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## Entry Nr. 375 Isambakon

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Aaron Spencer Fogleman and Robert Hanserd (eds.), *Five Hundred African Voices: A Catalog of Published Accounts by Africans Enslaved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1586-1936* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2022).

<i>Catalog number:</i>	<b>375</b>
<i>Name(s) of African providing account:</i>	<b>Isambakon = George File</b>
<i>Date account recorded:</i>	1854
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<i>Date of entry creation:</i>	28 September 2021

*Source:* Account printed on p. 1 of S. W. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*. London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, 1854.

*Comments:*

Koelle's remarks (p. 1) –

“Geographical remarks obtained from the same.— Batendu is half a day's journey from Katon, the Fulup capital, and about one mile distant from the sea. Fulup is near Bandsal and 'Esin-, where the same language is spoken; also near Buiui; but a considerable distance, perhaps three weeks, from Elalap, Botinet, and Sigidsot, in which four places the language is different from that of Fulup. Sigidsot is inhabited by the Portuguese. The Fulup country is quite level, without mountains and stones, the ground consisting of sand.”

*Text of Account:*

p. 1:

“Fulup.\*—The specimens of this language were received from Isambakon, or George File, of Kissy, born in the village Batendu, where he was kidnapped by the 'Esin people in about his twenty-second year, and sold to Elalap, where he was five years. He was next brought to Gadson, or Kadsiou, where he remained for three years in the hand of a Portuguese; and after this he was about five years at Bisao, whence he was brought to Sierra Leone by a British cruiser ten years ago, and has since been the only Fulup individual in this place. He had some difficulty in remembering the words of his mother tongue which I asked of him; yet, on revising them with him, I had not much to alter.”

\* Referring to the language Isambakon spoke.

(See original scans below.)

1. Fúlup.—The specimens of this language were received from Isambákōn, or George File, of Kissy, born in the village Bātēndu, where he was kidnapped by the 'Ešir people in about his twenty-second year, and sold to Elálāp, where he was five years. He was next brought to Gádşou, or Kádşīou, where he remained for three years in the hand of a Portuguese; and after this he was about five years at Bisáo, whence he was brought to Sierra Leone by a British cruiser ten years ago, and has since been the only Fúlup individual in this place. He had some difficulty in remembering the words of his mother-tongue which I asked of him; yet, on revising them with him, I had not much to alter.

Geographical remarks obtained from the same.—Bātēndu is half a day's journey from Kátou, the Fúlup capital, and about one mile distant from the sea. Fúlup is near Bándşāl and 'Ešir, where the same language is spoken; also near Búiui; but a considerable distance, perhaps three weeks, from Elálāp, Bótinet, and Sígidsōt, in which four places the language is different from that of Fúlup. Sígidsōt is inhabited by the Portuguese. The Fúlup country is quite level, without mountains and stones, the ground consisting of sand.

I. NORTH-WEST ATLANTIC LANGUAGES, distinguishing themselves, like those of South Africa, by Prefixal Changes, or an Initial Inflection.

A. *First Group*—

1. Fúlp.—The specimens of this language were received from Isambákōn, or George File, of Kissy, born in the village Bátēndu, where he was kidnapped by the 'Ešir people in about his twenty-second year, and sold to Ēlálāp, where he was five years. He was next brought to Gádšou, or Kádšīou, where he remained for three years in the hand of a Portuguese; and after this he was about five years at Bisáo, whence he was brought to Sierra Leone by a British cruiser ten years ago, and has since been the only Fúlp individual in this place. He had some difficulty in remembering the words of his mother-tongue which I asked of him; yet, on revising them with him, I had not much to alter.

Geographical remarks obtained from the same.—Bátēndu is half a day's journey from Kátōr, the Fúlp capital, and about one mile distant from the sea. Fúlp is near Bándšāl and 'Ešir, where the same language is spoken; also near Búitui; but a considerable distance, perhaps three weeks, from Ēlálāp, Bótinēt, and Sígidsōt, in which four places the language is different from that of Fúlp. Sígidsōt is inhabited by the Portuguese. The Fúlp country is quite level, without mountains and stones, the ground consisting of sand.

2. Fílham or Fílhōl.—From Káyāwōn, or Abraham (Bahema) Belford, of Kissy, born in the town Búntur, the Fílham capital, where he lived to his sixth year, at which age he removed to Tónāri, where he had four children, the eldest of whom was eight years old when he was taken in war by the Bányūn. He was then in Demerara for six years, and afterwards in Sierra Leone for seven, with only two countrymen.

Remarks.—Búntur is situate on a large river, running towards the sea, called Kóya, and about three weeks' journey from the Gambia. Tónāri is ten hours' journey from Búntur, and six hours from the Bányūn frontier. The Kabúnga call the Fílham Dšóla, or Fóni Dšóla, i.e. perhaps, "foreigner, barbarian." The country of the Fílham tribe is called 'Ešuh, and is situated to the west of Kuténo, with which it has one language in common.

B. *Second Group*—

1. Bóla.—From Bádšābu, or Manuel Maxfield, of Kissy, born in the town Góle, where he married two wives, and had a child old enough to walk before he was kidnapped by the Bidšógos. He has now been in Sierra Leone about thirty-six years, and has one of his countrymen in his house who came here only four years ago. Besides these two there is only one more Bóla in Sierra Leone.

Remarks.—Góle is situated in the Kō district, a few miles from the sea. Bóla is called Buráma by the

Bulánda, and is situated west of Bulánda, north-east of Púlunde, also near Bábōg, Bašēred, Kányōp, Káyū, Pósis, Bidšógo.

2. Sárār.—From 'Udšūman (or Osman), or Robert Nicol, at Kissy, born in the village Šádal, where he had a child about ten years of age when he was seized and sold by a Dšúal man because he had committed adultery with one of his wives. He was then bartered to the Mandšákoes for six cows and a pig, and, after one year, brought to Sierra Leone, which was about fifteen years ago. He has only one countryman in Sierra Leone.

Remarks.—Šádal is about two hours' journey from 'Amōn, the Sárār capital, and three hours from the sea. Sárār is situated west of Balánta, east of the sea, south of Bányūn, north of Bádšūan or Dšúal, where the Bóla language is spoken.

3. Pépēl.—From Béntu, or John W. Manuel, of Freetown, born in the town Tōr, whence he was taken by his mother to the island Bēlhīlīd, or Bēlšīlīd, called Pésis, whilst still an infant. He remained on Bēlhīlīd till his thirteenth year, during which time he spoke the Mandšáko language, this being the language of Bēlhīlīd, of which his mother was a native. He then returned to Bišláo for about six years, during which time he spoke Pépēl. In his nineteenth year he went to the Gambia, where he stopped eight years, and then settled in Sierra Leone in about 1831. (He is accordingly not a liberated slave). He has since returned four times to his country in the employ of the cruisers, as pilot and interpreter, each time stopping about a month.

Remarks.—Tōr is one day's journey from Nté, the capital of the Bišláo island. The Pépēl language is spoken on the island of Bišláo, commonly called Bisao, which is situate opposite Kányōp or Mandšáko, Balánta, and Nálu.

*Third Group*—

1. Biáfada.—From Búkar, or John Campbell, of Freetown, born in the village Tába, where he lived to his sixteenth year. He then removed to the village Wákóra, and, after six years' residence there, was taken in a civil war and sold. Being captured by the English cruisers he was brought to Sierra Leone, where he has been for twenty years, with five of his countrymen still remaining.

Remarks.—Tába is a day and a-half's journey from the sea, and is situate on the river Badšéba; but Wákóra is four miles from the Badšéba. The Biáfada are called Dšóla by the Kabúruga; hence, also, by others, Biáfada-Dšóla. Biáfada is situate west of N'kábu, east of Bulánda, north of Nálu, south of Birásu-Mandénga, where a language is spoken like that of the Kabúnga.

2. Pádšāde. From Wáli, or John Wali, of Freetown, born in the town 'Udádšā, where he was taken in war in

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