

GLOSSARY

A NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

In order to make this book more fluent for English readers not familiar with the International Phonetic Alphabet, I have used an approximate spelling of Baga Sitem words and names of places using the Latin alphabet. I ask the reader to meet me half-way in one respect: the letter c in Baga Sitem words is to be pronounced as the English ch (in ‘chat’). In this glossary, however, I include, in brackets, the correct pronunciation using the following symbols from the International Phonetics Alphabet:

Consonants

k – voiceless velar stop, as ‘c’ in English ‘car’ or ‘k’ in ‘okey’

c – alveo-palatal voiceless affricate: as ‘ch’ in English ‘chat’

ŋ – velar nasal, as ‘ng’ in English ‘sing’

The other symbols used for consonants (‘p’, ‘f’, ‘t’, etc.) are pronounced as in the usual Latin alphabet, except for the symbol ‘gb’ in the word *gbenka*, which in Baga Sitem is one single plosive consonant with double articulation.

Vowels

In the Baga Sitem language, eight vowels are regularly noted (Ganong 1998: 11–12):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i | ə | u |
| e | | o |
| ɛ | a | ɔ |

ə (schwa) – high central unrounded vowel

i – high front unrounded vowel

u – high back rounded vowel

e – mid front unrounded vowel

o – mid back rounded vowel

ɛ – low front unrounded vowel

ɔ – low back rounded vowel

a – low central unrounded vowel

The language spoken by Baga Sitem, called by its speakers ‘cəbaka cətem’, is a Niger-Congo language with noun classes. In general, when using the plural I have followed Baga Sitem rules (thus, I write one *abanka*, ‘ward’, but

several *cibanka*, ‘wards’). Yet I have not applied this rule when speaking of ‘Baga’, ‘Fula’, ‘Bulongic’, ‘Malinké’, ‘Susu’, or any other ethnic group well-known to the English readership, whose plural forms may be constructed in many different ways, according to the grammar of each language. In some rare instances, when introducing terms from different languages, I have constructed the plural simply by adding an ‘s’ at the end, as other authors working on the same region have done before me.

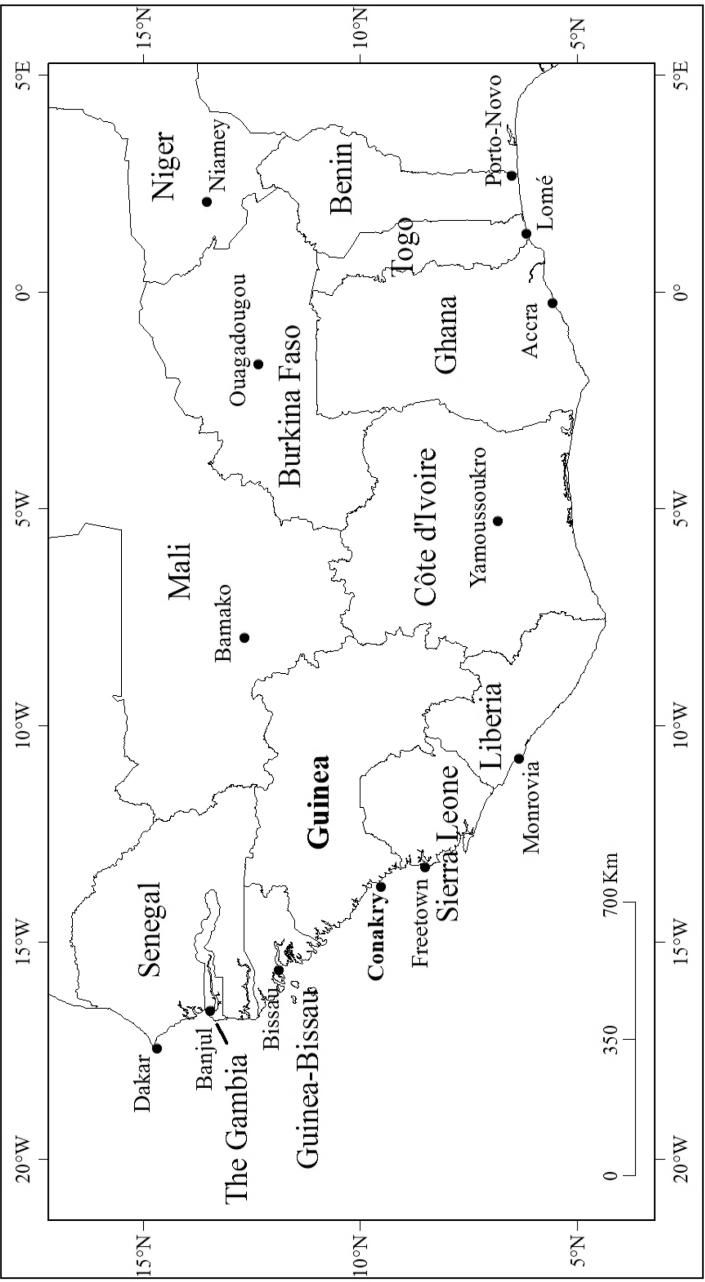
GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK

| Singular/Plural [Phonetic] | English |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| abanka/cibanka [abanka/cəbanka] | ward; courtyard |
| abol [abol] | a female spirit and a male cult around it |
| acol/col [acol/cɔl] | medicine; ritual object |
| acen/cen [acen/cen] | dog |
| afan [afan] | sacred wood |
| amanco/manco [amanco/manco] | spirit in charge of a ‘spirit province’ or of a region within it |
| amanco ngopong [amanco ŋɔpɔŋ] | male initiatory spirit, also known as <i>kakilambe</i> (its Susu name) |
| ane [anɛ; contraction of ana ɛ] | who |
| aparan/aparanga [aparan/aparaŋa] | grandfather (in some villages, <i>aparen</i>) |
| antof/ntof [antɔf/ntɔf] | earth |
| ateken [atekən] | a cult for married women |
| atof/tof [atɔf/tɔf] | territory |
| capafo [capafo] | hidden or indirect speech; the skill of speaking about something through allegories and metaphors |
| dacar [dacar] | slavery |
| dare/sidare [dare/sədare] | village |
| Dabaka [dabaka] | the place where the Baga people live |
| dale/sədale [dale/sədale] | rice field |
| defi [defi] | death |
| derem [dɛrəm] | oath; contract with a spirit |
| deser [deser] | witchcraft |
| dimba/sidimba [dɛmba/sɛmba] | a headdress; also known as <i>nimba</i> |
| dinda [dɛnda] | there |
| dukulum/sukulum [dɛkulum/sɛkulum] | bush |
| dim/sim [dim/sim] | voice |
| dim din [dim din] | one voice; consensus |
| fum/afum [afum/fum] | person |

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|---|--|
| gbenka [gbɛnka] | a young men's cult |
| kanu/canu [kanu/canu] | god |
| kel/cel [kɛl/cɛl] | hoe |
| keleser [kɛləsɛr] | to break up; to destroy |
| kesoto [kɛsɔtɔ] | to obtain |
| kibere [kɛbɛrɛ] | to enter |
| kiderem [kɛdɛrɛm] | to make a contract; to swear an oath |
| kides [kɛdɛs] | to settle; to ask someone to sit down |
| kides wube [kɛdɛs wɛbɛ] | 'to settle a chief', a crowning ceremony for colonial (and probably precolonial) chiefs |
| kikenc [kɛkɛŋc] | to circumcise; initiation dance |
| kidi [kɛdi] | to eat |
| kidi molom [kɛdi molom] | initiation (literally: 'to eat secrets') |
| kile/cile [kɛlɛ/cɛlɛ] | work group |
| kilop [kɛlɔp] | strangler fig (<i>Ficus spp.</i>) |
| kickere [kɛcɛrɛ] | to know |
| kicerene [kɛcɛrɛnɛ] | to know each other |
| kitam [kɛtam] | to be able to; to be stronger than |
| kiyi [kɛyi] | to be |
| kiyi de [kɛyi dɛ] | to be there; to exist; to be alive |
| kor/cor [kor/cor] | belly; patrilineal descent group |
| kop/cop [kɔp/cɔp] | plough |
| kibok [kɛbɔk] | to cry; to wail |
| kele/cele [kɛlɛ/cɛlɛ] | granary |
| kilo/wolo [kɛlɔ/wɔlɔ] | house; patrilineal descent group |
| kilo disre/wolo disre [kɛlɔ disrɛ/wɔlɔ disrɛ] | patrilineal descent group (literally: 'inside the house') |
| kilo kupong/wolo wopong [kɛlɔ kɛpɔŋ/wɔlɔ wɔpɔŋ] | oldest house of each descent group and ritual centre of the group (literally: 'big house') |
| kinger (kɛŋɛr) | to close; the ritual actions glossed as the 'closing of the earth' |
| kifontre [kɛfɔntɛrɛ] | to go to bed |
| kilip [kɛlɪp] | to finish |
| kipise [kɛpɪsɛ] | to dance; dance |
| kisere | to be a <i>wuser</i> |
| kiyo [kɛyɔ] | to have; to do |
| komne [komnɛ] | a children's male cult |
| kota [kɔta] | (Susu borrowing) a specific object of item of knowledge held as a private (or family) 'secret' |
| kosu | our |

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|--|---|
| kusunka/cisunka [kusunka/cəsunka] | doorway; patrilineal descent group |
| kusumpur | to catch, to seize |
| teleng/meleng [tɛlɛŋ/mɛlɛŋ] | song |
| tes/mes [tɛs/mɛs] | thing, deed |
| malo [malɔ] | rice |
| malo mabaka [malɔ mabaka] | floating rice (literally: ‘Baga rice’ or ‘rice of the Baga’) |
| malo madale [malɔ madalɛ] | mangrove swamp rice (literally: ‘rice of the rice fields’) |
| mes mabaka [mɛs mabaka] | ‘the things/deeds of the Baga’, i.e., Baga history and customs |
| moko [mɔkɔ] | today |
| ncoko/anco [ncɔkɔ/ancɔ] | mother’s brother |
| nde [ndɛ] | over there |
| ngonk/yonk [ŋɔnk/yɔnk] | spirit |
| nɔ | here |
| nonofor [nɔnɔfɔr] | pity; sympathy |
| powolsene/yowolsene [pɔwɔlsɛnɛ/yɔwɔlsɛnɛ] | toy |
| somptup | the name <i>amanco ngopong</i> receives in some villages |
| tewe/mewe [tɛwɛ/mɛwɛ] | name; reputation |
| tolom/molom [tolom/molom] | secret; mask; pain; cult |
| tonkure [tonkure] | a young men’s cult |
| wan/awut [wan/awut] | child |
| wan wurkun [wan wɔrkun] | boy |
| wan wuran [wan wɔran] | girl |
| weker/ceker [wɛkɔr/ cɛkɔr] | monkey |
| wube/abe [wɔbɛ/abɛ] | chief |
| wubakcerne/abakcerne [wɔbakɛcɛrnɛ/abakɛcɛrnɛ] | landlord |
| wucar/acar [wɛcar/acar] | slave |
| wucikra/acikra [wɛcɛkra/wɛcɛkra] | stranger, visitor |
| wuder/ader | newcomer |
| wufo wubaka/afo abaka [wufɔ wubaka/aɔ abaka] | ‘non-Baga’ (expression used by elders to refer to non-initiated younger people) |
| wuka dotof/aka dotof [wuka dɔtɔf/aka dɔtɔf] | native to a village (as opposed to <i>wuder</i> and <i>wucikra</i>) |
| wumen/amen [wɔmɛn/amɛn] | ritual specialist who counteracts the evil actions of the <i>wuser</i> |
| wuran/aran [wɔran/aran] | woman |
| wurkifin/arkifin [wɔrkifin/arkifin] | spirit (different to <i>ngonk</i>) |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| wurkun/arkun [wɔrkun/arkun] | man |
| wurok/rok [wɔrok/rok] | sister's son |
| wulipne/alipne [wɔlipnɛ/alipnɛ] | elderly man who has completed the initiation cycle (literally: 'he who has finished') |
| wutem/atem [wɔtem/atem] | old man |
| wutemp/atemp [wɔtɛmp/atɛmp] | young, unmarried man |
| wuser/aser [wuser/aser] | witch |



Map 1 West Africa



Young girl playing with a *Dimba dacol* headdress

A revolution can demolish cathedrals, but one cannot see how it will deter children from playing with marbles. (Griaule 1938: 2)