

1. Description

1.1 Name(s) of society, language, and language family:

Grebo, Northern, a language of Liberia. Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Kru, Western, Grebo, Liberian is its classification among the Niger-congo language family. Spoken in the Southeast region, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, and Kru Coast counties near Cote d'Ivoire border, south of Krahn, north of Klao, west of Glaro. Some distinct dialects include Sabo, Nitiabo, Tuobo, Ketiapo, Webo. This ethnography will focus on specific examples of the Sabo dialect.

"Thirteen months were spent in research in one of four Sabo villages, located in the Chiefdom of the same name in Webbo District of Grand Gedeh County. In this study I have called the village Saboke." (3p31)

1.2 ISO code:

ISO 639-3: gbo

1.3 Location:

5dN, 8dW

1.4 Brief history:

"...the establishment of industrial plantation agriculture in Liberia in the middle 1920s appears to mark the outset of the modern period of Liberian economic history and in addition, created conditions which profoundly affected patterns of labor migration which had previously been characteristic of the peoples of southeastern Liberia. In the more than forty years since that event, economic and political conditions have continued to change." (3p42)

"It would seem that at some point in the eighteenth century the peoples in the Setra Kru region began coming aboard European ships. The beginnings of this relationship may have been in the habit of coastal peoples coming aboard ship to trade, bringing pepper, ivory, a little gold, a few slaves, and so forth... These individuals would stay aboard as the ship moved down the coast, disembarking at various points with their pay in goods, and paddling back home in their canoes, trading along the way. In somewhat this fashion the Kru labor traffic may have begun (Davis 1968a:235f.)" (3p43)

"It is clear, however, that prior to the 1830s Kru- and Grebo-speaking peoples other than the krao, or "proper Kru," were involved in maritime wage-labor and long distance migration from the southeastern Liberian coast to other sections of the West African coast." (3p47)

"The advent of steamshipping in the 1850s increased greatly not only the numbers but also the average size of European ships trading along the West African coast. It appears also to have resulted, within only a few years, in the drawing of hinterland Kru and grebo peoples into "fru-man" maritime wage-labor migration..." (3p51)

"About 1860 a considerable amount of international trade developed between Liberia and Europe, especially England. (1931: 537; cf. Hargreaves 1964, passim)." (3p55)

"...it should be noted that there was an economic recession in Liberia after 1870..." (3p54)

"...it is worth noting that there were political conflicts between the grebo-speaking peoples and the Liberian government during the 1870s and in 1875, 'the seaboard tribes between Grand Cess and San Pedro formed the D'debo Reunited Kingdom and attempted to drive out the...Liberian settlements' (Idem; cf. Martin 1968)." (3p56)

"In 1910 there were renewed outbreaks of sporadic warfare between the Grebo tribes and the government. The area...had been plagued by recurrent small wars since before 1857." (3p78)

"At the outbreak of World War I, Liberia declared itself to be neutral, but the effects of British and French actions against German commercial activities in West Africa hit Liberia very hard, primarily because the Germans had dominated the country's trade for many years." (3p80)

"The U.S. Charge d'Affairs in Monrovia reported that among other effects of the advent of the great Depression of 1929-1930 on economic conditions in Liberia was severe unemployment." (3p94)

"In apparent response to the conditions in Liberia, which included severe unemployment, distressed trading conditions, political disputes and warfare, an increasing tax burden, and possibly bad subsistence-production conditions as a result of low rainfall years, large numbers of Kru- and Grebo-speaking tribespeople again migrated from southeastern Liberia." (3p97)

"The importance of Firestone during this period of Liberian economic history cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, the German geographer Schulze has referred to this period, dating from 1934 to 1950, as "the latex period" of Liberian economic history (1965: 3)." (3p99)

"The activities of the Maryland Logging Company, which in addition to providing wage-work for men from the local area built many of the roads in the district, have for the past decade or so stimulated economic development in the area. By 1962 the largest of the four Sabo villages was accessible by road, and by 1965 feeder roads had reached two of the other Sabo villages. Through the period of my ethnographic field research, the Maryland Logging Company extended its network of roads and tracks to the north and northeast of Sabo, and by the end of 1967, the road network extended to the boundary of the Grebo National forest. These roads reinforced traditional trading

patterns (and labor migration patterns) within which the major focal point was the Cape Palmas area; as of the time of my field research, the southeastern hinterland (at least Webbo District) ; lacked access, except by sea, to Monrovia.” (3p104)

“Each of the four Sabo villages, then, has its own history of ‘descent’ from the original village of the ancestral Sabo migrants. These histories differ in detail, but appear to be generally similar in structure. Inasmuch as the historical traditions pertaining to each village’s history from a part of the more general history of the dako, they contribute to the various ties of solidarity which bind together the descendants of the putative founders of the tribe, particularly during periods of dispute and disaffection among the four villages.” (3p156)

“Prior to the establishment of Liberian governmental control over the area in the 1920s, the villages did not have chiefs, according to my informants, but rather were under the effective control of a woroba (‘town father’) and the elders of the sibs represented in the village, the tua nye?ba;e. these men, together with all of the adult men of the village met in council in order to make decisions affecting the village. When deemed necessary, a ‘woman’s chief’ represented the two women’s age-groups.” (3p165)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

“It would seem that at some point in the eighteenth century the peoples in the Settra Kru region began coming aboard European ships. The beginnings of this relationship may have been in the habit of coastal peoples coming aboard ship to trade, bringing pepper, ivory, a little gold, a few slaves, and so forth. Europeans traded for these things in exchange for cotton cloth, firearms and powder, utensils and containers, and other common manufactured goods, but also desired provisions, which the coastal peoples provided by going ashore for them, thus saving the European crew from exposure to the health hazards of the mainland... In somewhat this fashion the Kru labor traffic may have begun. (Davis 1968a:235f.)” (3p43)

“About 1860 a considerable amount of international trade developed between Liberia and Europe, especially England. Raw products were bought and shipped, not only in foreign bottoms but also in ships owned by Liberian merchants... (1931: 537; cf. Hargreaves 1964, passim).” (3p55)

“During the period from 1890 to 1894 the French negotiated treaties with the chiefs of all the Grebo (‘Krou’) villages on the coast between Lahou and the Cavalla River (Amon d’Aby 1951: 25f). and a treaty between the French and the Republic of Liberia established the international boundary at the Cavalla River.” (3p71)

“But unlike African colonies, Liberia, whose long-standing independent status was aggravated by a rupture in its relations with both Firestone and the United States as well as by its difficulties with the League of Nations (Schmokel 1966), did not have the assistance of a metropolitan colonial government to intervene in its economic life.: (3p96)

“Other than government officials and their staffs and dependents, there were some Lebanese traders residing in Webbo District (moore 1955: 16) and a few American or Canadian missionaries who were engaged in addition to their religious activities in transporting produce by air (Moore 1955: 17f).” (3p102)

1.6 Ecology (natural environment):

“The boundaries of Saobli, the territory or ‘country’ occupied and controlled by the Sabo, are said to be demarcated by such natural features as streams and hills.” (3p157)

“The area of southeastern Liberia occupied by the Sabo appears from my observations in the field to lie almost directly athwart the watershed separating the drainage systems of the rivers Gbweh and Ji, two tributaries of the Cavalla River. Saobli comprises, in large part, a rather sizable rolling plateau which is roughly eroded at the eastern and southeastern margins, and topped as well as surrounded by occasional hills and massifs of relatively great height. Because tropical rain forest at various stages of growth covers much of the tribe’s territory, my understanding of its topography is necessarily impressionistic.” (3p159)

“The climate of southeastern Liberia is greatly influenced if not determined by the seasonally rhythmic movements of the so-called Inter-Tropical Front (ITF), which creates climatic conditions which have been termed ‘monsoonal’ because of the similarity to those of the monsoon regions of southeast and insular Asia (Porter 1961; cf. Harrison Church et al. 1967: 26-37). The ITF advances northward over West Africa during the period from mid-March to mid-September, and then ‘retreats’ southward from late September to mid-March. During the part of the year when the frontal system is over continental West Africa, weather patterns are dominated by heavy precipitation, and during the part of the year when frontal system is over the ocean south of West Africa, weather patterns are notable for a general lack of precipitation.” (3p320)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

“An average density of only 23.6 persons per square mile has been calculated for the entire country (Harrison Church 1967: 241). Porter’s estimates of population density of several sub-areas of southeastern Liberia... suggest considerable variation exists within the region.” (3p119)

“Tuobo, Barobo, and Nyitiabo were included in Porter’s “Grebo” area, for which he estimated a density of 16.8 persons per square mile, while Sabo and Palipo were included in the “Krahn” area, for which he estimated a density of only 4.5 persons per square mile (1956: 79f).” (3p119)

“It is quite clear that the population of Saboke has been reduced considerably in size as a result of migration.” (3p146)

“...in 1967, almost half the males of the village were absent, either on a temporary or long-term basis, and that the village population as a whole had been reduced in size by more than a third.” (3p150)

“In addition to the agnatically related males and their wives and children, other persons may belong to the tuawuuno group as members or incorporated quasi-members. These include such persons as (a) elderly un-remarried sisters or mothers of the male agnates in the group; (b) sisters’ sons, together with their wives and children; (c) younger adult males living uxorilocally with wives who are daughters of male tuawuuno members; (d) the wives of absent male members (brothers or sons) and their children; and occasionally one or more strangers (dawei) who may be residing temporarily in a household headed by one of the tuawuuno members. When present, any or all of these ‘attached’ persons may contribute in some way to the economic and social well-being of the tuawuuno or one of its constituent households, and in return for their contribution, may participate in the processes of decision-making within the household an tuawuuno.” (3p259-60)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

“Thus Saobli, like much of modern-day Webbo District and the adjacent areas of northern Maryland County, is a ‘patchwork’ of both primary (?) and secondary natural forest (the latter ranging in size of regrowth from the dense grass, vines, and shrubs of recently abandoned farm sites through immature secondary growth to near climax secondary forest) interspersed with plots of non-natural forest in locations where marketable tree crops are grown by the people (these are principally cocoa, rubber, and coffee, but also include some citrus and other crops)” (3p160)

“The most important subsistence activity is the horticultural production of upland (dry) rice (*Oryza glaberrima*), in which constitutes the major dietary staple. Rice farming, around which the Sabo annual agricultural cycle is organized, is supplemented by several other subsistence activities. A number of domesticated food plants are cultivated on farms and on the margins of cillages, and the collection of many semi-domesticated (or semi-wild?) plant foods as well as the gathering of numerous wild plant foods from the rain forest surrounding the Sabo villages and farms are important supplementary activities. A partial listing of domesticated, semi-domesticated, and wild plants utilized by the Sabo...” (3p315-6) include “upland rice... maize... sugar cane... bitter-root... cassava... eddoes... potato... sweet potato... yam... calabash... eggplant... bitter-balls... okra... pepper... pineapple... pumpkin... avocado... banana... plantain... cocoa... coconut... coffee... breadfruit... grapefruit... lemon... lime... orange... papaya... mango... plum... kola... oil palm... raffia palm... rattan...” (3p317-8)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

“The ‘traditional’ settlement pattern of the southeastern hinterland appears to reflect not only the topographic situation described above but also the land and territorial requirements of peoples whose subsistence has depended primarily on a combination of swidden agriculture and the hunting and collecting of wild animals and wild plant foods.” (3p160-1)

“Unlike the forests of more densely populated Central Liberia (Gibbs 1965: 203), the forest of hinterland southeastern Liberia contains a relative wealth of wild animal life, and through hunting and trapping, the Sabo are able to provide themselves with a reasonably dependable supply of both meat and animal by-products (e.g., skins, which are used for a variety of things).” (3p316)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

“Throughout the year, men hunt on almost nightly basis, nowadays using shotguns, they also set traps along known animal trails and around rice farms; these are checked regularly.” (3p316)

2.4 Food storage:

No specific examples were given for food storing besides the mention of constant water hauling. Insufficient data to say customary practices.

2.5 Sexual division of production:

“...his departure or return may modify the organization of his wives’ (or wife’s) farming arrangements, and so on. The departure of a younger, unmarried male (or his return) would not have the same structural and organizational effects. Moreover, with the advent in recent years of female migration, it is quite likely that the organization of economically crucial activities such as rice farming would be affected more by the migration of an economically productive young adult woman than by that of a young adolescent male, although the departure of the

young man might conceivably reduce the amount of meat available to the household because he can no longer be counted upon to hunt and trap on a daily basis. (3p267-8)

“...males who have not yet been initiated into the village men’s society (kwi) have little economic responsibility either as individuals or as a group, although some have after about age ten or so begin to take on some economically important tasks, and often accompany older brothers or fathers in carrying out productive work. Such work might include, for example, the cutting and hauling of oil-palm fruits, some hunting or trapping, and to a more limited extent, assistance in the clearing and harvesting of rice farms, or assisting in the harvesting of cocoa. After initiation into kwi—the men’s society—at about age fifteen, however, young adolescent males are expected to take on economic responsibilities in a more systematic manner. After age fifteen, young men are likely to migrate from the village in order to seek wage-work or adventure, or in search of education. The demographic index of the number of males aged fifteen or older in the household, then, gives a crude indication of the manpower which is available to the household (and implicitly to the tuawuuno) for tasks allotted ‘by custom’ to males or for those which are clearly too ‘heavy’ to be carried out affectively by females.” (3p280)

“I have noted above, and in chapter IV, that Sabo women bear the greater physical burden not only in subsistence agricultural production, where in rice farming they appear to perform the most exhausting physical activities, but also in connection with day-to-day maintenance of the domestic group. But unlike Sabo men, Sabo women do not continue to accrue additional prestige and authority or power as they advance in age. When a woman is no longer able ‘to go on the farm,’ she has in some sense lost her usefulness and to a considerable extent is considered to be no longer economically productive. She becomes, as I have suggested earlier, a batinyo at this phase in her life. Although it is possible (indeed, probable) that some Sabo women continue to be economically productive after reaching the estimated age of sixty-five or so, the census data suggest quite strongly that many if not most Sabo women ‘pass out’ of economic productivity prior to reaching age sixty-five, primarily because of the extremely arduous life imposed on them by this simple division of labor. For these reasons, I have chosen age sixty-five as the upper limit for female economic productivity on any more than a token basis. The lower age limit of this is equally arbitrary, although as in the case of the upper limit on economic productivity, there are cultural reasons attached to my selection of age ten in the case of female productivity. As was indicated in the section of Chapter IV dealing with age-grading, young girls (in clear contrast to boys) may begin as early as age five or so to contribute in some way to the economic well-being of the household group. But not until about age ten do young girls begin to make a substantial economic contribution.” (3p283-4)

“...a shorter way of indicating that the girl was sent ‘learn the fashion’ of her future husband’s mother: to learn that woman’s particular methods for planting rice, cutting and hauling firewood, hulling and winnowing rice, cooking, carrying water, and so through the long list of tasks assigned by the customary division of labor to women.” (3p284)

2.6 Land tenure:

“Farming land within a village territory is not in fact controlled by the village population as a whole, although the wishes of the village must be taken into account before the land can be loaned or sold to a stranger. Nor in fact is the land controlled by the sibs within the tribe as a whole. Rather, land once cultivated is controlled (or ‘owned’) by the members of lineages represented in the male population of a given village. The control of land is in behalf of the tua as a whole, but tua members from another village must have prior permission to use the land. Where more than a single lineage of the tua is represented by males in the village, each tuawuuno controls its own lands. Under normal circumstances then, a man (and his household) enjoys first rights to the exclusion of other members of his quarter-group, to farming sites which he, or his deceased father, has cleared previously from either primary or secondary climax forest. If another person within the tuawuuno wishes to farm in a location controlled by him, his permission as well as that of tuawuuno headman must be sought before the land can be used. The procedure noted here is similar but more complex if the person wishing to farm the site is a citizen of another Sabo village, is a citizen of another dako and has consanguineal or affinal ties within the village, or is a ‘stranger’ (dawei) lacking such incorporative ties. In such cases, the permission of the tuawuuno headman, the town chief, and in addition, that of the woroba and the nye’bale or village elders must be sought. The use of intermediaries in these negotiations is quite common.” (3p200-1)

2.7 Ceramics:

No evidence of ceramics was given during my research.

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

“...for the most part, involvement of Africans with international and regional market systems (whether in trade or labor) is of very recent date, and therefore greatly disruptive of “traditional” cultural adaptations.” (3p8)

“freely and willingly traveling, largely by sea, great distances in order to exchange physical labor for wages (in goods), which were redistributed in their home villages and used in marriage payments, and prestige.” (3p9)

2.9 Food taboos:

“In addition to the notion of common descent, co-members of a tua are said to share a common totem, usually an animal whose use as a food has been tabooed or restricted in some other way. Such taboos are said to derive from instances in which the particular animal miraculously saved the life of the tua’s founder or another tua-ancestor. Although some of the tabooed animals are common to more than a single tua, shared totemic taboos were not interpreted by my informants as evidence that the tuas concerned are genealogically related or formerly constituted a single descent group.” (3p193)

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

Specific mentions of canoes occurred repeatedly. Canoes were very customary in the Sabo life as it would be their primary way to migrate and for trading along the Cavalla River.

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

“Although his gloss of the phrase may not be a precise linguistic translation, its connotations serve as an excellent economic précis of the various tasks that are assigned to girls between the ages of about five and fifteen (I here use fifteen as an arbitrary age for puberty). Girls very early on are expected to be economically useful members of the household to which they belong.” (3p173)

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

Completed family size is hard to say considering the general overlap of families within their housing arrangements and descriptions of family size. Some houses consisted of one person, up to housing with 17+ people, and people generally lived in villages of only people of their patrilineal line until marriage.

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

“In traditional times at about age ten a betrothed girl would be taken into the household of her husband-to-be for a three-to-four year period in order ‘to learn the man’s fashion,’ as my informants phrased the custom.” (3p284)

Although this information does not give a definite age, girls are not allowed to marry until puberty; however, they may in fact be betrothed from infancy until this point. This information also suggests girls got married generally between the ages of 14 and 16.

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

“Marriages involving women who had ‘divorced’ but who had not remarried leviratically are more difficult to deal with, primarily because of the obvious reticence with which Sabo men spoke of unsuccessful marriages. I am reasonably certain that some informants intentionally withheld information about women who had divorced them to marry other men, although some men were willing enough to discuss former wives whom they claimed to have ‘put out of the house.’ For this reason, I am reluctant to assume with any certainty that my data accurately reflect the incidence of divorce among the Sabo. In four of nineteen recorded cases, all apparently involving dissolution of the primary marriage by divorce and the repayment of bridewealth, the woman involved divorced a Sabo husband to marry still another Sabo male. In nine other cases, the husband divorced was non-Sabo and the second husband Sabo. In one recorded case, the woman involved left a Sabo husband to marry a non-Sabo male. Five other women were reported by informants to have divorced Sabo primary husbands, but my census data do not specify the citizenship of the woman’s second husband.” (3p232)

Although divorce data remain to be rather unreliable, one thing can be deduced from the given data. Only women would initiate divorce, men had no reason to do so as most were polygynous and kept women around to sustain them economically and continue their lineage.

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

“With regard to the total number of marriages in which the men had been involved, census interviews brought out the fact that only eleven (22% of the fifty) had been involved in just a single marriage. None of them claimed to have been married more than four times. Twenty men (40%) had been involved in a total of only two

marriages, twelve men (24%) in three marriages, and only seven men (14%) reported themselves to have had a total of four marriages.” (3p237)

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

“...freely and willingly traveling, largely by sea, great distances in order to exchange physical labor for wages (in goods), which were redistributed in their home villages and used in marriage payments, and prestige.” (3p9)

“Just as in the case of dako and village (dea) citizenship, tua membership is normally ascribed at or shortly after birth. Under ‘normal’ circumstances, a child belongs to the tua to which the pater belongs regardless of the tua-membership of its genitor. Certain conditions, however, qualify exceptions to this general rule. Children born of unmarried mothers are considered to belong to the mother’s tua (i./e., since tua-membership is acquired through males, to the tua of the mother’s father or brother), unless the genitor is willing to pay either bridewealth (nyinowule, or ‘woman money’) or child-compensation. If he chooses the former of these courses of action, of course, the previously ‘unlawful’ union becomes a lawful marriage of the blagbakotu type... If, on the other hand, the genitor of the child chooses to pay compensation amounting, according to my informants, to one-half the bridewealth, he may become pater to the child but not husband to the child’s mother. Children born of adulterous unions between married women and men not married to them are considered to belong to the tua of the mother’s lawful spouse—in other words, in such cases, the child becomes a member of its pater’s patrilineal descent group.” (3p192)

This shows there is evidence for an exact amount that is the bride wealth, as it can be split to one half the amount. It seems this would be universal to the dako as the price to be paid for their brides along with the building of their house.

“The payment of bridewealth (discussed further below, in connection with marriage) for a female does not make of the woman a chattel, although it does seem to ensure the bridewealth-paying group and the woman’s husband certain rights over her. First, it confers upon her husband and his tua (especially at the lineage lever) a considerable degree of control over her sexuality. Second, and probably more importantly from the point of view of understanding the organization of Sabo kinship, it ensures that any children she bears will become members of her husband’s tua as well as citizens of his village and dako.” (3p203)

“The payment of bridewealth conveys to the husband (and to his tua) control over his wife’s sexuality, over any children which she may bear, and over her capacity for physical labor. Bridewealth, usually called ‘dowry’ in Liberian English (cf. d’Azevedo 1967: 14), is referred to by the term nyinowule (‘woman money’) or the phrase plunyinowuleke (literally ‘send woman money’). According to informants, bridewealth payment was and is carried out through the use of intermediaries. When the suitor believes it time for him ‘to send woman money,’ he begins to ‘look for the forty dollars,’ the 1967 cash equivalent (by Liberian law—see Gibbs 1965: 210ff., and note 14, p. 233) of the traditional prestation for which there continues to be some expressed preference. According to some informants, the betrothed girl’s tua was given a cow (or forty dollars cash). If the bridewealth beast were a female, then the suitor (or his tua) was obliged to give to the girl’s tua one goat, but if the animal given was a bullock, then two goats had to accompany it. Another goat was given to the girl’s mother’s tua (or in lieu of a goat, four dollars cash). Other informants stated that the first goat (termed daawule) was given to the girl’s mother for transferal to her tua, and the second goat (called wulefaa) accompanied the cow as a part of the bridewealth paid to the girl’s father’s descent group.” (3p 213 and 215)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

As everything else in the community, goes down the patrilineal line by age.

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

“There are, so far as I was able to determine during my field research, no prescribed marriages, although some informants expressed some minor preference for marriage between a young man and a girl who is a member of a tua to which one of his father’s other wives belongs. One is not considered to be ‘related’ consanguineally to one’s father’s other wives, unless they happen to be members of the tua to which one’s mother belongs. For this reason, a young man may inherit leviratically one of his father’s wives (but not his own mother). Informants very often phrased this preference in terms of the father’s other wife’s attitude toward the husband’s son: if the young man showed ‘respect’ to his father’s woman, by bringing her meat, palm-nuts, or by performing well in other tasks, she would signify her own high regard for him by ‘going to her brother’ (i.e., a male member of her own tua, not necessarily her own sibling) and bringing his daughter to live in her house as the future wife of her husband’s son. Such a marriage would, in the second generation, tend to ‘recreate’ or at least maintain the marital relationship previously established between the tua to which the father and son belong and the tua to which at least one of each of their wives belong.” (3p219)

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

“...are a number of absent women married to men from the other Savo villages or villages in other dakwe.” (3p148)

“Among informants who stated that sib exogamy was not obligatory across tribal boundaries there was some expressed feeling that one should not marry a person from another darko, if that person belonged to a descent group with the identical or similar name as one’s own sib. Other informants, on the other hand, indicated that if such a marriage were economically or politically advantageous, then the ‘name group’ tie would be disregarded, and the marriage arranged according to customary practice. If, however, the proposed marriage might prove to be an economic or political liability, then the ‘ties’ of common sib-ship would be invoked by the elders of the Sabo tua and the marriage prohibited.” (3p194-5)

“Many informants indicated their belief that, ideally, bridewealth should be allocated for a young man of the tua who was also a citizen of the same village as the girl for whom the tua had received the bridewealth. This corresponds with other informants’ statements that girls should marry within their own village, or at the very least, within their own dako, for to marry outside the dako is not believed to be a ‘good thing.’ Not all informants agreed with this latter observation, however, believing instead that marriage with persons from adjacent or nearby dakwe tended to inhibit conflict between the Sabo and the other tribe.” (3p217-8)

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?:

“The payment of bridewealth (discussed further below, in connection with marriage) for a female does not make of the woman a chattel, although it does seem to ensure the bridewealth-paying group and the woman’s husband certain rights over her. First, it confers upon her husband and his tua (especially at the lineage level) a considerable degree of control over her sexuality. Second, and probably more importantly from the point of view of understanding the organization of Sabo kinship, it ensures that any children she bears will become members of her husband’s tua as well as citizens of his village and dako.” (3p203)

“The payment of bridewealth conveys to the husband (and to his tua) control over his wife’s sexuality, over any children which she may bear, and over her capacity for physical labor.” (3p213)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

“Under ‘normal’ circumstances, a child belongs to the tua to which the pater belongs regardless of the tua-membership of its genitor. Certain conditions, however, qualify exceptions to this general rule. Children born of unmarried mothers are considered to belong to the mother’s tua (i.e., since tua-membership is acquired through males, to the tua of the mother’s father or brother), unless the genitor is willing to pay either bridewealth (nyinowule, or ‘woman money’) or child-compensation. If he chooses the former of these courses of action, of course, the previously ‘unlawful’ union becomes a lawful marriage of the blagbakotu type... If, on the other hand, the genitor of the child chooses to pay compensation amounting, according to my informants, to one-half the bridewealth, he may become pater to the child but not husband to the child’s mother. Children born of adulterous unions between married women and men not married to them are considered to belong to the tua of the mother’s lawful spouse—in other words, in such cases, the child becomes a member of its pater’s patrilineal descent group.” (3p192)

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.22 Evidence for couvades

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.24 Joking relationships?

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

“Although in the strictest sense the dako, or tribe, is the largest-scale patrilineal corporate descent group, inasmuch as one’s tribal citizenship (and the consequent rights and obligations which derive from this citizenship) is acquired through his or her pater’s [or fathers] tribal citizenship...” (3p191)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules:

“Following the death of one’s father as well as that of the father’s mother, marriage with a person belonging to the father’s mother’s tua is no longer prohibited (although it may be ‘frowned upon’), but so long as one or the other of the connecting relatives remains alive, such a marriage is prohibited. Neither can one marry a person whose mother is of the same tua as one’s own mother, either in a primary or a secondary marriage..” (3p207-8)

“There are, so far as I was able to determine during my field research, no prescribed marriages, although some informants expressed some minor preference for marriage between a young man and a girl who is a member of a tua to which one of his father’s other wives belongs. One is not considered to be ‘related’ consanguineally to one’s father’s other wives, unless they happen to be members of the tua to which one’s mother belongs. For this reason, a young man may inherit leviratically one of his father’s wives (but not his own mother). Informants very often phrased this preference in terms of the father’s other wife’s attitude toward the husband’s son: if the young man showed ‘respect’ to his father’s woman, by bringing her meat, palm-nuts, or by performing well in other tasks, she would signify her own high regard for him by ‘going to her brother’ (i.e., a male member of her own tua, not necessarily her own sibling) and bringing his daughter to live in her house as the future wife of her husband’s son. Such a marriage would, in the second generation, tend to ‘recreate’ or at least maintain the marital relationship previously established between the tua to which the father and son belong and the tua to which at least one of each of their wives belong.” (3p219)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

“Just as in the case of dako and village (dea) citizenship, tua membership is normally ascribed at or shortly after birth. Under ‘normal’ circumstances, a child belongs to the tua to which the pater belongs regardless of the tua-membership of its genitor. Certain conditions, however, qualify exceptions to this general rule. Children born of unmarried mothers are considered to belong to the mother’s tua (i./e., since tua-membership is acquired through males, to the tua of the mother’s father or brother), unless the genitor is willing to pay either bridewealth (nyinowule, or ‘woman money’) or child-compensation. If he chooses the former of these courses of action, of course, the previously ‘unlawful’ union becomes a lawful marriage of the blagbakotu type...” (3p192)

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

No evidence of this data was found during my research.

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

“...are a number of absent women married to men from the other Savo villages or villages in other dakwe.” (3p148)

“Among informants who stated that sib exogamy was not obligatory across tribal boundaries there was some expressed feeling that one should not marry a person from another darko, if that person belonged to a descent group with the identical or similar name as one’s own sib. Other informants, on the other hand, indicated that if such a marriage were economically or politically advantageous, then the ‘name group’ tie would be disregarded, and the marriage arranged according to customary practice. If, however, the proposed marriage might prove to be an economic or political liability, then the ‘ties’ of common sib-ship would be invoked by the elders of the Sabo tua and the marriage prohibited.” (3p194-5)

“Many informants indicated their belief that, ideally, bridewealth should be allocated for a young man of the tua who was also a citizen of the same village as the girl for whom the tua had received the bridewealth. This corresponds with other informants’ statements that girls should marry within their own village, or at the very least, within their own dako, for to marry outside the dako is not believed to be a ‘good thing.’ Not all informants agreed with this latter observation, however, believing instead that marriage with persons from adjacent or nearby dakwe tended to inhibit conflict between the Sabo and the other tribe.” (3p217-8)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

“Among informants who stated that sib exogamy was not obligatory across tribal boundaries there was some expressed feeling that one should not marry a person from another darko, if that person belonged to a descent group with the identical or similar name as one’s own sib. Other informants, on the other hand, indicated that if such

a marriage were economically or politically advantageous, then the 'name group' tie would be disregarded, and the marriage arranged according to customary practice. If, however, the proposed marriage might prove to be an economic or political liability, then the 'ties' of common sib-ship would be invoked by the elders of the Sabo tua and the marriage prohibited." (3p194-5)

"In one case of this type a young adult male seeking permission to marry a girl whose sib was represented in the village by two quarter-groups told me that his intermediary would negotiate with only one of the groups—the tua-wuuno representing the lineage to which the girl belonged. He flatly stated that the other tuawuuno 'had nothing to say' with regard to any marriage between him and the girl." (3p199)

"The Sabo, like many other Liberian tribal peoples, formerly practiced infant and child betrothal, but as Gibbs has indicated for the Kpelle, this is now illegal (Gibbs 1963; 1965: 210). By placing a splinter of 'bamboo' (split raffia cane) in the forelock of a baby girl (onyinaosedru) in the presence of the headman of the child's lineage, a man could signify his wish to later marry the girl. This act of betrothal, if accepted by the tua nye?bale, was considered to be binding; the girl could not be later engaged or married to another without the permission of the tua of the original suitor. According to elderly Sabo informants, infant betrothal could be easily negated later if either the girl or the members of her tua became ill-disposed toward her marriage with the man who had engaged her as a baby. The betrothal of girls of eight or nine years of age, which seems to have been much more common than infant betrothal, could be accomplished by giving a leaf of tobacco, or, in other words of one informant, 'five cents or two cents or some other small thing' to the girl's father or the headman of her descent group. Upon receipt of such a token, the father or headman would call the remainder of the tua (presumably the lineage, or at most the local sib element) to assemble. In their presence the girl was asked if the betrothal was agreeable to her—if it was, the token gift was accepted (opeedea)." (3p210)

"There are, so far as I was able to determine during my field research, no prescribed marriages, although some informants expressed some minor preference for marriage between a young man and a girl who is a member of a tua to which one of his father's other wives belongs. One is not considered to be 'related' consanguineally to one's father's other wives, unless they happen to be members of the tua to which one's mother belongs. For this reason, a young man may inherit leviratically one of his father's wives (but not his own mother). Informants very often phrased this preference in terms of the father's other wife's attitude toward the husband's son: if the young man showed 'respect' to his father's woman, by bringing her meat, palm-nuts, or by performing well in other tasks, she would signify her own high regard for him by 'going to her brother' (i.e., a male member of her own tua, not necessarily her own sibling) and bringing his daughter to live in her house as the future wife of her husband's son. Such a marriage would, in the second generation, tend to 'recreate' or at least maintain the marital relationship previously established between the tua to which the father and son belong and the tua to which at least one of each of their wives belong." (3p219)

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

"Among informants who stated that sib exogamy was not obligatory across tribal boundaries there was some expressed feeling that one should not marry a person from another darko, if that person belonged to a descent group with the identical or similar name as one's own sib. Other informants, on the other hand, indicated that if such a marriage were economically or politically advantageous, then the 'name group' tie would be disregarded, and the marriage arranged according to customary practice. If, however, the proposed marriage might prove to be an economic or political liability, then the 'ties' of common sib-ship would be invoked by the elders of the Sabo tua and the marriage prohibited." (3p194-5)

"The Sabo, like many other Liberian tribal peoples, formerly practiced infant and child betrothal, but as Gibbs has indicated for the Kpelle, this is now illegal (Gibbs 1963; 1965: 210). By placing a splinter of 'bamboo' (split raffia cane) in the forelock of a baby girl (onyinaosedru) in the presence of the headman of the child's lineage, a man could signify his wish to later marry the girl. This act of betrothal, if accepted by the tua nye?bale, was considered to be binding; the girl could not be later engaged or married to another without the permission of the tua of the original suitor. According to elderly Sabo informants, infant betrothal could be easily negated later if either the girl or the members of her tua became ill-disposed toward her marriage with the man who had engaged her as a baby. The betrothal of girls of eight or nine years of age, which seems to have been much more common than infant betrothal, could be accomplished by giving a leaf of tobacco, or, in other words of one informant, 'five cents or two cents or some other small thing' to the girl's father or the headman of her descent group. Upon receipt of such a token, the father or headman would call the remainder of the tua (presumably the lineage, or at most the local sib element) to assemble. In their presence the girl was asked if the betrothal was agreeable to her—if it was, the token gift was accepted (opeedea)." (3p210)

"One man noted that in former times, a girl 'married where her father's heart was,' whereas today too often a girl seemed 'to marry where her heart is.' He thus indicated his own disapproval of marriages which are

sometimes consummated without payment of bridewalth and tua approval. This same man suggested that schools and the missions have fostered the idea of individual rather than descent group ('family' or tua) choice in the matter of marriage." (3p212)

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare

No data concerning this was found during my research.

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

"One of the most important of these, it would appear, has been the generally peaceful political conditions which have prevailed in the area since the early 1930s, when government control of the area was finally, and firmly, established." (3p162)

Not all informants agreed with this latter observation, however, believing instead that marriage with persons from adjacent or nearby dakwe tended to inhibit conflict between the Sabo and the other tribe." (3p218)

4.18 Cannibalism?

"...many of them have never seen the ocean before; they live several hundred miles in the interior, and are said to be cannibals' (Dr. d'Lyons, quoted in African Repository 1859, 35: 311f.)" (3p66-7)

Even if cannibalism had existed, it seems this would have been a very early and remote practice.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

"...are considered to form the so-called 'normal' village population, which in late 1967 amounted to 308." (3p136)

"Normal population excludes unassimilated 'strangers.'" (3p145)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

"...more often than not, migration has been virtually the only means available for the peoples concerned to acquire either needed money or goods, or both." (3p14)

It seems that people are moving throughout the year upon reaching an adequate age to go out in order to find work in factories or aboard ships to labor for money and goods which they may eventually bring back to the village or they seek permanent life elsewhere to be able to have consistently their goods.

"It is possible that long-distance labor migration during this early period was seasonally organized by the Kru; some data suggest that the migration to Freetown was a dry season activity." (3p45)

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

"According to my informants, the Liberian government first named town chiefs in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Since that time, a kind of 'parallel' governmental structure has existed in the villages of southeastern Liberia, with the 'government chiefs' being, in effect, added on to the pre-existing political organization. The village chief, or town chief as he is more often termed in the area, today is a more-or-less compromise choice between the needs of the national and district government and the wishes of the village populace. The chief, called kei or chifi, is formally appointed by the government after his election (or selection) by the villagers, but the government has sometimes refused to confirm the villagers' choice. In addition to the town chief, most villages in the area today have a 'second' chief, who assists the chief in his duties, and who (occasionally) acts in the chief's absence. Although the chief and his second are nominally in charge of village affairs, few chiefs at the local level would contravene openly the wishes of the traditional village leaders, the elders." (3p167)

"Previously, except for a short period in the 1920s, the Sabo were considered by the government to be a 'clan' of the neighboring Tuobo Chiefdom, and were headed by an appointed Clan Chief. So far as I was able to determine from informants, the positions of Paramount Chief and Clan Chief have no basis in the pre-Liberian political organization of the dakos, but rather, date from the implementation of indirect rule." (3p168)

"Following the re-establishment of the Sabo Chiefdom, the then Clan Chief was named as Paramount Chief, and following the precedent of other chiefdoms, a Clan Chief was named despite the fact that the Sabo Chiefdom has only a single clan or district." (3p170)

"The oldest men of the village are called the blutabuo, but are occasionally referred to by the collective term boligbwe ('the speakers'—or in the singular, boligbo, 'the speaker'). These are the most respected men of the village, and in combination with the elders of the other villages in the dakos, form the tribal council of elders. The elders (as I shall translate the term blutabuo) are said with considerable justification 'to control the town.' They are responsible for shaping the policies of the village toward other villages in the tribe, toward the paramount chief

(who, as I have indicated earlier, holds a 'created' status), and toward the government. Few town chiefs would envision acting without consultation with the elders who 'own' the village. Not surprisingly, the number of boligbwe in a village is not large, being limited to the three or four oldest of the various lineage-headmen (tua nyebale). The oldest of these three or four men is considered to be the 'real' boligbo or speaker for the town." (3p182)

5.4 Post marital residence:

"I am reasonably certain that some informants intentionally withheld information about women who had divorced them to marry other men, although some men were willing enough to discuss former wives whom they claimed to have 'put out of the house.'" (3p232)

From this it is clear, if not already obvious, that women went to live with the men at their homes. As described below and in house organization, each wife had her own house on the male's land. If the male married monogamously, it is unclear whether the female has a home separate from the male or if they reside under the same roof.

"In addition to the agnatically related males and their wives and children, other persons may belong to the tuawuuno group as members or incorporated quasi-members. These include such persons as (a) elderly un-remarried sisters or mothers of the male agnates in the group; (b) sisters' sons, together with their wives and children; (c) younger adult males living uxorilocally with wives who are daughters of male tuawuuno members; (d) the wives of absent male members (brothers or sons) and their children; and occasionally € one or more strangers (dawei) who may be residing temporarily in a household headed by one of the tuawuuno members. When present, any or all of these 'attached' persons may contribute in some way to the economic and social well-being of the tuawuuno or one of its constituent households, and in return for their contribution, may participate in the processes of decision-making within the household an tuawuuno." (3p259-60)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

"...and a treaty between the French and the Republic of Liberia established the international boundary at the Cavalla River." (3p71)

"In 1899 the French mounted a major expedition through the Cavalla Basin, apparently to determine the source and the course of the river, which as I have noted had been established by treaty as the boundary between the republic of Liberia and the Ivory Coast portion of France's West African territories." (3p73)

"...the boundary of the Grebo National forest..." (3p104)

"The boundaries of Saobli, the territory or 'country' occupied and controlled by the Sabo, are said to be demarcated by such natural features as streams and hills. The Sabo claim that these boundaries are known and respected not only by the Sabo themselves but also by the people of the give dakwe (Palipo, Ketibo, Nyitiabo, Tuobo, and Barobo) whose territories are contiguous to Saobli. Within the tribal territory, each village has its own smaller 'country' (bli) which like the dako territory is bounded by natural features said to be well known and respected by the people of the villages whose territories are contiguous." (3p157)

"Most, although not all, of the deswa in Saobli which were identified as former Sabo villages were located in defensible positions." (3p161)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

Age groups are broken up into many divisions, generally by the groups in which they perform similar economic activities. The grouping which follow were gathered from a more general table of the population which are probably more closely associated to the terms in which females are categorized in their usefulness. Groups are broken up from 0-5, 5-9, 10-14, 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75+. (3p145)

"If the women of the village are to be involved in the decision, the women's chief announces the decision of the women as this has been reached in their own, and usually private, caucus. After a variable period of discussion, the length of which is dependent upon the intensity of the issue under consideration, the boligbo again states the issue at hand, and pronounces the consensus decision as his own." (3p166-7)

"In a very general sense, the older a person is in relation to any other individual or in relation to the populace as a whole, the more power, privilege, and prestige he has. This is especially true among males: the eldest of the elders commands the respect of the entire community." (3p171)

"Male Sabo informants argued that women lacked elaborate age-classification because 'women are women—they do not need those things.'" (3p171)

"When a woman has ceased to be economically productive, in the sense that she can no longer 'make farm' or do other important tasks, she passes, in effect, into retirement and out of the prestige system." (3p172-3)

"Girls apparently remain in the nesuawulu until puberty, the time at which most girls in previous times were formally married.... At puberty, or upon marriage, adolescent girls become members of the wainyo, or 'wire group....' The next older age-grade, denyino (literally, town women), appears to consist of the women of a village

who for the most part have stopped bearing children, but who have not yet reached the stage of life at which they are physically incapable of economic productivity... But when a woman is no longer economically productive, in the sense that she is no longer physically able to undertake the many arduous tasks associated with food production and processing, with cutting and hauling of firewood, and with the carrying of the necessary water supplies, she goes, in effect, into retirement by passing into the age-grade termed *batinyo*, or sometimes *batipo* (literally, ‘those who call out *bati*’).” (3p174-5)

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

“Co-wives in a polygynous household who enjoy good relations with each other—‘if they like each other’s fashion’—are more likely to cooperate in the several economically important activities in which the household is involved. These range from helping each other in rice-farming activities (see Chapter VI), in food preparation, and in the logistic activities of daily life: hauling and cutting of firewood, hauling of water, and activities of house maintenance.” (3p293)

5.8 Village and house organization:

“...the population of tribal villages in southeastern Liberia may be classified by reference to principles of patrilineally-derived tribal and village citizenship.” (3p136)

“The ‘rural’ settlement pattern may be best characterized as dispersed, semi-permanent farmsteads and hamlets, most often providing shelter for a single extended family, which have been built at sometimes considerable walking distances from the ‘traditional’ large villages discussed in more detail below. Although some farmsteads and hamlets have been built in ‘isolated’ sections of the high forest, they are more commonly found along or near motor roads (cf. Anonymous, n.d.). It would appear, however, that most of the population of Webbo District continues to live in the traditional *dea*, or village, or in *misiodea* (‘Mission Towns’) which have been built on the outskirts of traditional villages in recent years (cf. Moore 1955: 34f. for Webbo District, and Fraenkel 1966 for the Kru Coast).” (3p162-3)

“As a rule, houses in the traditional village are built closely together, and are clustered with no visible order around a central plaza (cf. Schwab 1947: 32, and Plates 35a, c, d, e, f, g, h, and 37a, b, c, d). In most villages, the central plaza (desire: ‘town center’) is the location of the sacred tree and other village shrines, the men’s society house (*tua?gba*), and the village drums. In some hinterland villages where a majority of the inhabitants have become active members of the Assemblies of God Church, traditional village religious structures (including the sacred tree, the men’s society house, and other shrines) have been replaced by a chapel (‘church house’) – this has been the case in one of the Sabo villages, and apparently too in a nearby Palipo village and in one small *tuobo* village. Moore (1955: 34f.) reported that he had been told that the *Bodio*’s house had been destroyed and replaced by a church in one of the villages in the Barobo Chiefdom.” (3p163)

“Houses built in the mission-town sections of the villages in the area are usually rectangular in form, and some of those recently constructed have corrugated-iron roofs (*pake*). The appearance of the mission town is in clear contrast to the traditional village, inasmuch as the houses in the former are usually laid out along a ‘street,’ even in those villages lacking access to the motor roads which have been recently built in the region. Some houses in the mission towns have smaller, rectangular ‘kitchen houses’ (*chali*) located behind the main structure.” (3p164)

“In addition to being used to refer to the personnel involved, the terms *tuawuuno* and *panton* are used in description of a physical portion of the village in which the houses of group members are located. As the horizontal plan of Saboke suggests, the areas occupied by the constituent households of the various quarter-groups were not obviously demarcated in 1967 when my field work was carried out. No walls, fences, or other ‘boundary features’ separated the clustered houses belonging to one *tuawuuno* from those belonging to another. Indeed, a great deal of ‘overlap’ existed within the village, and were built on land considered to belong to different *tuawuuno*. In such cases, when a house belonging to one *tuawuuno* has been built on land ‘owned’ by another *tuawuuno*, ultimate rights to the land in question are said to be retained by the ‘owning’ *tuawuuno*. With the apparent exception of the village’s central plaza (the location of the sacred tree, the men’s society shelter, and other shrines), any given section of the village is considered to be controlled by one or another of the several *tuawuuno* groups in the village.” (3p261)

“...Sabo customary beliefs hold that each married woman should have her own house, in order to minimize conflict between wives... some polygynous households occupy only a single domestic structure, either on a temporary or apparently more permanent basis. In addition, although male Sabo informants indicated that while it is desirable to have the ‘consent’ of one’s wife before marrying still another, it is not essential that he always have this permission, because each marriage is seen, in essence, in its own terms.” (3p292-3)

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses):

“In three of the four Sabo villages (the horizontal plan of one Sabo village—‘Saboke’—is illustrated in Chapter V) the most common house form is traditional in the area: a circular house with a thatched conical roof

(dakeaki: 'umbrella house'). Many of the round houses have had small external rooms (gbulu) built onto one or more sides. Modern-day round houses are said to be considerably larger in diameter than was formerly the case. All houses have a rice storage loft. Some houses of more recent construction are rectangular in form, but retain the traditional thatched roof because of the relative high cost of corrugated iron roofing as well as the difficulty of having it transported. Rectangular houses are termed kwonih aeke (literal, 'four-cornered house')." (3p163-4)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

No data concerning this was found during my research.

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

"Sabo tribal organization, the principles of which require that any given individual be identified with a particular village as well as with a particular patrilineal descent group (tua)." (3p33)

"The historical, economic, and demographical materials summarized in the preceding chapters suggest strongly that the Sabo and other Grebo- and Kru-speaking peoples of the southeastern Liberian hinterland might properly be termed village-dwelling peasant farmers, but most people in the area identify themselves primarily as tribesmen—as members of particular, named tribes (dakwe) whose separate existences long predate the extension of Liberian political hegemony over them... the Sabo continue to emphasize the importance of traditional descent group and kinship organization as well as traditional territorially based political units." (3p153)

"As I have indicated above, the eldest of the several tua nye?bale in the village appears to have had the greatest power in village affairs during the period which preceded the extension of Liberian governmental control over the area. This position, called boligbo, was not hereditary. The boligbo, together with the older elders. The woroba, and the adult men of the village conferred and discussed issues which affected the village as a whole, consulting when appropriate the denyino (town women) and their 'chief' or spokeswoman, the nyinkei." (3p166)

"As I have noted earlier, there are included within the dako a number of distinct patrilineal sibs, with each of these comprising one or more component lineages. The term tua is used by the Sabo to refer either to the more inclusive sib or to the more exclusive lineages within each sib." (3p191)

5.12 Trade:

"Harper City, at Cape Palmas, has been the major port for southeastern Liberia since the middle of the last century, and as such, attracted many migrants on a "transient" basis. But in recent years, it has attracted increasing numbers of migrants, both male and female, who come in search not only of work but also education or in some cases, simply a way of life different from that which could be led in the rural and tribal villages in the hinterland." (3p125)

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Those regarded as "strangers" are at the lowest standpoint in the villages. They are not allowed into others practices or regarded as citizens in the villages. Outcasts in many sense; however, it appears over time they may gain limited acceptance.

"Like the other 'strangers' in the village, they had not yet established incorporative ties within the local social structure." (3p143)

"One of the most important is the fact that the four villages share, in addition to the features noted earlier, a common ritual affiliation with a single Bodio, or 'High Priest' (cf. Johnson 1957: 43-51). Although one Sabo informant stated that each village, ideally, should have its own Bodio, other informants indicated there was to be only one Bodio for the dako as a whole. Another tie linking the villages is the common sib membership of the war priest, or jibadio, in each of the villages: the position of Jibadio is to be filled from the men of a single sib (the tua Misao). Similarly, the status of Woroba (literally, village or twin father) is to be filled, in each of the dako's villages, by a man belonging to the tua Jidao, which is considered to 'own the ground.' Such features as these, in addition to the historical traditions of village movements, and of village alliances, conflicts, and re-alliances, appear to function as solidary structures in the tribal organization, and appear also, to have provided mechanisms for uniting the Sabo against incursions by other tribes in the area." (3p158)

"The oldest of the male members of the tuawuuno is considered to be, nominally at least, its spokesman in village affairs, and is referred to by the term tua nye?bale ('family old man') or such other horrific terms as kunyo ('old man') or nyefwe ('big man'). As such, he is important in village political organization." (3p165)

"As I have indicated above, the eldest of the several tua nye?bale in the village appears to have had the greatest power in village affairs during the period which preceded the extension of Liberian governmental control over the area. This position, called boligbo, was not hereditary. The boligbo, together with the older elders. The woroba, and the adult men of the village conferred and discussed issues which affected the village as a whole, consulting when appropriate the denyino (town women) and their 'chief' or spokeswoman, the nyinkei." (3p166)

"According to my informants, the Liberian government first named town chiefs in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Since that time, a kind of 'parallel' governmental structure has existed in the villages of southeastern Liberia,

with the 'government chiefs' being, in effect, added on to the pre-existing political organization. The village chief, or town chief as he is more often termed in the area, today is a more-or-less compromise choice between the needs of the national and district government and the wishes of the village populace. The chief, called kei or chifi, is formally appointed by the government after his election (or selection) by the villagers, but the government has sometimes refused to confirm the villagers' choice. In addition to the town chief, most villages in the area today have a 'second' chief, who assists the chief in his duties, and who (occasionally) acts in the chief's absence. Although the chief and his second are nominally in charge of village affairs, few chiefs at the local level would contravene openly the wishes of the traditional village leaders, the elders." (3p167)

"According to informants, the nyinokei is selected on the basis of her ability to speak rather than on any hereditary basis. In some cases, she may be backed up by a 'second chief' (this structure then parallels the town political organization.) When the women of the village have to come to some formal decision with regard to a particular issue, they caucus privately in one of the houses in the village and reach a consensus which is presented to the village council by the byinokei. When such a meeting is imminent, two messengers or belopo walk through the village ringing large brass hand-bells and calling out the appropriate announcement." (3p176-7)

"Order at company dances and other activities was maintained by two female 'policemen' or 'constables' (konsibo) who used bobby's whistles in the execution of their duties. The 'policemen' were empowered to 'arrest' and fine members who failed (or refused) to participate in company activities or who misbehaved during dances. The women of the company were often (although not always) led in their distinctive circular dances by another male, called the wulenyakwenyu ('dance in front ruler person,' or leading dancer). When members of the company undertook such other activities as the cooperative mudding of a new house (by 'contract' with the owner) or as a group helped with the planting of a rice farm, this man acted as a kind of headman, overseeing the activity, encouraging the workers, and serving any nesura (cane liquor) or other refreshment that might be at hand." (3p179)

"The women of the denyino age-grade similarly have a dance, called seowule, but apparently do not form a 'company.' Rather, they are called 'town women' (as I have indicated earlier). Unlike the patterned circular dances of the Wire Company, the seowule appears to the observer to be a rather 'unorganized' dance. Too, the denyino apparently do not have 'officers' per se, but the nyinokei and an informal circle of especially powerful women (wives of men in important political and ritual positions) appear to be responsible for marshaling opinion on important issues, for getting the women of this age-grade to cooperate in the mudding of a house, or to assist in rice-planting, and so on." (3p179)

"The oldest men of the village are called the blutabuo, but are occasionally referred to by the collective term boligbwe ('the speakers'—or in the singular, boligbo, 'the speaker'). These are the most respected men of the village, and in combination with the elders of the other villages in the dako, form the tribal council of elders. The elders (as I shall translate the term blutabuo) are said with considerable justification 'to control the town.' They are responsible for shaping the policies of the village toward other villages in the tribe, toward the paramount chief (who, as I have indicated earlier, holds a 'created' status), and toward the government. Few town chiefs would envision acting without consultation with the elders who 'own' the village. Not surprisingly, the number of boligbwe in a village is not large, being limited to the three or four oldest of the various lineage-headmen (tua nyebale). The oldest of these three or four men is considered to be the 'real' boligbo or speaker for the town." (3p182)

"Insofar as I was able to determine, lineages within a sib are not hierarchically ranked, no one lineage representing the first line of descent from the putative founder of the tua. Indeed, in many cases, one informant would indicate quite strongly that his own lineage represented the 'true people' of the sib concerned, but his claim would be controverted by another informant claiming that his lineage was the 'true people.'" (3p195)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time allocation to RCR:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

"One of the most important is the fact that the four villages share, in addition to the features noted earlier, a common ritual affiliation with a single Bodio, or 'High Priest' (cf. Johnson 1957: 43-51). Although one Sabo informant stated that each village, ideally, should have its own Bodio, other informants indicated there was to be only one Bodio for the dako as a whole. Another tie linking the villages is the common sib membership of the war priest, or jibadio, in each of the villages: the position of Jibadio is to be filled from the men of a single sib (the tua Misao)." (3p158)

"...the sib Misao provided the war priest in each village, the sib Jidao provided the woroba in each village, and each village shared a common ritual affiliation with a single Bodio or High Priest. Because of the important role

played by the Bodio in maintaining relatively stable relations between the villages of the dako, it is useful to describe more fully some of the rights and obligations of his status.” (3p168)

“It is important to emphasize that the Bodio’s role precluded the power to enforce for any length of time his injunction on violent conflict between persons or groups; according to my Sabo informants, his power in such cases was limited to an initial stoppage of the conflict” (3p169)

6.2 Stimulants:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

“...my informants insisted that the Sabo have no formal means of initiation of girls into adulthood. At puberty or upon marriage, adolescent girls become members of the wainyo, or ‘wire group.’ This age-grade, as often called by its full English title ‘Wire Company,’ includes in its membership the younger married women of the village.” (3p174)

“With their initiation into kwi at about age fifteen, boys pass into the kofa, the youngest of several age-grades that serve to stratify the men of a village. Kofa includes in its membership unmarried men up to about age thirty, so far as I was able to determine from my census of Saboke. Some older kofa have begun to cohabit with women, but only when a young man has built a house for his wife is he considered to be ‘fully married,’ the qualification for promotion into the next higher age-grade.” (3p181)

“As I have noted, marriage (and the construction of one’s wife’s house) is required for promotion into hai, but informants indicate that men could be promoted to hai, jiragbulo, and gbo only at times when a male ‘bush goat’ (nya) has been killed, ritually prepared, and eaten in the center of the village by the adult man. When a man is ‘to be raised’ to gbo, he must pay a goat to the gbo, which is killed and eaten in a common meal shared by all of the men.” (3p182-3)

“Just as in the case of dako and village (dea) citizenship, tua membership is normally ascribed at or shortly after birth. Under ‘normal’ circumstances, a child belongs to the tua to which the pater belongs regardless of the tua-membership of its genitor. Certain conditions, however, qualify exceptions to this general rule. Children born of unmarried mothers are considered to belong to the mother’s tua (i./e., since tua-membership is acquired through males, to the tua of the mother’s father or brother), unless the genitor is willing to pay either bridewealth (nyinowule, or ‘woman money’) or child-compensation. If he chooses the former of these courses of action, of course, the previously ‘unlawful’ union becomes a lawful marriage of the blagbakotu type...” (3p192)

“Chickens, for example, may be killed and cooked in honor of a ‘stranger’ or a visiting kinsman, and goats and sheep are often killed (or given) at funerals. Goats and sheep may also be used in bridewealth payment, as I have noted earlier.” (3p319)

6.4 Other rituals:

“If a village was notified in advance that we were coming, our arrival (particularly if accompanied by my family) was often construed as an occasion for festivities and ceremonial gift exchange.” (3p34)

“Assumption of the office, according to my Sabo informants, involved a ritual capture of the new Bodio, and an investiture ceremony which included the placing of an iron anklet ring on his leg and a ‘slap on the back’ which rendered the new Bodio thereafter sexually incapable. In addition to the anklet, the Bodio’s badges of office included the skin of a white monkey (ple) which could be used in at least two ways. First, the white monkey skind could be used by the Bodio’s messenger to place in front of a successful hunter, an act which signaled to the hunter that his meat had been requisitioned for the use of the High Priest. More importantly, the white skind was used by the Bodio in the execution of what may have been the most crucial aspect of his role. In cases of serious dispute, the Bodio could suspend ‘palaver’ by casting the skin between the parties to the dispute, thereby committing the dispute to negotiations carried out under the aegis of a neutral party.” (3p169)

“According to these informants, such companies are usually started on the basis of individual initiative—some person will create a song which becomes popular among the young women who dance. Later, a ‘big man’ (nye few) may invite the young women to sing and dance at his house (i.e., the sponsor a dance by providing liquid and other refreshments).” (3p177)

“The Sabo, like many other Liberian tribal peoples, formerly practiced infant and child betrothal, but as Gibbs has indicated for the Kpelle, this is now illegal (Gibbs 1963; 1965: 210). By placing a splinter of ‘bamboo’ (split raffia cane) in the forelock of a baby girl (onyinaosedru) in the presence of the headman of the child’s lineage, a man could signify his wish to later marry the girl. This act of betrothal, if accepted by the tua nye?bale, was considered to be binding; the girl could not be later engaged or married to another without the permission of the tua of the original suitor. According to elderly Sabo informants, infant betrothal could be easily negated later if either the girl or the members of her tua became ill-disposed toward her marriage with the man who had engaged her as a baby. The betrothal of girls of eight or nine years of age, which seems to have been much more common than infant

betrothal, could be accomplished by giving a leaf of tobacco, or, in other words of one informant, ‘five cents or two cents or some other small thing’ to the girl’s father or the headman of her descent group. Upon receipt of such a token, the father or headman would call the remainder of the tua (presumably the lineage, or at most the local sib element) to assemble. In their presence the girl was asked if the betrothal was agreeable to her—if it was, the token gift was accepted (opeedea).” (3p210)

“Chickens, for example, may be killed and cooked in honor of a ‘stranger’ or a visiting kinsman, and goats and sheep are often killed (or given) at funerals. Goats and sheep may also be used in bridewealth payment, as I have noted earlier. But in spite of their social and ecological importance, none of these animals are tended or herded as are the domesticated animals of certain African societies (e.g., Fulani cattle)—they are simply there, and the Sabo may expend much time arguing the ownership of a given animal but relatively little (if any) time is allocated to their care and breeding (cf. Moore 1955: 20f).” (3p319)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

“Citizens of the dako are said to be descended patrilineally from one of several ‘founding fathers,’ rather than from a single apical ancestor as is the case in such other West African tribal groups as the Tiv (L. bohannan 1958). Most, although not all, of the tribal ancestors of the Sabo are said to have come originally from an area called Paa or Paapeti, a region identified rather vaguely by my informants as having been located ‘far to the north.’ The ancestors, together with their families, are said to have left Paapeti during a period of war and conflict among its inhabitants, and eventually migrated, many generations ago, into the area now called Saobli by their claimed descendants, the modern Sabo. The ancestors are considered to have been the founders of the several patrilineal sibs (tua) of the dako.” (3p155-6)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

“In most villages, the central plaza (desire: ‘town center’) is the location of the sacred tree and other village shrines, the men’s society house (tua?gba), and the village drums.” (3p163)

“According to these informants, such companies are usually started on the basis of individual initiative—some person will create a song which becomes popular among the young women who dance. Later, a ‘big man’ (nye few) may invite the young women to sing and dance at his house (i.e., the sponsor a dance by providing liquid and other refreshments).” (3p177)

“Order at company dances and other activities was maintained by two female ‘policemen’ or ‘constables’ (konsibo) who used bobby’s whistles in the execution of their duties. The ‘policemen’ were empowered to ‘arrest’ and fine members who failed (or refused) to participate in company activities or who misbehaved during dances. The women of the company were often (although not always) led in their distinctive circular dances by another male, called the wulenyakwenyu (‘dance in front ruler person,’ or leading dancer). When members of the company undertook such other activities as the cooperative mudding of a new house (by ‘contract’ with the owner) or as a group helped with the planting of a rice farm, this man acted as a kind of headman, overseeing the activity, encouraging the workers, and serving any nesura (cane liquor) or other refreshment that might be at hand.” (3p179)

“The women of the denyino age-grade similarly have a dance, called seowule, but apparently do not form a ‘company.’ Rather, they are called ‘town women’ (as I have indicated earlier). Unlike the patterned circular dances of the Wire Company, the seowule appears to the observer to be a rather ‘unorganized’ dance. Too, the denyino apparently do not have ‘officers’ per se, but the nyinokei and an informal circle of especially powerful women (wives of men in important political and ritual positions) appear to be responsible for marshaling opinion on important issues, for getting the women of this age-grade to cooperate in the mudding of a house, or to assist in rice-planting, and so on.” (3p179)

“The nyaapo spend a lot of their free time in playing such games as football; many, although not all, now attend school.” (3p180)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.8 Missionary effect:

“In some hinterland villages where a majority of the inhabitants have become active members of the Assemblies of God Church, traditional village religious structures (including the sacred tree, the men’s society house, and other shrines) have been replaced by a chapel (‘chuch house’) – this has been the case in one of the Sabo villages, and apparently too in a nearby Palipo village and in one small tuobo village. Moore (1955: 34f.) reported that he had been told that the Bodio’s house had been destroyed and replaced by a church in one of the villages in the Barobo Chiefdom.” (3p163)

6.9 RCR revival:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

No data concerning this was found during my research.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

“One of the most important is the fact that the four villages share, in addition to the features noted earlier, a common ritual affiliation with a single Bodio, or ‘High Priest’ (cf. Johnson 1957: 43-51). Although one Sabo informant stated that each village, ideally, should have its own Bodio, other informants indicated there was to be only one Bodio for the dako as a whole. Another tie linking the villages is the common sib membership of the war priest, or jibadio, in each of the villages: the position of Jibadio is to be filled from the men of a single sib (the tua Misao).” (3p158)

“In most villages, the central plaza (desire: ‘town center’) is the location of the sacred tree and other village shrines, the men’s society house (tua?gba), and the village drums. In some hinterland villages where a majority of the inhabitants have become active members of the Assemblies of God Church, traditional village religious structures (including the sacred tree, the men’s society house, and other shrines) have been replaced by a chapel (‘church house’) – this has been the case in one of the Sabo villages, and apparently too in a nearby Palipo village and in one small tuobo village. More (1955: 34f.) reported that he had been told that the Bodio’s house had been destroyed and replaced by a church in one of the villages in the Barobo Chiefdom.” (3p163)

“In addition to the notion of common descent, co-members of a tua are said to share a common totem, usually an animal whose use as a food has been tabooed or restricted in some other way. Such taboos are said to derive from instances in which the particular animal miraculously saved the life of the tua’s founder or another tua-ancestor. Although some of the tabooed animals are common to more than a single tua, shared totemic taboos were not interpreted by my informants as evidence that the tuas concerned are genealogically related or formerly constituted a single descent group.” (3p193)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.2 Piercings:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.3 Haircut:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.4 Scarification:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.8 Missionary effect:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

No data concerning this was found during my research.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

“It became apparent to me that kinship terminology per se is perhaps of somewhat less importance than kinship organization... because of the Sabo people’s rather flexible use of kinship terms in a variety of situations...” (3p33)

The researcher also continues to say it is very complex because of its flexibility and would require much more study.

“There are, so far as I was able to determine during my field research, no prescribed marriages, although some informants expressed some minor preference for marriage between a young man and a girl who is a member of a tua to which one of his father’s other wives belongs. One is not considered to be ‘related’ consanguineally to one’s father’s other wives, unless they happen to be members of the tua to which one’s mother belongs. For this reason, a young man may inherit leviratically one of his father’s wives (but not his own mother). Informants very often phrased this preference in terms of the father’s other wife’s attitude toward the husband’s son: if the young man

showed 'respect' to his father's woman, by bringing her meat, palm-nuts, or by performing well in other tasks, she would signify her own high regard for him by 'going to her brother' (i.e., a male member of her own tua, not necessarily her own sibling) and bringing his daughter to live in her house as the future wife of her husband's son. Such a marriage would, in the second generation, tend to 'recreate' or at least maintain the marital relationship previously established between the tua to which the father and son belong and the tua to which at least one of each of their wives belong." (3p219)

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

"Possibly because of the apparently increasing size of the absent male population, or more precisely put, because of the increasing absence of men from any given lineage or quarter-group, there may be an increasing tendency for the local sib element to be the group within which leviratic inheritance of widows (or, as it could be termed, succession to husbandship) occurs. According to one elderly male informant, lineages were formerly the unit of bridewealth payment and as such were also the unit within which leviratic widow inheritance took place, but nowadays the lineages of his own tua, at least, have begun to 'put together on this thing.'" (3p199)

"There are, so far as I was able to determine during my field research, no prescribed marriages, although some informants expressed some minor preference for marriage between a young man and a girl who is a member of a tua to which one of his father's other wives belongs. One is not considered to be 'related' consanguineally to one's father's other wives, unless they happen to be members of the tua to which one's mother belongs. For this reason, a young man may inherit leviratically one of his father's wives (but not his own mother). Informants very often phrased this preference in terms of the father's other wife's attitude toward the husband's son: if the young man showed 'respect' to his father's woman, by bringing her meat, palm-nuts, or by performing well in other tasks, she would signify her own high regard for him by 'going to her brother' (i.e., a male member of her own tua, not necessarily her own sibling) and bringing his daughter to live in her house as the future wife of her husband's son. Such a marriage would, in the second generation, tend to 'recreate' or at least maintain the marital relationship previously established between the tua to which the father and son belong and the tua to which at least one of each of their wives belong." (3p219)

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

No data concerning this was found during my research.

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

There is... "the introduction and acceptance of already-manufactured agricultural tools (i.e., the "trade axe," hoe and cutlass)." (3p27-28)

Numbered references

1. <http://linguistics.buffalo.edu/people/faculty/dryer/dryer/atlas.locations>
2. http://bblearn.missouri.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flauncher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D_7059_1%26url%3D
3. McEvoy, Frederick D. 1971. History, Tradition, and Kinship as Factors in Modern Samoan Labor Migration. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Oregon. [Dialect of Northern Grebo.]