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Entry Nr. 415 Rúnago

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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: **Rúnāgo = Thomas Nicol**
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Source: Account printed on p. 16 of S. W. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*. London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, 1854.

Comments:

Koelle provided no remarks in this entry.

Text of Account:

p. 16

“Bidsogo or Bidsoro, as spoken—

- a. On ‘Arrkaras, as island opposite the Rio Grande, and nearly a day’s journey from Bissao.—From Rumago, or Thomas Nicol, of Kissy, born in the village of Nago, a few hours’ journey from Kere, one of the Bidsogo capitals. When still very young he was removed to Kere, where he grew up, and had a child who was just beginning to walk when he was sold by his elder brother to the Portuguese, because they could not agree. He has been in Sierra Leone fifteen years, with two countrywomen remaining.”

(See original scans below.)

2. Bidšógo or Bidšóro, as spoken—

a. On Ankāras, an island opposite the Rio Grande, and nearly a day's journey from Bissao.—From Rúnāgo, or Thomas Nicol, of Kissy, born in the village of Nāgo, a few hours' journey from Kére, one of the Bidšógo capitals. When still very young he was removed to Kére, where he grew up, and had a child who was just beginning to walk when he was sold by his elder brother to the Portuguese, because they could not agree. He has been in Sierra Leone fifteen years, with two country women remaining.

Remarks.—Mátáán is west of the sea, opposite the island of "Ombít," called "Masámbik" by the Portuguese, who possess it, and east of Kúran. Njórúbo is two days' journey from the island of Masámbik, where the same language is spoken by the natives. Mátáán is also spoken in Makóá, Sunkúla, "Olángwa, and Tokóma.

6. Nyámáán.—From Tsántamélo Owágígúhí (*i.e.* Tsántamél, son of Kígúhí), of Freetown, born in the town of Nyámaviléni, where he lived to about his sixteenth year, when he was kidnapped by the Mángúnu, and one month afterwards shipped on board a Portuguese slave-vessel. He has been in Sierra Leone eighteen years, with twenty country-people, one of whom he married. I revised the specimens with him, and they needed no alteration. This was done in the presence of one of his countrymen, all of whom had left home very young.

Remarks.—Nyámaviléni is about an hour's journey from the sea. Nyámáán is west of the sea, east of Wángúnu or Mángúnu, where a different language is spoken.

XII. UNCLASSIFIED AND ISOLATED LANGUAGES, being languages which do not evince a striking glossarial affinity with any of the languages above enumerated, or one with another, but many of which will probably show themselves members of larger or smaller families, as our knowledge of African philology increases. Some of them, however, are likely always to remain "isolated languages."

A. Unclassified West-Atlantic Languages.

a. With final inflection—

1. Wólof, by Europeans called Jolof, which, however, is merely a Wólof district.—From Gúmbo, of Freetown, born in the hamlet of Ndjódo, where he lived till his eldest child was ten years old, when he was kidnapped by Mandéngas. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty-eight years, where at first he had about fifty countrymen, all of whom, except two, have now either emigrated or died. He himself looks seventy or eighty years old.

Remarks.—Ndjódo lies in the Sálum district, and is two days' journey from Goree.

2. Bidsógo or Bidsóro, as spoken—

a. On Ankáras, an island opposite the Rio Grande, and nearly a day's journey from Bissao.—From Ránágo, or Thomas Nicol, of Kissy, born in the village of Nágo, a few hours' journey from Kéré, one of the Bidsógo capitals. When still very young he was removed to Kéré, where he grew up, and had a child who was just beginning to walk when he was sold by his elder brother to the Portuguese, because they could not agree. He has been in Sierra Leone fifteen years, with two countrywomen remaining.

b. Bidsógo as spoken on the island "Wún."—From Ancyágo, or Zacharias Macaulay, of Kissy, born in the village of Káwun, on the island of Wún, where he was sold by his family in about his twenty-fifth year, and soon afterwards brought to Sierra Leone, where he has now been upwards of thirty years.

3. Gadsága.—From Bóakari Wúri, born in the town of Gíldé, by the Phála called "Djilde." He is now forty-seven years old, has never been a slave, but came from Timbo, about ten years ago, in charge of the son of a Mr. Thompson, after his father, a linguist of the Church Missionary Society, had died there.

Remarks.—Gadsága is one of the six tribes who call themselves, and are called by others, the Serehúle nation, *i.e.* the nation of white people. (On maps the name is generally spelt Serawooli). They have this name, not on account of their complexion, for they are jet black, but, as Bóakari informed

me, on account of the honesty and integrity of their character and dealings, in which they equal the white race. The other Serehúle districts, besides Gadsága, are Gídemára, Hanyágo, Dsáfínu, Háire, and Gangári, in all of which the same language is spoken, with only slight variations. Gadsága itself is situated west of Lógo, east of Futa Tóro, south of Síhel, north of Báudu.

4. Gúra, by neighbouring tribes, *e.g.* the Veis, called "Góla."—From Ghódúá, a lad about fifteen years of age, born in Wádsagúri, near Bása, whom I met in Monrovia in April 1849, where he had come on a visit. While waiting in Monrovia for a passage, I commenced a collection of words similar to, but larger than, the present. As I could not get Gúra specimens in Sierra Leone, the few Gúra men there having forgotten their language, I insert from that collection so much as meets my present purpose. The blank places are not occasioned by want of recollection in my informant, but because on the former occasion I did not ask for certain words contained in the present collection.

b. With initial inflection—

1. Bányún.—By an oversight no notes respecting this language were collected.

2. Nálu.—From Tóno, or Tom Nálu, born in the town of Kákúndom, where he had three children, the eldest of whom was twelve years old when he forsook them and came to Sierra Leone as a sailor. He has been here for the last twenty-five years, with three of his countrymen remaining.

Remarks.—Kákúndom is four days' journey south of the Gambia. Nálu is west of Lándóma, east of the sea and the Bága islands (Bénár, Kátágo, Djalógúndso, Kéfen), and south of Yóla.

3. Bulánda.—From Ngónl, or Philip Fehl, of Kissy, born in the town of Nyómi, where he was kidnapped in his fifteenth year. He has been in Sierra Leone fourteen years, with two countrymen and four countrywomen.

Remarks.—Nyómi is situated on the river Kerám, *i.e.* Gambia. Bulánda is south-east of Buráma, west of Biáfada; also near Gnár, Gesáán, Genyénge, Psófa, Gesámu, Bédér.

4. Límba.—From Kómbúe, a native trader, born in the village of Wángúfo, whence he removed in early youth with his parents to the hamlet of Matátai, six hours' journey from the former, where he remained till about his twenty-third year, after which he came and settled in Sierra Leone. He has been here thirteen years, and is constantly visited by his countrymen.

Remarks.—Wángúfo is the Límba capital, and three days' journey from Sierra Leone. Límba is situated west of Sáfroko, speaking a different but cognate language, east of Timne, and south of Bisóso, *i.e.* Soso.

5. Lándóma.—From Yéri or Sáyo, born in the town of Wákaría, where he was sold on account of adultery, at the age of thirty. He has been five years in Demerara, and eleven in Sierra Leone, where he is the only Lándóma.

Remarks.—Wákaría is four miles from Dégbóre, the Lándóma capital. The Lándóma is the language spoken in the country of Kákánde, which the Europeans call Rio Nunez, and which is situated to the west of Futa-Djálu, east of Nálu, north of the Rio Pongas-Sóso, south of Kókóli, where likewise Lándóma is spoken.

B. Unclassified High-Sudan Languages—

1. Asánte, or Asánte, or Sánté.—From Busmúru, or Richard Davis, of Freetown, born in the village of Inšita, where he lived till about his twenty-first year, when he went to 'En-karái, *i.e.* Accra, for the purpose of trading, at the time when Sir C. MacCarthy was Governor.

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