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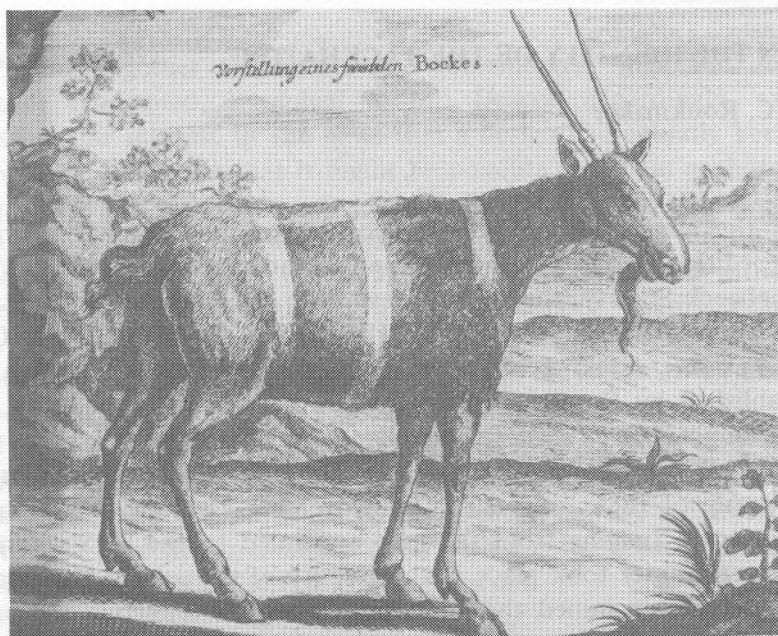
## ON THE IDENTITY OF THE TACKHAITSE

L.C. Rookmaker

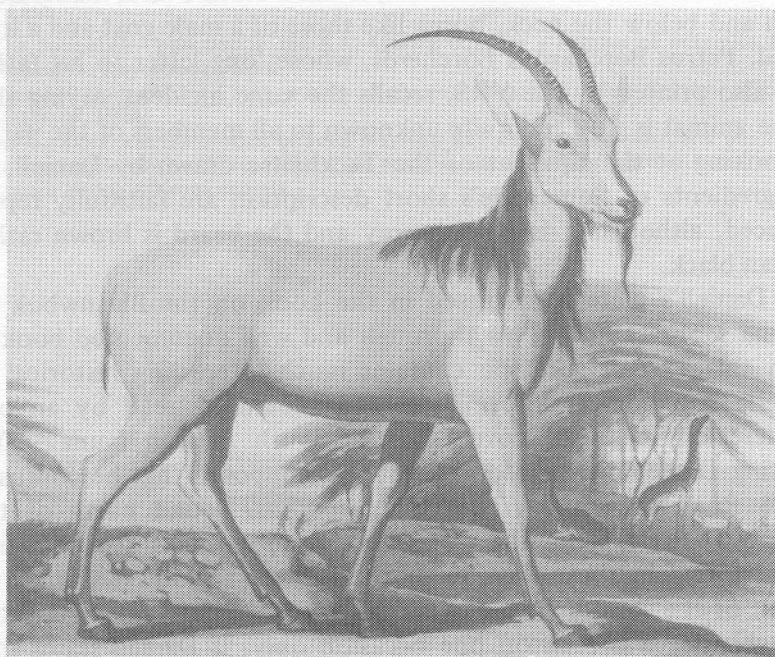
In the recent edition of two accounts of the Truter-Somerville expedition to the Northern Cape Province published by the Van Riebeeck Society, the editors leave us in doubt about the identity of an animal called Tackhaitse (Bradlow & Bradlow 1979: 108, pl.7). This antelope is known from the description and figure published by Samuel Daniell, the secretary of the expedition, in his album *African scenery and animals* (p.24, 1805).

Dr. William Somerville (1771–1860) and his party encountered a group of these animals on 20 November 1801 in the "Briqua country". Judging from the map appended to the VRS volume, this encounter took place in the vicinity of the present Kuruman. Somerville examined the antelopes through a telescope and provided the following details: size like a hartebeest, the male is darker coloured than the female, it has a black beard, manes both on and below the neck, horns like those of a male goat and a long tail. Petrus Borchardus Borchers, whose long letter to his father is also printed by the VRS, recalls the same incident, saying that the animal is grey and quite unknown to all members of the party. Looking at the aquatint of the Tackhaitse drawn by Daniell, all ingredients of Somerville's short description are faithfully reproduced, although it is blueish grey and the beard is brown rather than black.

Daniell's plate is discussed in the book on the Blaauwbok by Erna Mohr (1967). This thorough and well documented booklet on this extinct antelope contains much interesting historical as well as biological information and should be read by anyone interested in the discovery of the South African fauna. After citing Daniell's text, Mohr (1967:14) supposed that he confused the Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) found north of the Orange River, and the Blaauwbok (*Hippotragus leucophaeus*) still found in those days in more southern regions. This may be part of the solution. Somerville's *Narrative* clearly shows that the Tackhaitse was seen on one occasion only. If Daniell states that "they are usually grazing on the edge of the Karroo plains" and



Kolb's "Frembder Bock" (1719)



Daniell's "Tackhaitse" (1801)

often eaten, he either inserted observations by others or referred to specimens of the Blaauwbok.

Another problem is the beard mentioned by Somerville and shown in Daniell's plate. To Mohr this is a remnant of an earlier depiction of the Blaauwbok included in the *Caput Bonae Spei hodiernum* by Peter Kolb (1719). Husson & Holthuis (1975) discovered that there were two states or editions of this plate in Kolb's book published in German. In the first state the animal in plate II is labelled "Vorstellung eines blauen Bockes" (Mohr 1967, fig.1), while this is obviously corrected in a second state where the same animal is a "Vorstellung eines frembden Bockes" (Husson & Holthuis 1975, pl.1). Hence, the animal figured by Kolb is not the Blaauwbok but the "buck without a name" also described by Kolb. The antelope in this plate has a long beard, but I do not think that it is the source of Daniell's mistake. It appears unlikely that Somerville consulted the volumes by Kolb while he wrote his short note on the Tackhaitse. Possibly, the impression of a beard was caused by the examination of the animal from a distance through a telescope. When you look at a roan from the front, it may appear as if some hairs grow from the chin rather than from the underside of the neck.

We may agree with Mohr's conclusion that Samuel Daniell figured the Roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*) as the Tackhaitse.

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS : OOR ONS MEDEWERKERS

ALAN A. COOPER has had a long-standing interest in freemasonry and its history in South Africa. His M.A. thesis, published in 1980, is entitled *Origins and growth of Freemasonry in South Africa, 1772-1876*.

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PIERRE MORGENROOD, born in Worcester, Cape, is an economist. He is a member of the Genealogical Society of South Africa and has contributed a number of articles to *Familia*.

A.M. LEWIN ROBINSON retired as Director of the South African Library in 1981. He has written and edited a number of books, among the latter being letters of Lady Anne Barnard (1973). Dr. Robinson still lectures at the U.C.T. School of Librarianship.

CHRISTOPHER SAUNDERS heads the Department of African History at the University of Cape Town. He is a prolific writer and editor in the field of South African history and has been instrumental in organising history workshops at U.C.T. The papers delivered at these workshops have been published as *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, vols. 1-4.

L.C. ROOKMAKER. Born, educated and living in the Netherlands, his main interest is in historical zoology. His doctoral thesis deals with the *Gordon Atlas*, while he has also written at length on the rhinoceros. His *Bibliography of the Rhinoceros* is being published by Balkema, Rotterdam, later this year.