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Entry Nr. 404 Bunsála

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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).

Catalog number: **404**
Name(s) of African providing account: **Būnsála = Thomas Pratt**
Date account recorded: 1854
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Source: Account printed on p. 14 of S. W. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*. London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, 1854.

Comments:

Koelle's remarks (p. 14) –

“Mukorrgomorrue consists, as all other towns of the country, of only two rows of houses, forming a single road, but it is of the length of a day's journey. It lies three miles from the river Bambaye, which can be crossed on foot even in the rainy season, and is nine hours' journey from Bandsumbo, the Bambama capital. Babamba is situated west of Sake, where the people (i.e. Shagga?) wear their hair so long that a stranger might be frightened, supposing at a distance 'they are baboons;' east of Mpau; also near Bakele, Baumbo, Wuseba, Ndamboma, Burrkomo. 'By walking one month's journey towards the sea, Bateke is reached; and by walking five days towards the east, Bumbete is reached.”

Text of Account: (see facsimiles below)

p. 14

“Mbamba or Babamba.*-- From Bunsala (i.e. famine), or Thomas Pratt, of Lomley, born in the town of Mukorrgomorrue, where he grew up, and had been married four years when he was sold on account of adultery, and carried to the sea-side, a journey which occupied five months. He has been in Sierra Leone for fifteen years, with five countrymen and as many countrywomen.”

* Referring to the language Bunsala spoke.

4. Mbám̄ba or Babám̄ba.—From Būnsála (*i. e.* famine), or Thomas Pratt, of Lomley, born in the town of Mukórgomóngūe, where he grew up, and had been married four years when he was sold on account of adultery, and carried to the sea-side, a journey which occupied five months. He has been in Sierra Leone for fifteen years, with five countrymen and as many countrywomen.

Remarks.—Mukórgomóngūe consists, as all other towns of the country, of only two rows of houses, forming a single road, but it is of the length of a day's journey. It lies three miles from the river Bám̄bāye, which can be crossed on foot even in the rainy season, and is nine hours' journey from Band-şúmbo, the Bám̄bamba capital. Babám̄ba is situated west of Şáke, where the people (*i. e.* Shagga?) wear their hair so long that a stranger might be frightened, supposing at a distance "they are baboons;" east of Mpáu; also near Bákéle, Baúmbo, Wuşéba, Ndám̄bōma, Būrkōmo. "By walking one month's journey towards the sea, Bātéke is reached; and by walking five days towards the east, Būmbéte is reached."

six miles from the river Piéka, which can be crossed on foot in the dry season, where he was sold by his relatives in about his twenty-third year. After stopping one year in Lónda, he was brought to Sierra Leone, where he has been twelve years, with three of his countrymen.

Remarks.—Kíla is about one month's journey from the river Ndáde, and about three months from the sea. Musentádu is west of Mákúta and Mbúla, which have the same language; east of Mukiwárgila, also with the same language. It is one day's journey from Mantúmba, with the same language; one month from Ndánda, with a different language; one month from Lamónu, with the same language; and one month from Masárgi.

4. Mbámba or Babámba.—From Binsála (*i. e.* famine), or Thomas Pratt, of Lomley, born in the town of Mukórgomórgúe, where he grew up, and had been married four years when he was sold on account of adultery, and carried to the sea-side, a journey which occupied five months. He has been in Sierra Leone for fifteen years, with five countrymen and as many countrywomen.

Remarks.—Mukórgomórgúe consists, as all other towns of the country, of only two rows of houses, forming a single road, but it is of the length of a day's journey. It lies three miles from the river Bámháye, which can be crossed on foot even in the rainy season, and is nine hours' journey from Band-súmbo, the Bámhámba capital. Babámba is situated west of Sáké, where the people (*i. e.* Shagga?) wear their hair so long that a stranger might be frightened, supposing at a distance "they are baboons;" east of Mpáú; also near Bákéle, Baúmbo, Wuséba, Ndámbo, Búrkómo. "By walking one month's journey towards the sea, Bátéke is reached; and by walking five days towards the east, Búmbéte is reached."

5. Kanyíka.—From Mútómp, or William Francis, of Freetown, born in the town Mámunykáyínt, where he was brought up, and had one child which could not walk when he was sold, on account of bad conduct, to Kambúnda slave-dealers, who sold him into the Kásánds country, from whence he was sold to Bága and the Portuguese. He stopped one year in Kásánds, one year in Bága, and one month on the coast; and he has now been in Sierra Leone twelve years, with only one countrywoman.

Remarks.—The Kásánds country is one month's journey from Kanyíka, and Mámunykáyínt is five days from the river Lóaláp, which can only be crossed in canoes even in the dry season. Kanyíka is one day's journey from Múnyimukánt, and four days from Kómusér.

6. Ntépe, or Ntéke, or Batépe.—From Ndánu, or William Fergusson, of Freetown, born in the town of Léséri, where he was sold in about his seventeenth year. He has now been in Sierra Leone for seventeen years, and is the only representative of Ntéke.

Remarks.—Léséri is one day's journey from the river Lékúri, which can only be crossed in canoes even in the dry season, and five days from Ošíra, the Bátéke capital. Ntépe is situate west of Bábárgi, east of Bantsáye; also near, Bándéncúra, Balále, Bayága, Bákúyi, Bantsintére, Bákúta, Bándúmbo. Ndánu thinks that it is six weeks' journey from his country to the sea, in the journey to which the following places are passed:—1. Bándéncúra, 2. Bantsáye, 3. Bákúyi, 4. Bayómbe, and 5. Bávili.

7. Mutsáya or Batsáya.—From Tút, or Charles Wilhelm, of Lomley, born in the town of Mólép, where he was kidnapped in about his twentieth year, and then hurried to the sea. He has been in Sierra Leone seventeen years, with twenty country-people, of whom his wife is one.

Remarks.—Mólép is two and a-half weeks' journey west of Bátéke and six weeks from the sea. Mutsáya

is west of Mbómo or Babómo, and Bátéke east of Batsárga.

B. Second Group—

1. Babúma or Mobúma, called "Mandóngo" by the Bágúo, *i. e.* Kórgós.—From Dýngó, or James Job, of Freetown, born in the town of Gílibe, where he was seized and sold for debt, when his eldest child was ten years old. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with five countrymen.

Remarks.—Gílibe is one and a-half days' journey from the river Molále, scarcely fordable on foot in the dry season, and uniting with the Nyále in the Músé country. Babúma is considered by Dýngó to be six months' journey from the sea, and situated west of Bádésíndag and Babále, east of Bayámbe; also near Pánra, Ngúana, Ngandásága, Tárge, Ndásé, and Bahám. In coming to the sea he passed through, 1. Tárge, with a language allied to Mobúma; 2. Mpóni, where they speak similarly to the Bákúo, *i. e.* Kórgós; 3. Báyága; 4. Bákú, where he crossed the Nyále, which separates Bákú and Bayómbe; 5. Bayómbe; 6. Bapfili, on the coast. Three months' journey to the east of Babúma is the country N'gábadámu, where the people clothe themselves in black monkey-skins.

2. Búmbéte.—From 'Okiri, or Andrew Parker, of Lomley, born in the town of 'Akúára, where he lived to about his sixteenth year, when he was sold, because his mother had run away with him from his father. On his way to the sea he stopped in various countries, and was thus seven years before he reached Lóárgo, on the coast. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with three countrymen remaining.

Remarks.—'Akúára, the Búmbéte capital, is situated on the river Lebáre, which can only be crossed in canoes even in the dry season, comes from the east, and is called Nyáli in Bátépe. Búmbéte is west of Bámbo, east of Bámhámba. Also ten days' journey from Ndámbo, with the same language; one month from Bátépe; three weeks from Léséwe. 'Okiri also said, that at a great distance from Búmbéte there is a people called "Mirgándo," who are yellow from the navel upwards and black downwards, and have each a tail of about two inches in length. They wear the skins of animals for clothing.

This account of 'Okiri's, as it stands, seems to be fabulous; but as similar accounts have been received from different quarters, some suppose that it may have had its origin in a real anomalous protuberance, improperly called "tail."

3. Kásánds, by the Sóngos and Ngólas called "Kásándsí."—From Ngórga, or John Wilhelm, of Freetown, born in the town of Yórk, where he was kidnapped in about his twenty-eighth year. Afterwards he was two years in the hands of the Portuguese, and thirteen years in Sierra Leone, where he has five countrymen.

Remarks.—Yórk is two days' journey from Kílómp, the Kásánds capital, and four hours from the river Lui, a tributary of the Kóángo. It comes from the Nórú country, and flows down to Hól. Kásánds is west of Síndú and Lúnda, *i. e.* Ruúnda, with different languages; east of Mbóndo, also speaking a different language.

4. Nyómbe, or Bayómbe, or Mayómbe.—From Kúmbu, or Thomas Parker, of Wilberforce, born in the town of Basesóntse, but removed when a little boy to the town of Baskasáde, where he grew up, married, and had a child about five years' old, when he was sold because his sister had been accused of witchcraft. He has been in Sierra Leone eighteen years, with about twelve countrymen.

Remarks.—Basesóntse is nearly a days' journey from the river Loárgu, and two days from the sea; and Baskasáde is two days' journey from Basesóntse and three days from the sea. Bayómbe is west

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