

2022

Entry Nr. 430 Soraga

Aaron Spencer Fogleman
Northern Illinois University, aaronfogleman@niu.edu

Robert Hanserd

Follow this and additional works at: <https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/history-500africanvoices>



Part of the [Africana Studies Commons](#), [African History Commons](#), [African Languages and Societies Commons](#), [American Studies Commons](#), [Caribbean Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Digital Humanities Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Latin American History Commons](#), [Missions and World Christianity Commons](#), [Other French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons](#), [Other German Language and Literature Commons](#), [Other Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Entry Nr. 430 Soraga, Huskie Commons, Northern Illinois University, Fogleman, Aaron Spencer and Hanserd, Robert, *500 African Voices*, <https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/history-500africanvoices/253>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Other Faculty Publications at Huskie Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in 500 African Voices by an authorized administrator of Huskie Commons. For more information, please contact jschumacher@niu.edu.

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: **430**
Name(s) of African providing account: **Sórāga = Thomas Crocker**
Date account recorded: 1854
Date account first published: 1854
Date of entry creation: 28 September 2021

Source: Account printed on p. 20 of S. W. Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*. London: Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, 1854.

Comments:

Koelle's remarks (p. 20) –

“Balía is one day's journey from the river ‘Ohu, coming from Mbarike, and going down to ‘Igala. Boritsu is eight days' journey from Bagba, i.e. Hausa; one week from Nyamnyam, and consists of only two towns, Belike and Balía, to which this language is confined. From Balía to Belike, the king's residence, is one day's journey. Each of these towns are situated on a high mountain (i.e. gehu).”

Text of Account:

p. 20:

“Boritsu, called ‘ ‘Afiten’ by the Burubos and Mbarikes, and ‘Difu’ by the Urapan or Gbagban, as the Boritus call the Dsukus or Kurorofas.*-- From Soraga, or Thomas Cocker, of Waterloo, born in the town Balía, where he lived till about his twenty-third year, when he was kidnapped by the ‘Adinyi, i.e. ‘runaway slaves of the Phula,’ who sold him to Gbagban, whence he was hurried to ‘Igala and Kalaba. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with only one countryman.”

* Referring to the language Soraga spoke.

(See facsimiles below.)

ATSUKA.

20. Bórĩtsu, called "Afiter" by the Búrũboſ and Mbárĩkes, and "Dĩfu" by the Urápan or Gbágbar, as the Bórĩtsus call the Dŕũkus or Kurórõfas.—From Sórũga, or Thomas Cocker, of Waterloo, born in the town of Bálĩa, where he lived till about his twenty-third year, when he was kidnapped by the Adĩnyi, *i. e.* "runaway slaves of the Phũla," who sold him to Gbágbar, whence he was hurried to 'Igala and Kálabã. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with only one countryman.

Remarks.—Bálĩa is one day's journey from the river 'Olu, coming from Mbárĩke, and going down to 'Igala. Bórĩtsu is eight days' journey from Bágba, *i. e.* Hausa; one week from Nyamnyám, and consists of only two towns, Bélike and Bálĩa, to which this language is confined. From Bálĩa to Bélike, the king's residence, is one day's journey. Each of these towns are situated on a high mountain (*i. e.* gũhu).

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

13. Ndóh, called Bárúkém by the Kurórófas, Tiwis, &c.—From Awázi (*i.e.* God), or Henry Johnson, of Bathurst, born in Mbám, the Ndóh capital, where he lived till about his twentieth year, when he was taken in war by the Téháre, said to be Phúla. He was then three months in coming down to the Kálábá country, and has been in Sierra Leone since 1828, with only three of his countrymen remaining, many having died.

Remarks.—Mbám is about six hours' journey from the river Bie, coming from Mpíndónám, and going to Mpíómum, where it is called "Déba," and so large that it can only be crossed in canoes, even in the dry season. Ndóh is west of Píndónám, where a different language is spoken; east of Píómum, or Mpíómum, also with a different language. It is also three weeks' journey from Mpíópáig, and three weeks from Mpíóti, both with different languages.

16. N'kéle or Bakéle.—From Míyáke, or John Pitt, of Hastings, who had a child in his own country four years old when he was sold by relatives. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty-seven years, with about sixteen of his countrymen.

Remarks.—The Bakéle country, in which is the river Móóbe, containing salt water, is situate west of Sárkant, with the same language, and east of Mpóngúe. It is four days' journey from the sea, also three days' journey from Merúngúo, three weeks from Diáma, and five weeks from Ntókúe, in both which the same language is spoken. In Bakéle they build large towns, consisting of two rows of houses, and often of a whole day's journey in length; but they inhabit them only for a period of from five to twenty years, when they forsake them, and seek another place with virgin soil.

17. Kórgúar.—From Asú, or Thomas Harry, of Hastings, born in the village Bisónawan, nearly one day's journey from Támitek, or Etámitek, the Kórgúar capital, where he also grew up, and married two wives, the unfaithfulness of one of whom led him to slay a man, on which account he was sold by the king about sixteen years ago. He looks rather more than forty years of age; and thinks he has about 100 countrymen in Sierra Leone.

Remarks.—Kórgúar is situate west of N'gbot, where the same language is spoken; east of Mányar, also with the same language. It is one day's journey from Bádsúo, with the same language; three days from Bábé, with a different language; two days from Etoro, with the same language; one week from Anyo, *i.e.* Kálábá, with a different language. The Anyós call them "Ókúí."

18. Mbárike.—From Adsi, or John Man, of Waterloo, born in Arbur, the Mbárike capital, situated on a large mountain, where he had grown-up children when he was taken in war by the Adínyi, who had come from a far country. He was sold to Yákúba, which is one week's journey from his home, then to Pánda, Igala, and 'Ibo. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty-six years, with six of his countrymen remaining.

19. Tiwi, called "Mídsi" or "Mbídsi" by the Kurórófas and Hausas, and "Gbáloú" by the Agáyas, who speak the same language as the Tiwis.—From Dişile, or John Cocker, of Waterloo, born in the town of Mukúwa, where he grew up, married four wives, and had a child about nine years of age when he was taken in war by the Gényi, who had come a great distance, and sold him to Mbágba, *i.e.* Hausa, whence he was brought to the sea by way of Igala, where he was detained one year. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years.—Also from Yápánda, or William Seck, of Wellington, born in the village of Tórówo, where he lived till about his twenty-fourth year, when he was kidnapped on a trading-tour to Mbágba, *i.e.* Hausa, and sold to the Gényi, who brought him down the Yílífe to Igala. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with about twenty countrymen.

Remarks.—Makúwa is two days' journey from the river Yílífe, coming from Afúdu, and going down to Igala; and three days from Adígbo, the Tiwi capital, which is situated on a mountain. Tórówo is six hours' journey from Agáya, the Tiwi capital. Tiwi is west of Mbárike, with a different language, and of Ke or Wike, *i.e.* Kurórófa, to which it is subject; and east of 'Ighála, with a different language. It is also one day's journey from Mbágba, *i.e.* Hausa, and three days from Atsúnka.

20. Bóritsu, called "Afitem" by the Bárúbos and Mbárikes, and "Difu" by the Urápar or Gbágbar, as the Bóritsus call the Dşikus or Kurórófas.—From Sórúga, or Thomas Cocker, of Waterloo, born in the town of Bália, where he lived till about his twenty-third year, when he was kidnapped by the Adínyi, *i.e.* "runaway slaves of the Phúla," who sold him to Gbágbar, whence he was hurried to Igala and Kálábá. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years, with only one countryman.

Remarks.—Bália is one day's journey from the river 'Olu, coming from Mbárike, and going down to Igala. Bóritsu is eight days' journey from Bágba, *i.e.* Hausa; one week from Nyamnyám, and consists of only two towns, Bélike and Bália, to which this language is confined. From Bália to Bélike, the king's residence, is one day's journey. Each of these towns are situated on a high mountain (*i.e.* g'ghu).

21. Afúdu or Afúru.—From 'Abúso, or John Second, of Campbell town, born in the town of Bititi, about two hours' journey from Bétson, the Afúdu capital, where he also lived till about his twenty-fourth year, when a people came from a far and unknown country, who were called "Béliyí or Bédéyi," and burnt all their towns, the capital not excepted, so that all who could run escaped into the woods. There he was caught by them and carried to Igala. He has been in Sierra Leone about twenty-two years, with a number of his countrymen, some of whom have quite forgotten their language.

Remarks.—Afúdu is west of Mórgu, where a different language is spoken; and east of Dşúku. It is also two days' journey from Béréngbe, where a different language is spoken; four days from Hausa; three days from Bési or Mísi, *i.e.* Mbídsi. In Afúdu both sexes go entirely naked, the women not even using leaves for a covering. In war the men eat their enemies' flesh.

22. Mfút or Báfut.—From Yóro, or William Macaulay, of Freetown, born at Bákou, where his father was king, and where he lived till about his eighteenth year, when the Bále, *i.e.* Phúla, conquered the town and sold him to the Báfólar, among whom he lived ten years. He was then carried to the sea, and has been in Sierra Leone twenty-five years, with only one countryman remaining.

Remarks.—Mfút is east of Báfólar. In journeying from Mfút to the sea, the following places are passed, viz. Níórtu, Kórgúar, and Kálábá, and the journey occupies several months. The Mfút country is divided into three different districts, all speaking the same language, viz. Kon or Bákou, Fimbo or Báfimbo, Nđşiar or Bándşiar. Kon is properly the name of the town in which the Mfút king resides, but a whole district, consisting of several towns, is named after it. The Fimbo and Nđşiar districts have each a governor, who is appointed by the king of Kon. The Mfút towns consist of only two rows of houses, often of very great length. Kon is situated on the river "Déhá," which can be crossed on foot in certain places during the dry season; on the other side of which the people live in a state of nudity. In Mfút the women cover themselves with leaves only, and the men eat their enemies' flesh in the time of war.

23. Mbé.—From Tándo, or John James, of Gloucester, born

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).