

<sup>11</sup> Compare e.g. *Osee* for *Hosea* or *Abdias* for *Obadiah*.

<sup>12</sup> C. Meinhof drew attention to this some decades ago; compare his work *The Christianisation of African languages*, Basle Mission Studies Vol. 28, Basel 1905, p. 53. With Catholic saints' names the Latin form may represent a legitimate point of departure.

<sup>13</sup> It is not the intention in this article to indicate individual rules, which may be used in the taking over or adaptation of proper names. It is in any case agreed, however, that the case ending should not be adopted.

<sup>14</sup> Over against this, *Yesu Kristo* has been retained. Curiously enough one finds *Yakobo* when one would have expected *Yakubu* according to the Arabic pattern.

<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that Röhl has hit on the right form in every case. Thus I would propose *Matayo* rather than *Mateo*, but in no case *Mathayo* (Union Version). 'th' is an unknown sound in Swahili, which only appears in foreign Arabic words and should be pronounced as the voiceless 'th' in English. Most Swahilis, especially in the interior, will say 's' which corresponds neither to the original nor to the English.

<sup>16</sup> Here we find such forms as *Abulahamu*, *Josefu*, *Ndabiti* (David).

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## Translating the Psalms to Uruund

*Anna E. Lerbak*

The Uruund language, generally called Lunda by other tribes and by Europeans, is spoken by the Aruund (Lundas) who live in the south-western part of Belgian Congo and the eastern part of Angola. A related language, Ndembwe or Lunda, is spoken to the south on both sides of the boundary between Belgian Congo and Northern Rhodesia. The seat of the tribe is at Kapanga, Belgian Congo. It was originally at Nkalany, a river some thirty miles east of Kapanga. It seems that the tribe was well established there at least about 1500. The legends speak about the earliest inhabitants living in caves near Nkalany, and the 'Elders' of the tribe still live there. The paramount chief is Mwant Yavu (Mwata Yamvo). During the years 1600—1900 the tribe expanded greatly, chiefly by trading. The traders, who usually came accompanied by a number of relatives, would gradually become influential people, they would intermarry with the local people, and after some time Mwant Yavu would appoint a chief. In many cases it was a group of the king's relatives who left home, settled down in some new place and gradually came to power. There were—and are—Lunda (Aruund) chiefs all over the country between the river Kwango and Lake Tanganyika, and at least as far north as Lunda-Kasongo, and far down in Northern Rhodesia. There are no figures on the number of real Aruund, one guess is about 400,000.

The Uruund language was written down by missionaries of the Methodist Church. The government and traders use the intertribal trade languages, Swahili to the south and Kituba in the Kwango. The Catholic missionaries also use these languages, or some Chokwe around Sandoa, but a few of those living right at Kapanga do use Uruund. It has been

a difficult task to write Uruund as it differs in some main respects from the neighbouring Bantu languages. It does not have final vowels as a rule. But many words end in unvoiced *u*. It has a sort of whistling *s* and *z* and often strong aspiration. And the trilled *r* is frequent. There have also been different opinions on how some of the sounds should be written, as well as on the choice among certain dialectical forms, and between old and newer forms, as to what words, or pronunciations, and consequently what spelling to adopt for the written word. But at a meeting at Kapanga in December 1952 we came to agreement on all main points. It was a very interesting meeting, the great majority of those attending were Aruund, and all opinions were represented and freely spoken. Mwant Yavu attended every meeting and showed great interest. He, by the way, was among the first ones of the tribe who learned to read and write, now some forty years ago. The two Catholic priests who use the language and some Catholic teachers were present and took part, and everybody agreed to abide by the decisions made by the committee.

We have had the New Testament, a few of the Psalms, a good collection of hymns and songs, readers for the lower grades in school, and a few other small books in print for some twenty to thirty years, but the spelling was far from uniform. Recently we have translated a number of school books from Swahili, and we have translated the Psalms, also revising the few we had. This has been a very interesting task. Besides working on the problem of getting the spelling uniform, getting more of the grammar written down and increasing the vocabulary, we have been aware of the fact that we were creating or stabilizing the religious vocabulary and terminology, or phraseology, a sober thought. We tried all the time to write in such a way that it would be readily understood by new readers, and at the same time be a good and dignified language that the best and most advanced people would be glad for the young generation to learn, and that everybody would be glad to hear read in church and care to read at home.

We were three working together on the translation of the Psalms, Pastor John Mij, Mr. Daniel Munung, our medical assistant, and myself. I made the first draft of the greater part of them. I read first each Psalm in Dr. Elmer Leslie's book on the Psalms, his explanation and his translation, then I read the same Psalm in the American Revised Version, then in the French and last in the Danish translation. Thus I tried to get the text well in mind. Then I started to write it down, reading the Psalm again a verse at a time, mostly in the American Revised, but having the others open and looking at them frequently, as well as in the Chokwe and a Luba version.

Most of the time it was a great help to get the particular slants of the various translations. The familiar English of the American Revised, at times somewhat formal and not too clear, was clarified by the forthright every-day speech of the Danish, a recent translation, and by the more definite French giving more detail, often a little clear phrase where the English had a difficult word, and then by a certain freshness of Dr. Leslie's recent translation which, by the way, often was more

together with the recent Danish version than by the French and American Revised versions.

However, it was not all the time that it was so beautiful. It was surprising to me how these four translations could differ. One might be in the future tense, another in the past. One might be in first person, another in third, or one singular and another plural. But worse, sometimes the text simply was so different in two or more of these translations that one just had to make a choice. If the two most recent translations were alike and seemed good, I most likely took them. If the forthright Danish and the definite French were alike and seemed good, likely they were considered best. Sometimes the way it was written in the Chokwe or Luba translation helped to make the decision. Also the continuity or transition from one verse to another might be a deciding factor. We were anxious to get, not only each verse readily understood, but also—and especially—the whole chapter, or story, or other unit.

When I had a chapter written down as well as I felt I could, I typed it and took it to the two men who both read it through carefully and made corrections and suggestions. We then discussed any points on which there might be different opinions. I retyped it and sent a copy to Pastor Andre Nawej at Kapanga, who has worked on the language from the beginning. He read it all carefully and made his corrections and suggestions, many very valuable ones. Another copy was sent to Sandoa where three men, Pastor Paul Mbangi, Merchant Moise Chombe, and Clerk Samuel Mupach, read some parts as they had time and also made some good suggestions.

The other Psalms that John Mij or Daniel Munung translated went through a similar process. They used a French Bible, the Chokwe and two different Luba versions. Then I read their first draft together with the four versions I had and made my corrections and suggestions, then gave it back to them for their considerations, we discussed any remaining points that were not clear, I typed them and sent copies to Kapanga and Sandoa. Although the first work was rather crude and I had to rewrite a good part of it, they improved very rapidly and did some fine work. They often used a phraseology that I had not thought of which, besides being good, also helped me by giving me ideas and making my writing somewhat more idiomatic.

By the time we were nearly finished and some copies were back from Kapanga and Sandoa, another man came to work with us, Simon Chisol, a supply pastor who also has worked with the language from the beginning. I also received the new American Revised Standard Version at this time, so I read all the work through once more together with this version. I found that there were not a few places where this new version simplified or clarified a difficult passage. Simon Chisol read it all through, spotted a few mistakes and found some weak places that could be improved on. The four of us now discussed some points that one or another had a question on, as well as the remarks and suggestions made at Kapanga and Sandoa. Then we were ready for the last typing of the manuscript. And we trust that we shall have the Psalms in as fine a translation as it is possible at the present time and

good enough to last until the Aruund shall have gained the necessary education and experience to do all such work themselves.

A brief account about deciding on the names of God may be interesting. The word for God is *Nzamb* which has been used from the beginning, there is no question about that. The name 'Jehovah' had been used in some contexts, but I had the feeling that it did not mean much to the people, and when I asked the pastors they all said it didn't, and worse, it very often confused people, especially in the villages. During the conversation it was suggested that the name *Chinawej* be used in the place of 'Jehovah', and this met with immediate approval. A few days later I was working on a Psalm in which 'Jehovah' was used frequently, so I wrote *Chinawej* in its place and then read the Psalm to them. The response was about like this: "That is it, now people will understand, that is how *Chinawej* is. The Jews call God 'Jehovah', we call Him *Chinawej*, it is the same God, but we know Him as *Chinawej* as the Jews know Him as 'Jehovah' ". They often call God *Chinawej* in prayer, it seems to indicate warmth and intimacy.

The same word is used in two other ways. It is the name of a snake which never attacks human beings. And it is used as a response of approval. When told of something they are pleased to hear, something they find good, just, helpful, generous, they often respond by saying, *Chinawej*. When they call God *Chinawej*, it indicates that they think of Him as One Who is good and just and generous towards them. When it was suggested at the committee that we use *Chinawej* in place of 'Jehovah' it was accepted immediately and unanimously.

We had experimented with two other names, *Nkambikamb* for the 'Most High' and *Kadiandand* for the 'terrible God'. It was difficult to fit the adjectives for these two expressions to really say what they should, and they use these two names very fittingly for Mwant Yavu. But this was not accepted by the committee. They said that those two names are fitting for Mwant Yavu, but not for God.

However, this led to a valuable discussion on religious terminology, and it became a fine closing session of this fine meeting of the language committee. We who work with the language, with translations and producing literature in it, could go home with the feeling that although some people did not agree with us in every detail, everybody respected and approved our work and wanted us to continue, and that they were glad for our translation of the Psalms.

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## Further Comments on the Chokwe Translation

*D. B. Long*

Chokwe is one of the five or six major Bantu languages of Angola (Portuguese West Africa) spoken by about 500,000 people, mostly in the N.E. corner of the colony. The basic problems connected with Bible translation into this language do not differ from those of other Bantu languages throughout Central Africa and therefore do not require at-