

SAHARA HINTS — NOTATIONS SAHARIENNES

Food for Camels

A fascinating small publication dating back to the Second World War (October 1940) originated in the Imperial Bureau of Animal Nutrition, based in Aberdeen, Scotland (Leitch, 1940). It contains general information on camel distribution and feeding, nutritional diseases and a discussion on theoretical energy requirements, theoretical protein requirements and water storage in relation to salt intake.

There are no less than seven appendices, listed under different headings, which have evidently involved considerable research and effort to compile. Even though it would appear from the bibliography (pp.18-19) that the author seemingly had no contact with Paris nor Rome, without forgetting numerous experienced African, French and Italian camel soldiers in the Sahara who may well have made useful written contributions to our knowledge, the work is full of information and was probably a standard textbook in its day in the Anglophone world.

Leitch. I. 1940. *The Feeding of Camels*. Aberdeen: Imperial Bureau of Animal Nutrition (Technical Communication No.13): 35 pp.

A collection of publications on the Atlantic Sahara

On a website given here as <http://sahara-news.webcindario.com> are reproduced some 29 articles, mostly in Spanish, covering discovery, archaeology and similar topics, mainly in former Spanish territory. While the majority are fairly ancient, with one dating back to the 1930s, a few are written in Catalan and clearly related to recent work by the University of Girona. The ensemble is basically interesting, although one can only regret that certain other texts have not been included.

A further Spanish-language text is listed under <http://saharanews.webcindario.com/unos-monumentosmegaliticos.htm>

It is however surprising to find that the bibliographical references of such articles are basically lacking in what both presumably

purport to be academic web sites. It would be useful to be told, for instance, that a text with the title “Los primeros grabados rupestres del Sahara Español. Atlántis”, by J. Martínez Santa-Olalla, appeared in *Notas y Memorias de la Sociedad Española de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria*, XVI. 1941: 163-167. The same remark holds good for all other articles reproduced.

In one French-language text there are some quite inexcusable misprints which are neither Spanish, French nor even Catalan. In another, initially containing various misprints at the time of publication during the 1970s, further printing errors have crept into the Internet version.

Publications of J. de la Roche

With reference to remarks in *Lettre de l'AARS* 27 (p.14), Susan Searight has kindly supplied the information that he wrote for *La Vigie Marocaine* (which no longer exists). However the mystery of one unpublished text on the Agadez Cross and a second on engravings and paintings of the Sous remains unsolved.

Unidentified ruins in the Atlantic Sahara

a. Although there have been reports of a Portuguese building at Hofrat Ouadane in Mauritania (L.Gillier, 1926: 20), a later report by Th. Monod (1948: 10) states that there were two habitation centres at Faranni and Leksaiiba, only 1,5 km apart, but that he could identify no definite Portuguese structures during his visit between 4-6 June 1934. He is emphatic that Portuguese emissaries certainly did go to Ouadane around 1485-1490, but remained there only a short time, their purpose being to organize trade and especially to occupy an important spot in Soudan through which caravans carrying gold towards Morocco used to pass.

b. To west of the well at El-Atatba, in the central west area of the present West Sahara, were reported “...access ramps and two pentagonal bastions abso-

lutely identical to those which we build at certain posts and which appear to be the work of Europeans. At the foot of the plateau are two more bastions. Finally on the most northerly plateau one finds a mass of jumbled stones, looking like collapsed towers or houses.” (G. Schmitt, 1913: 242-243).

Since the Spaniards did not venture inland until ca.1883 and did not occupy the interior until 1934, such ruins can hardly be attributed to them. Nor, unless G. Schmitt is mistaken, could the ruins be of French military origin.

It follows that it would be most interesting to learn of any further details and developments in respect of both parts a. and b. above.

References

- GILLIER (L.) 1926. *La Pénétration en Mauritanie*. Paris: Geuthner, 359 p.
 MONOD (Th.) 1948. Sur quelques constructions anciennes du Sahara Occidental. *Bulletin de la Soc. de Géographie et d'Archéologie de la Province d'Oran*, 71: Offprint, 30 pp. (The page numbers given in a list of publications by Monod are «23-52», but these cannot be matched with the 30 pages in the offprint.)
 SCHMITT (G.) 1913. Le Sahara occidental. Régions au nord et au nord-ouest de l'Adrar mauritanien. *La Géographie*, XXVII (4) : 241-261.

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The Libyco-Berber inscriptions of the Canary Islands — misused as a playground for specialists and amateurs.

It is a phenomenon which can be observed since more than hundred years that series of scholars and amateurs from different special fields feel to be entitled to publish their comments regarding Libyco-Berber inscriptions. Not only prehistorians, linguists and epigraphers but also biologists, writers and lawyers published their bold theories, mostly far away from a serious basis of specialized knowledge and from

considering scientific standards. In the following overview, I will restrict to the inscriptions of the Canary Islands.

One of the first exotic interpretations was published by Campbell in 1900. This Canadian philologist called the script “Turanic” (= Iberic) and the language Basque — as very similar to Japanese (!).

Fell (1982) — marine biologist at Harvard University — propagated the theory that Norwegians brought the Libyco-Berber script to Northern Africa around 1700 BC.

Relying upon Fell's theory, Knauer (1990) — a German lawyer — established the origin of the Libyco-Berber script in the caves of SW-France and in the period between 30.000 and 16.000 B.C. Among other examples Knauer analysed inscriptions of the Barranco de Tejeleita/El Hierro using a drawing in Delgado 1964. Neglecting Delgado's comment that it was a depiction of inscriptions from five different sites of the valley, Knauer read them as one sentence — thus taking the first and last name of one person from two different sites. For translation he used the Latin (!) language (assuming that “*lema*” is a Latin word for “soul”).

Mahieu (1985) assigned the Canary inscriptions to survivors of the fight for Troya, which lived only a short time in Libya and finally escaped to the Canary Islands.

Muñoz (1994) — catedrático de estudios árabes e islámicos de la Universidad de La Laguna — interpreted the Libyco-Berber signs from the “chajasco” of Hoya de los Muertos/El Hierro as stellar symbols (for sun, moon, Jupiter, Saturn etc.).

The Viennese specialist for African languages Böhm (1996) ventured a transcription of the inscriptions of the Cueva de Candia/El Hierro. He used an old documentation by Nowak, eliminating the right half of the panel without any comment. In addition he changed three of the signs without having ever seen

