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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).

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Name(s) of African providing account: **Síse = John Cole**
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Source: Account printed on p. 12 of S. W. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*. London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, 1854.

Comments:

Koelle's remarks (p. 12) –

“Banorr is almost a days' journey from 'Ntar, the Bagba capital, and three days from the large river Debe, also called Riba, in the Rifom country. Bagba is situated west of Bandsombu, with a different language, and of Barrkumbo, also with a different language;

East of Badsad, with the same language. It is also one day's journey from Barrkorr, with the same language; one from Bandsembi, with a different language; two days from Babu, with a different language; two days from Bako, also with a different language. During his transportation to the sea, Sise passed through Bamum, Besin, Mbuwan. Banyarr, Bandaa, Ntontu, Mberekarr, 'Afu, Koangbar, Mbeson, Kalaba. On the river Riba, which comes from Bansa, and goes to Bamborrgo, and is not fordable on foot even in the dry season, there is a small tribe of people, only from three to five feet in height, called 'Betsar,' who are most successful hunters. They get their cloth from the Nsor-tree by beating it flat and then drying it. They have long beards, and the hair on their head it about as long as a man's hand. They are a very peaceable people, never making war and live entirely on the produce of the chase, sometimes exchanging their venison for millet, &c., in the Rufum country. They do not cultivate the ground, but are constantly on the move, changing their abode every six or twelve months. Their houses can be easily built, taken down, and even carried along with them, consisting as they do, of the bark of a large tree. The Betsarr hunt monkeys, baboons, wild hogs, deer, elephants, &c.”

Text of Account:

p. 12

“Bagba.*-- From Sise, or John Cole, of Gloucester, born in the hamlet of Banjon, where he grew up and remained till about thirty years of age, when was taken in a war against the Tebale, who had come from afar on horses, and had conquered many countries, spreading terror before them on account of their poisoned weapons, by the mere touch of which they killed their enemies. He has been in Sierra Leone fifteen years, with now only one countrywoman remaining, whereas at first there were eight of them.”

* Referring to the language spoken by Sise.

(See scanned facsimiles below.)

6. Bágba.—From Şişe, or John Cole, of Gloucester, born in the hamlet of Bánon, where he grew up and remained till about thirty years of age, when he was taken in a war against the Tebále, who had come from afar on horses, and had conquered many countries, spreading terror before them on account of their poisoned weapons, by the mere touch of which they killed their enemies. He has been in Sierra Leone fifteen years, with now only one countrywoman remaining, whereas at first there were eight of them.

Remarks.—Bánon is almost a days' journey from 'Ntar, the Bágba capital, and three days from the large river Dêbê, also called Ribā, in the Rífom country. Bágba is situated west of Bandşómbū, with a different language, and of Bârkumbo, also with a different language; east of Bâdşad, with the same language. It is also one day's journey from Bârkon, with the same language; one from Bandşêmbi, with a different language; two days from Bâbu, with a different language; two days from Bâko, also with a different language. During his transportation to the sea, Şişe passed through Bâmum, Bésin, Mbúwan, Bányan, Bândan, Ntõntu, Mbérêkan, Afū, Kóangbar, Mbéson, Kálabā. On the river Ribā, which comes from Bânsa, and goes to Bambóngo, and is not fordable on foot even in the dry season, there is a small tribe of people, only from three to five feet in height, called "Bétsar," who are most successful hunters. They get their cloth from the Nsór-tree by beating it flat and then drying it. They have long beards, and the hair of their head is about as long as a man's hand. They are a very peaceable people, never making war, and live entirely on the produce of the chase, sometimes exchanging their venison for millet, &c., in the Rífom country. They do not cultivate the ground, but are constantly on the move, changing their abode every six or twelve months. Their houses can be easily built, taken down, and even carried along with them, consisting as they do, of the bark of a large tree. The Bétsar hunt monkeys, baboons, wild hogs, deer, elephants, &c.

and warlike, dressing in black monkey-skins, and fighting with swords, spears, and arrows. Near Láfum, and also on the shores of the Libá, is another people called "Kéńkób," only three or four feet high, but very stout, and the most excellent marksmen. They are peaceful, live on the produce of the chase, and are so liberal, that if, *e.g.*, one has killed an elephant, he would give the whole of it away.

5. Kúm or Bákum.—From Ndińga, or John Harding, of Freetown, born in the town of Débá, where he had a child four years of age when he was taken in war by the Muhammadan Tibále, who carried him to Ngóla, a Moko country, where he managed to run away from them, but was caught by the Bákóm, who sold him to Ménéńar, whence he was brought to Báfóm, Bányńar, Kóngńar, Dik, Kálábá. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty-three years, with only two more persons who speak the same language.

Remarks.—Débá is four days' journey from Fúmbán, the residence of a king who has five thousand wives, and who reigns over Bále, Bábú, Ndşób, Bápa, Bati, Bńrgot, Bákum, Bńdsşóm, Bńmbńn, Bńgba, Nşş, &c. Bákum is west of Ndşób, with a different language; east of Bńmum, to which it is subject, and where also a different language is spoken. Also one day's journey from Nşş, with a different language; half a day from Bále, with the same language; two days from Bábú, with a language like that of Bńfat.

6. Bńgba.—From Şişe, or John Cole, of Gloucester, born in the hamlet of Bńşon, where he grew up and remained till about thirty years of age, when he was taken in a war against the Tebále, who had come from afar on horses, and had conquered many countries, spreading terror before them on account of their poisoned weapons, by the mere touch of which they killed their enemies. He has been in Sierra Leone fifteen years, with now only one countrywoman remaining, whereas at first there were eight of them.

Remarks.—Bńşon is almost a days' journey from Ntar, the Bńgba capital, and three days from the large river Débş, also called Ribá, in the Rńfóm country. Bńgba is situated west of Bńdsşombń, with a different language, and of Bńńkumbo, also with a different language; east of Bńdsad, with the same language. It is also one day's journey from Bńńkor, with the same language; one from Bńdsşembń, with a different language; two days from Bńbu, with a different language; two days from Bńko, also with a different language. During his transportation to the sea, Şişe passed through Bńmum, Bşşin, Mbńwan, Bńnyńn, Bńndan, Ntńntu, Mbńrńkar, Ańń, Kńngńbar, Mbşson, Kálábá. On the river Ribá, which comes from Bńnsa, and goes to Bńmbńrgo, and is not fordable on foot even in the dry season, there is a small tribe of people, only from three to five feet in height, called "Bşsar," who are most successful hunters. They get their cloth from the Nşńr-tree by beating it flat and then drying it. They have long beards, and the hair of their head is about as long as a man's hand. They are a very peaceable people, never making war, and live entirely on the produce of the chase, sometimes exchanging their venison for millet, &c., in the Rńfóm country. They do not cultivate the ground, but are constantly on the move, changing their abode every six or twelve months. Their houses can be easily built, taken down, and even carried along with them, consisting as they do, of the bark of a large tree. The Bşsar hunt monkeys, baboons, wild hogs, deer, elephants, &c.

7. Bńlu.—From Kńmsi, or John Thomas, of Wellington, born in the village Bńdsşare, where he lived till about his twentieth year, when he was taken by the Tibńr, said to be the same as the Phńla of other countries. He was brought to the sea by way of Kálábá, and has been in Sierra Leone eighteen years, being the only representative of his tribe.

Remarks.—Bńlu is west of Entsi or Bńntsi, east of Ezş or Bńş; also near Bńntńm, Bńngur, Bńnda, Bńya, Bńmo.

8. Mom or Bńmom.—From Nyńmse, or James Harding, of Freetown, born in the Bńlumfa country, whence he was brought as a child to Tńpńn, a town five days' journey from Fńmbńn, the Bńmom capital, where he grew up and lived to his twenty-fourth year, when he was seized on a trading-tour to the Bńkńn country, for the debt of another Tńpńn man, and sold towards the sea, which he reached by way of Kálábá. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty-three years, being the only individual speaking this language, which is Bńmom proper. His mother-tongue he has entirely forgotten.

Remarks.—Tńpńn is two hours' journey from the river Mşpńn, whose water is "red like fire," and which is fordable on foot in the dry season. It comes from Bńdsşóm, and goes to Mńt, after having, in Mbńńkńa, joined the much larger Débá (*i.g.* Ribá), which comes from Ndşób, and in the midst of which the red water of the Mşpńn is seen unmixed for a great distance. After Mńt the Débá goes to Rńfúm, a great war country, and then to the Kńrgo country (?). Bńmom is west of Bńkum, which is subject to it, and east of Pńpu, which it also governs. On his way to the sea Nyńmse passed through Bńrńwa, Ntńrtu, Mbńrńkam, Bńrńa, Kńngńar, Kálábá. This occupied four years, but the journey may perhaps be made in two months.

9. Ngńala.—From Mbşpe, or James John, of Waterloo, born in the village of Ndşb, to be distinguished from the country of the same name, and where he lived till about his eighteenth year, when the Tńpńla came to his country and burnt all the towns, so that the people had to flee for safety in every direction. He himself fled to Mbará, where he was seized and made a slave. But when the Tńpńla burnt the Mbará towns likewise, his master fled with him to Pńpam, where he was again seized, and at once carried towards the sea, a journey of one month's constant walking before they arrived at Kálábá, where he remained three years. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with only two countrywomen.

Remarks.—The village Ndşb, or Pńndşb, is about three hours' journey from Tşńrntş, the Ngńala capital, and four or five from the large and wild river "Nńra," which is not fordable on foot even in the dry season. It runs from west to east, coming from Pńpńah and going to Mbará, of an average depth of four fathoms. (I doubted the statement concerning this great depth, but my informant was quite positive, and said in many parts it was much deeper, in some parts as deep as ten fathoms). Ngńala is west of Mbará, or properly, as they call themselves, of Mbşgon, speaking a different language; east of Pńpe, *i.e.* Pńpńah; north of Pşı, with a different language; south of Ańa, also with a different language.

10. Mńmńya, or Bńmńya.—From Nyńmse, or Thomas John, of Allentown, born in the town Mńmńka, where he lived till his eldest child was six years old, when the Bńmum destroyed it. He fled to Mńntş, or Bńntş, whose language he did not understand, where he was seized, made a slave, and after one year sold to Mńfńlar. He has been in Sierra Leone about eighteen years, with five countrymen and six countrywomen.

Remarks.—Mńmńka is two days' journey from the river "Ribá," not fordable on foot even in the dry season, and flowing from Mńmńya to Bńrńfo. Bńmńya is situate west of Mńrńfo, or Bńrńfo, speaking a different language; east of Mńtş, or Bńtş. Also one day's journey from Mńmum, with a different language; and two to three days from Mńba, *i.e.* Pńpńah, likewise with a different language. In coming to the sea Nyńmse passed through Mńfńlar, Bńngam, Mbş or Bńmbş, Mńmbşńkńa, Mńkńngbar, Nńwńra, *i.e.* Camerons.

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