94. Notes on the Boni Hunters of Jubaland.

Author(s): R. E. Salkeld

Source: *Man*, Vol. 5 (1905), pp. 168-170

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2787498>

Accessed: 25-03-2015 12:10 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Man*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

About 200 yards north of this encampment are the groups of stones, about fifteen groups in all, two typical examples of which are shown in the photographs. Other isolated groups occur along the coast, but those above mentioned could all be included in a circle of 150 yards, one or two groups being situated barely above extreme high tide mark.

Each group is distinct from and apparently unconnected with the others; each is composed of two parallel lines of stones varying in number from five to eight on either side, about 18 inches separating the lines. The stones are natural slabs, which occur in numbers among the beach rocks, and are about 3 feet in length, buried to about half their length. In one photograph (Fig. 3) the spade was placed close to the group for comparison.

With Mr. Garwood Alston, to whom I am indebted for the photographs, and some other gentlemen I assisted to excavate six of these groups. We dug a trench along one side of each group till an undisturbed stratum was reached. In four cases this stratum was indurated sand, and in the other two, which were close to the beach, an old beach level. The depth in every case was approximately 3 feet. The side

of the trench was then pared back till the group was removed.

Nothing whatever was found under any of the groups, nor could the natives give any information regarding them.

A curious point is that with scarcely an exception the parallel lines lie north and south.

As the groups have clearly no sepulchral object, and cannot from their forma-

R. COLSON.

FIG. 3.—GROUP OF STONES, PORT NOLLOTH.

tion be of any use as game traps, it is possible they may have some religious significance, though I have never heard of any tribe in South Africa erecting stones in this manner for that purpose.

Africa, East.

Salkeld.

Notes on the Boni Hunters of Jubaland. By Captain R. E. Salkeld. 94
(Published by the courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

The Waboni are the hunters of Jubaland; they live in no settled habitations, but follow game. They are capable of extraordinary feats of endurance. From a Government point of view they are the only elephant killers, and if they could be communicated with and their confidence gained they would form the best scouts in the country. They are, however, very shy, and much afraid of their Somali masters.

They have three divisions:—

(A.) Bon Dhurrey. (B.) Bon Aleyli. (C.) Bon Boran.

(A.) Bon Dhurrey were the Boni of the country subject to the Werdey and Gallas. When the Werdey were conquered and driven back on the Tana by the Somalis their Boni followed them, and now inhabit the coast, and, it is said, the neighbourhood of the Tana river. They have fairly close relations with the Bajuns, who supply them with cloth, &c. and with whom they trade their ivory. They are the most civilised of the various Boni, having, in fact, a settlement and shambas at Anola at the head of Tovai creek.

(b.) Bon Aleyli are probably the oldest of the three divisions ; they inhabit the forests bordering the River Juba, and owe no allegiance such as other Boni do. They have certainly one village, perhaps more. They are admitted to be much more accomplished in Boni medicine than the other two sections, and are credited with a cure for gundi (tsetse fly) bite ; this has been explained, but hitherto no opportunity has offered of testing the medicine. They are also supposed to possess an antidote against snake-bite and wounds of poisoned arrows. The latter has been explained, but again there has hitherto been no opportunity of trying it.

(c.) The Bon Boran or Bon Hegan are probably the largest section of the three and are subject to the Somalis. Families and their offspring being the property of Somalis are left by them in their wills. They give to their masters, when they kill an elephant, the tusk on the side which the elephant falls ; the other is their own property. There is no tribal organisation amongst these people, their disputes being settled by their old men. There is a man called Weyo Arrey amongst this section who considers himself chief of the Bon Boran, but no Boni considers that he is.

The Somalis are not unkind to these people ; on the one hand the Boni provide ivory and the hides of giraffe and oryx for shields, the most valuable local products ; on the other the Somalis give them meat, milk, and generally look after them and act as *rakil* for them. The Bon Boran followed the Somalis into this country when it was invaded. In those days there were many Borana living in Jubaland who were very friendly with the Boni ; the Somalis joined with the Borana to conquer the Gallas and then turned on the Borana and massacred them ; the Boni, however, took to their new masters.

The following are some of their chief customs, and are common to all sections of Boni :—

A Boni may marry any woman of his race ; it is not necessary to obtain the consent of the parents, but it is usual to give them presents, though not necessary. One curious custom is that there is no divorce among these people, all the children of one woman, by whatever father, are the property of the woman's original husband if alive ; if dead, of his brother.

When a lad starts hunting, at about sixteen or seventeen, and kills his first elephant, he hands over both tusks to his father and a feast is made, and with much singing and eating he is hailed as a man.

When a Boni dies he is buried lying on his side as he sleeps, his head to the north, his bow, arrows, and spear are buried with him, but economy decides that the iron heads of his arrows and spear should be kept by his relatives.

The great Boni accomplishment is, of course, the making of poison for their arrows. This poison is made from a tree called, in Northern Somaliland, *Gadwayiyu*. It grows commonly there, also in the hinterland of the Benadir, and in the northern parts of the Jubaland. The recipe is this : Take a piece of wood, bark it, and shred the wood into splinters ; soak bark and wood for twelve hours. It is now necessary, if the poison is being made for a white man, to kill a goat to feed the cooks. The cooks having been fed, the cooking proceeds. The wood and bark are now boiled for twelve hours, fresh water being constantly added. Towards the end of the boiling it is necessary to skim the scum of the brew, and here knowledge and experience come in. The final result is a thick black treacle-like substance, which is put on the arrows, on the detachable head behind the barb. The poison is strong. In an experiment tried, a goat was chosen, a small incision made in its shoulder and the poison inserted ; death ensued in just over five minutes. The symptoms were those of strychnine poisoning, so I am informed.

In Northern Somaliland the subject tribes are Tomal, Yibr, and Midgaan. The Tomal are the iron workers ; the Yibr the wood and leather workers and astrologers ;

the Midgaan the hunters. These are supplemented in Southern Somaliland by the Waboni, and, as a matter of fact, the above-mentioned three tribes do not hold the same subordinate position as they do in Northern Somaliland. When dealing with Waboni it is necessary to be prepared for many disappointments, for they have a habit of walking off into the bush and disappearing; tobacco, cloth and, above all, food, especially meat, should be used when paying them.

These people are not without interest. When their confidence has been gained it will be found that, besides being extraordinarily good hunters and trackers, they are very good practical naturalists and botanists; they have many interesting customs and tales, very often tell the truth, and would make the finest scouts imaginable.

These notes, of course, require supplementing as opportunity occurs.

R. E. SALKELD.

Hungary.

Beddoe.

Hungarian Physiognomy. *By John Beddoe, M.D., F.R.S.*

95

A curious controversy has been afoot lately in Hungary respecting the physical type of the Magyars, the anthropologists concerned being the late Dr. Johann Janko, C. Von Ujfalvy, Professor Von Török, Dr. Willibald Semeyer, and Dr. Otto Herman. It will be noted that the two latter gentlemen bear German names; it is well-known that the Magyar nationality is growing by the absorption of German as well as of Slavonic and other elements.

So far back as the year 1900 Dr. Janko published what was intended to be the first of a series of papers on the physical types of his countrymen, which his lamented death at an early age prevented him from carrying any further. He chose to begin with the people dwelling on or near the Lake Balaton, who are regarded by many as tolerably pure Magyars, though their geographical position, in comparatively low ground* not very remote from the German and Slovenian frontiers, might lead one to have a little doubt on that point.

Forty-eight specimens of the adult male natives were photographed, every one in two positions, front face and absolute, or nearly absolute, profile; and in every case the stature (1674.5),† age, occupation, nose form, circumference (aver. 550), length and breadth of the head (184.2 and 156), and cephalic index (aver. 84.5), were given. A few of the men bear surnames indicating Slavish (Toth, Takács, Bogdan), or German (Német, Oswald) admixture; and Dr. Otto Herman, in criticising Janko's work, says that the owners of these names should have been eliminated. Perhaps they should have been so; for they cannot, of course, have had an absolutely pure Magyar pedigree, whereas it is just within the limits of possibility that men named, *e.g.*, Nagy or Jobbagy, may have had one. Janko confined himself to people whose families had been esteemed to be Magyars since the eighteenth century; but his limit was not sufficiently narrow, for some of his Slavish or German-named men show indications of their respective origins. Still, though surnames may fairly be used as evidence of ethnological mixture in a population, they are of little use as regards the predominating strain in individuals. I know several men called White, but every one of them is of dark complexion.

Janko's paper, which was published officially from the National Museum at Budapest, gave rise to much controversy. Von Ujfalvy, whose lamented death followed that of Janko, was very vehement in his condemnation of the latter's photographs, accusing Janko of having chosen the ugliest men from the lowest caste

* There are hills around the lake, but of no very great height.

† This is decidedly above the mean of the Magyars, or of any other Hungarian race.