various invasions beginning in the 1600s. Kawa was also a herbalist, a skill which aided him in his defense of the chiefdom. He prepared herbal concoctions with which he washed the body of warriors to provide them with protection. One story describes Kawa's interaction with Keha Kengeambeh Kanu a warrior from Masongbo Pondoni. Keha met Kawa, and asked him to wash his body in preparation for

battle. Kawa agreed to wash Keha, but only if he would ally with Kawa to defend the land. They built an encampment on a hill called Bowoina, and from there eventually conquered the whole chiefdom.

The current chief is Kandeh Finor III, a Loko elected in 2006. The chief during the war, Kandeh Finor II, fled for less than a year in 2000, and died in 2003.

Gbaiamba The Gbaiamba ruling family is the legacy of Alimamy Baimbah, first chief of Magbaiamba.

Ngafor The Ngafor is the lineage of a nephew of Baiamba. When Baiamba died his son was too young to take the throne. His nephew assumed the throne instead.

Kanu Kagbere The three Kanu families are all in the lineage of Pa Keha, the ally of Pa Kawa. Keha's children formed three separate families to administer various parts of the chiefdom.

Kanu Pelewara This house is a Kanu family in the lineage of Keha.

Kanu Kabara This house is a Kanu family in the lineage of Keha.

2.7 Makari-Gbanti

Makari Gbanti is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Makari and Gbanti. The history of Makari goes back to the settlement of the region by Lokos. The village that is today called Makari used to be a Loko settlement called Makaneh. The Lokos were driven away however by a Limba warrior from Tonkolili district called Bai Makari Mayamba, who ruled the area for some time. Gbanti was a diverse settlement of Lokos, Limbas and Temne that was conquered by a Mandingo warrior by the name of Tarawallie. The first chief was a Mandingo named Bai N'tham, N'tham meaning conqueror in Temne.

The current chief is Masayalie N'Tham II, a descendant of N'tham who identifies as a Temne. He was elected in 1972. He fled to Freetown during the war, leaving in 1996 and returning in 2002.

Makari This house traces its lineage directly to Bai Makari Mayamba, and is headquartered in Makari town.

Keteh Keteh is a separate ruling house settled by a son of Makari who started an independent line. They reside in a village with the same name.

Masapri This is a third house that started from a grandson of Makari who also started an independent line.

Mankinehlaya This house was started by a great grandson of Makari who started an independent line.

Pan-lap This house is related to the Mandingos who entered Gbanti.

Sawalai This house was named for a son of N'tham who settled in the village of Sawalai.

Mabanta Mabanta is a village in Gbanti. A daughter of N'tham married a man named Koroma and gave birth to seven children. One of them, who settled at Mabanta village, was subsequently crowned chief, gaining the right through his mother's descent.

Robuya This house emerged after the death of N'tham, and is related by blood to the other families.

2.8 Paki Masabong

Paki Masabong is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Paki and Masabong. The first chief of Paki, a small section of the chiefdom, was a Limba warrior named Pa Gbabay, born in the town of Bumban within the chiefdom. Since the amalgamation the lineage of Gbabay has not been recognized as a ruling family, and is instead recognized as a lineage of section chiefs. Masabong, was much larger, and founded by a group of Kuranko warriors from Samaya Bendugu who had been hired as mercenaries during a war. At the end of their mission, they decided to return home. On their way, however, they passed through Mapaki. During their stay there, two of them went on a hunting trip and encountered a devil in a cave in the hills overlooking Mapaki. The devil gave them a ring and message to deliver to the people of Mapaki that only people with the name Conteh could wear the ring, which signified the power of the chieftaincy. There were seven families however with the name Conteh, and so each became a ruling family. Throughout the history of the chiefdom, they have alternated power, and all but two competed in the most recent election. The current chief is Mansa Paki Kobombor, a Limba elected in 2002. The chief during the war, Mansa Paki Mathankay, did not flee and died of natural causes in 1998.

Ruling Houses The seven Conteh houses are: Magbontho, Kabombor, Kebekrah, Mathonkay, Masabong Thoron, Masabong Pill, Makente and Mafonday.

2.9 Safroko Limba

The word Safroko is derived from a Biriwa language which means to find for oneself or to be independent. At the time of the declaration of the protectorate, Safroko Limba split from Briwa chiefdom, which at the time was ruled by Suluku from its headquarters in Bumba. The move to separate Safroko from Biriwa, to create an independent Limba chiefdom was initiated by an ambitious court messenger called Sorie Limba who was born in Masongbo village of the chiefdom.

The first chief of this chiefdom was Umaru Gbokay, a trader who had migrated from Guinea, he was elected in 1907. His family, the Dura family, has dominated the chiefdom since. The current chief is Alimamy Dura III, who was elected in 2009. The chief during the war, Alimamy Dura II, was arrested by the NPRC in 1993, and again by the government in 1996. Stayed in Freetown, ill until his death in 2007.

Dura The Dura line traces its origin to Umaru Gbokay, and has their headquarters in Binkolo, a trading town.

Koroma This ruling house, based in Mankoreh town, has been able to contest but has never been elected. It traces its origin to a man called white Koroma. Koroma was an interpreter for the colonial district commissioner during the election of Dura the first.

2.10 Sanda Loko

The chiefdom traces its origin to the Limba invasions of the region in the early 19th century. Lokos and the Temnes in the region united to oppose the Limbas, and have alternated power in the chiefdom ever since. It is common in this region for villages to have Temnes and Lokos living together, but each with their different headmen, who administer the villages cooperatively.

The chiefdom has five ruling families, each of which traces its origin to one of the warriors who defended the area against the Limba. As of June 2011, the seat was filled by a regent chief, Komrabai Sosoh Kamara, a Temne. The chief during the majority of the war was Samura Sanu III, a Loko who was elected in 1995 and died in 2004. He fled the chiefdom during the war and did not return until 2002.

Ruling Houses The five families are: Samura Ngenge Bangura, Samura Gbalia, Samura Fombo, Samura Kamara and Samura Sanu.

2.11 Sanda Tendaren

Sanda Tendaren is a chiefdom mixed between Loko and Temene. In the origin story, the indigenous Loko met peacefully with a group of Temne migrants from Rogbain. The group of Temne migrants was led by a man named Bai Quee. Two families in the chiefdom trace their origin to the Temne migrants, and one to the original Lokos.

In 1950, two very small Loko chiefdoms, Mafonda-Makerimbe and Gombahun, which were known at the time as the Batkanu Joint Native Administration, were annexed to Sanda Tendaren. The chiefs of the two chiefdoms became sub-chiefs to the Sanda Tendaren Paramount Chief Bai Lama. Their families have never been recognized as able to stand for the Sanda Tendaren chieftaincy. The current chief is Kandeh Wusu Sesay II, a Temne elected in 2002. The chief during the war, Alhaji Kandeh Wusu Sesay fled in 2000 and died outside of the chiefdom.

Munu This ruling house traces the lineage of Bai Lama Kondo Munu, the very first chief to be recognized by the British. The family is affiliated with Malama, Sendugu and Matebo villages.

Sanu This house, which has never won an election, is the lineage of Foday Telpheh Sanu, one of the early migrants from Rogbain. Rosiaka village is their headquarter.

Sesay This house is the lineage of Mora Alie, grandson of Bai Quee the early migrant. Their headquarters is at Rosana.

2.12 Sella Limba

This chiefdom traces its origin through the lineage of Harimeh, a warrior from Bafodia who drove the Susu from the area. He had four children, one of whom settled in Sella Limba and gave birth to three children, Balla Sameba, Seray Sameba and Maneki Sameba. Balla Sameba then had a son named Bambu, who had a son named Kwe. The chiefdom headquarters of Kamakwe, which is today a major town in the relatively remote region, is named for Kwe. The first man to be recognized was Alimamy Balaba, who was given a bronze token by the government in 1877. His relation to Kwe, and the generations that separated them, are unclear. Today there are four families, all of whom consider themselves to be “brothers”, related to Alimamy Balaba.

The chiefdom was the site of heavy fighting during the war between the RUF and the Nigerian ECOMOG forces. The current chief, Kanda Luseni III, was forced to flee to Guinea in 1996, shortly after his coronation. The chiefdom receives some mining rents currently from a Chinese gold mining operation.

Sabuya This ruling house traces the lineage of Alimamy Balaba.

Laminaya This house traces the lineage of Lamina Gbayie, a brother to Alimamy Baba.

Bockarieya This house traces the lineage of Bockarie Gbanika, a brother to Alimamy Baba.

Luseniya The house traces the lineage of Alimamy Luseni, another brother of Balaba.

2.13 Tambakha

Tambakha is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Samaia and Fintonia, which comprise respectively lower and upper Tambakha. Fintonia is referred to as the grassland, and Samaia, the spice land, and the families of the two chiefdoms maintain strong linkages preceding the amalgamation. There is not a clear distinction between which families are from which chiefdoms, as both were so heavily interlinked. Samaia chiefdom traces its history to the Mane invasions of the 16th century. The Manes that settled there after driving out the Limbas were headed by a warrior called Gbankude Sulaiman. The Fintonia chiefdom was founded by Fonor Brima, or Konkoro Dantili, as he was known on the battlefield, another warrior from Guinea who arrived sometime later. He settled in Khobata initially. Later he over ran a Mane settlement after building a set of encampments in the hills surrounding them. His brother Fonor Mamadu assisted him in this war. There were also successive attacks to drive Limbas from the chiefdom.

The amalgamation was initiated by paramount chief Kandeh Koleh of Samaia in the early 1950s, who handed the chiefdom to his elder brother Flosa Koleh, then chief of Fintonia. Today the chiefdom recognizes nine families, all of whom trace their origins to various warriors who attained prominence in both chiefdoms. The current chief is Alhaji Kandeh Koleh II, a Susu elected in 1968. He fled to Guinea for eight years in 1993 during the war.

Bramaia This house is the lineage of Bramaia, a warriors who fought alongside Fonor Brima to gain Fintonia from the Manes.

Samaia This house is the lineage of Samaia, another ally of Fonor Brima.

Somasoriya This family is the lineage of another ally of Fonor Brima.

Gbonglosoya This family is the lineage of another warrior who independently gained prominence in the western part of the chieftom, fighting against the Limbas.

Yannah This house is the lineage of a Susu warrior named Yanna, who acted as a body guard of Fonor Brima.

Fudiasoriya This house is the lineage of a female warrior named Fudia, she was also a body-guard Fonor Brima.

Mabuya Mabuya was an independent warrior in the area responsible for the maintenance of prisoners of war. Limba prisoners captured in war were often captured while holding special charms. Mambuya was a specialist in such charms, and was able to neutralize the charms, and then fuse them together for reuse by his allies.

Sirialaya This house descends from a prominent warrior, Sirialaya.

Yasin Modiya This house is the lineage of a prominent warrior Yasin Modiya.

Chapter 3

Bonthe District

3.1 Bendu Cha

Bendu Cha is an amalgamation of two small chiefdoms, Bendu and Cha, completed in 1950. Both chiefdoms have their origin in trade. Bendu traces its origin to a fisherman, from Kargord, near Shenge, in the Moyamba District. He established a small encampment in present day Bendu to smoke the fish he had caught on fishing trips. As his business selling the fish grew, a fish market and small town developed in the area. Bendu became the local destination for fish purchases. After Bendu's death, his younger brother Kpange was recognized as first chief of Bendu. Bendu was an important trading port in the 19th century, and the site of a small government outpost built from mud. The site was abandoned, however, in 1868 by then resident Captain Walshe, who moved across to Bonthe Island (Fyfe, 1962, pg. 369) Abraham (pg. 176) notes that in 1857, when the area at the time was under the purview of chief Thomas Steven Caulker, and contested between the French and British, a French squadron bombarded the town, as a punishment to a local Sherbro chief who had insulted a French trader. Cha chiefdom was established around the workshop of a mat maker named Sobalaa, originally from nearby Yawbeko chiefdom. Cha in Sherbro is the word for mat. A town was developed around his workshop and he became the first recognized chief of the area.

Despite the focus on two individuals in these origin stories, other local families, presumably indigenes who arrived before these traders, have established families in these areas. The current chief is Joseph Yeamie, a Sherbro elected in 2010. The chief during the war was Muana Kormoa, who fled in 1994 to Bonthe Island and later Freetown, where he stayed for the duration of the conflict.

Kpange This house is the lineage of Bendu and Kpange of Bendu chiefdom.

Karina This house traces the chief of the original chief of Taigbeh, a smaller settlement enclosed by the chiefdom.

Yeemie Yeemie also is the lineage of the same chief, and is headquartered in Sahun town. The present chief is from this lineage.

Muana Muana was an adviser to Bendu from Lugbu chiefdom in Bo district, and his family was given the right to rule during after his service to Bendu.

Bann This house is the lineage of a Sherbro chief that is included as part of Bendu Cha.

3.2 Bum

This chiefdom traces its origin to Pa Seibureh, a warrior and a fisherman, who migrated to the area from Moyamba. He was the first chief to be recognized by the government. The chiefdom is named for the Bum river.

The current chief is Alex Maada Kengbe Kainpumu II, a Sherbro elected in 2009. His predecessor, Madam Margret Seibureh IV, fled for the duration of the war.

Seibureh This family is the lineage of Pa Seibureh.

Nuni Pa Nuni was a farmer and associate of Seibureh. When Pa Seibureh died, his children were too young to take the throne, and so they agreed to hand power to Pa Nuni.

Kainpumu This house was traces its legacy to another local chief Kainpumu I and has their headquarters in Tormabum.

3.3 Dema

Like Bendu Cha, Dema chiefdom also traces its origin to trade. In 1842, a Krim fisherman named Ngabe, migrated from Kpukumu Krim in Pujehun to a local beach to dry his fish. He established a hut, and eventually brought a family. A town, now called Kamal, soon emerged as the settlement grew around the fish trade. D.C Beatie recognized Ngabe as the first paramount chief of the area. The current chief is Samuel G.K. Ngabe, a Sherbro elected in 1988. Dema was not attacked during the war, and he stayed there for the duration of the war.

Ngabe This house is the lineage of Ngabe.

Gamanga This house traces its origin to a Sherbro named Gamanga, who migrated to Kamal from Kargboro chiefdom in Moyamba District at the time of Ngabe. They are not related to the Ngabe house, but have alternated the chieftaincy with them.

3.4 Imperri

Imperri traces its origin to a warrior and elephant hunter from Kailahun named Solundo, who migrated to the area through Jong chiefdom, eventually camping one night near a large tree called an M'bellie. There he met a local Sherbro group, in particular members of the Tuyeme, Kunkpeyo and Biayeme linages who settled along the river. Solundo and his relatives settled by the M'bellie tree and Solundo married a Sherbro woman from Bonthe named Majisa. The oral historians remark that Imperri is simply a British mispronunciation of the word M'bellie, which is now the name of the headquarter town.

Solundo died around 1820, and his younger brother Kpanaboam was recognized as the first paramount chief of M'belli, taking the title Sokong. After Kpanaboam died in 1870, the seat was left vacant for 26 years. It was filled in 1896 by a leading Poro man (secret society leader) named Be Sherbro of Yoni who had in the years before developed great influence in the region. It is likely that this Be Sherbro of Yoni was Kpana Lewis, grandson of Kong Kuba, a leader of much of Sherbro territory. His coronation was photographed and documented by Travelling Commissioner Alldridge (Fyfe, pg. 556). Relations between the government and the chiefdom did not go smoothly, however. The area was a source of great disturbance during the Hut Tax rebellion (Abraham, 2003, pg. 192). In the following decade, there appears to have been a crackdown on various headmen in the chiefdom by the government.

In 1912, government records report that the chieftaincy was held by Alfred Kategbeh, who was educated and had worked as a police court interpreter in Freetown. It is unclear if Alfred Kategbeh is the same person as Be Sherbro. The 1912 Chiefdom records record that Kategbeh, “tries to do his best, but is handicapped by his people, who are cannibals. The chiefdom is center of Human Leopardism, and all the principal men have been hanged or deported”¹. What Human Leopardism entails is unclear. While Kategbeh is portrayed sympathetically by the chiefdom records, he is remembered in the chiefdom as a powerful Poro figure in his own right, who opposed the colonial government and saw them as invaders. The current chief is Madam Hawa Kpangboam III, a Mende elected in 1983. She fled during the war in 1995.

¹1912 Chiefdom Records, Northern Sherbro District Section

Kpanaboam This family is the lineage of Solundo, through his son.

Ketegbeh This family traces its history to Alfred Kategbeh, and claims no relation to Solundo.

3.5 Jong

Jong chiefdom takes its name from the Jong river, an important trading river in the 18th and 19th centuries. Its headquarters are in Mattru-Jong, which today remains an important market town. The leaders of the area had led various attacks on European traders in the area, but eventually signed a peace treaty in 1853. The chiefdom today has three families. Two of the families trace their history back to an influential warrior named Habib Sheriff, who is thought to have migrated from Kankan in present day Guinea during the early 19th century. Local historians recall that his family dominated the chieftaincy during the early part of the 20th century. There appears to have been a great deal of unrest in the region in the 1910s. The 1912 chiefdom records indicate that an “educated native” and Muslim named Bunting Williams, a descendent of Habib Sheriff, was in charge of the chiefdom at that time. He was “very unreliable and not to be trusted. The chiefdom is full of Cannibalism and Bunting Williams is supposed to be implicated.”

The Tuckers are also influential in the chiefdom. The Tuckers are a powerful family of Afro-Europeans who descended from John Tucker of the Royal African Company, who married into to a powerful Sherbro family in the late 17th century. The family was influential across Sherbro territory, and one Abraham Tucker was once speaker of the chiefdom.

The current chief is A.B. Sheriff, a Mende elected in 2002. The chiefdom during the war, Samuel Goba, fled in 1995 and stayed away for the duration of the war.

Sheriff This family is the lineage of Habib Sheriff.

Seri-Kamal This house is the lineage of Pa Seri-Kamal, who migrated from Moyamba district. He fought alongside with Pa Sheriff during his conquest of the area.

Tucker This family gained prominence through Abraham Tucker’s role as speaker. It also includes the lineage of Bockarie Goba, a carpenter who migrated from Bo district who worked alongside Tucker.

3.6 Kpanda Kemo

Kpanda Kemo is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Kpanda and Kemo. Both chiefdoms trace their origin to prominent farming families. The families had been in a protracted land dispute. A local Christian, Mr. Lebbie, who was affiliated with the mission at Senehun, suggested the dispute could be resolved by the amalgamation of the chiefdoms, which would allow both families access to more land. Upon the death of the Kpanda chief in 1948, the chiefdoms were amalgamated, and the chief of Kemo assumed power. They established a new headquarters at Monta, near the highway.

The current chief is Madam M.F. Gberi IV, a Mende elected in 2005. The chief during the war was Jonathan Lebbie. He fled to Moyamba and later to Freetown in 1995 as violence moved toward the area. The chiefdom today receives some mining rents from the Vimet Company, and other rents from an African Development Bank agricultural project.

Goberie This ruling house follows the lineage of Kipiswai, the farmer who was recognized as the first chief of Kemo.

Jabai This family follows the lineage of the farmer who was the first chief of Kpanda. They have their headquarters at Segehun.

Lebbie This house follows the lineage of Mr. Lebbie, who assisted in brokering peace between the two chiefdoms, and had been influential in the chiefdom for some time. Chiefdom reports from 1912 describe a Lebbie chief at that time with “a bad reputation” and note that he is related to the Tucker family.

3.7 Kwamebai Krim

Kwamebai Krim is an amalgamation of three Krim chiefdoms, Messie, Kwako and Baiama. Each of these chiefdoms traces their origin to fisherman who migrated from Guinea in the mid 19th Century. The original migrants who settled founded the settlements in the three chiefdoms were named Kongbana Messie, Kong Mahulor, and Buy Boam Penyikie, respectively. The sons of these migrants were recognized as the first Paramount Chiefs of the area in two treaties signed in 1883 with the colonial government.

The amalgamation of the three chiefdoms was suggested by the colonial government, and completed in the 1950s. The first chief of the amalgamated chiefdom was Madam Titi Messie,

of Messie chiefdom. The chiefdom was the site of some of the first violence during the war. The chief at the time, Ernest Mahulor, was decapitated by the RUF in 1991. The current chief is Thomas A.B. Tiffa, a Krim elected in 2006.

Messie This family is the lineage of Kongbana Messie, and has its headquarters in Hoyo town.

Penyikie This family traces the legacy of Buy Boam Penyikie, and has its headquarters in Baiama town.

Tiffa This family migrated to settle in Baiama with Buy Boam Penyikie. When Penyikie was detained for some time by the colonial government, someone from this line adopted the throne.

Mahulor This family follows the lineage of Kong Mahulor, who settled in Topan of Kwako chiefdom.

3.8 Nongoba Bullom

The people of Nongoba Bullom are both Bullom and Sherbro. The chiefdom gets its name from Nongoba, a bullom fisherman from Pujehun, who entered the area on a fishing expedition, moving through Kwamabai Krim. He settled in Gbap alongside the Sherbro and developed a prosperous fishing business. He made peace with many local people and had many wives.

Despite Nongoba's prominence, the chieftaincy however has been dominated by descendants of the Tucker family. The Tuckers are split between two ruling families, who trace their origin to two Tucker brothers who settled in the chiefdom in the late 19th century. The current chief is Jonathan Karba Tucker, a Sherbro elected in 2010. The chief during the war, Charlie Bawulle Tucker, fled in 1995 and did not return until 2002.

Karba Karba This house is the lineage of Karba Karba, who settled in Gbap in the 1880s, establishing himself as a section chief. He was famous for his ability to entertain. He was a brother to one Bawullie Tucker.

Bawulle This family is the lineage of Bawullie Tucker, a prosperous Sherbro trader who came from Bum chiefdom with his brother Karba Karba.

Bumpeh This house is not related to the Tuckers, but instead follows the line of a Sherbro family indigenous to the area. They have the right to stand, but have never been able to unseat the Tuckers in an election.

3.9 Sittia

Sittia was established by multiple traders who built businesses in its town of Yoni. It covers most of Bonthé Island. The three families, all related by marriage, trace their origins to these original traders. The land is arid, and quite dry. This was viewed as a desirable quality among traders who did not need to farm.

The current chief is Thomas K. Koromoa, a Sherbro elected in 2010. There was no paramount chief during the war, and the chieftom was overseen at the time by Samuel Mampeh, a regent chief.

Fai This family is the lineage of Fai, a Christian fisherman who arrived in the mid 1850s from Bendu.

Brandoh This house traces its lineage to a trader who migrated from Moyamba district and established Libieya village in the chieftom. The trader was also a messenger to the district commissioner.

Sangbo This family is the lineage of a trader who came from Bendu to establish himself at Yoni.

3.10 Sogbini

The two families of this chieftom, the Bios and the Bayos, are farming families thought to have migrated from Kailahun in the mid 18th century. The Bayo family has dominated the chieftaincy since the first Paramount Chief, but they were recently unseated by the Bio in 2010. The current chief is Steven Philip Bio, a Mende elected in 2010. Maada Bio, a member of this ruling family, ran unsuccessfully for President as the SLPP candidate in 2012.

Bio The Bio family has their headquarters at Tonsu.

Bayo The Bayo family has their headquarters at Tihun, a Mende word meaning “surrounded by water”.

3.11 Yawbeko

Yawbeko is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Yawma and Bekowa. Each chiefdom traces its history to two farmers of the same name who are thought to have migrated from Pujehun.

In the middle of the 20th century, the chiefdoms were administered as part of a “group native administration”, which included a committee of Paramount Chiefs from each of the chiefdoms. This administration included Kapanda and Kemo, now a separate chiefdom. When Kapanda and Kemo amalgamated in 1948, Yawma and Bekowa were left on their own, and were considered too small to raise enough of their own revenue. They were amalgamated in 1951 and James Yawma, former Paramount Chief of Yawma, became the Paramount Chief of the amalgamated chiefdom. It appears however that shortly thereafter the old chief of Bekowa Joe Jangba was able to reassert his control over the amalgamated chiefdom. In 1966, chiefdom councillors from old Yawma lodged a formal complaint with the government. They alleged that Jangba had become a client of the Tucker family in Ngongba Bullom, and with the help of the Court President James Tucker, both appropriated land unfairly from Yawama and compelled Yawma’s citizens to labor without pay on various construction projects in Gbap. In their complaint letter of April 12, 1966, they wrote “It is no [sic] communal labour when force has been put to bear on us. We have been tortured, molested, illegally fined and sent to the Chiefdom lock-up in case of resistance to work the road.”

These complaints were summarily rejected by the post-independence government however, attesting likely to the influence of the Tuckers in the provincial administration. In a 1966 letter from the District officer of Bonthe to the Provincial Secretary in Bo, the officer wrote “I confirm that I have severely warned the petitioners—and everyone present at that—to avoid the slightest repetition of such questionable conduct.” The petitioners subsequently signed an apology letter, begging obsequiously for forgiveness. The tension between these chiefdoms appears to have subsided, however, as today the ruling families of both Yawma and Bekowa consider themselves “brothers”.

The current chief is Alhaji Brima M. Jusu II, a Mende elected in 2004. He was preceded by Joe Jamba, who did not flee during the war.

Jusu This house is the lineage of Pa Yawma, the founder of Yawma chiefdom.

Bundeh This house is the lineage of Bundeh, who married a daughter of Pa Yawma.

Jangba This family is the lineage of Pa Bekowa, and takes its name today from Jangba, a chief in the mid 20th century.

Yanie This family is the lineage of Pa Yanie, a brother of Pa Bekowa.

Chapter 4

Kailahun District

4.1 Dia

Dia chiefdom traces its origin to Yaku Gbongo, a mercenary who had been hired in the mid 19th century by Nyagua, a Mende warrior who exerted influence over a region then called Kpanguma (Abraham, 2003, pg. 180). Gbongo supposedly had supernatural powers, and was able to disappear at will, a technique which was useful in battles. After Nyagua expanded his empire through a series of battles, he rewarded Gbongo in the late Gbongo came from Guma town in Vaahun, which is in present day Liberia. The chiefdom today has two families, each of which trace the lineage of one of two cousins descended from Gbongo.

The current chief of Dia is Joseph Bofelay Edwin Gaima VI, a Mende elected in 2005. The chief during the war, Thomas Davowa Gaima, fled in 1992 for Kenema and later Freetown, where he died in 2001.

Gaima Gbailo This house traces the lineage of Chief Gbailo, the eldest son of Gbongo. He inherited the chieftaincy from his father. This village has its headquarters in Mogbailo village.

Manyeh This house is the lineage of Manyeh, a first cousin of chief Gbailo. He had administered a separate part of the chiefdom on behalf of Gbongo.

4.2 Jawei

Jawei chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Yavai, who migrated to the area from Topowahun, in what is now Malema chiefdom in a war party that included other great warriors named Seigoweh, Made Babay, Dalagbata, Maada Borbor-waa Kallon, Gombu Clare. Yavai is remembered to have had supremely good eyesight, and the ability to notice enemies from a great

distance away. One day, after a long hike, he entered Jawei with his war party, and his wife who was in labor. They settled in for the night for her to give birth. Unfortunately, she died. They named the area Kambama, which means gravesite in Mende, and established a settlement there.

The current chief is Musa Gombu Clare, a Mende elected in 2003. The chiefdom was under a series of regent chiefs during the war.

Von Kallon This house is the lineage of Kallon. When Yavai died, he passed the chieftaincy on to Kallon. A chief of the Von Kallon line is mentioned in Abraham (2003, pg. 98) as having been involved in the events leading to the downfall of Ndawa, a great Mende warrior of the 19th century.

Gombu Clare This house traces its legacy to Gombu Clare. A member of this family succeeded the first Kallon as chief.

4.3 Kissi Kama

Kissi Kama was originally part of a larger Kissi chiefdom, which had its headquarters at Bendu. The Kissi people of the area are primarily farmers, and their name is attached to the “Kissi penny”, long thin bars of iron which were used as money before the introduction of Sterling. The kingdom was fragmented into what are today Kissi Kama, Kissi Teng and Kissi Tongi chiefdoms in something of a coup instigated by a local leader named Jopolo Tengbeh Bangbeyor. Frustrated with the leaders of the Kingdom, Bangbeyor approached the District Commissioner in Pendembu and requested that the chiefdoms be fragmented into three. This was eventually done, and he was crowned first paramount chief of Kissi Kama in 1919.

The current chief is Tamba Sidie Okeke Jabba IV, a Kissi elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Fayia Morlu Jabba III died in 1997 while in exile in Guinea.

Jabba This house traces the lineage of Morlu Jabba, a nephew of Bangbeyor, who was elected chief in 1922 after Bangbeyor’s death. They have their headquarter in Kongoma village.

Tengbeh This house traces the lineage of Bangbeyor himself, and has its headquarters in Dokosu village.

4.4 Kissi Teng

Kissi Teng, meaning middle in Kissi, was in the middle of the Kissi Kingdom administered from Bendu. It traces its own history further back, however, to a warrior from Kissidugu in Guinea named Kpain Tambilie, whose son Favissi Konor settled in the area. Kissi Teng was split from the Kissi Kingdom in 1919.

The current chief is Emmanuel Ganawa, a Kissi elected in 2010. The chief during the war, Jusu Ganawa, fled to Kissidugu in Guinea during the conflict.

Ganawa This house traces the lineage of Gibao Ganawa, son of Favissi Konor the warrior king. They have their headquarters in Konidu village.

Bandabla This ruling house traces the lineage of Saffa Bandabla, a section chief at the time of the partition who became the first recognized Paramount Chief. Their headquarters is Kpekeledu village.

4.5 Kissi Tongi

Kissi Tongi, with its headquarter town at Bendu, was the administrative center of original Kissi chiefdom. After the partition of the chiefdom, the heads of the various sections established themselves as ruling houses. The current chief is Sengu Nyuma, a Kissi elected in 1985. He fled during the war.

Damba This chiefdom is the lineage of Kongor Damba, who is believed to have migrated from Kissidugu in Guinea. From his village in Dambala he was recognized as the first Paramount Chief of Kissi Tongi after the partition in 1919.

Sahr Kalan This house is the lineage of Sahr Kalan, a leader who succeeded Kongor Damba on the throne. Their headquarters is Bendu town. The current chief is from this family.

Kai Tong This house is the lineage of another local leader, affiliated with the Kayelole section of the chiefdom.

Bai Bayon This house is the lineage of Masakalia Sato the leader of Bandasuma village and the Pokolie section of the chiefdom.

4.6 Kpeje Bongre

Kpeje Bongre is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Peje East and Bongre. The inhabitants of the chiefdom trace their history back, generally, to migrants from Kono district and what is present day Guinea. The first chief to be recognized as leader of Peje East was Bea Fofowai. The first chief to be recognized as leader of Bongre was a warrior named Chief Baion. All the families of the chiefdom trace their lineages to these warriors. The current chief is Charles L. Ngobeh, a Mende elected in 1976. He fled the chiefdom to Guinea from 1994 to 2002.

Fofowai This house is the lineage of Bea Fofowai.

Nyaweiyo This house is the lineage of the younger brother of Fofowai, who became chief after Fofowai's death.

Kpandeigua This family is the lineage of a nephew of Fofowai, Kpandengua who was born to a sister of Fofowai. He held the chieftaincy after Nyawfivo.

Ngobeh This family is the lineage of Ngobeh, another nephew of Fofowai.

Baion This family is the lineage of Baion, and has its headquarters in Mamboma village of the old Bongre chiefdom.

Korwah-Manah/Manah This family is the lineage of a nephew of Baion, who was the first recognized chief of Bongre.

Kapu This family also is the lineage of a nephew of Baion.

4.7 Kpeje West

Kpeje West traces its origin to a warrior Torloh, who original settled in what is today Kpeje Bongre. He decided to strike out on his own in search of more fertile land so he and his people left Kpeje Bongre to establish many villages with his people, including Tokpua, Kpahun, Konabeh, and finally to today's chiefdom headquarter Bunumbu. His family has maintained strong control of the chiefdom ever since.

The current chief is Haja Maitta Songua, a Mende elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Moigua Koroma fled in 1991 to Freetown, where he died of natural causes.

Mustapha This house is the lineage of Torloh. After Torloh's death, his son Kajone became chief, and after that, his son Sam Saffa Ngobeh became chief. Saffa was given the name Mustapha incorrectly by the British, and this is how the family's name came about.

4.8 Luawa

Luawa chiefdom traces its origin to king called Ngobeh Yea-govei, which means in Mende "Ngobeh the old one." Ngobeh is believed to have migrated from present day Liberia, and was a member of the Gbandi ethnic group. The Gbandis entered Sierra Leone quite long before the 19th century. The Lokos, who reside in the north of the country, are descendants of the Gbandis and today called "gbandimbe" by the Limba, who likely lived in the north before the Lokos arrived (Abraham, 2003, pg. 27) He established a village called Gbegele. He was succeeded by a Kissi warrior named Kailondo. Kailondo was a powerful warrior, for whom the town of Kailahun is named, who conquered much of the surrounding area and held control over it during the mid 19th century (Abraham, 2003, pg. 101). Kailondo is one of the few chiefs about whom colonial officials wrote in any detail. Alldridge, cited in Abraham (2003, pg. 85) wrote "Certainly he was one of the most intelligent chiefs I ever met; powerful and might man of war, but capable of understanding what was for the lasting interest of his people, and universally beloved for miles around." Alldrige goes on to describe his reputation for being merciful to his enemies. He had in particular various conflicts with Ndawa a great Mende warrior of the time. Stories of the origin of Luawa can be found in Clarke (1957) and Hollins (1929). Kailondo signed a treaty with the British in 1890, which recognized him as ruler of Luawa. Kailondo's authority collapsed shortly thereafter, as he suffered various attacks from different regions. Hollins (1929) and Clarke (1957) report that Kai died in what is today Guinea, but that his body was eventually moved to Mano Sewalu his birth place. Abraham (2003, pg. 104) reports differing accounts from other sources, and the interesting detail that twelve male slaves were sacrificed and buried with him.

The current chief is Mohamed Sama-Kailondo Banya, a Mende elected in 2003. The chief during the war Sama Gbalahun Kailondo Banya died of natural causes in 1996.

Kailondo Banya This house is the lineage of Kai Londo, and has its headquarters in Mofindor village.

Kpundeh This house is the lineage of Bokarie Kpundeh, who local historians recall to be the first Paramount Chief to be recognized some years after Kai Londo's death. They trace their

origin to the Gbandi of Liberia as well, and have their headquarters in Luawa Ngiehun. Colonial records from 1899 also list another chief, N'fa Bundor, who was reported to be a successor to Kailondo and fiercely loyal to the colonial government. Later, in 1912, Bokarie Kpundeh is listed as chief, and described as “formerly a bad character, but, having been banished to Koinadugu for three years, has now returned, and shows signs of being a very good chief,” a reference indeed to his loyalty to the government, which likely punished him for rebelliousness during N'fa Bundor's reign. It is unclear which lineage N'fa Bundor himself came from.

Ngobeh This ruling house is the lineage of NgobehYea-govei, who was believed to be one of the original Gbandi migrants. One of their line took the chieftaincy after Kpundeh's death in 1915. Their headquarters is Sakima village.

4.9 Malema

Malema traces its origins to a warrior, Ngevao, who came from Gumao town in what is today Liberia. Malema means “We are growing/developing” in Mende. He was a mercenary that had been hired by Nyawa. Nyawa was himself a great warrior who participated in the Kpaa-Mende expansion of Mende across eastern and southern Sierra Leone (Abraham, 2003, pg. 97). Nyawa is credited with founding Nyawa-Lenga. The story goes that Ngevao and Kpambu raised the area around Malema until there were only four villages left. After, they settled there, and began rebuilding the area's roads and settlements. Malema in Mende means “we are growing”, referring to this reconstruction period.

The current chief is Lamin Pamly Ngevao, a Mende elected in 2003. There was no chief from the war, as chief K.S.L. Kangoma died in 1991, and a regent held the position for the duration of the war.

Ngevao This house follows the lineage of the original warrior of its name. There is likely to have been some conflict between this house and the others in the early 20th century. Farma Ngevao is listed as “a fair chief” in the district records of 1912, “but unpopular with the resultant internal dissensions in the chiefdom.” Today, though there is little memory of this chief today, it is recalled that he was not friendly with the colonial government, whereas the other families were. The other families could have used relationships with the government to their advantage to challenge Ngevao politically.

Kpambu This house follows the lineage of Kpambu, a mercenary subordinate to Ngevao who was also given the right to rule.

Dwawo Nyemie This house follows the lineage of another subordinate of Ngevao.

4.10 Mandu

This chiefdom traces its origins to Mandu Falley, a warrior who entered the area from present day Liberia. His son, Kaba Sei was recognized as first chief of the chiefdom. At the end of the 19th century, Kaba Sei rose to prominence by fighting of an invasion by Ndawa, a great warrior from Segbwema (Abraham, 2003, p. 85).

There is only one family in the chiefdom today, the Coomers, who trace the lineage of Kaba Sei. This family's rule however was interfered with by President Siaka Stevens, who appointed a chief of, J.B. Bunduka, in an effort to consolidate political power in the area. Bunduka reigned until 1991 at the beginning of the war, when he was the first paramount chief to be murdered by the RUF which had sworn to free the country from APC oppression (Smith et. al., 2004). Undoubtedly the violence of the RUF against Bunduka was a rejection of outside interference in the chieftaincy. A regent chief held the seat after Bunduka's death until the election of the current chief Samuel Coomber, in 2003.

Coomber This house is the lineage of Mandu Falley and his son Kaba Sei.

4.11 N'jaluhun

N'jaluhun, which has its center in Segbwema, and important town on the road to Kailahun from Kenema, traces its origin to a warrior and proficient trap setter named Nepoh who migrated from Banda-juma Kovay Gbuami across the Moa river. Banda-juma in Mende means "where pots are manufactured", a reference to an early industry that developed there. He came to present day Segbwema in search of plants from which he could produce rope to make his traps to catch animals. He found a large quantity of the plants on a hill called Damba-yeima, and established himself there, eventually developing a prosperous farm. The name of the hill references the crocodiles in the near by river. He married, and his wife became pregnant. She gave birth at the peak of the hungry season to a hideously ugly child, who she named Sei. Nepoh was lucky however, as his crop that year had produced a tremendous yield much earlier than the other farmers. He told the people of the village that they could take his rice, but in exchange they

must dance to entertain his ugly child, who could never hope to marry because of his ugly face. The people of the chiefdom obliged. The name Segbwema means “I came from seeing Sei”, referring to this first trip of the villagers to dance for the child. The name N’jaluhun, which refers to the whole chiefdom means “between rivers”, as the chiefdom is bordered by rivers. Though other families are recognized in the chiefdom, the chiefdom has been led by descendants of Nepoh since the 19th century.

The current chief is James Serry Coker Njajua IV, a Mende elected in 2010. The chief during the war D.K. Jimmi N’jajua fled to Freetown, where he died in 1995.

N’jajua This house follows the lineage of Nepoh. Nepoh had two sons after Sei, who died early. This house follows the lineage of one of Sei’s younger brothers, Kangoi Jimmi N’jajua, who became prominent and ruled the chiefdom after Nepoh’s death.

Bawoh This house follows the lineage of Nepoh’s third son Nepoh Farma Bawoh. Farma Bawoh had a son of the same name who was the first chief to be given the staff of the chieftaincy by the British.

Gbetuwa This house follows the lineage of a sub-chief of Nepoh from Kambama village. Due to his diligence as a sub-chief Nepoh awarded him the right to stand for chief.

Samawova This house follows the lineage of a warrior named Samawova who helped Nepoh defend the area.

Gbongboto This ruling house was given the right to rule when Jan chiefdom was split and annexed to N’Jaluhun in the 20th century. Two sections, Fallay and Jongoh, joined N’Jaluhun. The family though has never been able to win an election.

4.12 Penguia

This chiefdom affiliates itself with the Wonde kingdom in present day Guinea. Penguia is a Kissi word meaning borderland, referring to the split of the Wonde kingdom, which today has 90% of its territory still in Guinea. The exact date that this territory was split is uncertain, but it likely occurred during the rush of treaties signed in the 1890s, as both France and Britain scrambled for territory in the area. The settlements in the area trace their history to Kalublangoi and Jimmy Fokloh, who moved from Bombeh village in present day Guinea to settle in Korwatadu village in today’s Penguia.

The current chief is Sheku Samuel Kalublangoi, a Kono elected in 2009. The chief during the war, Sahr Francis Kabba Sei II, did not flee and instead acted as a host to other chiefs. He died in 2007.

Panda This house is the lineage of Korwa, who was a son of either Kalublangoi or Jimmy Fokloh. Korwa signed the original treaty with the British in 1896, and his elder sister's son began the Panda line.

Mongor Kalublangoi This house is the lineage of another nephew of Korwa. On Korwa's death bed he pronounced that the chieftom must be led by Mongor Kalublangoi after Panda. It was this family that moved the chieftom headquarters from Bombeh to Sandalu, where it is today

Duveh This family has the right to run in elections, but has never been elected. Duveh was a chief advisor to Panda who participated in the signing of the treaties. He fell into disrepute however, after being banished from the chieftom by Mongor Kalublangoi for impersonating the chief.

4.13 Upper Bambara

Upper Bambara has its headquarters in Pendembu. Pendembu today is a small town, with only a little small-scale cocoa trading, but during the colonial period it was an important trading town at the end of the railway line, which reached there in 1907. Today one can still see the ruins of the government warehouse that was used to store produce before shipment. It was also the site of a District Commissioner's office.

The town of Pendembu, which was the birthplace of post-war SLPP president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, traces its origin to a hunter named Baa Gambia. The place, which is still surrounded by a dense forest, and Baa used to hunt there. It was his custom to place whatever he killed under a Kpende tree, which is how the town got its name, Kpendembu, or Pendembu, as pronounced by the British. Baa Gambia had two sons, Koihina, which means strong leopard in Mende, and Ndimor, who became chiefs of the town after him. There is no record of their contact with the colonial officials. A later chief named Momoh Babawo was the first to sign a treaty with the colonial government. It is unclear how much time passed between Baa Gambia's founding of the site and Momoh Babawo's reign.

The current chief is Mohamed Jajua Kutubu, a Mende elected in 1975. He fled briefly during the war.

Jajuwa This family traces its the lineage of Ndimor, first son of Baa Gambia.

Kutubu This ruling family traces its lineage to Koi-hina, the second son of Baa Gambia.

Gondor This family is the lineage of Foray Sinnoh, a close advisor to Baa Gambia, who became chief after Momoh Babawo.

Babawo This chief is the lineage of Momoh Babawo, who is recognized as having been the only leader of the area with the courage to face the British and sign a treaty.

4.14 Yawei

Yawei chiefdom traces its origins to a group of Mende warriors who migrated from present day Kono district to settle in the chiefdom during the early 19th century. Yah was the name of the leader of these warriors, Yawei meaning kingdom of Yah in Mende. He apportioned the chiefdom to his lieutenant chiefs, each of whom has a ruling family today. The headquarters of the chiefdom, Bandajuma, was an important police garrison during the colonial period.

The current chief is Brima Keketeh II, a Mende elected in 2002. There was no chief during the war, as the previous chief John Baylor Kuyembeh, had died in 1987 and had not been replaced at the start of the conflict.

Jusu Sembeh This house is the lineage of a warrior named Gunu, who arrived with Yah.

Gouvaya Gbondo This house is the lineage of Gouvaya Gbondo, a descendant of the warriors who arrived with Yah. He succeeded Gunu on the throne.

Keketeh This house is the lineage of Gbato Mawefei, a descendant of the warriors who arrived with Yah. with Yah. Gbato succeeded Gouvaya Gbondo on the throne.

Kuyembeh This house gained legitimacy through marriage to the Gunu house. Their family migrated from another town in Kono called Tugbebu. Their forebearer, Kuyembeh had comitted murder and sought refuge in Yawei. His son, Amara, came looking for him, and befriended Jusu Sembeh, the leader of the Gunu house at the time, because they were of the same age. Amara

persuaded Sembeh to allow them to stay in the area, and was himself married to Sembeh's sister, Adama. The son of Adama, Momoh Kuyembeh became the first paramount chief from this family in 1974.

Chapter 5

Kambia District

5.1 Bramaia

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Bramaia and Khonimakha. Bramaia traces its origin to a hunter named Farranlai, who entered the area from present day Guinea on a hunting trip. Looking to rest, he discovered a tree that provided him with shade, and chose to settle there. The tree was called Kukuna in the Susu language, and a village emerged around it, which eventually became the chiefdom headquarter of Braingoh. Khonimakha chiefdom traces its history to two warriors named Kabathura and Mankeh Ganyi, who migrated from Laifury in present day Guinea. They captured many villages from the Limbas and established a chiefdom together.

The current chief is Kandeh Kabba Sedu I, a Limba elected in 2009. The chief during the war, Kandeh Sedu Dumbuya fled the chiefdom and died of natural causes in Freetown in 2001.

Bramaia This house is the lineage of Farranlai's eldest son Wolie Brima. He became chief after his father's death.

Maligia This house is the lineage of Wolie Magligie, the second son of Farranlai.

Kabathra This house is the lineage of Kabathura, one of the original settlers in the area.

Dabatamani This house is the lineage of the Kamaras, another house that migrated from present day Guinea at the time of Kabathura. They have linkages to another house in Tambakah chiefdom in Bombali district.

Ganyi This house is the lineage of Mankeh Ganyi.

5.2 Gbinleh Dixon

Gbinleh Dixon is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Gbinleh and Dixon, completed in 1951. At the time the amalgamation was considered unusual as Gbinleh was predominantly Susu and Dixon predominantly Temne, and amalgamations were not usually suggested by the government for chiefdoms with different majorities of ethnic groups. The Susu gained their language from the larger Mane language group, which shared much culturally with the Temnes after the Mane expansion into Sierra Leone in the sixteenth century.

Gbinleh traces its history from Mori Brima, who settled the area with his family who came from Mali. Legend has it that Mori Brima was very powerful in Mali, with authority over some area. His family members were educated lawyers and doctors. There was unrest under his rule, however, and a revolt was led against him by a man named Sumanguru Kante. Mori Brima and his family were driven out of Mali, and fought their way down through Guniea, passing through Forecariea. It is difficult to date Mori Brima's travels, but it is likely that he entered the area as part of the Mande expansion, which occurred between 1540 and 1550, as the Malian empire had begun its decline (Wylie, 1977, pg. 15). Upon reaching Gbinleh, Mori Bama left his younger brother Saidu Bankay Kamara in charge and continued fighting to expand his influence in what is today Port Loko district. Mori was able to achieve some success, apparently ruling Port Loko for some time as Bai Porto before dying at Maseba. Sometime later at the beginning of the colonial period, a descendent Saidu Bankay had five sons, who established the five families of Gbinleh. Dixon chiefdom traces its origin to Alimamy Fabeh, a Temne, who was present at the time of first contact with the British. There is a long history though of relations between the people of Dixon and the people of Gbinleh, going back to the Mane invasion. It is interesting to point out that in Dixon there is a strict rotation agreement between families for who shall stand as their chieftaincy's candidate in the election for chief of the amalgamated chieftaincy.

The current chief is Alimamy Kondo Balla Konko Dioko, a Temne elected in 2009. The chief during the war Kande Lansana fled the chiefdom briefly in 1999, returning in 2001.

Brimayah This house traces its lineage to Lamina Bankay, one of the five sons who make up the five families of Gbinleh. He was the first chief to sign a treaty with the British.

Durathmami This house traces their lineage to another of the five sons, who got their name from the village of the son's mother.

Kotakebanaya This name comes from another of the five sons, and means “man who wears big clothes”, an attribute of the house’s founder.

Ramatalaya This house is the lineage of another of the five sons, and takes the name of his mother.

Yeli Kabaya This house is the lineage of the fifth son of the five. It’s name is a reference to the son’s habit of calling on his subjects to dance for him.

Fabbeh This house is the lineage of Alimamy Fabeh, the first chief to sign a treaty with the British at Batkanu.

Firaya As part of a deal with the other leaders of the chiefdom Alimami Fabbeh had agreed to hand over the chieftaincy after his death to the Rotifunk area in the chiefdom. Upon Fabbeh’s death, however, Rotifunk also owed a great financial debt to Sheka Kamara, brother of Alimami Fabbeh, who lived in Masimbo village. As a way to settle the debt, Rotifunk decided to give their right to the throne instead to the children of Sheka, who comprised two families settling in Fodaya: Firaya and Soriya. Firaya owned the largest share of Rotifunk’s debt, and so their candidate Alimamy Modu was given the crown first. The Firaya family is the lineage of Modu.

Soriya This family is the lineage of Alimamy Amara, who was given the crown for the Soriya family after Modu’s death, as per the terms of the debt repayment agreement.

Saniyah After Amara’s death, it was felt that right to the chieftaincy returned to the Fabbeh house. At this time, however, there was no suitable heir available and so the extended family had to search for a candidate. They selected Yeli Mordu, of the Saniyah house. His grandmother had been a daughter of Pa. Ansumana who briefly succeeded Fabbeh after his death, but was never crowned. Through this lineage, the Saniyah house has the right to the throne.

5.3 Mambolo

Mambolo chiefdom traces its history to a woman named Borkia who migrated from Guinea. She is likely to have come as part of the Mane invasions from Guinea in the mid 16th century. The name “Mambolo” came from a Bullom word meaning deep hole, which refers to the settlement’s

location between the Little and Great Scarcies rivers. Some time thereafter, however, her settlement was conquered by a group of Bullom warriors. The lineages of five of these warriors comprise the ruling houses of the chiefdom.

The current chief is Bai Sherbora Somanoh Kapen III, a Susu elected in 1989. He fled the chiefdom from 1995 to 2002.

Somanoh The first recognized chief of the chiefdom came from this house, Bai Sherbora Somanoh.

Lion This house follows the lineage of another warrior, and a member of this house became chief after the death of Somanoh. The name Lion comes from the forebearer's reputation for leonine bravery during the war.

Moribaya This house is the lineage of another of the original Bullom warriors.

Jum Harry This house is the lineage of another of the original Bullom warriors.

Woni Koberr This house is the lineage of another of the original Bullom warriors.

5.4 Magbema

Magbema traces its history to a Temne leader named Pa Keitas who is remembered to have united the leaders of the region in a fight against the Portuguese. He himself is thought to have migrated from Tonkolili. It is difficult to tell when this battle actually occurred. Sierra Leone was first sighted by Europeans on a Portuguese expedition in 1446 commanded by Alvaro Fernandes, but it is likely that contact with Magbema itself took place somewhat later. The Portuguese only established a fort there in 1482, but it was later demolished as attention turned to India and Brazil. It was only in the 1500s that Portuguese trade began to develop in earnest (Kup, 1962, pg. 13).

As of June 2011, the chiefdom was overseen by a regent chief, Alimamy Turay. The previous chief, Bai Farama Tas was a Temne elected in 1979. He died in 2010. The chief fled multiple times during the war.

Bombeh This house follows the lineage of Pa. Bombeh, a warrior and grandson of Pa Keitas.

Faramatholie This house follows the lineage of Pa Faramatholie, who joined Pa Keitas in the fight against the Portuguese.

Faramatame This house follows the lineage of Pa Faramatame, another warrior who helped defend against the Portuguese.

Bubu N’gbak This house is the lineage of Pa. Bubu N’gbak, who also helped defend against the Portuguese.

Wonfet This house also traces its history to another family that helped to defend against the Portuguese. This family has some filial relation to Bubu N’gbak.

5.5 Masungbala

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of three chiefdoms, Masungbala, Munu and Tala. All were amalgamated after the deaths of the chief of Munu in 1948 and the chief of Tala in 1949. Alimami Lahai III of Masungbala then took charge. All previously however had been a single chiefdom under Masungbala, which was spilt due to internal dissent early in the 20th century. Masungbala traces its history to Kalu Kepre, a Limba warrior who had fought his way into the area from Tonko Limba and established himself as chief. The leader of the chiefdom at the end of twentieth century was Alimamy Lai. Lai was close friends with Bai Bureh, and participated in the Hut Tax rebellion. Lai was captured and sent to the gold coast for some time, after this time, his sub-chiefs at Munu and Tala negotiated with the British to establish their own chiefdoms. At the time, Munu was led by Bai Keifa Bonkonoh. He established a headquarter at Bamoi. Tala, which in Temne means “palm” was broken off under the leadership of Bai Nani Kakeshe. Though the chiefdom was successfully separated, Kakeshe died before he could take the throne.

The current chief is Alimamy Lai V, a Temne elected in 2010. The chief during the war was Alimamy Lai IV, who fled the chiefdom during the conflict.

Alimamy Lai This house is the lineage of Alimamy Lai, the leader of Masungbala at the time of the hut tax rebellion.

Kalu Kepre This house is the lineage of Kalu Kepre, the original founder of the chiefdom.

Satalai This family traces the legacy of the grandson of Kalu Kepre. Kalu Kepre's daughter was called Sata. When it was time for her to become chief, she instead passed the crown on to her son, Alimamy Satai.

Keifa Bonkonoh This house is the lineage of Bai Keifa Bonkonoh, who originally led the separation of Munu. He traced his lineage back to a settler who originally migrated to the place from Sanda.

Keifa Sankoh This house is the lineage of Keifa Sankoh, a cousin of Bonkonoh who played an important role in the breakaway of Munu.

Nani Yami This ruling house is the lineage of a younger brother of Kakeshe, who led the breakaway of Tala.

Nani Krugba This house is the lineage of Bai Nani Krugba, a younger brother of Kakeshe, who became the second paramount chief of Tala.

Nomi Kabath This house is the lineage of a younger brother of Kakeshe, who became the third paramount chief of Tala.

5.6 Samu

Samu chiefdom, which borders Guinea today, traces its origin to a Susu warrior named Sorie Thamro. He received his name Thamro from the Temne, with whom he often fought. The name means someone who is stubborn and difficult to defeat. Sorie Thamro had seven sons, two of which were instrumental in the construction of the chiefdom. As the chiefdom overlaps the border of Guinea and Sierra Leone, it was a site of a border dispute between the French and British. One of the sons Ansumana Gbenti spoke French and negotiated on behalf of his people. Initially, the French suggested that Ansumana be made king, but this resulted in some conflict among the brothers, as the eldest brother Neyemi, felt entitled to such a position. In the end, the dispute was resolved by a border agreement between the colonial powers. Ansumana would become chief on the Guinea side, and Neyemi would be chief on the Sierra Leone side. Each was given a cap by the colonial authorities, their new symbol of authority.

The current chief is Sherbora Yek II, who identifies as both Sherbro and Susu, and was elected in 2003. The office of paramount chief was held by a regent chief, and there was no sitting chief at the start of the war.

Yek This house is the lineage of Neyemi, who was the first recognized chief of Samu, and had a son named Sherbora Yek. It is said that he is also linked to Sherbora Sheba of Kaffu Bullom, who once had authority over Samu.

Kabba Sorie This house traces the legacy of Bai Sherbora Kabba Sorie, the younger brother of Sherbora Yek who succeeded him on the throne. The chieftaincy was synched apparently when a fortune teller named Boma Pa Lamina foretold the death of Yek and forecasted that his younger brother would take the throne.

Tonkoya This ruling house attained their legitimacy through marriage, to a longer sister of Sherbora Yek named Mayeni. When Kabba Sorie died, the next eldest child in the Yek family was Mayeni, and so she passed the throne to her husband, Bai Sherbora Tonko.

Yaumkella This house attained their legitimacy through maternal lineage. Yaumkella was the grandson of Kabba Sorie in a maternal line. He assisted the chief during a boundary dispute with Gbinleh Dixon, and for his services was recognized as a potential candidate for the throne.

5.7 Tonko Limba

Tonko Limba traces its history to a Limba warrior called Musa Krofay, who migrated from Falaba in present day Koinadugu district. He had many great battles, the largest of which was against a Susu warrior named Gboloie, who had attacked his territory. After successfully defending against Gboloie's attacks, Krofay gave himself the title Mansa of Tonko Limba, meaning king in Limba. He settled first at Kathonko Kayagoro, and later at Thaoya, where he married and raised children.

This chiefdom is notable for the role played by secret societies in its elections. Though in the region there is no tradition of female paramount chiefs, female secret societies play an important role in the election, and have even the power to decide the outcome. Before the election, heads of the female secret society enter a shrine. After many ceremonies, ancestral spirits whisper into their ears who is the most suitable of the candidates for chief. After the name had been whispered into the women's ears, tribal authority members proceed to the ballots, but the candidate suggested by the society will surely be the one elected.

The current chief is Bombo Lahai Keifa Foro III, a Limba elected in 2011. The paramount chief during the war, Alimamy Bombo Lahai Kargbo II, was murdered by AFRC forces in his house in 1999.

Mabanda This house is the lineage of Kela Maria, the second son to Mansa Krofay. Kela Maria became chief of Tonko Limba after his fathers death, and moved his headquarters to the village of Mabanda, hence the name of the family.

Bubuya This house is the lineage of Lahai Bombo, a grandson of Krofay and Kela Maria's nephew. Kela Maria raised Bombo from childhood. When Kela Maria grew old, warriors attacked their their chiefdom, and Lahai Bombo Lahai rose to defend it, hiring Koranko mercenaries to help his warriors. For his bravery in the defense, Maria bestowed upon his family the right to the throne.

Madina This family traces the legacy of Bombo Lahai Kelfa Faro, another grandson of Mansa Krofay. He succeeded Lahai Bombo and settled at Madina, giving the house its name.

Kagbonko This house is the lineage of Alimamy Bombo Lahai Konko Gbaku, another grandson of Krofay, who was the first person to be given the staff of the chieftaincy by the colonial officials. He succeeded Kelfa Faro, and established a headquarters at Kagbonko village. Village historians report that a statue was built of his likeness in Freetown at some time, but this cannot be verified.

Chapter 6

Kenema District

6.1 Dama

This chiefdom, set along the Moa river, traces its history to the Fowai family, a group of farmers who came from present day Liberia, through Kailahun to eventually settle at Kpandembu. A descendent of the family was Hakawa, who together with other members of the Fowai family, such as Durroh Fowai, Momoh Fowai and Fasei Fowai, signed the treaty with the travelling commissioner Alldridge in 1890 and was recognized as the first paramount chief.

It is notable that Dalby (1963) identified an extinct language in Dama chiefdom, similar to Kono or Vai, which links the population of the area to a Kono and Vai migration into the area during the 15th century. Dama was also site of the death of Ndawa, the great warrior who had struggled against Kailondo of Luawa, and whose mother was in fact from Jorhun in Dama chiefdom (Abraham, pg. 86, 2003).

The current chief is Alhaji Sandy Momoh Fowai, a Mende elected in 2002. The chief during the war, Vandy Dassama, was murdered by the RUF in 1997.

Hakawa This is the lineage of Hakawa, the first signatory of a treaty with the British. He traced his lineage to the original Fowai family through a maternal line.

Fowai This family, the paternal descendants of Fowai, took the chieftaincy after Hakawa.

Dassama This is another family descended from the Fowais through marriage. A Fowai daughter married to a man named Dassama.

Dakowa This family also gained their right to stand through marriage, as a Fowai married a member of its family.

6.2 Dodo

Dodo chiefdom traces its origins to warriors from Kono, Faba and Fakoi, who migrated to the area, however today the inhabitants downplay this origin as they consider themselves Mendes. Faba settled at Kateh section and Fakoi at Gorama section. It is believed that Faba was the father with a Kono woman of Quee N'yagua, the great warrior who conquered much of the area in the late 19th century and had his headquarters in Panguma town, of present day Lower Bambara chiefdom. Dodo and Lower Bambara were thus originally part of a single chiefdom that was broken up after N'yagua's death.

The current chief is Foday Kpakra Faba VI, a Mende elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Bucknor Gebai, died of ill health in 1995, and the office was held by regent chiefs until the election in 2003.

Gegbai This house traces its origin to Fakena, the son of Fakoi, and has its headquarters in Kpakuyama village.

Kpakra Kpakra traces its lineage to Faba. They have their headquarters at Kateh village. The family today still maintains relations with N'yagua's family in the nearby chiefdom, which is in their lineage.

6.3 Gaura

Gaura traces its history to a hunter from present day Guinea named Mendegular. He is thought to have settled in the area after on a hunting trip he came upon a forested place with many fresh potatoes. In that place he established the town of Joru, which means "among the potatoes" in Mende. King Mendegla was alive in 1887, when Abraham (2003, pg. 99) reports, he was engaged in a conflict with the warrior Ndawa. While others in the region were still fighting with the British, Mendegla had apparently sent his sword to governor Rowe some time before then, as a symbol of peace with the British. A brother of Mendegular, Bahcoy, was the first signatory to the treaty with the British in 1890. At that time, the region was called Kokoru, after his village.

The current chief is Alhaji Bia Gbatakaka IV, a Mende elected in the early 1960s. He fled to Kenema during the war from 1992 to 2001.

Mendegular This family traces the line of Mendegular, who with their related family of Bahcoy signed the first treaty with the colonial government in 1890.

Bahcoy Bahcoy was the first chief to be recognized, and his family traces an independent line although he was himself related to the founder, Mendegular.

Gbatekaka It is believed that Gbatekaka was also a warrior that assisted Mendegular. Though he is remembered today as having been one of the signatories of the treaty, reports cited in Abraham (2003, pg. 74) suggest that he had been dead then for a century. It is more likely that his family members were signatories.

Kallon The Kallon family is related to the Mendegular family by the marriage of a daughter.

Bunduka This family claims maternal relation to the Bahcoy family, and was authorized to contest a 1964 election, though their legitimacy has been disputed recently.

6.4 Gorama Mende

Gorama Mende traces its origins to a Mende warrior named Gombu Kpai, who fought bravely to capture the area, and established his first settlement at Mokuually village in what is now Tungie section. In the early 20th century, Gorama Mende was part of the same chiefdom as Wandor.

The current chief is Haja Mariama Gassama Kanja, a Mende elected in 2002. The chief at the beginning of the war, Lansana Kanja, died early in 1993, and the office was held by a regent, who fled for the duration of the conflict.

Kanja This house is the lineage of Gombu Kpai's younger brother, who succeeded Kpai and was the first chief to be recognized by the British.

Baio This house is the lineage of another brother of Gombu Kpai, Baio, whose son became chief.

6.5 Kandu Leppiama

Kandu Leppiama is an amalgamation of two small chiefdoms, Kandu and Leppiama. Leppiama traces its origins to two warriors named Gbench and Gballay Kambaima. They signed an original treaty with the British, and passed away shortly thereafter. Kando chiefdom traces its history to a warrior named Mbollom, who is believed to have migrated from the Kissi region of Kailahun. This chiefdom is notable in that a Kuranko village in the chiefdom still identifies itself with a history of slavery, tracing its origin back to a Kuranko slave owned by Mbollom.

The current chief is Theresa Vibbi, a Mende elected in 1969. She fled the chiefdom briefly from 1997 to 1999.

Vibbi This house traces its origin to a leader of Kanga section named Kpandewa Vibbi.

Gbemeh This house is the lineage of Gbemh, a warrior who established Gbandor town in Sonnie section.

Gbondor This house traces the origins of Gballay Kambaima, a founder of Leppiama who is thought to have migrated from Foindu in present day Baoma chiefdom. This family had a chief named Bundu listed in 1912 colonial records as “very rich, rather fiery and hot tempered”. Their headquarters is at Jenneh.

Nengeh This ruling house is the lineage of Mabajia, a powerful woman chief is thought to have migrated from Bagbo chiefdom in Bo district. Today they maintain close relations with families in Baoma chiefdom.

Mbollom This ruling house is the lineage of Mbollom, an original settler. They are believed to be related to the Vibbi house.

6.6 Koya

Koya chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Menima Kpengba. Kpengba was an ethnic Gola, who is believed to have migrated from present day Liberia. It is difficult to date Kpengba’s arrival, as there is little historical record of the Golas in Sierra Leone, except from some mention of them by Portuguese travelers in the early 16th century. Kup (1962, p. 127) writes, citing these sources, that “it is likely [...] the Golas have lived for a very long time in small numbers amongst the creeks which intersect the thick forest of the south.”

The Komai and Sellu families both trace their lineages to the Gola people that migrated with Kpengba, and are affiliated with different towns in the chiefdom, Gbogbuabu and Bongor, respectively. The first paramount chief in Koya to be recognized by the colonial government was Joseh, of the Komai family, who signed a treaty at Gbogbuabu with one Travelling Commissioner Alldridge in 1890. Cordial relations between the Government and Joseh did not continue however. Joseh joined the rebellion in 1898 against the declaration of the Protectorate, and in retaliation Captain Carr, who led opposition to the rebellion in the area, burned Gbogbuabu to

the ground. Joseh was deposed and imprisoned for a year. Joseh returned to office, however, in 1899, at the age of “35 to 40”, and was ultimately succeeded by his younger brother Kormeh, by unanimous vote of 32 tribal authorities in 1907.¹

After Kormeh’s death in 1920, Sellu Ngombu, of the Sellu family, held the chieftaincy. A 1920 letter to Freetown from the District Commissioner² states that after Kormeh’s death a regent chief was elected immediately “so that delay in finding a successor, which has resulted in so much dissension in the neighboring Chiefdom (Tunkia), might not cause trouble here.” It is common practice for regent or “caretaker” chiefs not from ruling families to hold office between chieftaincy elections. Sellu Ngombu was this same caretaker.

The current chief is Almany Mustapha Kanneh V, a Mende elected in 2009. The chief during the war, Mustapha Mohamed Kanneh fled in 1991, and died outside of the chiefdom in 2000.

Kanneh This family has dominated the chiefdom since Kormeh. Kormeh’s death and Sellu Ngombu’s weakness left a vacuum that was filled by a local family without links to the chiefdom’s original forbearers. They maintain connections with Dama chiefdom.

Komai This house is the lineage of Joseh and Kormeh.

Sellu This house is the lineage of Sellu Ngombu.

6.7 Langurma

Langurma traces its history to a warrior named Bimbi Taleh, and is named for the river on which Taleh fought many battles. The warrior later established the town of Yebema, which is today a headquarter town of the chiefdom.

The current chief is Prince Mambu Pawa, a Mende elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Albert Mambu Pawa, fled the war, as his residence and offices were razed completely.

Bimbi Taleh This house is the lineage of Bimbi Taleh, who was recognized as first chief after being given a medal by the British. Its headquarter is at Yebema.

Pawa This house traces its lineage to warrior who fought alongside Bimbi Taleh named Pawa.

¹Provincial Secretary’s Office, Kenema: Kenema District Decree Book

²Provincial Secretary’s Office, Kenema: Kenema District Decree Book

6.8 Lower Bambara

This chiefdom traces its history from a great warrior of the late 19th century named N'yagua, who ruled the chiefdom from his headquarters in Panguma. N'yagua's father was Faba, the founder of Dodo chiefdom. In 1896, colonial reports note that N'yagua was a great ally of the colonial government, who had a district commissioner stationed in Panguma town. DC Birch, who established a barracks there wrote, "I built barracks at Panguma Town. N'yagaua supplied upwards of 1000 men, the work took some months and N'yagua appeared to take the greatest interest in the erection of these barracks and rendered every assistance. The barracks were built voluntarily and without any promise of reward, though I informed him that if satisfied I would recommend him to the governor." Despite this recommendation, however, the government turned quickly on N'yagua. During the hut tax rebellion there was great violence in this area, and missionaries were slaughtered in many nearby chiefdoms. N'yagua was arrested multiple times with other chiefs and accused of leading the insurrection in the area, and at one point summarily sentenced to 14 years banishment in the Gold Coast. This sentence was ultimately commuted, however, as sufficient evidence could not be brought against him (Abraham, 2003, pg. 193).

The current chief is Alimamy Moiwo Farma V, a Mende elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Amadu M. Farma, fled to Kenema in 1993 and died there in 2002. The chiefdom receives today surface rents from small scale alluvial diamond miners and the Exim timber company.

Farma This house had a close relationship with N'yagua and has dominated the chiefdom for sometime beginning with Paramount Chief Dauda Farma in the 1950s. This house is affiliated with Bonya section of the chiefdom and traces its origins to the Krim regions to the south.

N'yagua This house is the lineage of N'yagua, and is related by blood to the Farma ruling house.

6.9 Malegohun

Malegohun is an amalgamated chiefdom comprising three smaller chiefdoms, Wulurhun, Kojo and Satunla. Each chiefdom traces its origin to the founders of the various sections of those chiefdoms, the lineages of whom in turn make up the ruling families. The amalgamation was completed in the late 1940s when Boima Yajo of Wulurhun took charge of the amalgamated chiefdom. At the time the components of this chiefdom were also in Kailahun district, and were

then transferred to Kenema. During the war, the Paramount Chief's residence was burned to the ground in 1994.

The current chief is Madam Sallay Hendeme, a Mende elected in 1973. She fled the chiefdom in 1994, after her residence was razed by RUF fighters.

Farma This house is the lineage of a great warrior of the 19th century named Farma. They have their headquarters at Sebehun.

Gibrilla This family traces the lineage of an original warrior, who settled at Balema. They are related to the Yajo house.

Yajo This family is the lineage of Yajo, and a member held the chieftaincy after the amalgamation.

Mannah This house traces its lineage to a founder of Wulurhun chiefdom and has its headquarters at Benduma.

Gendememes This ruling house traces its lineage to another founder of Wulurhun and has their headquarters at Sawula.

Sombo This ruling house has its headquarter at Konjo Viagayhun, and traces its lineage to a founder of Kojo chiefdom. It is related to the three other houses in Kojo.

Joiah This house is a cousin to Sombo family by marriage to the Dauda house, which is related directly to the Sombo family.

Daudu This house is related directly to the Sombo family.

Kargbo This house is the lineage of a nephew of the Sombo house.

6.10 Niawa

This chiefdom traces its history to a man named Mana who migrated from present day Gallines Peri chiefdom in Pujehun district. He gave birth to son named Janga Jangai who was a great

warrior and hunter. The son established himself as ruler of the chiefdom, with many sub-chiefs. Today there are five ruling houses that trace their lineage to various sub-chiefs, and are interlinked by marriage.

The current chief is Joe Amara T. Jawa, a Mende elected in 1988. He fled the chiefdom to Kenema in 1991 and returned in 1997.

Massaquoi This family is the lineage of Janga Jangai, and have a close relationship with the Feika house. Their headquarters is at Golawan village.

Bondor This house takes its lineage to the leader of a section of the chiefdom who migrated from Pehala village in the Kpanga Kabonde chiefdom of Pujehun district and married into the Massaquoi house. Their headquarters is in Gandorhun.

Feika This ruling house traces a lineage that migrated from Sini in Makpele chiefdom of Pujehun district. Their headquarters is in Sendumei.

Safawa This ruling house, which is related to the Bundor house, is the lineage of migrants from Kargbo in Nongowa chiefdom. Their headquarters is also in Sendumei.

Jawa This ruling house traces its the lineage of a migrant from Giewahun in the Tonkia chiefdom of Kenema district.

6.11 Nomo

This chiefdom traces its origin to Nomo, a warrior and fisherman. He came from what is now the Cape Mount area of Libera with his younger brother. Upon arriving in the Nomo area, they made peace with the local Mendes and Nomo's brother was given young girl to be his wife. One night after the wedding, however, Nomo raped the girl and took her virginity. A serious war ensued between Nomo and his brother. Peace, however, was eventually agreed upon and since the 19th century, power has alternated between the descendants of Nomo and Kabba.

The current chief is Vandi Kamara Kamoh, a Mende elected in 2009. There was no chief during the war, as the chief before the beginning of the conflict, Moinama Kamoh, died in 1989 and had not been replaced.

Kamoh This house traces the lineage to Kamoh, eldest son of Nomo

Kabba This house is the lineage of Kabba, the youngest son of Nomo's brother.

6.12 Nongowa

This is the chiefdom surrounding the provincial capital of Kenema. It is believed that the founder of the chiefdom migrated first from Guniea via Kailahun to settle at a place called Tomuhun. He then gave birth to a child called Bambay, who gave birth to Keiri Momoh Vuma, who then moved from Tomuhun to Haa-ga, which means "die there", a warning to invaders. This term was mispronounced by the British as "Hanga." Momoh Vuma means in Mende "you cannot fight me". He later changed his name to Kogbandie Vangahun which means in Mende the perhaps more aggressive "before we argue, let us take swords", and conquered what is now Nongowa chiefdom, headquartered in Kenema town. He was the first chief to sign a treaty with the British in 1895. Abraham (2003, pg. 117) provides a detailed description of Kenema's conquest and Kogbandie's upbringing. Kogbandie was remembered to be ostracized and arrogant as a youth.

The name Nongowa comes from an earlier settlement established around 1820, which was eventually over run by Kogbandie. Nongowa was named for an influential sage of the time named Nongoh. Today the chiefdom headquarters is still in the center of Kenema town, although the administration of the town has been given over to an elected town council. Kenema is also the location of the only Provincial Secretary's office which was not razed during the war. The library there is closely guarded by the Secretary and contains a wealth of chieftaincy records dating back to the early 20th century.

The current chief is Alhaji A.B. Vangahun, a Mende elected in 1996. The chief during the war, Kapuwa Mato, fled to Freetown in 1994, but returned in 1995, when he died. Shortly thereafter Vangahun was elected, and would spend the war hosting many other chiefs who fled violence in the more remote chiefdoms.

Mato This house is the lineage of Madam Mato, who was recognized as chief after the death of Kogbandie.

Bawo This house traces the legacy of the wife of Kogbandie's son. She ruled after the death of Madam Mato and is remembered for her great intelligence.

Vangahun This house is the lineage of a grandson of Kogbandie named Vangahun.

Kai-samba This family traces its origin to a marriage between the Mato and Kai-Samba households. It was recognized after this marriage that they would have the right to hold the chieftaincy.

6.13 Simbaru

Oral historians trace its origin back to a warrior and hunter named Gombulo Tama, who settled the area with his brother Jaiwu. Today it only has one family, which traces its origins to Tama. Tama made his settlement at Javoima (formally called Koba town) while Jaiwa settled at Goma. Abraham (2003, p. 113) traces the origin of Simbaru to the expansion of Keni Karteh, a warrior of the early 19th century who, with his warriors, expanded to occupy areas surrounding his town of Dodo. Tama and his brother were likely warriors under the command of Karteh. The first chief from this house to be recognized by the British, Sangwewa, was a grandson of Gombulo Tama. His family has dominated ever since, as there has always been a strong and ready male heir to take the chieftaincy.

The current chief is Mamie Gamanga II, elected in 1983. She fled the chiefdom in 1994 during the war due to intense fighting, returning in 2002. Simbaru is notable for being the site of a hydroelectric dam, which is on the border with Dodo chiefdom. The dam was vandalized during the war.

Gamanga This house traces the origin of Sangwewa. Another family today, the Jaiwu, claim legitimacy but they have failed to be placed on any ballot.

6.14 Small Bo

This chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Kongosule Fakoi Malah, who is thought to have migrated from Njama Quee in Moyamba district. He is thought to have established the first settlement in Small Bo, called Kpetewoma, which is named after his village in Njama Quee. He was married and had many children, prominent amongst them being Lahai. He led the settlement as it became more established, though he was eventually killed in a battle defending the town, and beheaded by his enemies. His warriors escaped with his head, which they placed in a metal box and took to Kpetewoma, where it is currently held, supposedly, in a Shrine. Lahai was succeeded by Nyangbe, who signed the first treaty with British.

The chieftaincy was vacant during the war, after the death of chief Mamawa Benya in 1996 of the Benya ruling house. She was succeeded in 2003 by Mohamed D. Benya, who lived in

the United States during the war. During the war, Small Bo was organized with Niawa and Langurama chiefdoms as the Upper Wanjei Defense Committee.

Benya This house traces the lineage of Kongosule Fakoi Malah, and has headquarters at Kpetewoma and Ngovogbahun villages.

Jambo This house traces the lineage of Nyangbe, the first chief who succeeded Lahai. Their headquarters is at Linneh.

Nyangbe This house traces the lineage of Nyangbe himself, and have their headquarters at Nyangbe Bo village.

6.15 Tunkia

This chiefdom traces its origin to Chief Amara Sama, who migrated from Kailahun district. He drove “Liberians”, likely ethnic Gola, from the region when he arrived. In 1862, there was an attempt by a “Liberian” warrior, Nyakoh to capture Tunkia, but Amara Sama repelled this attack. He became leader, and signed the first treaty with the British in 1890.

The current chief, Amara Nguway Sama, a Mende, was elected in 1988 and fled during the war. His family had dominated the chiefdom since the colonial period, though others have contested the elections.

Sama This house traces the lineage of Amara Sama himself.

Tehmeh This house traces the lineage of Tehmeh, a spiritual adviser to Amara Sama. Because of his role in assisting Sama, he was given a ruling house, but no one from this family has successfully contested the chieftaincy.

Njavombo This house traces the lineage of Njavombo, a cousin to Amara Sama who assisted Sama in battle.

6.16 Wandor

Wandor chiefdom traces its origin to a group of warriors from present day Liberia. Their leader was a Mende called Vonja, or alternatively Fangawah, who fought to establish a settlement at N’kna-maiena, which means “no blood in the area”. Vonja was an active participant in the hut

tax rebellion, and was arrested by the British before dying in 1901. The current chief Henry Fangawa was elected at a relatively young age, at only 19, in 1972. He fled to Freetown during the war.

This family has a history of female leadership. In the 1972 election, two women contested, Madams Suba Koiwa and Jenneh Ndopei. It is also worth noting that in the early 20th century, Gurama Mende and Wandor were part of the same chiefdom.

Koiwa This ruling house traces the lineage of Vonjoa himself.

Fangawa This chief traces the lineage of a woman captured from Sandor chiefdom by a contemporary warrior of Vonja's named Kawahun. When Vonja was arrested, she was made chief.

Ndopei This house traces the origin of Kinnie Kabinjo (Sahr Ndopei), who was arrested with Vonja. He became chief after Madam Fangawa's death in 1927.

Chapter 7

Koinadugu District

7.1 Diang

The chiefdom traces its history back many centuries to the arrival of three brothers who are said to have come from what is today Bamako, Mali. The elder was named Manse Yire and the two younger were called Manse Mamuru and Manse Saramba. With them, they brought their symbol of authority the Manse Kina, or “chieftaincy stone”. They conquered the residents of the area and settled around lake Sonfon. The brother Manse Saranba became first leader of the chiefdom.

The first chief to be recognized by the British was Ferende Koroma, who is thought to have been descended from the three brothers. He was recognized as chief in 1896. 6 years before his death in 1918, he was listed as “well intentioned but weak and forgetful”, in colonial records regarding the chiefs.¹ The current chief is Sheku Magba Koroma II, who was elected in 1996. There appears to be an agreement that a member of the other house will be elected chief after him, but whether this agreement will be honored remains to be seen. The chiefdom received mining rents from Lion and Dabor mining companies.

Ferende This family traces the lineage of the first paramount chief, and has its headquarters at Kondembayia.

Magba This family traces the lineage of the second chief of Diang, Magba Kormoa I, who was the younger brother of Ferende. Their headquarters is also at Kondembayia.

¹1912 Chiefdom Records

7.2 Folosaba Dembelia

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms Folosaba and Dembelia, completed in 1960 under the oversight of District Commissioner Smith. Smith instituted many amalgamations across Koinadugu from his headquarters in Kabala.

Dembelia chiefdom traces its origins to Phineyireh, a warrior who is said to have migrated from present day Guinea. He established himself in Dembelia, which he found to have fertile farming land. Folosaba traces its origin to a warrior named Kamba Sorie from present day Guinea. In Folosaba, he defeated the Limbas and established himself at Kamba.

The chief of Folosaba Dembelia, Alahaji Alimamy Amadu III, of the Phineryah family, died in 2011 at the age of 93. As of mid-2011, Sirah Bala Kamara is acting as caretaker.

Phineryah This house traces its origin to the the founder of Dembelia.

Kogbandayah This house traces the lineage of a grand son of Phineryah.

Sorieyah This family, which has been influential in Folosaba for some time traces its origin to Manga Sorie, a chief during the early 20th century. This family claims that Manga was a brother to the first chief Kamba Sorie, but records from the amalgamation suggest there was controversy over the claim. In a note from DC Smith dated 1951, he reports that members of the chiefdom alleged that Manga Sori had asserted himself wrongfully. He had been sent as a messenger to Freetown by the chiefs of Dembelia, Folosaba and Sulima to collect their staffs. When he returned, he had brought four. Keeping one for himself, he took the Limba town of Lago by force and began to assert his control over parts of the chiefdom. Indeed, it was only after it was agreed that the houses of Folosaba would control the amalgamated chiefdom that the amalgamation could be continued. The leaders of the surrounding chiefdoms would not submit to the rule of this family, which they viewed as illegitimate. Today, the family contests elections, but has not won one.

Moria This house traces the lineage of a brother of Manga Sorie named Moria.

7.3 Kasunko

Kasunko chiefdom is an amalgamation of four chiefdoms, Kasunko, Thamiso, Kakaya and Kaka-ley. Each of these chiefdoms traces its origins to a related group of Limba warriors who conquered the Lokos in the area during the 15th century (Kup, 1962, p. 124). The Limba, however, faced

another invasion by the Sofa in the late 19th century. Lipschutz (1973) records an interview with Paramount Chief Baio Serry II of Kassunko in 1972 in which Serry recalls how his grandfather made peace with the Sofa and maintained the independence of the chiefdom. The story is that his grandfather Sara Baio's fingers were gnarled. The invaders said that whenever they met a person with such a deformity, they should not touch him, and so they did not fight. A government report from 1912 recalls that Sara Baio "has the confidence of his people".²

During the war, Paramount chief Alimamy Fanah II was murdered in 1997 by the RUF. The current chief is Lamina Baio Serry II, a Limba and Muslim who was elected in 2002 at age 63.

ruling houses

Kamabopo This house traces its lineage to the original Biao Serry, and all chiefs from this family take that name. It has its headquarters in Fadugu.

Kagbasia This house is linked to Kakaley chiefdom, and has not ruled since the amalgamation. They have their headquarters at Kagbio.

Kakarima This house is associated with Kakarima chiefdom.

Kasasie This house associates itself with a section of the chiefdom with its headquarters at Kasasie. In 2002, they put forth Yaribo Thoronka as a candidate for chief who did not win.

Mansaray This family has its headquarters in Karassa village, in a section of the chiefdom named for the old Thamiso chiefdom. This family appears to have been dominant for some time. An election report from 1923 in Thamiso says that Sie Manga of this family was supported by the "great majority" of the chiefdom.

7.4 Mongo

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of five chiefdoms, Mongo, Morfindor, Deldogo, Benadugu, and Mankalia. Each traces its history to a movement of Koranko warriors who are thought to have come from Mali after the fall of the Malian empire during the mid-16th century. Mongo traces its origin to Baimba Mariama Kallay, who settled first in Karifaya. Morfindor traces its origin to Mar Bokarie, who settled in Serikolia. Deldogo traces its origin to Foro Wouleh, who

²Fourah Bay College Archives, "Information Regarding Protectorate Chiefs 1912"

settled in Dandafara. Benadugu traces its origin to Sora Tamba. Mankalia traces its origin to Mar Bunjeli, who settled in Kadu. The chiefdom today has six ruling families, all linked to these original settlers.

The current chief Sina Kali of the Kokesia family was elected in 2010. Compulsory labor on his farms is still common place. The chiefdom is notable, however, for having stiff electoral competition. A total of 24 candidates contested the 2010 election. The chief during the war Makura Konta II died of natural causes in 1997, and the role was held by a regent named Foday Lamina until a new chief was elected in 2002.

Kokesia This house traces the lineage of Baimba Marieama Kallay, and has its headquarters in Kokesia section.

Bunjeli This house traces the lineage of Mar Bunjeli.

Tambaya This ruling house traces its origin to Sora Tamba.

Misadu This house traces the origins of Mar Bokarie, and has its headquarters in the Misadu section of the chiefdom.

Famaria This ruling house traces its origin to Foro Wouleh, and has its head quarters in the Famaria section.

Kankabaya This ruling house traces its origin to Baimba Mansa, a grandson of Foro Wouleh who also ruled Deldu chiefdom.

7.5 Neya

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of four chiefdoms, Kuloh, Saradu, Neya and Neydu. Kuloh traces its origin to Sendeh Fanneh, who gained prominence by fighting against the Kissi. Saradu traces its origin to Dembekulaku, a warrior who fought against the Konos. Neya traces its origin to Fankulai, who fought against the Konos as well. Neydu traces its origin to Kulaku Demba, who also fought against them.

The last chief, Bondo Madusilai II, was elected in 2003 and died in 2010, and as of mid-2011, Abdulai Turay was acting as caretaker. The chief during the war was Fankolia II, who fled to Freetown to escape the violence and died there in 1998. The chiefdom is notable in that a chief,

Bondo Mandusilai, was installed by Siaka Stevens in the 1960s. He was deposed in 1981, and died in 2010.

Fankulia This family traces the lineage of Fankulai, the first chief to be recognized as head of Neya by the British.

Bubumkoro This family traces the lineage of Bamakel Sayo, the first chief to Naydu to be recognized by the colonial officials.

Kulakudamba This family traces the lineage of a prominent farmer from Bubukoro.

Selati Kalima This family traces the lineage of another prominent farmer from Dodokoro.

7.6 Neini

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of four chiefdoms Kallan, Neini, Barawa and Wallay. Kallan chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior called Pa Gbafana Jallon, who is thought to have migrated from present day Guniea, and was the first to be recognized by the British as chief in 1896. Wally cheifdom traces its origin to Danbaleh, who was the first to be recognized by the British. Barawa chiefdom traces its origin to Mamora Bemkoro Marah, who was recognized as first chief by the British. The one for which the chiefdom is named, Neini, chiefdom traces its origin to a Kuranko warrior called Bambafara Koroma, he was the first to be recognized as paramount chief by the British. Lipschutz (1973, pg. 35) notes that Bambarafara was very powerful in the area, and likely held influence over the other chiefdoms, before they were broken apart by the colonial administration. He had a nickname Kongofa, meaning “hunger-killer”.

The chiefdom is notable for having a rotation agreement between families. The current chief is named Alimamy Jalloh, and was elected in 2010 at age 40. The chief before him, Balla Kelly Kormoa II died in 2006, and had fled briefly during the war. In the 2010 election, there was some controversy over one family, the Sawaneh, which wanted to contest. In the end they were viewed as illegitimate and not allowed.

Jalloh This family traces the lineage of Gbafana Jallon, and has their headquarters at Kumala town.

Thorunka This family traces the lineage of Dabantor Thorunka, the son of one of Gbafana Jallon's commanders. He became the second chief of Kallan chiefdom. This family traces its origins to Alhalia town.

Koroma This family traces the lineage of Bambafara Kormoa, and has its headquarters at Yiffin town.

Dambanleh Marah This family traces its origins to the founder of Wallay chiefdom, and has its headquarters at Banda Karifa town.

Bemkoro marah This family traces its origin to the first chief of Barawa chiefdom, and has its headquarters at Firawa village.

7.7 Sengbe

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of three chiefdoms, Sengbe, Kamadugu and Yiranhia, all of which trace their origin to Kuranko warriors. Sengbe traces its origin to Bamba Sira Doduka, who is thought to have migrated from Mali, passing through Samaria and eventually settling at Bendugu. Bendugu means in Kuranko "let's meet here". Kamadugu is remembered to have been founded by a Koranko warrior named Mansa Kama, who migrated from present day Mali during the end of the 16th century. His son, Momori Kalko, founder of Kalkoya town in Kamadugu, ruled there for some time. Today families there remember also an elephant hunter named Molai, to whom the ruling families of Kamadugu trace their lineage. He named the area Kamadugu, which means "country of elephants". Yiranhia traces its origin to Manso Yirah, who settled his people at a place he named after himself.

Each chiefdom today is represented only by one family, but election records indicate that multiple families contested for election in the early histories of the amalgamated chiefdoms. It appears however that since the amalgamation these families have consolidated themselves into political groups within each of the amalgamated chiefdoms. The histories which they now associate with themselves may be in part constructed as a way to unify the families. This is perhaps a legacy of the pre colonial institutions of the Kuranko, who Lipschutz (1973, pg. 32) notes were organized into autonomous villages headed by a few leaders. Political power in these villages ebbed and flowed freely with the influence of the leaders.

This chiefdom has its headquarters in Kabala, an important town in northern Koinadugu, known for beautiful hills and excellent vegetables. The current chief is Alie B. Marrah, of the

Balansana house, who was elected in 2002.

Bubele This house traces its origin to Manso Bubele, a son of Manso Yirah.

Balansana This ruling house traces its origin to Balansama, son of Bamba Sira Doduka.

Kamadugu This house traces the lineage of Morlai.

7.8 Sinkunia

Sinkunia, known also as Dembelia Sinkunia, was founded by warriors who are thought to have originally travelled from Mali. The family gives a specific date to their settlement here, in 1670. The most prominent of the brothers was named Kelmanfa Mamudu established himself as the first chief. Other oral history states however that Sinkunia was under the authority of the Sulima chiefdom, and so it is likely that Mamudu was perhaps in some way subordinate to the leaders in Sulima.

The chiefdom has been totally dominated by one lineage that traces its origin to Narasunkunia, a descendent of the original settlers. In the late 19th century, however, the family split into two lines, Kumbaya and Fankunia. The current chief is known as Alimamy Lahai V, of the Kumbaya line, was elected in 1994. Only the Kumbaya line has contested in recent elections, and all chiefs in the chiefdom have all been of the Kumbaya line, taking the name Lahai, since Alimamy Lahai I took the throne in 1911. The Kumbaya dominance is so strong that in 1986, one candidate ran unopposed. It is likely that this is the point at which the split between the two families occurred, perhaps due to government intervention. An entry in the 1912 chiefdom records notes that Lahai “owes his position to the government to some extent.”

Kumbaya This house traces the lineage of Alimamy Lahai I, who is thought to have descended from an original settler.

Fankunia This house also traces its origins to the ruling settler, but it appears that they have been shunted from leadership by the Kumbaya house.

7.9 Sulima

Sulima’s history is described in detail in Lipschutz (1973, pg. 15) and can be traced to a group of Yalunka warriors from the Futa Jallon who coalesced under the rule of Suli Manga around

1630. Suli Manga had a succession of children and grandchildren, who for many years profitably raided nearby Kissi and Limba villages for slaves. The heads of their chiefdom were converted to Islam by the Fula around 1700 at the time of chief Manga Dansa, a descendent of Suli. As that century wore on, however, relations with the Fula grew tense, likely over land disputes, and descended into war. Many of Sulima's towns were captured, except for Falaba, which is the headquarters of Sulima today. After war with the Fula subsided, Falaba prospered, and, as noted in Lipschutz, was observed by Windwood Reade in 1869 as a prosperous farming and trading community.

In 1884, Falaba was destroyed under an epic siege by the Sofa, from present day Guinea, which is described in Lipschutz (1973,pg. 67): "The seige lasted five months until the food supply was exhausted. At that point Sewa [then chief of Sulima] and the royal family secured themselves in the powder magazine and, declaring their refusal to submit to the Sofa, put the magazine to torch. The Sulima state ceased to exist."

Following the Sofa invasion, there was a period of instability. Informants report that it was then that the chiefdom split into two regions, Kabelia and Sulima. However, a report from 1949 reports that the split occurred earlier in 1860, likely as part of the Hubu separatist movement. In either case, as the British drove off the Sofa in the early 1890s these chiefdoms were established as native administrations.³ The chiefdoms were then amalgamated as Sulima in 1949. At that point Fore Samura who had previously been Paramount Chief of Kabelia was elected chief of Sulima.

It is interesting to note that in both of these chiefdoms, the Paramount Chiefs have held the Samura name since early in the 20th century. Records to the beginning of the century are not available for Kabelia, but do exist for Sulima. The first chief recognized by the British was Falaba-Dinka, who was appointed by the British after the Sofa invasion. After his death in 1895, he was succeeded by Fasineh. Fasineh died in 1915. At that point, colonial records report that Salifu Samura, a court messenger, became chief by unanimous agreement of the chiefdom council. Descendants of Samura have dominated Samura, and apparently also Kabelia, ever since, though the family is now split into separate lines that contest elections vigorously. Today, the members of the Samura family trace their lineage to Fasineh, but it is unclear whether this is a fabrication given that Samura was originally a court messenger, a job not often reserved for sons of chiefs. The current chief is Roman Manga Salifu III, elected in 2002.

Gulunga This house traces the lineage of a son of Salifu Samura.

³Koinadugu Chiefdom Election Records, Sulima

Sanukunria This family traces the lineage of a son of a younger brother of Fasineh named Sanukunria, but is also a part of the Samura family.

Metaya This family traces the lineage of a son of Salifu Samura.

Bockaria This house traces the lineage of a brother of Salifu Samura.

7.10 Wara Wara Bafodia

This chiefdom has a long history, and was one of two important Limba power centers in Koinadugu, the other being Biriwa, to the South, which was led by Koinadugu. The chiefdom traces its history to a Limba warrior named Wuyeh, who had six sons who ruled the area. The first was Foday, and after him Mansaray. No date can be put on Wuyeh's arrival, but the Limba have a long history in Sierra Leone, and were likely there before even the Mane invasions of the 15th century. Lipschutz (1973, pg. 35) reports that the Limba were fragmented towards the beginning of the 19th century and frequent targets of slave raiders. In the latter part of that century, however, Biriwa and Bafodia consolidated their power, and held influence over much of Limba country. Bafodia in particular developed a fearsome reputation, with Governor King-Harman in 1902 describing the people there as

a wild and savage tribe with an evil reputation for murderous instincts and inhospitality...it is only some ten years ago when the present chief, Alimami Suman, caused every stranger who entered his town to be murdered and his body to be thrown in to a deep pit in the bush.

Lipschutz notes, however, that this reputation was probably carefully cultivated, as it helped deter invaders, who often took the Limbas as slaves.

Wara wara Bafodia is also an amalgamation chiefdom. In 1948, it was merged with Kemukeh, a much smaller chiefdom. This chiefdom was likely broken off from the earlier Wara Wara Bafodia in the early 20th century, as they still remember Alimami Suman, chief of Bafodia, as their chief. When the British were originally demarcating boundaries, Suman apparently appointed his brother, who was also a son of Foday, to be chief of the smaller chiefdom.

The current chief is Alimami Amidu I. He was elected in 1992, and fled for Freetown during the war, after being shot in the leg and "fired" by an RUF commander. Compulsory labor on his farms is still reported to be common today.

Salifuyah This house traces the lineage of Salifuyah, one of the seven children of Foday. This house has been the only house to participate in the last two chieftaincy elections.

Kasimaya This house traces the lineage of Alimamy Sinah, a son of Foday.

Kalingbeya This house traces its origin to one of the sons of Foday, Lengbeh.

Bafadia This house traces the lineage of another son.

Kegbosie This house received the right to rule when Alimami Suman gave the chieftaincy of Kemukeh to his brother Alimamy Gbeku Salay. This house traces the lineage of Salay.

Serekundeh This house traces the lineage of Alimamy Umaru, a brother of Salay who succeeded him in Kemukeh.

Kambadia This house traces its lineage to another brother of Suman.

7.11 Wara Wara Yagala

Wara wara Yangala was a more minor Limba chiefdom that traces its recent warrior called Mansa Kele, who lived in the late 19th century. His ancestors are thought to have defeated Lokos and other Limba in the area during the early 16th century, and established himself in a settlement in the hills. The village of Yagala is just beyond the hills surrounding Kabala, and serves as the headquarters of the chiefdom.

The current chief is Kondowullay Gbawuru III, and he was elected in 2010. During the war, the chief at the time, Gbawuru II, left for Freetown where he died of natural causes.

Gbawuru This family traces its origin to Kele Mansa, whose original name is thought to have been Gbawuru.

Yembeh Mansaray This house traces its origin to a second son of Kele Mansa.

Chapter 8

Kono District

8.1 Gbense

This chiefdom surrounds Koidu town, the largest in the diamond mining area of Kono. This chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Kaimachiende M’ba, which means “fearsome” in Kono. During the 19th century informants claim he also held authority over Gbense chiefdom and also of the adjacent chiefdom of Fiama. He was arrested by the British during the hut tax rebellion, allowing Tao Kabba to take over. After Tao Kabba was arrested again for financial fraud, Fiama split off from Gbense in 1913, led by Sahr Kontandey M’Briwa, who was perhaps a subordinate to Kaimachiende.

Koidu was a site of intense fighting during the war, and the chief during the war was forced to flee in 1998. The chiefdom currently receives revenues from small-scale artisanal diamond mining. The current chief is Sahr Fengai, a Kono elected in 2002, who has his headquarters at Yardu Village.

Korgbende This family traces the lineage of Kaimachiende M’ba, and has its headquarters at Yardu.

Njaakui Bona This family traces the lineage of Njaakui Bona, a warrior who fought with Kaimachiende M’ba. He was elected as chief in 1913 after the arrest of Tao Kabba. His headquarters is also at Yardu.

Thorlie This family traces the origin of Kamoh Thorlie who was elected chief in 1922 after Njaakui Bona. His family is not related to any others, but they retain close ties with the other families at Yardu.

Tao Kabba This family traces the origin of Tao Kabba. He was caretaker under Kaimachiende M'ba, and replaced him after Kaimachiende's arrest. He was later deposed in 1913 for financial fraud.

8.2 Fiama

This chiefdom traces its history to Aiah Kontandey M'briwa, a warrior who established himself in the area. Aiah is likely to have arrived with Kaimachiende M'ba, of Gbense chiefdom. A son of Aiah, Sahr Kontandey M'Biriwa, was head of the area at first contact with the British and broke off from Gbense to lead in independent chiefdom in 1913.

The current chief is Sahr Youngai. He was elected in 2002. The previous chief, Sahr Sanga M'Biriwa was murdered during the war in 1993.

Kontandey M'Briwa This family traces the lineage of the son of Aiah, and has its headquarters in N'jagbwema town.

Songu M'Briwa This family traces the lineage of a nephew of Aiah, Sahr Songu M'briwa. Their headquarters is also in N'jagbwema.

Kanga Gbetuwa This family traces the origin of Aiah Kanga Gbetawa, an adopted son of Aiah. This family is unique in that it is very rare for adopted children to be viewed as fully legitimate in a family line.

8.3 Gbane

This chiefdom traces its origin to two Kono warriors who existed during the 19th century. There is no story of them migrating from anywhere, but the Konos, part of the Mane language group, are thought to have been part of the Mane migration from present day Guinea during the 16th century. Ngobu Kakpata, who settled at Tombodu Mainfe in present day Mongor section. His deputy was Fenfa, who stayed at Kondendu. The first chief of the chiefdom was Ngobu Nyandmoqui, son of Kakpata, who was first to be recognized by the British. The present chief is Aiah Bindi Fenfa Gongor, a Muslim, who was elected in 2010. Sahr Nyandamoqui III, the paramount chief during the war, fled the chiefdom for the duration of the war. Nyandamoqui means "fine leopard".

Nyandamoqui This house traces the lineage of Kakpata, and has its headquarters at Tombodu.

Fenfa This family traces the lineage of Gongor, first son of Fenfa, Kakpata's deputy.

8.4 Gbane Kandor

This chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Mamina, who lived during the 19th century. Mamina is said to have been born in Fanda, within the chiefdom, and took the region from other residents in a great battle, causing them to flee to present day Guinea. He hid in the Konogortan hills around the chiefdom, and attacked from above. He was succeeded by Kamachi M'bawa, who was recognized as the first paramount chief by the British.

The current chief is Paul Wuseni Manga M'bawa, a Kono and Muslim. He was elected in 2005. The chiefdom only has one ruling house. Tamba Fia M'bawa was chief during the war, and he fled briefly in 1997. He returned in 2000 and died in 2003.

M'bawa This house traces the lineage of Kamachi M'bawa, and has their headquarters in Gbane Tetema section.

8.5 Gorama Kono

Gorama Kono traces its origin to a group of Kono warriors who are thought to have conquered the area during the 19th century. The warriors were led by Konobundor, and included Dugbawa Manyeh, Sogboh, and Kanda. Konobundor was the eldest and became the leader when there was peace. The current chief also has the name Kono Bundor, and was elected in 1984. He fled briefly during the war.

Kono Bundor This house traces the history of Bundor, who was the first chief to be recognized by the British.

Forewa This house traces the lineage of a Mandingo named Forewa who came from Kakor in Guinea and was a trusted advisor to Bundor. After Bundor died in 1920, Forewa became chief, ruling for 63 years.

8.6 Kamara

This chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Hindowa Ngandi who dislodged the “Kamaranos” from the area. Informants say their local interpretation of Kamara is that it means “someone who does not eat baboon”. The first chief to be recognized by the British was Sumana Tieh, a son of Hindowa. The current chief is Aiah Melvin Ngekiah II, a Muslim Kono elected in 2003. The chief during the war S.G.M. Fania fled in 1992 and died in the United Kingdom in 1999.

Tieh This house traces the lineage of Sumana Tieh the first chief to be recognized by the British. Their headquarters is at Tombodu.

Ngekiah This house traces the lineage of Paramount Chief Ngekiah I, who was crowned in 1932. He is also thought to have descended from prominent warriors in the chiefdom. Their headquarters is also at Tombodu.

Fania This house traces the lineage of a prominent leader from Tombodu with the name of Fania.

Pitikol This house traces its origin to another son of Hindowa who stayed at Tombodu.

8.7 Lei

This chiefdom traces its origin to Kogbanda, a Kissi, warrior who migrated from present day Guinea. The story is that there were many chiefs in the area at the time the British arrived. Kogbanda was the only one brave enough to face them, and so was the first to be recognized as chief. His house, the Mani family, has ruled ever since.

The current chief, Tamba Fengai Alpah Mani, was elected in 2003. His predecessor, Aiah Alpha Mani, fled the chiefdom in 1992 during the war before dying of natural causes in 2001.

Mani This chiefdom traces the lineage of Kogbanda Sahr Alpha Mani, the first son of Kogbanda.

8.8 Mafindor

Mafindor chiefdom borders Guinea along the river Maleh. It traces its history to a warrior named Suluku Handupor, a Kono who led the chiefdom throughout the 19th century, and was

recognized by the British as chief in 1891. It was famous battle, which likely occurred in the 1880s, he deterred the Sofa from the north led by Mori Turay.

After the death of chief Sahr Lamin Musa in 1948, this chiefdom was briefly administrated by the chief of Gbane Kandor chiefdom. It became independent again under the leadership of chief Kekura Lyod Musa in 1959. The current chief is Abu M'bawa Kongbora, who was elected in 1986. He played a leadership role in the early part of the war, joining the Kono Council of Paramount Chiefs organized with the consent of the NPRC in 1994. He fled to Guinea during the war between 1997 and 2001.

Suluku This house traces the lineage of Suluku, the first chief. Their headquarters is in Teme-sadu.

Kongorba This house traces the lineage of N'ango, the younger brother of Suluku who succeeded him.

8.9 Nimikoro

This chiefdom traces its history to a Kono warrior from a nearby Mende area named Foamansa Matturie. He was recognized as first chief by the British in 1876. His descendants, who have formed two families, have alternated rule over the chiefdom. The current chief, Aiah Dentin Bona Fuhamansa III, of the Bona family, was elected in 2006.

Maturi This house traces the lineage of Fahamansa Matura and has its headquarters at Sahr Fellis village.

Bona This house originated from Dodobona, who was related to the Maturi house through marriage, and ruled after Maturi until 1981. They have their headquarters at Bonadae village.

8.10 Nimiyama

Nimiyama traces its origin to two Kono warriors named Chika and Sogboh Torto, who were recognized as leaders by the British in the late 19th century. The name Nimiyama means “face of the hill” in Kono, and the chiefdom was named this for the hill that faces Sewafe, the town center. The current chief is a descendant of Torto, George Bockarie Torto, who was elected in 2009.

Torto This house traces the lineage of Sogboh Torto, and is the only family to have ruled the chiefdom.

Nyaka This house traces the lineage of another warrior, Nyaka, who fought with Chika. Their headquarters is at Peya village. They have never assumed the throne.

Madu This house traces the lineage of Pa Madu, a caretaker for an early chief. Given his service as a caretaker, his descendants have been recognized with the right to stand in elections.

8.11 Sandor

This chiefdom traces the lineage of Fasulukuwa, a warrior who is thought to have migrated from Mali. He established himself in the area after successfully defending against the Sofa invasion of the 1880s, and was recognized as first chief by the British in 1896.

A chiefdom report from 1899 reports that Suluku, at his headquarters in Kayima, was the most powerful chiefdom of the era in Kono district, who once divided the region with Nyagua, another powerful chief at the time.¹ The current chief is Sheku Ahemd Tejan Fasuluku III, a prominent farmer who was elected in 2005. The chief during the war, Kaibondo Sunduwa Fasuluku fled. It is suspected that he was viewed as illegitimate, and found it difficult to return after the war. The chiefdom during the war was a site of the prominent Donso hunter group, which organized to defend the chiefdom against the RUF.

Fasuluku This house traces the origin of Fasulukuwa. His family has had an abundance of sons, and has dominated the chiefdom since the colonial period.

8.12 Soa

Soa chiefdom traces its origin to a warrior named Gbendewa, who attained prominence defending the area from other groups. He was recognized as the first chief by the British. The current chief is Tamba Emmanuel Tokeh Foyoh, a Kono who was elected in 2009.

Foio This family traces the lineage of Foyohwa, an assistant to Gbendewa who settled at Kainkordu and took the chieftaincy after Gbendewa's death.

Gbenda This family traces the lineage of Gbendewa, and has their headquarters in Kainkordu.

¹Notes on Paramount Chiefs, 1899

8.13 Tankoro

This chiefdom traces the lineage of a group of Kono warriors who are said to have come from the south and driven the Mandingos from the land in the late 19th century.

This chiefdom is undoubtedly quite rich, as it is the headquarters of the Koidu Holdings Kimberlite Project, the largest diamond mine in the country. The chiefdom administration receives surface rents from the project. The current chief is Paul Gabba Saquee, who was elected in 2006. The chief during the war, Joseph Saquee, fled between 1998 and 2002 to escape heavy fighting in the area.

Saquee This house traces the lineage of Pa Sahr Quee, one of the original warriors who fought against the Mandingos. He settled at Baiama.

Gando This house traces the lineage of Pa Tamba Gando, a warrior who fought with Sahr Quee. This family has its headquarters at Yamadu.

Gbesseh Gumbu This house traces the lineage of Pa Gbesseh Gumbu, a messenger to the Quee and Gando houses. He acted as messenger for the Gando and Sahr Quee houses, and during a meeting was given as staff, and thus his family holds the right to rule.

8.14 Toli

Toli chiefdom traces its origin to Soluku, a warrior who migrated from Guinea. He settled first in Kuateh in present day Sandor chiefdom, and later moved to Kondewakor, where Soluku's brother Landa established himself as leader of Toli. Descendants of Soluku have ruled the chiefdom ever since.

This chiefdom was at the end of the 19th century considered a part of Neya chiefdom, but broke off on its own at the time of Suluku. It is unclear what exact relationship Suluku had with the leaders of Neya at that time.

Soluku This house traces the lineage of Landa, a brother of Soluku.

Nya Songoh This house traces the lineage of Nya Songoh, who lived at the time of Soluku in the late 19th century. They have established their right to stand for election by presenting evidence that Nya Songoh was once arrested with Suluku and this recognized as chief. Though they were allowed to stand in the 2010 election, there is some controversy about the legitimacy

of this family, particularly given the dominance of the Soluku family throughout the chiefdom's history.

Chapter 9

Moyamba District

9.1 Bagruwa

Bagruwa is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Mano Bagru and Sembehun Bagru, that was completed in 1950. The narrative that has developed around the amalgamation involves, a young man being initiated into a secret society against the will of his mother. His mother complained to the district commissioner, who sent a message to Chief Gamanga of Sembehun to discontinue the initiation and release the boy. Gamanga refused, and the district commissioner punished him by initiating the amalgamation, after which he was dethroned and replaced by Seilolo Papapwe of Mano Bagru. Mano Bagru, which was a small chiefdom before the amalgamation, has only one ruling family, the Seilolo Papapwe house named for the first person to be recognized by the British as chief of the area. A record from 1912 notes that Mano Bagru was at one point a section of Bagru chiefdom, at once controlled by the heads of Sembehun Bagru.

The first recognized leader of Sembehun was Humpa Rango, an ally of the government. Some years after his death, Sembehun's most remembered chief, Nancy Tucker was recognized as chief in 1897. Tucker was a trader from Bonthé who had established prominence in the area. She arrived in the late 19th century, acting as an interlocutor between local chiefs and the British. She established prominence in part by establishing a secret society. She initiated many girls into her society, and built a shrine called Kpanguei-ma. She also built a large stone building, the ruins of which can still be seen, which served as the headquarters of her trading activity. Her recognition as chief was undoubtedly linked to her political skill intermediating between the British and the locals of the area. Fyfe notes in particular that at the time of her appointment in 1897, she was a mistress of Edward Coker, a sergeant in the Frontier police. It is interesting to note, however, that Tuckers descendants have never been able to win a subsequent election. Given her name, Nancy Tucker was likely related to the Sherbro Tucker family, but the exact

relation cannot be established.

The current chief is Seilolo Papapwe III. He was elected in 2004. The chiefdom collects surface rents from the Sierra Rutile mining operation.

Seilolo Papapwe This house traces the lineage of the family that has ruled Mano Bagru since the beginning of the 20th century. They were resident at the time of the arrival of the British. This family has their headquarters in Moselilolo, in the Mano Bagru section.

Tucker This house traces the lineage of Nancy Tucker.

Soluku This house traces the lineage of Soluku, the chief who succeeded Tucker. It is remembered that he was a court messenger for her, but some also claim he had a connection to the indigenous rulers of the area before Tuckers arrival.

Barkutu This house traces the lineage of a family that had established itself before the arrival of Tucker.

9.2 Bumpeh

The history of the Bumpeh chiefdom traces the influential Caulker dynasty through the 19th century. The family established itself in the late 17th century, when a Royal Africa Company trader named Thomas Corker established himself as chief agent at York Island. Corker married a daughter of the prominent Sherbro Chief Ya Kumba, and their descendants established themselves as leaders of Kumba's kingdom.

Bumpeh chiefdom was split off from the larger Caulker state based in Shenge, which became what is known today as Kagboro. The area was split between two Caulker brothers who wished to rule independently. At this time Thomas Kan Tham, a caulker son became the first ruler of Bumpeh in 1810. As described in the Caulker family history (Caulker-Burnett, 2010), a son of Thomas at later chief of Bumpeh, James Canreba Caulker, went on to have a dispute with the Caulkers of Shenge. He waged a war with them that was settled with a treaty in 1845 that confirmed the division of the two chiefdoms. As discussed in detail in Caulker-Burnett (2010) however, disputes would continue between the two chiefdoms well into the beginning of the 20th century.

After the split from Shenge, Bumpeh, with its headquarters in Rotifunk became influential power center of its own right, with a large standing army (Abraham, 2003, pg. 55). The current

chief is Charles Caulker, who was elected in 1984. He fled the chiefdom during the war, leaving in 1995.

Caulker This house traces the lineage of Thomas Caulker, a descended of Thomas Corker, who established himself as chief of Bumpeh in the early 19th century.

Bendu This house participated in the 1984 elections and has been present in the area for some time. They claim to trace the lineage to a wife of Ya Kumba, the original chief of the country, though this lineage is contested by the Caulkers, who hold almost all the political power in the chiefdom. They have failed to ever win an election.

9.3 Dasse

Dasse chiefdom was originally settled by the Banta people, who established a substantial chiefdom in the Sherbro territory. Around 1825, however, the area was conquered by warriors from the Kpaa-Mende state in a violent and destructive war described by Abraham (2003, pg. 143). The leader of Dasse at the time was chief Bayon, notorious for raiding the surrounding settlements. Abraham reports a legend that he was aided by a mermaid, who provided him with supernatural powers. Bayon was eventually overthrown by a group of Kpaa-Mende warriors led by Kajue. Kajue's descendants have rule the chiefdom since.

The current chief is Haja Fatmata Koroma Meama Kajue. She was elected in 2002 and traces the lineage of Kajue. The chief during the war, Albert Meama Kajue, fled in 1994 and eventually died in Freetown.

Kajue This family traces the lineage of Kajue. His first son Kondowa was recognized as the first paramount chief to Dasse by the British. They have their headquarters in Mogbasike.

Ndolovo This ruling house traces the lineage of Ndolavoi, a warrior who accompanied Kajue on his raid of Dasse. They have their headquarters at Gulagbehun. They have never held the chieftaincy, though have contested in the last election.

9.4 Fakunya

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Fako and Kunafoe. Both were established by warriors as part of the expansion of Kpaa-Mende warriors from Taiama in 1820. Kunafoe was founded by a warrior named Kunyafor. Fako was founded by a warrior named Momoh who

helped Kunyafor in battle. The two chiefdoms were amalgamated in 1932 at the recommendation of the government. The amalgamation went smoothly due to their historical ties.

The current chief is Joseph Kavura Korgormor, who was elected in 1994. He fled the chiefdom during the war, when his offices and residence were burned down.

N'gaque This family traces the lineage of a warrior who arrived in the chiefdom with Kunyafor. They have their headquarters at Kpangbama.

Kpanda/Kpange This house traces its origin to another warrior who arrived as part of the Kpaa-Mende expansion. They were apparently recommended as a ruling house to the British by Momoh.

Korgormo This house traces the lineage of the first chief of Fokoi to be recognized by the British. This chief, Korgormo, was the nephew of Momoh. When the staffs were being distributed, Momoh was very old, and decided to give the staff to Korgormo in recognition of his support to Momoh in battle. They have their headquarters at Kwellu.

Sesay This family traces the lineage of a sister of Momoh in Fokoi.

9.5 Kagboro

Like Bumpeh chiefdom, Kagboro, traces its origins to the Caulker chiefdom that began with marriage of Thomas Corker to a daughter of the Sherbro King Ya Kumba. A detailed history of the chiefdom is given by Caulker-Burnett (2010). Shenge, an island off the coast in present day Kagboro chiefdom, was the headquarters of a great dynasty led by Thomas's children, until Bumpeh split off to be led by another member of Caulker in 1810. Kagboro also once included the Banana Islands, off the coast of the Freetown peninsula, but these were leased to the Colony in 1840.

The hut-tax war of 1898 was a time of great upheaval in the chiefdom. The chief at the time Thomas Neale-Caulker was an ally of the government, and because of this was opposed by many of his sub-chiefs. He followed the government's orders to collect the tax, but did so brutally, and, perhaps as retribution, was assassinated in 1898. After his death, his wife Sophia Neale-Caulker was appointed chief, but was apparently very weak and unable to quell the unrest along the coast. In 1908, very old and morbidly obese, she was deposed through an agreement with the government that officially merged her Shenge settlement with the larger Kagboro district on the

coast to make the Kagboro Native Administration. After this agreement was completed in 1909 Sei Lebbi of the Sosant Dick house from the coast, was appointed as Paramount Chief. He moved the headquarters to Macobo, on the coast and Shenge was left in disrepair. It was only 10 years later that Samuel Afrianus Caulker, a grandson of Thomas Neale-Caulker, was able to retake the throne and rebuilt the town in Shenge. Over the following century, the Caulkers would continue to compete for the chieftaincy with the Sonsant Dick house. The rivalry continues today.

The current chief is Doris Lenga-Caulker Gbabiyyor II, an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church and former principal at the Harford School for Girls. She was elected in 2010. During the war, the office and residence of the paramount chief was burnt to the ground.

Caulker This house traces the lineage of Thomas Corker, the first Caulker of Sierra Leone.

Sosandick This house traces the lineage of Sei Lebbi.

9.6 Kaiyamba

Kaiyamba has its headquarters at Moyamba town, once an important railway stop and the headquarters of Moyamba district. This chiefdom traces its history to a warrior named Kaiyamba, who migrated to the area from Kono in search of animals around the 1820s. Abraham (2003, pg. 142) suggest he was a follower of the expansion of Mende warriors from the east lead by leaders of the Kpaa-Mende state. Kaiyamba's wife, Guwanalo, had many children. It is said her fertility came from her consumption of kola nuts. Today the chiefdom's families trace the lineage of Kaiyamba's children.

Informants in the chiefdom report a legend that the father of Madam Yoko, who is herself the Sierra Leone Protectorate's most well known figure, was born in the chiefdom. Her father, Joko Lamboy, is thought to have lived in the land before the arrival of Kaiyamba, and was forced to wage a great war of defense upon Kaiyamba's arrival. He eventually lost, forcing him to flee to the area near Senehun, where Yoko is thought to have been born. It is said that in order to bring an end to the war, he buried a virgin girl alive, as this sacrifice was said to bring peace. This sacrifice is also said to have lead to the greatness of his daughter, Madam Yoko, who rose from a humble trader in Senehun to a leader of the Kpaa-Mende state which once held authority over the Kaiyamba territory. This story, however cannot be confirmed. This story is somewhat at odds with the story of Yoko's birth reported in Abraham (2003, pg. 145) which says she was the daughter of a Kpaa-Mende warrior named Njiakundohun, who had his origin in Tungea in Gorama Mende.

In 2011, the office of the paramount chief was still in transition, as Ela Koblo Gulama had died in 2006, and the election result had not yet been ratified.

Boyawa This house traces the lineage of the first son of Kaiyamba,

Golama This house traces the lineage of the second son of Kaiyamba. This ruling house was founded by Pa Gulama. His son Julius Gulama ruled Kaiyamba and had a good relationship with the colonial officials.

Biango This house traces the lineage of of Toma Blango, who was originally called Toma Biango. He likely migrated with Kaiyamba.

M'Bomeh This house traces the lineage of M'Bomeh, another son of Kaiyamba.

Kpangbavi This house traces the lineage of a warrior who migrated with Kaiyamba. A member of the house, Lamin Kpangbavi, held the position of regent chief in the 1970s, and the house has been allowed to stand in previous elections. However, they have never won.

Yoko This house, which has fielded candidates in previous elections but has never won, traces the lineage of Joko Lamboy, father of Madam Yoko.

9.7 Kamajei

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two sub-states of the 19th century Kpaa-Mende state, Majei and Kama. The amalgamation was completed in 1952. The headquarters today, at Senahun, is notable for being the commercial center of the Kpaa-Mende state, and the headquarters of Madam Yoko, the trader who rose to become leader of the Kpaa-Mende state at the turn of the 20th century. As discussed in detail in Abraham (2003, pg. 151), it was in part through her role as interlocutor between the British and other leaders in the area that she rose to prominence. The eight ruling houses of the chiefdom today however do not trace the lineage of Yoko, but rather the lineages of the original Kpaa-Mende settlers. The chiefdom today also maintains strong links with Kori chiefdom, which was part of the Kpaa-Mende state.

Baiyaingay This house traces the lineage of Baiyaingay an original Kpaa-Mende settler. Their headquarters is at Senahun.

Ngebeh This house is related to Baiyaingay and traces its history as well to the original settlers. Though they had a paramount chief during the 1940s, and thus have full right to contest, they also traditionally hold the role of regent chief after the death of a Baiyanigay chief.

Yovnie This house also traces the lineage of a Kpaa-Mende warrior, and has its headquarters at Senehun.

Sovula This house also traces the lineage of a Kpaa-Mende warrior, and has its headquarters at Senehun.

Kobai This house also traces the lineage of a Kpaa-Mende warrior, and has its headquarters at Gondama.

Yakana This house also traces the lineage of a Kpaa-Mende warrior, and has its headquarters at Senehun.

Fangawai This house also traces the lineage of a Kpaa-Mende warrior, and has its headquarters at Senehun.

Silo This house also traces the lineage of a Kpaa-Mende warrior, and has its headquarters at Gundama.

9.8 Kongbora

The area of present day Kongbora was once part of Bumpeh, a chiefdom under the authority of the Sherbro Caulkers. As described in Abraham (2003, pg. 145) the territory was slowly annexed by the Kpaa-Mende state during the 1870s. The ruler of the Kpaa-Mende in Taiama, Gbenjeh, was a friend of Richard Canray Bah Caluker, who became chief of Bumpeh in 1864. Gbenjeh married his daughter Yogbu to Caulker, and sent her along with her brother Bagi, to be initiated into Caulker's Poro society. After their graduation, it is said that they took the names Bora and Kong respectively, for which the chiefdom gets its name. Bora was a dutiful wife, and was given a town called Mogbagi, near Rotifunk. It was renamed Senehun, in honor of the original Senehun in her father's state.

The ruling families of the chiefdom trace their lineage not to Bora, but to two Kpaa-Mende warriors who rose to prominence somewhat, during the decline of the Kpaa-Mende state which

began with Madam Yoko's death in 1906. At this time, the chiefdom's headquarter was established at Bauya. Today, there is an implicit rotational agreement between the two families.

The current chief is Alfred Saidu Domawa Banya II. He was elected in 1991, and fled between 1995 and 2000, during the war.

Kangaju This house traces the lineage of Kangaju who was first to be recognized as chief of Kongbora, after the final king Lamboi of the Kpaa-Mende state died in 1917 (Abraham, 2003, pg. 166). Kangaju had previously served as regent chief of the Kpaa-Mende state at Taiama.

Banya This house traces its origin to a contemporary of Kangaju named Banya, who succeeded Kangaju as chief.

9.9 Kori

Kori was the center of the Kpaa-Mende state, which had its administrative headquarters in Taiama. The origin myth reported by informants and confirmed in Abraham (2003, pg. 141) is that the settlement was established by a warrior named either Koli, which means leopard, or Kor-lay, which means "one who starts war", who arrived with hunters from Tungea in Gorama Mende and defeated the indigenous Banta. They killed an elephant on the banks of the Taia river and established a town. Abraham notes that Kori is likely an anglicized version of Koli. Koli became the title of the king of Kpaa-Mende.

While Kori was the center of the great state of Kpaa-Mende, its most prominent ruling families trace their origin not to the heads of the Kpaa-Mende state, but rather to warriors who likely settled with Koli. These warriors were likely sub-chiefs to the state centered at Taiama.

Gbapie This family traces its origin to Koli, the warrior who founded Taiama. They have their headquarters at Yando village, nearby to Taiama town.

Breaa This chief traces its origin to an original warrior named Breaa, and has its headquarters at Fogbo village.

Gbenjeh This house traces the lineage of Gbenjeh, who was, depending on accounts, either a son or ally of Koli and ruler of the Kpaa-Mende state in the mid 19th century. This house has its headquarters at Bahoma, but has not held the chieftaincy during the 20th century.

Kpaya This house traces its origin to a warrior named Kpaya, and has its headquarters at Sahina village.

9.10 Kowa

Kowa chiefdom was settled by a warrior named Komai, or Kor-mahei, meaning “warrior chief” in Mende, who came from what is today Valunia chiefdom, in Bo. Komai is a title given in Mende to chiefs who secured power solely through military conquest, and chiefs in Kowa carried this title in the early 20th century (Abraham, pg. 72). Komai likely conquered the Banta as part of the Kpaa-Mende expansion in the early 19th century. The legend is that Komui had the ability to command many red ants to defend his headquarters at Jamaquee. The ruling houses all trace their origin to Kpaa-Mende warriors who arrived with Komai. It is likely that these warriors were sub-chiefs in the larger Kpaa-Mende administrative structure based at Taiama.

The current chief is Deborah Sudie Quee III. She was elected in 2009. The paramount chief during the war, Joe Quee III, fled from 1995 to 2002.

Quee This house traces the lineage to William Quee I, a descendant of an original warrior who held the cheftaincy beginning in 1901.

Kpanabondor This house traces the lineage of a warrior named Kpanabondor who succeeded the Kounder Komai as chief. Their headquarters is at Shenge Town.

Yavana This house traces the lineage of another prominent warrior who fought with Komai. A member of their family succeeded Kpanabondor, Njagbahun is their headquarters.

Tibble This house traces the lineage of a prominent warrior name Tibbie. They have their headquarters at Ngagbema.

Fummeh This house traces the legacy of another prominent warrior and has its headquarters at Mofolley.

Boi-N’jama This house traces the lineage of another prominent warrior. Boi-N’jama I succeeded Yavana as chief. They have their headquarters at Kpandebu.

9.11 Lower Banta

Lower Banta was part of the territory settled by the Banta peoples likely during the early 19th century. The people then were called Mabanta, which is Temne term still used today in a derogatory sense. They likely fled present day Yoni, in fear of being sold into slavery by the Fulas were then expanding into the area. They fled south to eventually cover the present day chiefdoms of Lower and Upper (Mokele) Banta, Bumpeh and Dasse. Abraham (2003, pg 139) describes many Mende traditions describing the Banta, in which they are renowned for their hunting abilities. It is said in the region that each elephant shot by a hunter speaks a word of Banta before dying. As the 19th century wore on, however, they were gradually displaced by the Kpaa-Mende as they expanded southward from Taiama.

Lower Banta, has its headquarters in Gbangbatoke, a trading center and longtime Banta capital. Until very recently, the chiefdom has been led by the Margai family, which counts the first Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai, as a member. Despite its dominance, however, the family are not indigenes to the area, and in fact owe their position of power to the colonial government. The first Margai in the area, Kalike Margai, arrived in Gbangbatoke from present day Sandor chiefdom sometime in the late 19th century, depending on the account. At that time, Baimba Kelley was recognized chief of the Mabanta area, and had his headquarters in Mokelle, named for him or more likely for his predecessor. Upon his arrival Kalike prospered as a trader. The area was later heavily involved in the hut tax rebellion and many local chiefs were killed or arrested and deported. An exact account of what happened to Baimba Kelley cannot be found, but Fyfe reports that shortly after the rebellion was put down in 1899, Kelley had been replaced by Bangali Margai as chief of Mabanta.

Mabanta was later split, some time in the 1910s, into Lower Banta, which had its headquarters at Gbangbatoke, and Upper Banta, which had its headquarters at Mokele. The Margais would go on to dominate the chiefdom's politics. Indeed the family proved to be influential, with their son Sir Milton becoming a leader in the independence party and first prime minister. It is ironic that although Sir Milton was praised by the government for being a uniter of the chiefs in the pre-independence legislative council, he himself came from a family of chiefs that owed their power entirely to the British. As much as the colonial government may have aspired to create in the legislative council government of indigenous rulers, that it was led by someone such as Margai means this was as far as possible from the truth. It is interesting to note that though the Margais continue to dominate the politics of the chiefdom today, their family in fact owns no land. Their headquarters is in the center of Gbangbatoke market, the place where they

were first installed by the British a century ago.

The chiefdom today recognizes five ruling families. The Margais strongly contest the right of other families to run, but the legitimacy of the four other families has been upheld locally based on an election document from 1952, which shows four other families running. In a recent election in 2010, one Jibao Russel won an outright vote against the Margais. Russell, whose relative was listed in the 1952 document, traces his lineage to a chief Nyaiama who was sent to the Gold Coast by the British after the hut tax rebellion. The Margais have used their influence nationally however to invalidate this election and as of 2011, it had yet to be resolved. The other families in Gbangbatok also likely migrated to the area after the Mabanta settled there. The Mabanta lineages today remain in the families of Upper Banta at Mokelle. The chiefdom today receives rents from the Sierra Rutile Company.

Margai This house traces the lineage of Kalike and Bangali Margai.

Nyaiama This house traces the lineage of Nyaiama, a warrior whose family is said to have settled the area after moving from the area around Bonthe island. This family today speaks Mende, so it is unlikely that they are of Mabanta descent. The family has its headquarters in Lagor.

Bota This family also traces its lineage to settlers from Bonthe who arrived with Nyaiama.

Walters This family also traces its lineage to settlers from Bonthe who arrived with Naiama.

Yoyo This house traces the origin of another migrant, likely a trader, from Sembehun in present day Bagruwa chiefdom.

9.12 Ribbi

Ribbi was originally a part of Bumpeh chiefdom ruled by the Caulkers. The area was at the time the site of a profitable timber operation. Around 1860, however under the rule of Thomas Theophilus who was considered a weak ruler, the chief of Ribbi section declared the chiefdom independent (Caulker-Burnet, 2010). Some years later in 1883, Ribbi and the other section chiefs still in Bumpeh were attacked by a group of Temne from Yoni seeking a new port. At that time, a woman named Yah Kai, rose to great prominence by hiring Loko mercenaries from the north to successfully repel the Temnes. Descendants of these mercenaries have their own section in the chiefdom today.

The chief today is Keni Mahoi, a descendant of Yah Kai elected in 2003. The chieftom continues to produce timber today, receiving surface rents from Basco International, a logging operation.

Bendu This house traces the lineage of Yah Kai, and has dominated the chieftaincy for most of the 20th century. They have their headquarters in Bradford.

Cole This house traces the lineage of Bandama Cole, a trader from Freetown. He is thought to have used his influence with the colonial officials to establish himself as Paramount Chief in the very early 20th century. Though his descendants continue to contest in elections, they are widely viewed as outsiders and do not garner many votes.

9.13 Timdale

Timdale is a remote chieftom easily accessible only by the coast. It is thought to have been established by a warrior named Timdale who settled the area before the British. What happened after him is a source of great contention in the chieftom. Local tradition, confirmed by colonial records, says that the chieftom was a source of many disturbances during the hut tax war. The chief at the time Sango Yimbo participated in the rebellion and fled after 1899. What happened after is unclear. By 1912, a colonial reports that James Kaindoh, a former clerk and interpreter for the Sherbro district commissioner was now in charge. It is likely that Kaindoh was appointed by the British in Yimbo's absence, and then managed to hold onto power. A house, which one can still view, was built for the Kaindohs by the colonial administration in 1926 in Mandu, the family's headquarter.

Reports however show that there was great unrest in the chieftom during Kaindoh's rule. His family members had been arrested and hanged for cannibalism and Human Leopardism. Family tradition today argues that these accusations were false and were planted by the Yimbos to drive Kaindoh from power. Indeed, the note from 1912 reports that Kaindoh "is in terror of his life [and] of his people." Though power has alternated between the Yimbos during the twentieth century, rivalry between the two families is still strong. The current chief is from the Yimbo family, Madam Matu Yimbo. She was elected in 1983.

Yimbo This family traces the lineage of Sango Yimbo, chief during the hut tax war. They have their headquarters at Bomotoke.

Kaindoh This family traces the lineage of James Kaindoh. Joseph Kaindoh, a former member of parliament, contested on behalf of this family in the last election in 1983.

9.14 Upper Banta (Mokelle)

Upper Banta traces its history to the Mabanta people, as discussed above under Lower Banta. The first recognized of Mabanta was Baimba Kelley. After the hut tax rebellion, the part of Mabanta with Gbangbatoke was separated to become Lower Banta, to be led by Bangali Margai. The oral record is somewhat unclear in this chiefdom, but it appears that the Jombla family, which claims to get its name from the first son of Baimba Kelley, has dominated the chiefdom since the split. There are two other families that have not ruled, both of which trace their lineage to Bimba Kelley.

The current chief is Tommy Mua-lay-lay, who was elected in 2003. The chiefdom receives rents from the Sierra Rutile corporation.

Jombla This family traces their origin to Jombia, a son of Bimba Kelley. These links however are not verifiable. The family has argued that evidence of their link is that the members of their line are very big in stature. They have their headquarters at Mokelle, which they say is named for Baimba Kelley.

Korgbai This family, which has not held the chieftaincy, also claim a connection to Mokelle, but the link is unclear. Their headquarters is at Mogbondoo.

Dendeh This house traces the lineage of a younger brother of Jombla, another son of Baimba Kelley. They have never held the chieftaincy, and have their headquarters at Tegeben village.

Chapter 10

Port Loko District

10.1 Bureh Kasse Maconte (BKM)

Bureh Kasseh Maconte, often called BKM, is an amalgamation of three chiefdoms, Bureh, Kasseh and Maconte. Bureh and Maconteh were amalgamated in 1947 under force, and Kasseh was added in 1959.

Kasse chiefdom is notable for having once been led by Bai Bureh, the Temne leader who today is lionized on the 1,000 Leone note for his role in mobilizing resistance to the British during the 1898 hut tax rebellion, which occurred two years after Governor Cardew declared a Protectorate over the provinces of Sierra Leone. Bai Bureh was first known as Kebalai, a warrior who staged many successful slave raids throughout the Scarcies region beginning as early as 1865, and later led the Temne in a spectacularly violent war against the Susu in 1885 (Wylie, 1977, pg. 143). Though Kasse was originally founded by Loko and Susu hunters, Kebalai took over the region after the war and was recognized by the British in 1885 as Bai Bureh of Kasseh. Though this chiefdom was relatively small and unimportant economically, Bai Bureh was able to use his relationships built during his career as a raider to lead the Temne of the area in an impressive guerrilla war against the British. He is generally remembered as a hero in most oral traditions, except, as Wylie notes, in the traditions of eastern Temne land where some remember him as an opportunist, who took opposition to the British as a moment to build his own prestige. The influence of the Bureh legend is strong in the chiefdom today. An ostensible burial site of British soldiers killed by Bureh's warriors, the location of which is kept secret by the tribal authority, is a location of some symbolic importance in the chiefdom today.

One point that has not been emphasized until recently (e.g. in Whyte, 2012) is that a reason for Bureh's, and indeed other chief's, opposition to the declaration of the Protectorate was that a colonial government, which answered to a growing abolitionist sentiment in Britain, raised the

specter of abolition in the provinces. In 1923, some years later, it was estimated that 15% of the protectorate population was in servitude, and the chiefs themselves were frequently large slave owners (Arkley, 1965). Chiefs, particularly in the Temne areas, had benefited a great deal from the slave trade and were wont to give it up, creating strong incentives to oppose the government.¹

The other two chiefdoms have similar origin stories, and were led by warriors who established themselves in the area. Bureh chiefdom was established by Bai Bureh Hinga Youro, a warrior who first settled at Rokafap along the Scarcies river. At this point Mange town, the site of an important and beautiful colonial ear bridge on the way to Kambia district, also in the chiefdom, was settled by Pa Mange, who befriended Hinga Youro. At Mange's death, Youro extended his authority to Mange's area. After Youro's death, his son Bai Hinga Bando succeeded him, and moved his headquarters to the growing trading settlement at Mange.

Maconte chiefdom was founded by Pa Kanlu, a mandingo who migrated from present day Guinea to settle at Rokaihimbora, which is taken to refer to the fertile land in the area near the bodies of water. Kanlu's descendants frequently had the name Conteh, which gave the chiefdom its name. The amalgamated chiefdom today has twelve families, all of whom trace their descendants to warriors who rose to prominence in the region in the end of the 19th century, in some cases during the Susu war of 1885, and later during Bai Bureh's opposition to the British. Each is associated with a particular town, which we write in parenthesis.

The current chief, a former member of Parliament, is a descendant of Kabalai.

Bai Hinga Yuroh (Rokatap) This family traces the lineage of Bai Hinga Yuroh descendants who remained at Rokafap, after the head quarters of Bureh was moved to Mange.

Bai Hinga Bando (Mange) . This family traces the lineage of Bai Hinga Bando, a son of Yuroh.

Bai Hinga Lamina Lontho Kamara (Mange Barrick) This family traces the lineage of a cousin of Bai Hinga Bando, who settled near by at Mange Barrick. Lontho succeeded Bai Hinga Maray Bando, the brother of Bai Hinga Bando, who himself succeeded Bando.

Bai Hinga Lamina Lontho Bangura (Mange) This family traces the lineage of a nephew of Lontho Kamara. He was born to Kamara's sister, who herself had the Bangura surname. He succeeded his uncle to the throne.

¹Domestic slavery was only outlawed in the Protectorate in 1928.

Bai Bureh Kathena (Kasseh Bamoi) This family traces the lineage of a Loko warrior who ruled Kasseh before Kabelai. His symbol of authority before the British was a *kaborkolma*, an animal tail.

Bai Bureh Kaiffee (Kasseh Baimoi) This family traces the lineage of a cousin of Kathena who succeeded him after his death.

Bai Bureh Ali Sabeh (Kasseh Bamoi) This family trace the lineage of another cousin of Kathena, who was the third chief of Kasseh after the Loko invasion and first to be recognized by the British.

Bai Bureh Lamina Kamara (Kasseh Rokthenti) This family traces the lineage of a warrior who migrated from Lugbu chiefdom in Bo district and established himself here in the mid 19th century. He was recognized as chief before Kabelai.

Bai Bureh Kabelai (Kasseh Rogbalan) This house traces the lineage of Bai Bureh Kabelai, the famous warrior of the hut tax rebellion. Though deported to the Gold Coast in 1898, he returned in 1905 and ruled for three years until his death.

Bai Bureh Momoh-Lugbu Bangura (Rogberay) This family traces the lineage of a man who Kabelai passed the staff to while he was in exile. The family is said to have migrated from Lugbu chiefdom in Bo district.

Bai Bureh Molai Kadi (Mabureh Kasseh) This family traces the lineage of a nephew of Bai Bureh Kabelai, who got his name from his mother Kadi, the elder sister of Kabelai.

Kaihimbora (Macoteh) This family traces the lineage of Pa Kanlu, the founder of Macoteh chiefdom. His son Simera Boroh was the first recognized leader of the chiefdom to be recognized by the British. Successive members of the family ruled until amalgamation.

10.2 Buya Romende

Buya Romende is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Buya and Romende, completed in 1945. Buya chiefdom traces its origin to Pa Buya, a Loko warrior who took the area from the Temnes after migrating from present day Bombali district. Romende chiefdom traces the lineage of Bai Fonti Satti, a Temne warrior who from nearby Magbureh. He invited many warriors to help

him drive the Lokos from Romende area, each of whom has a ruling family in Romende. The chiefdom has two families from Buya, N’Kennedy and Sesay, and seven from Romende, Fonti Gbangba, Fonti Satti, Fonti Mohamado, Fonti N’gbamanti, Fonti Mami, Fonti Sillah, and Fonti Konko.

The chiefdom is notable for the role of secret societies in the elections. Elders called *kapr masams*, oversee the election. Each candidate submits a cowry shell, called *jagay*, to the *kapr masims*, who place them into a hole containing water. The candidate whose *jagay* floats is considered the one to have been chosen, as chief, and will be elected by the tribal authority.²

The current chief is Bai Banta Kargbo Kennedy II, elected in 1989. He fled during the war in 1995, but still exerted influence from afar. The families of Buya appear to dominate the chiefdom today. Only members of Buya families participated in the election of 1989.

Sesay The Sesay family traces their origin to a group of Mandingo warriors who fought off the original Loko settlers of Pa Buya. They were the first to be recognized as chiefs by the British.

N’Kennedy This family traces the lineage of Bai Banta Gbeti Gbara, who succeeded the Sesays in the mid to late 19th century. The story of his ascendance hinges on the role of the family members as medicine men. The Sesay family had apparently cast a spell on the office of Paramount Chief that would kill anyone crowned not from the family. The N’Kennedy family was able to break that spell. The family is thought to have originated in Batkanu, which was a colonial outpost during that period, and to have been very close allies of the colonial officials. It is possible that the name N’Kennedy was appropriated from Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy, Governor of Sierra Leone at various points between 1852 and 1872.

Romende This chiefdom has seven ruling families, all of whom trace the lineage of various Fonti Gbangba, Fonti Satti, Fonti Mohamado, Fonti N’gbamanti, Fonti Mami, Fonti Sillah, and Fonti Konko.

10.3 Dibia

Dibiya chiefdom traces its origin to Bai Sheika Enpikarr. Enpikarr is a Temne word meaning gun. Enpikarr settled originally at Makump, a town that is strategically located on top of a hill, allowing him to see his enemies from a distance in the event of attack. From this hill, he was

²Titles such as *kapr masam* were originally appropriated from Muslim invaders, likely those who begat the Sesay family. For details see Turay, 1971

able to prevent attacks from the leaders of Maforki chiefdom in Port Loko town in particular. He gained prominence for his defense of Makump in this battle. Any chief of Dibiya holds the title Sheika, a reference to a spirit named Samu Sheika, who is said to have helped Enpikarr in battle.

Kargbo This house traces the lineage of Enpikarr himself.

Lugbu This house traces the lineage of Bai Sheika Lugbu, who fought along side Enpikarr. Lugbu was recognized as a successor by Enpikarr, but created some consternation in the Kargbo family by naming himself as chief before the official pronouncement of Enpikarr's death.

Bundu This family traces the lineage of a chiefdom speaker of Bai Sheika Lugbu named Bundu. After Lugbu's death, Bundu was appointed regent chief. He pleaded with the chiefdom to continue as Paramount Chief, and was elected under the condition that his family would never again contest. This agreement was not followed however, and a second Bundu chief reigned was elected in 1974.

Tink This family rose to prominence after the death of the first Bai Sheika Bundu. Upon his death, Tink, a court messenger and ally of district commissioner Malcolm, used his influence with the district commissioner to be appointed chief. His family has never held the throne since.

10.4 Kaffu Bullom

This chiefdom, on the Lungi peninsula, is site of Freetown's international airport and one of the few chiefdoms to trace its lineage to the original settlers who met with the Portuguese in the 16th century. The first settlers of the chiefdom were Bulloms, who are believed to have arrived as fishermen. Today, the chiefdom traces its origins to Pa Gberek, who was given a bronze symbol of authority by the Portuguese. The present chief, Bai Shebora Sheba Gberek II traces the lineage of this man. One of the first treaties with the British was signed with a leader of this area named Bai Shebora in 1827. A second treaty in 1849 was signed ceding some of the regions territory to the government. The chieftaincy in the area is hotly contested, as it is so close to the capital, Freetown. In the last election, in 2010, many members of the diaspora returned and attempted to contest.

This chiefdom is also notable for one chief having had a chief installed during the rule of Siaka Stevens. Shebora Yome, a Temne, who is not thought to have had ties to a lineage in the

chiefdom, was appointed by the government in 1973, after the chief had been held for sometime by a regent. Upon Stevens's death in 1988, Yome was deposed. The chieftaincy remained vacant until Bai Shebora Komkanda II's election in 1991.

Kaffu Bullom is also one of the few chieftaincies to remain active during the war, as the Lungi peninsula was a headquarter base for various international combatants such as ECOWAS.

Sherbora Sheba Gbreh This family traces the lineage of Gbreh, a leader though to have existed at the time of the Portuguese. They have their headquarters in Yongoro.

Sherbora Dura Shiaka After the death of a Gbreh chief in the early 19th century, Pa Sesi Sangbe took over, but died during his initiation—in “kantha”. His death frightened the other candidates, but Dura Shiaka from Madina stepped forward and was accepted as chief by the British in 1873. Some members of this house claim a relation to the Gbreh family, but there is disagreement about the nature of this relation.

Madigba Foday This house traces the lineage of Madigba Foday, a leader near Yongoro village at the turn of the 20th century. He was related to the Gbreh, and was elected chief in 1899.

Sherbora King Debi This family traces the lineage of another relative of Gbreh. He became chief in 1876.

William Sheka This family traces the lineage of William Sheka, who is believed to have migrated from Moyamba and to have intermarried with the Gbreh family. He was given a piece of land at Rogbanebana, and became chief in 1881 after the death of King Debi.

Komkanda This family traces the lineage of Komkanda. Komkanda sacrificed greatly on behalf a Gbreh chief in the 1910s, and was imprisoned by the government for a crime in fact committed by Gbreh. As compensation for this sacrifice, the Gbreh chief stipulated in his will that Komkanda succeed him as chief once he had returned from prison. Komkanda was elected in 1918.

10.5 Koya

Koya chiefdom is another important chiefdom, just outside of the Western Area, the administrative area covering the Western Peninsula around Freetown. The chiefdom includes in its

boundaries the town of Masiaka, and important junction on the road from Freetown to Bo and Makeni. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Koya was an important trading chiefdom for both timber, and earlier slaves.

Koya chiefdom traces its origins to a warrior called Farma Tami who is thought to have migrated from present day Guinea. Farr Ma is thought to have had supernatural powers that aided him in battle. The current chief is Kompa Bombolai II, who was elected in 1973. The chief did not leave the chiefdom during the war.

Farma This house traces the lineage of the first ruler of Koya, and has their headquarters at Safroko Lamakondo.

Kekent This ruling house traces the lineage of a court messenger and logger named Kompa Kekent, who obtained prominence in the area during the early 19th century. This family traces its origin to Cline town, in Freetown, a settlement established in 1787 as a settlement for British blacks.

Keforo (Dumbuya) This house originated from Kompa Keforo, who obtained prominence in the region, likely as a trader, during the 19th century. They are related to the Bomboli ruling house and have their headquarters at Mataka village.

Kemant This house traces the lineage of Kompa Kemant, who is believed to have migrated from Masimera and married Yabom Maya Falla, a daughter of Kompa Bombolai I. He took the chieftaincy after Bomboli's death.

Bombolai This family traces its origin to a successful slave trader named Kompa Bombolai I. His family has their origins at Robis in Calaba town of Freetown.

Kamara Yek This family traces the lineage of Kompa Kamara Yek I, who rose to prominence in the early 20th century. This family ruled during the mid 20th century, and has its headquarters at Magbeni village.

10.6 Lokomassama

Loko Massama, an expansive chiefdom on the road from Port Loko to Lungi, traces its origin to three warriors who migrated from Masimera and drove Bulloms and Susus from the area in battle. They first settled at Roloko, and Somka Moko Massama, the eldest, became first

chief. A descendant of Somka called Ba Mauro, signed one of the first treaties with the British government in 1847. Loko Massama was also one of the first chiefdoms to be identified on early maps from that period. The current chief is Bai Maro Kombo II, a Temne elected in 2009. His predecessor Bai Sama Laminasam III, who died in 2008, did not flee during the war.

Samaya This house traces the lineage of Baisama Lamina Sam, first son of Somka Moko Massama. He led the chiefdom after Massama's death, and fought several battles defending the land.

Bomboya This house traces the lineage of Bai Mara Raka, the husband of a sister of Baisama Lamina Sam named Dorainka. After Sam's death, he became chief.

Laminaya This house traces the lineage of a Kuranko warrior who assisted Bai Maro Raka to defend the chiefdom. After the battle, Laminaya was given control over the section of Kombrabai, and established itself as a ruling house. Laminaya succeeded Mara Raka as chief.

10.7 Maforki

Maforki chiefdom, surrounds the district headquarters of Port Loko town, and has been an important town since at least the 16th century, as documented extensively in Wylie (1977). It traces its history to Bai Farma Tami, a Mane invader from the north who established himself as a ruler of the Matimbo state, which spread over many present day chiefdoms in the region. Though this Mane kingdom eventually declined by the middle of the 17th century, the Temne, and to some extent the Bullom, of the region, who had been present before the Mane, were able to in someways appropriate the aristocratic structure established by the Manes. The Mane themselves had preserved a system of landed *kaprs* or sub-chiefs, who would continue to exert influence over their sections. (Wylie, pg. 16). Maforki today is an amalgamation of two separate chiefdoms, Maforki and Bakeloko completed in 1948, but both chiefdoms had been part of the Matimbo state, and the families have along history of collaboration.

Wylie traces the current families of Maforki to around 1815. Susu slave raiders had dominated the chiefdom for some time, waging violent wars against the Temne. In that year, however, a Temne named Moriba Kindo began to fight back. Kindo was an *alimami*, or subchief of a village. This was a title established under the Susu for local administrators, distinct from the landed *kaprs*. He was a prominent leader and had attained the title of *santigi*, which means sub chief of a town. He organized the other *alimamis* of the area to oppose the Susu ruler, Ibrahima

Konkori, who was eventually beheaded at the end of a protracted and bloody battle. From 1816 onwards, the area would be led by a conference of subchiefs, *alimamis*, lead by an *alkali*, or ruler, who they were responsible for electing. In this sense, much of the feudal administrative structure established by the Susu was retained after their overthrow, though attempts were made to make the system more accountable. Many of the *kaprs* were replaced by *alimamis* and their land rights were transferred as well.

After Kindo's death in 1825, the chiefdom, led by Alkali Fatma Brima Kamara, who had fought with Kindo, began to expand at the expense of Loko neighbors. Kamara was helped in part, by strong diplomatic ties to the British government in Freetown. These ties continued, however, until the 1880s, as resistance to an increasingly activist government began to build in surrounding chefdoms. Throughout the hut tax war, alkalis in Maforki would provide covert support to the resistance, while at times appearing to maintain their friendship with the British. Wylie recognizes that at this point, though the chieftaincy was nominally headed by the *alkali*, he was always careful to consult his *alimamis*, who held a great deal of indepenent authority. In the period after the hut tax war, the British began interacting with Alimamis individually, and the administrative structure of the chiefdom became fragmented, the influence of the *alkali* waning further. It was only until later in the 20th century, as the two chiefdoms comprising much of Kindo's former territory, now called Maforki and Bakeloko, were amalgamated. The amalgamation of Maforki and Bakeloko was completed in 1948, and Alikali Modu III was elected chief.

Today, the chiefdom has many ruling families, who each trace their origin to various Almamis over the area, including those who at some point had been Alkali. The chief during the war, Alikali Modu II, was murdered by the RUF in 1998. As of June 2011, there was no sitting chief in the chiefdom, as Bai Forki Sonkoi III died in 2006 and a replacement had not yet been found.

Forki Magbankitha This family traces the lineage of Bai Forki, the chief of old Port Loko town, who ruled during the 1810s. He was the son of Gbonkotho-Gbankatha, a warrior and hunter who settled in the region with his family. The son took the name obai forki, meaning chief of Maforki, using an old Muslim term from the Mane invaders. Gbonkotho-Gbankatha had many sons, each of whom became entitled to rule the town. It is unclear though, whether this origin myth has been constructed to create a sense of unity between many alimamis who ruled the area surrounding old port loko town.

Forki Sonkoi This house trace the lineage of Sonkoi, a son of Gbonkotho-Gabankatha.

Forki Bath-Polon This house trace the lineage of a son of Gbonkotho-Gabankatha who settled at Bath-Polon.

Forki Rofenka This house trace the lineage of a son of Gbonkotho-Gabankatha who settled at Rofenka.

Forki Kafakeh This house trace the lineage of a son of Gbonkotho-Gabankatha who settled at Sherbora Kafakeh.

Forki Penthagbo This house is named for a descendent of Gbonkotho-Gabankatha. He was elected but died in kantha, or during the initiation ceremony.

Kandebeli This house emerged when a local man was able to become elected chief through the influence of the district commissioner. Though his family is allowed to participate in elections, the title Kandebeli refers to the fact that the house is viewed as illegitimate.

Alikali Modu This ruling house, from the Bakeloko part of the chiefdom, traces its origin to a warrior who fought with Kindo against the Susus. These warriors led a long succession of chiefs in the Bakeloko area, and heavily intermarried.

Alikali Fatmabrima This house traces the lineage of another *alimami* involved in the fight with Kindo.

Alikali Moribaya This house traces the lineage of another *alimami* involved in the fight with Kindo.

Alikali Mayla This house traces the lineage of another *alimami* involved in the fight with Kindo.

10.8 Marampa

This chiefdom traces its origin to an elephant hunter named Kekelay Kaba, who is said to have come from Mali in the 16th century with his wife Fatmata Jabbi and son Keleh Kaba. When he arrived, he met the Lokos already living there. The next day, he went to the hills and killed a big elephant, which he brought to town and shared with the village. He is said to have greeted them with the word “maraba” in his language. This was mispronounced as marampa, which

gave the chiefdom its name. Kekelay's descendants comprise the chiefdoms of the family today. Again, however, it is unclear whether this relation between the households has been constructed as a myth to unite the families. Another story consistent with the evidence is that Kekelay was a Mane invader who established himself as chief of the area, ruling through alimamis as described in Wylie (1977). The families today, trace the lineage of these alimamis, who may or may not have been descendants of Kekelay. Wylie (1977, pg. 134) notes that the chieftaincy of Marampa was relatively stable throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

The present chief is Bai Koblo Queen Kabia. The chief is a man, but his family took the name Queen from Queen Victoria. He was elected in 2002. The chief during the war, Alie Koblo Queen Kabia II, to whom the current chief is related, was elected in 1986, but was dethroned by the NPRC 1992, only to be reinstated in 2002. It is likely that this dethronement had something to do with the fact that Marampa is the site of a particularly important iron ore mine, run today by the London Mining Company. The mine, however, has been active since it was developed by the Development Corporation of Sierra Leone in 1933. The headquarters of the chiefdom is in Lunsar.

Gbamathie This family traces its origins to the first son of Kekelay, who succeeded him.

Pathbana This house traces the lineage of a second son of Kekelay who ruled after Gbamathie.

Sankolo This house traces the lineage of a third son of Kekelay, who ruled after Pathbana.

Kegbelay This house traces the lineage of a fourth son of Kekelay, who ruled after Sankolo.

Queen This ruling house traces its lineage to a family member of the Gbamathie family. It is said that when a member of this family won, he chose the name Queen for his house, as Queen Victoria was crowned on that same day, May 24, 1819.

Kennedy This family also traces its lineage to the Gbamathie family, but also has connections in Tonkolili.

10.9 Masimera

Masimera was a chiefdom of much unrest during the 19th century, as it was constantly fought over by various parties, given its importance as a trade route. In 1873, however, a professional

Koranko warrior named Yirandigi, was able to establish himself, as Bai Simera Kamal. Simera established himself by fighting many battles, extending his influence into Marampa, Koya and even Yoni (Wylie, pg. 135).

He is said to have married four wives, each of whom had sons which went on to establish ruling families, all of whom have the name Bangura. Women have an important role in the history of Masimera, and Simera is thought to have ascended to the chieftaincy in part due to help from his wife. She was laundering at the river one day, before Simera took the chieftaincy in the area, where she came across a devil holding power over the chieftaincy. She brought it home with her, and with its assistance Simera was crowned.

Simera is also notable for having led one of the earliest campaigns of opposition against the colonial government, beginning in 1872. He attempted at times, to close off trade to the region, and disagreed with the policy of accommodation taken by other chiefs at the time, however, he was never able to fully convince the others, and accommodation continued until the hut tax rebellion. (Wylie, pg. 133).

Masimera was briefly overseen by Marampa chieftaindom in an amalgamation that lasted from 1953 to 1987. The current chief is Bai Simera Thongla IV, a Temne elected in 2010. The chief during the war, Bai Simera Ponko Lamin Bangura, stayed there until his death of natural causes in 1999.

Thonkla This family traces the lineage of the eldest son of the first wife of Simera, Ya Thonkla. Her son succeeded his father.

Nase This family traces the lineage of the son of Ya Nase, the second wife of Simera.

Ponko This family traces the lineage of the son of Ya Ponko, the third wife of Simera.

Gbarah This family traces the lineage of the son of Ya Gbarah, the fourth wife of Simera.

10.10 Sanda Magbolontor

Sanda Magbolontor traces its origins to a warrior named Brima Sanda Kablie, who is said to have been the brother of Bai Bureh of Kasseh. He is said to have at a time exerted authority over the area from the present day Sanda Loko all the way up to Kamakwe. Sanda Magbolontor is interpreted in Limba as meaning “come and be shackled” a warning that those Limba who

might cross Kablie would be enslaved. The chiefdom today is split between Limbas and Temnes, who have alternated the chieftaincy during the 20th century.

As of June 2011, there was no standing chief here as, the previous chief Brima S.S. Sesay, who held the chieftaincy beginning in 1978, died in 2010. The chiefdom headquarters are in Sendugu.

Brima Lebbay This house traces the lineage of Brima Sanda Kablie.

Turay This house traces the lineage of Dura Gbafah, later called Brima Sanda Turay, the husband of one of Brima Sanda Kablie's sisters. After the hut tax rebellion subsided, Kablie offered his brother in law to the British as head of the chiefdom as he feared arrest. Turay was crowned chief shortly thereafter.

Sesay This Limba ruling house emerged sometime after Turay's death, when two Temne brothers were in contention for the chieftaincy. They could not agree on who would step down and so the district commissioner suggested that a Limba might be chosen. The Limbas brought forward Kandeh Dauda Sesay, and this family today traces his lineage.

Sillah This house originated through intermarriage. A man of the Sillah family married a daughter of the Lebbay family. Their son, Sanda Kafor Sillah was elected paramount chief in the early 20th century.

10.11 Tikantupa Makama Saffroko (TMS)

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of three chiefdoms that was completed during the 1950s. Each chiefdom traces its origins to prominent warriors. It is unclear what time they arrived. Tikantupa was named by Pa Koleh, a warrior who settled in the area around the hill he called Tinkatupa, after conquering the Lokos in battle. Makama traces its lineage to Masawanka, a great warrior who came from present day Guinea, in the east, and wrestled the area from the Lokos and Temnes. He settled first at Gbonko Mabara, where he dug his sword into the earth, indicating the battle had finished. Saffroko was founded by a warrior and a herbalist called Farma. Farma hailed from Bombali district, near Batkanu. His herbs gave him special ability on the battlefield and allowed him to quickly conquer the Temnes of the area.

The current chief is Bai Kamatenkeh II, of Makama, elected in 2002. The chief during the war was Bai Kurrai III, who fled for one year before dying of natural causes in the chiefdom in

1995. Dibia chiefdom was briefly amalgamated to TMS during the 1960s.

Masawanka-Conteh This house traces the lineage of Masawanka, first chief of Makama.

Fallah This house traces its lineage to indigens of the chiefdom who lived in Makama before Masawanka's arrival. The story of Fallah's ascendance is somewhat strange. The Maswankas were Muslims, and did not drink alcohol. At a certain time, however, it was agreed that in order for one to take the chieftaincy oath, one must drink alcohol. The Masawankas could not participate, and so gave their daughter to a Fallah for marriage. The son of this family was thus not a Muslim and so could drink alcohol. He became the first chief of this family.

Kama This family also traces its lineage to a family who lived in Makama before Masawanka's arrival.

Kurrari This house traces the lineage of Kolleh, the founder of Tinkatupa.

Sinneh This house is related by marriage to the Kolleh house.

Masinneh This house is also related by marriage to the Kolleh house.

Oshengbeh This house is the only ruling house of Saffroko and traces the lineage of Farma. They have a close relationship with the Kurrai ruling house of Tinkatupa.

Chapter 11

Pujehun District

11.1 Barri

Barri chiefdom was established by an elephant hunter named Kahuan, who settled at first in a village called Faweima. He was said to have been terrifically ugly, and his name is a reference to this. He established himself as a prominent ivory trader in Faweima, and the chiefdom sprung up around the town. The majority of the chiefdom's families trace their lineage to a group of leaders who signed a treaty with the British in 1885.

The current chief is Vandi Kong Magona, who has his headquarters at Potoru. The chief during the war, who called himself by the same name, fled the chiefdom in 1991 and died before returning in 2001.

Kallon This house traces the lineage of Jaminah Kallon, who was the first to sign a treaty with the British. He is the grandson of Kahall, the brother of Kahuan.

Magona This house merged through intermarriage. A sister of Jaminah Kallon married a man from the Magona family, Siaka, who would later become chief.

Borbor This house traces the lineage of a brother of Jaminah Kallon.

Yajowai This house traces the lineage of another "brother" of Jaminah Kallon.

Goba This house traces the lineage of another brother of Kallon.

Bockarie This house traces the lineage of Bockarie Wai, who was part of the group of chiefs who initially signed a treaty with the British.

Nyalor This family was also part of the original party that signed the original treaty with the British.

Jabatiwi This family traces the lineage of an associate of Kahall, the brother of Kahuan.

Gbennie This house traces the lineage of another member of the party that signed the original treaty with the British.

11.2 Gallines Peri

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms Gallines and Peri completed in 1945. Gallines traces its origins to a hunter named Gideon, who migrated from Mali. He was a great hunter, and first settled at Gangba in Mano Sakrim chiefdom. He married, and gave birth to a son named Kadehen, who left the chiefdom and moved to settle at Dumagbay in Gallines. Kadehen gave birth to Siaka, who settled in Gendema and asserted control over the chiefdom in a series of violent wars in the mid 19th century. It is at this time that the term *massaquoi*, meaning king, was adopted by Siaka. The crown was later passed to his son, King Manna, who succeeded his father in 1843 and came to amass great personal wealth, in no small part due to the sale of slaves to Pedro Blanco, a notorious slaver in the area (Abraham, pg. 60). Manna's successor, however, called Jaya, was much weaker, and by the time the British arrived to sign treaties in 1885, there was much dissension in the region between the various sub chiefs, each vying to become *massaquoi*, which reflects the fragmented nature of the families today across towns.

Peri was a much smaller chiefdom, founded by two hunters named Kamageh and Torgbah. At the time of King Siaka, they had arrived in the chiefdom, and presented him with the gift of ivory in exchange for a piece of land at Maboima. Kamageh gave birth to Vandi Guya, and became the first ruler of a semi-autonomous region in Peri. The chieftaincy was held by regent chiefs since the death of Sylvester L.B. Massaquoi in 1990 until 2005 when Alhaji J.B. Kamara-Koroma was elected. The chief receives surface rents from alluvial diamond miners and a rubber plantation.

Massaquoi Sembahun This house traces its lineage to the subchiefs of Mewa section who signed the Gallines treaty with the government in 1885.

Massaquoi Gendema This house traces the lineage of the subchiefs from Dakuna section who signed the treaty.

Jakayma This house, which has never held the throne in Gallines Peri, traces its lineage to another prominent family during the colonial period.

11.3 Kpaka

This chiefdom traces the lineage of Zachary Rogers, a Royal Africa Company agent from Liverpool in Britain, who was the chief agent at Sherbro from 1677-1681 (Fyfe, pg. 10). He had children with a Sherbro woman, and his descendants gained prominence as traders in the area. Sometime in the early 19th century, his descendants were in a land dispute settled by Massaquoi Siaka at Gendema. At the end of the dispute, the Rogers won, and Gbessay Rogers was selected to be the first paramount chief of Kpaka chiefdom. Either Gbessay, or a relation of his, married into Siaka's family, sealing the deal. Today Kpaka has one ruling family, the Rogerses.

The current chief is Alhaji John S. Rogers, elected in 2006. He has his headquarters at Massam Kpaka. Tejan M. Rogers, elected in 1963 was chief during the war. He fled to Bo in 1994 and returned in 2001, dying in 2002. The chiefdom receives surface rents from both alluvial diamond mining and various agriculture projects.

Rogers This family traces the lineage of Zachary Rogers.

11.4 Makpele

Makpele traces its origin to a warrior named Jon Bureh, who migrated from Vonjama in present day Liberia. He came with other warriors, each of whom established themselves in villages in the area, each of which is now defined as a section. Gombu Tegeh settled at Gombu village in Selimeh section, Varay Gonda settled along the road to Kenema, near the Gola forest. Gbangbana Jueyeh settled in the area bordering present day Barri chiefdom, and Jon Bureh occupied a hill at Tomagbema, where he could watch for potential attacks. This is where the chiefdom established its headquarters, Zimmi. These original settlers were likely Gola, but the chief of the chiefdom today identifies as Mende.

The present chief is Prince Metziger Bondo Konneh II, elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Monya Tamu, fled in 1991 to Freetown, where he died of natural causes in 1996.

Tamu This house traces its origin to the original settlers at Seilima.

Gbavia This house arose out of marriage. A Gbavia family member married a woman from the Tamu house.

Konneh This family traces the lineage of the original settlers at Seitua.

Kengo This house traces the lineage of a family of strangers who migrated from Sorogbema. They were hosted by the Konnehs, and later married into that family.

Goma This house traces the lineage of the original settlers at Gomayawuma.

11.5 Malen

This chiefdom traces the lineage of a warrior named Bonnagbay who settled in the area in the 18th century. He is said to have found the area uninhabited, and chose to settle there. Later, he was joined by another group of settlers led by Bockarie Susu, and later others, whose descendants comprise the ruling families today. The chiefdom is named for the Malen river.

The current chief is Victor Brima S. Kebbie, a Mende elected in 1980. During the war he fled to the United States, and only returned in 2003. The chiefdom receives surface rents from various alluvial mining and agriculture projects.

Kebbie This house traces to a group of migrants from the Gandon region of the chiefdom in the 19th century. They were led by Tom Kebbie and settled in Kowa and Taukunor section.

Sengova This house traces the lineage of a group of people who settled at Sengeila section of the chiefdom, led by Sengova.

O'neil This house recognizes Alpha O'neil Gbator, who migrated to the chiefdom in the late 19th century to settle at Bahoin section, and intermarried with the Kebbie house.

Bakundu This family traces the lineage of a family that settled at Basseleh town in the chiefdom.

11.6 Mano Sakrim

This chiefdom traces the lineage of Joe Mannah Fawundu, a Krim fisherman who it is believed migrated from present day Guinea. He established a settlement, and was able to defend his

territory from many attacks from the Mende. He signed a treaty with the British in 1883, and his descendants have held the chieftaincy ever since.

The current chief is Madam Edna G. Fawundu, a Krim elected in 1983. She left, fleeing violence during the war from 1992 to 1998.

Fawundu This family traces the lineage of Joe Mannah Fawundu.

11.7 Kpanga Kabonde

Kpanga Kabonde, which surrounds the district capital of Pujehun, is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, completed in 1950. Kpanga chiefdom traces its origin to a Krim settlement led by Wobe Jamahun. He assisted the Krim in fighting off many invaders. Kabonde chiefdom was a small chiefdom at the time of the amalgamation, only six towns. It was founded by Momoh Koroma, a powerful herbalist who is said to have migrated from Mali and settled in the area assisting Wobe Jamahun in securing the area from invaders.

The current chief is Alimamy Jaya Kai Kai, elected in 2003. The chief during the war, A.B.M. Jah, fled the chiefdom for Bo in 1993. He returned in 1997 and died in 1998 of natural causes. The chiefdom today receives rents from alluvial mining and agricultural projects.

Koroma This ruling house traces the lineage of Momoh Korma, and has its headquarters at Payhala town in Kabonde.

Kai Kai This house traces its origin to a family prominent in the area. It is not clear whether this Kai Kai refers to the same Kai Kai in other chiefdoms in the regions. This family held the chieftaincy after the amalgamation in 1950.

French This house traces the lineage of P.M. French who settled in the area in the early 20th century. They have never held the chieftaincy, but are recognized as an important family.

Jah This house traces its the lineage of a settler who arrived from Kenema in the early 20th century.

Silah This house traces the lineage of Bockarie Silah, who is thought to have migrated from Melekuray in Guinea during the early 20th century. They have never held a seat, but have contested in each of the last two elections.

11.8 Kpanga Krim

This chiefdom was settled originally by the Krim. In the late 19th century however there was an invasion of Fullahs seeking to take over the area. A warrior named Henry Tucker from Bonthe, with links to the Tucker family, was able to partner with the Krim to defend the land. He was recognized as first chief by the colonial authorities, and his family has alternated in the chieftaincy with a Krim family since the early 20th century.

The current chief is Samuel A.S. Gbonda, elected in 1979. He fled the chiefdom in 1993 until 1998. The chiefdom currently receives some rents from small alluvial mining companies.

Gbonda This is a Krim family which lived in the chiefdom before the arrival of Henry Tucker. They have their headquarters at Bayama town.

Tucker This family traces the lineage of Henry Tucker, and has its headquarters at Gobaru.

11.9 Pejeh (Futa Pejeh)

Pejeh chiefdom traces its origins to a group of warriors led by a particularly violent man named Kaaleh-gbao, which means “to catch the bones of human beings”. The warriors came from Manjedu in Kono district. The current chief is Madam Haja Miatta Songua Kromoa, elected in 2003. The chief during the war, Moigua Koroma, fled in 1993 and died of natural causes in Freetown in 1998.

Malikie Koroma This ruling house traces the lineage of Maada Malikie Koroma, one of the first warriors from Kono. His brother Kaaleh Gbao was first to be recognized as chief by the British. Maada Malikie was recognized after him.

Kallon This house traces the lineage of Boakay Ginnah Kallon, a nephew to Malikie Koroma. When Maada Malikie was ill, the British sent for him to sign a treaty. He was too weak to go, and sent his nephew instead. After his death, his nephew became chief.

Salia This house is related to the Kallon family by marriage. Boakay Ginnah had a sister named Bintu Gbanjahun. Her son, who took his father’s name of Salia. After Boakay’s death, Bintu became chief; after her death, Salia.

Gbanjahun This family traces the other relations of Bintu Gbanjahun other than Salia.

Yah This ruling house traces the lineage of Boimayah, a warrior who fought along side Kalegbo. He settled in a village called Pejewa, for which the chiefdom was named.

11.10 Soro Gbema

Soro Gbema is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Soro and Gbema. Soro chiefdom was founded by a warrior named Kemoh Zoker, and another named Hyie, who are thought to have come from Liberia during the early 19th century. They were Vai, a people who speak a Mane language and inhabit much of Liberia. The Vai are notable for having developed their own written script around 1833. Zokor is said to be a Vai word, referring to his callous nature, and influence as a powerful secret society leader. Gbema traces its origin to another Vai warrior who is also said to have come from Liberia, and to have fought against Zokor, but eventually to have settled in peace. His name was Kaikai Lango.

Soro Gbema is notable for being the site of the Ndogboyosoi, or bush devil, war in 1982, a spate of violence driven by conflict between supporters of the APC and SLPP. There was no chief during the war, as chief Vandi Pabai had died in 1991. Chief B.V.S. Zombo was elected in 2002.

Zoker This family traces the lineage of Kemoh Zoker.

Massaquoi This family is related to King Siaka of Gallines Peri. Sometime during Siaka's rule during the mid 19th century, there was a slave revolt in Soro Gbema. Siaka assisted Kemoh Zoker in putting down the rebellion, and later married one of Zoker's daughters' named Ngor Gbema. Their descendants have the right to contest in Soro's elections.

Pabai This ruling house originated through marriage. A member of the Pabai family married a daughter of Kaikai Lango.

Zombo This house traces the lineage of Hyie, the warrior who settled with Zoker.

11.11 Sowa

Sowa traces its origin to a hunter named Saba Sowa, who migrated from Liberia. He first settled at Korvegbuamei, but later moved to Bandajuma, the chiefdom's headquarters, because of its proximity to the river Warijai. Bandajuma means in Mende, "at the bank of the river".

Bandajuma is notable for having been the site of a police barracks and a district commissioner's office at the turn of the century. The current chief is Abdulai Kemoh Lahai Sowa. The chief during the war, Madam Bendu Brima Sowa fled the chiefdom in 1998, and stayed in Freetown due to old age, where she died in 2006. The chiefdom today receives some rents from small scale mining projects.

Sowa This house traces the lineage of Saba Sowa. The first chief to be recognized by the British was Saidu Sowa, who has the last name Lahai. His descendants have ruled the chiefdom ever since.

11.12 Yakemo-Kpukumu Krim (YKK)

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of three small chiefdoms completed in 1948. Kpukumu chiefdom traces its origin to a Krim fisherman named Bai Gbessay Zorokong, who settled in the area after some war, and eventually signed a treaty with the British in 1885. His origins are not known. Yabai Fortune chiefdom was a small chiefdom established by Konjor Fortune, a warrior whose origin is also not known. He signed a similar treaty in 1885. Finally, Baoma Sakrim was founded by a fisherman named Biabo Mina. He settled there, and signed a treaty with the British in 1885. Not much is known about any of these people's origins. Today, the chiefdom has three families, each of which come from one of the amalgamated chiefdoms.

The current chief is Yayuu Matilda Lansana Mina. She came from the Biabo section of the chiefdom, and was elected in 1986. She was captured by the RUF at the beginning of the war and held captive for 7 months. After her release, she left for the United States, returning in 1996.

Mina This family traces the lineage of the founder of Boma Sakrim and has its headquarters at Baoma town.

Kpukumu This family traces the lineage of Zorokong, and has its headquarters at Messiema town.

Fortune This family traces the lineage of Konjor Fortune, and has its origin at Jabama town.

Chapter 12

Tonkolili District

12.1 Gbonkolenken

Gbonkolenken is an amalgamation of four chiefdoms, Gbonkolenken Yele, Gobonkolenken Ropoli, Massakong and Mayepoh. The amalgamation was completed in 1949, and a Bai Komp became chief of the amalgamated chiefdom, with its headquarters at the important crossroad town of Yele. Mayepoh was founded by a man named Masimera, who migrated from Koranko land. He was forced to leave, it was said, when his sister went fishing and caught a hideous creature that was thought to be a bad omen. The whole family was expelled, and eventually settled at Mayepoh, where Simera became Bai Simera, first leader chief of that land. Massakong was established by a younger brother of Masimera. Massakong was always jealous of his brother, so much so that he was sent away. The local phrase “Massakong sit down and take it” is used to describe the origin of the chiefdom, as Massakong was sent to accept a chieftaincy somewhere else. Ropoli was established by a group of warriors led by Sunthaba Osara. The warriors are thought to have migrated from a town in Masingbe called Mapolie and named their new settlement after it. Yele was established by a family who migrated from the Koranko land. They conquered the Mende in a battlefield surrounded by water with a small forest in the center. Yele, meaning center in Temne, was named for that small forest, which can still be seen today.

The chief today is Bai Sunthaba Osara, who takes his name from the original settler at Ropoli. He was elected in 1993, and played an important role organizing a civilian defense force in the area.

Kanu This family traces the original settlers of Mayepoh.

Fornah This family traces the lineage of the original settlers at Ropoli.

Sesay This family traces the lineage of the Sesay family of Yele. The founding family were warriors, and married their daughter to the Sesay family. When the staff was given to them by the British, they refused, saying they could not be warriors and chief at the same time. They then passed the staff to the husband of their sister in the Sesay family.

Massakong This family traces the lineage of the founder of Massakong.

12.2 Kafe Simera

Kafe Simera is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Kafe and Simera completed in 1947. Simera was very small, and there were already many linkages between the two areas. Both chiefdoms trace their origins to a group of Koranko warriors led by a man named Bondakaira, who migrated from Dun Kondo in the Futa Jallon around 1789. Upon settling, he is said to have planted large okra fields. For this reason, the chiefdom was called until the amalgamation Mabontor by the Temnes, a mispronunciation of the Koranko word “bondor”, which means okra. He settled at Mabolko, where he is said to have planted okra. Today, this is the name of a town in Simera.

The current chief is Alimamy Bangura of the Tambakaira house, a Koranko elected in 1971. He stayed in Kamadugu for the duration of the war. The chiefdom currently receives surface rents from the Rokel Resources Mining Company.

Tambakaira This house traces the lineage of Tambakaira, a son of Bondokaira.

Kamadugu (Tholie) This house traces the lineage of Kamadugu, the eldest son of a Koranko warrior named Sel Tamba who arrived at Simera. Tamba was a cousin to Bondokaira, and they likely came at the same time.

Royema This house traces the lineage of a second son of Sel Tamba.

12.3 Kalansogoia

Kalansogoia is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Kalantuba and Dansogia completed in 1953. Kalantuba traces its origins to a warrior called Baio Yembeh. It is said that he came from Biriwa and was supported with arms and warriors that were a gift of the powerful chief Suluku of Biriwa. He was the first person to be recognized as chief of Kalantuba. Dansogia traces its origin to a hunter called Dansogo, which in Koranko is a greeting for a hunter who has killed a great amount of game. He is said to have come much earlier than Yembeh, from a place called

Gberah Tubakoh in Mali. On his way, he arrived in the area and found people in a cave hiding from battle. He volunteered and protected them, serving as something of a caretaker chief until his grandson was made paramount chief of the chiefdom.

The current chief is Alimamy Yallah Koroma III, a Koranko elected in 2002. There is great controversy in the chiefdom over the chieftaincy of Alimamy Talan Turay I, who ruled from 1972 to 1998. It is suggested that he was appointed by the government, which had an interest in having control over mining rights in the area. Turay died in 1998, and the war prevented a successor from being elected until 2002. The chiefdom is notable for being both the site of the Bumbuna hydroelectric project, and the African Minerals iron ore mine. The chiefdom is supposed to receive rents from both projects, but officials claim not to have been paid for the latter.

Tisseh This house traces the lineage of the second son of Baio Yembah. They have their headquarters in Kasokora.

Yallah This house traces the lineage of Bockarie, the grandson of Dansogo. They have their headquarters at Bumbuna.

12.4 Kholifa Mabang

Kholifa Mabang traces its origin to a hunter named Kofitha, who came from a place called Kholifa in Koranko land, likely at the same time as the settlers to whom Kholifa Rowala traces its origins during the Mane invasions of the 16th century. During a hunting expedition, he came to a river called Shankshaka. He crossed it, proceeding to Gbangbara where he decided to rest. He leaned his gun against a tree and was suddenly surprised by devils, who said the place was forbidden to rest in. They offered him a Faustian bargain, however. He could establish a settlement in the area and become chief if every year he would provide them with an adult woman with fair skin, and 100 different specific items, including sheep, palm oil, salt and cloth. He accepted, and named the place Mabang. He had many wives, and his sons through these different women form the chiefdoms ruling families.

The chief of this chiefdom is Bai Kurr Malforay II, a Temne elected in 2002. There was no chief during the war in this chiefdom, as Bai Kurr Kanasakie died in 1989, and a successor had not been found when the conflict began.

Kurahari This family traces the lineage of Kurahari, son of Kafitha. At one point Kafitha disappeared, perhaps because he had angered the devils. His son was appointed chief.

Bondigba Bondigba was a half brother of Kurahari, and this family traces his lineage.

Kanagbonthor This family traces the lineage of Kurr Kanagbonthor, a brother of Kurahari, again from a different mother.

Kanafula This house traces the lineage of another have brother of Kurahari.

Malforay This house traces the lineage of a final half brother of Kurahari.

12.5 Kholifa Rowala

Kholifa Rowala is an amalgamation of three Kholifa chiefdoms, Rowala, Mayoiso and Mamuntha. Colonial records from the late 19th century refer to a place “Kolifa” that probably referred to all of these chiefdoms. The amalgamation was instigated as something of a coup against the chief of Kholifa Mamuntha, Bai Yo Yoiso Karankay. He had been impeached by his subjects, and to resolve the problem gracefully the district commissioner suggested an amalgamation. The amalgamation was completed in 1945.

Kholifa Rowala was founded by a Koranko warrior from Khilifa in Koranko country named Mansa Kama Kelegbekele. He likely came at the same time as the founder of Kholifa Mabang. He became friends with the resident Temnes and established himself as chief. Rowala in Temne means resting place. Kholifa Mayoiso was founded by a renowned fisherman named Bamba Kamara, a son of Kelegbekele. He was such a prodigious fisherman that he exhausted all the fish supplies. The name Ma-yoiso is said to be a Temne tradition that means “don’t clean the fish again.” Kholifa Mamuntha was founded by a twin brother of Bamba Kamara called Mamasa Mamuntha Kamara. He was also a fisherman, who settled along the Rokel.

Karawullay This ruling house traces the lineage of a warrior who settled with Kelegbekele. Their chiefdom headquarters is at Doboll, about five miles from Magburaka.

Kabonko This house takes the name of the mother of the son of Kelegbekele. Mabon is the family’s headquarter.

Limboly This house traces the lineage of one of the sons of Kelegbekele. The name refers to one of his outstanding physical features, a very long neck. Malal is the family's headquarters.

Timpasoko This family traces the lineage of an original warrior who settled in the chiefdom. The family's headquarters is at Mayatha.

Kanamakama This ruling house traces the lineage of a descendant of an original warrior who settled in Rowala. The house's name comes from the name of the mother, Ya Namakama'. The chiefdom has its headquarters at Magbeseh.

Yoiso This house traces the lineage of a ruling house of Mayoiso, and is named for the village.

Kanayet This house traces the lineage of Bamba Kamara.

Kanamasa This house traces the lineage of an original Koranko warrior. It is named for his mother, Ya Namasa. The family's headquarters is at Mamankal.

12.6 Kunike (Kunike Sanda)

Kunike is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms, Kunike Folawusu and Kunkike Sanda. Folawusu, which was much smaller, was founded by Bai Kofri Malki, born of Kenema village in Folawusus. He rose to prominence defending the area in the late 19th century. It is likely that these battles were the *sofa* invasions described in Abraham (2003, pg. 124). The sofas were a mercenary squadron led by Samory Toure, a Sudanic warrior who set out to create a theocratic state by conquest. He was greatly feared in the Koranko and Temne regions of Sierra Leone during the 1880s and 1890s until his capture in 1898. The British aided some Mende chiefs, notably Nyagua of Kpanguma, to eventually route the sofas from the area, who used the support to conquer their own territory. Local tradition also speaks of defense against the Mende, so it is likely that Malki fought against these troops as well. Sanda was an adjacent chiefdom that traces its origin to Tin. Tin was a warrior from the east, who settled there and later called his brother Woma to help him defend the chiefdom.

The chief today is Kurr K. Sanka, a Temne elected in 1988. He fled during the war in 1995, returning only in 2004. All families in the chiefdom have the surname Conteh, and consider themselves brothers, but are nonetheless broken into three distinct families. All trace the lineage of Woma. The chiefdom is notable for being encompassing Masingbi, an important stop on the highway from Freetown to Koidu.

Kurr Kanafoi They have their headquarters at Makelfa.

Kanagbaro This family has their headquarters at Makelfa.

Bonkay They have their headquarters at Bonkay village within the chiefdom.

12.7 Kunike Barina

Kunike Barina, was, like Kunike Sanda, involved in the battles between the sofa battalions and Mende warriors in the 1880s. At this, Korankos, perhaps mercenaries affiliated with the Sofas, were established in the area, defending it heavily against Mende invasions. Two Temne warriors, Lumpur Manunku from Yoni and Konkomor Conteh from Gbonkolenken used the opportunity, cooperating with the Korankos, led by Mirrur Bongor, to drive the Mende from the area. They set up a bridge at Lungi Taiama, and used this bridge to attack the Mendes, capturing the settlement at Makali. The name Kunike Barine refers to the bridge they constructed during battle. The chiefdom's four families trace the lineages of these original warriors.

The current chief is Alhaji Alimamy Sorie Katonkeh II, a Temne elected in 2010. The chief during the war Alimamy Kanu, fled during the war.

Conteh This ruling house traces the lineage of Konkomor. A chief from this house is credited with persuading the colonial government to build a road from Makeni to Makali, their headquarters. The chief, Alhaji Alimamy Sorie, apparently showed them a large cassava root to show the agricultural productivity of the area. He is also thought to have been instrumental in providing timber for the construction of a deep water quay in the port at Freetown.

Kanu This house traces the lineage of Alimamy Kanu Tambawa, a cousin of the Conteh house. They have their headquarters at Wonkifor.

Sesay This house traces the lineage of the Koranko leader Mirrur Bongor, who was later called Bai Yarri after being crowned chief.

Kamara This house traces the lineage of Lumpur Munuku. In a macabre story, Munuku became chief after the wars but quickly died. It is said he was not accepted by the devils of the chiefdom, and he was buried outside it. This likely refers to a coup conducted through the Poro society. His family has not held the chieftaincy since.

12.8 Malal Mara

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of Malal and Mara chiefdoms, completed in 1955. Mara chiefdom traces its origin to a mercenary from Binkolo in Bombali District named Kraha. He traveled by sea and met another warrior, Malolem, who hired him to go into the bush to act as a spy. He went into the bush and established himself at Malolem, Jege and Ronko Cloth villages in present day Mara. Malal was settled originally by a Koranko warrior called Bai Kagbokoh, who settled at Gbokoh. The chiefdom has eight families, each of which traces their origin to migrations of warriors around this period. They have tacitly agreed to rotate with one another, and are heavily intermarried.

The present chief is Bailal N'Soila II, a Temne elected in 1977. He fled during the war to Freetown, and stayed there between 1994 until 2002. The chiefdom currently receives surface rents from the Addax biofuel and agricultural project.

Bai Baroh Mabileh This house traces the lineage of Bai Baroh, son of Khara.

Mayoloh This house originated when Bai Baroh invited his relatives from Mayoloh to settle here. They were given the right to rule.

Bai Barogbakuna This house traces the lineage of Barogbakuna a migrant from Magburaka, who settled in the chiefdom.

Bai Barhamemneh This family traces the lineage of migrants from Kunta Bai Shari in Bombali District.

Bailal Kololo This family migrated from Yoni to Roehen, in Malal.

Bailal N'jika This house traces the lineage of a son of Bai Kagbokoh.

Bailal Kakubereh This family arose during marriage, when a daughter of the N'jika family married into Kagbokoh's family and had a son named Kakubereh.

Bailal N'soila This family emerged during a dispute between the N'jika and Kakubereh families. After settling this dispute, N'Soolia was given the right to the throne.

12.9 Sambaya

Sambaya chiefdom traces its lineage to Mbaimba Samba (“tall Samba”), the eldest son of Malikie Jalloh, a Fullah warrior who migrated from Timbourinya in the Futa Jallon. Jalloh migrated with his wife Delyeria and his three sons, Samba, Habibu and Khalilu. Upon entering Sierra Leone, they came across a lake called Sonfon Dalleh in present day Diang chiefdom, where they met some Kurankos of the Tegeri clan (surname Turay) with whom they intermarried. Samba set off alone from the group to settle in an uninhabited region, where Sambaya is today. The chiefdom’s two families trace the lineage of his two sons.

The current chief is a Koranko named Alimamy Kolio Jalloh II, a Koranko elected in 1973. He left during the war in 1996 and returned in 2002.

Yabia This ruling house follows the lineage of the second son of Samba. Their headquarters is at Kandeya village.

Nbaymbayeria This house traces the lineage of the first son of Samba. They are affiliated with Wolna, Bendugu and Ballia villages.

12.10 Tane

Tane chiefdom traces its origin to a Kuranko warrior named Mausea Krugbeiya. He was successful in an attack on the Sofas in the area, and settled at Krugbai after he had driven them from the area. His name, which means in Kuranko “king of white stone”, refers to an amulet that gave him power in battle. Krugbeiya had a son, Monkro, who had four wives, each of whom settled in a different village, creating four separate ruling families.

The current chief is Bai Kafari Haja Mama II, elected in 2009. The chief during the war Bai Kafari Bauka stayed in the chiefdom for the duration of the conflict, but his office was not fully functional. The chiefdom receives some agricultural rents from small scale miners and the Tanko agricultural project.

Kopoloh This house traces the lineage of Monkro, the son of Krugbeiya. He married a woman who settled at Ropoloh, where she gave birth to a son, Bai Kafori Enfelreneh.

Makeni Koray This house traces the lineage of Bai Kafari Kalonkay, a son of Monkro, whose mother settled at Matotoka.

Mangay This house traces the lineage of the third son of Monkro, Bai Kafari Kalanko, whose mother settled at Mangay.

Mabamp This family traces the lineage of Bai Kafari Themrabai, the sixth son of Monkro, whose mother settled at Mabamp.

12.11 Yoni

This chiefdom is an amalgamation of two chiefdoms with strong historical connections. The amalgamation was completed in 1956. Lower Yoni traces its origins to a Temne warrior named Shebora Kondor, who drove the Mende from the area and established himself as leader of a large chiefdom. Later, in the late 18th century, a slave raider known as Fullah Mansa Gbabereh moved into the area, and some of Kondor's territory was ceded to him to create Yoni Mabanta. Fearing capture as slaves, this caused a flow of many Temne to what are today Lower and Upper Banta chiefdoms. The chief of Yoni Mabanta would carry the title Fullah Mansa for the next hundred years. Chiefdom records from 1899 indicate that a regent chief in Mabanta named Kapra Kinti briefly became chief of the whole Yoni territory in 1898, after Bai Shebora, formerly called Saisi Banna, of upper Yoni was arrested by the government and imprisoned for participation in the hut tax war. Bai Shebora returned, however, in 1899 to rule over his section. The Fullah Mansa who ruled before Kinti, had himself been banished to the Gold Coast from 1884-1888 for opposition to the government. He remained loyal to the government after, and was killed fighting with them during the hut tax rebellion at Gbangeama in May of 1898.

It is said in the chiefdom that the amalgamation was completed at the request of the SLPP political party before independence. At the time, the chiefdom was the unit at which members of parliament were elected. Reducing the number of chiefdoms in the north reduced the representation of northerners in parliament, strengthening the southern base of the SLPP party. Elections in upper Yoni are notable for their use of spirituality. Candidates submit themselves before a spirit known as Mankaney. The spirit selects which candidate will win, and this result is then announced by a bird, which flies from a sacred tree near the headquarters at Yonibana.

The current chief is Bai Shebora Kondor III, a Temne elected in 1987. He fled during the war between 1994 and 1996.

Kondor This house traces the lineage of Shebora Kondor, the first Temne chief of the area.

Makunta This house traces the lineage of Makunta, who arrived with Kondor, and was a successful fisherman.

Banna This house traces the lineage of a warrior named Banna who assisted the chiefdom in defense during the wars of the 19th century. It is possible that this Banna was the same Saisi Banna mentioned above.

Gbasha This house originated through marriage of a daughter of the Kondor house, and takes the name of the husband in that marriage.

Fullah Mansa Bimbikoro This house traces the lineage of a chiefdom speaker to a Fullah Mansa in the early 20th century.

Fullah Mansa Gbabereh This traces the lineage of the original Fullah slave raider who took control of Yoni Mabanta.

Fullah Mansa Kabop This house traces the lineage of a grandson of Fullah Mansa Gbabereh, who was a prominent farmer.

Fullah Mansa N'soila This family traces the lineage of a warrior who helped to defend the area against the Mendes, and was crowned Fullah Mansa for his bravery. His name is said to mean "roar of a lion".

Chapter 13

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