

THE SULTANATE OF BORNU

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN
OF DR. A. SCHULTZE
FIRST LIEUTENANT (RETIRED) IMPERIAL GERMAN ARMY

WITH
ADDITIONS AND APPENDICES

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AND A THIRD CLASS RESIDENT, BORNU PROVINCE, NORTHERN NIGERIA

Σπάρταν ἔλαχες, Σπάρταν κόσμει
Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna

HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE
AND BOMBAY



28 OCT 1966

Boundary Commission in the winter of 1903-4, must certainly be taken as an over rather than an underestimate. Although Kund mentions at the same period the appearance of a herd 200 strong on the Shari,²⁰⁸ his statement must certainly be grounded on greatly exaggerated reports from natives.

The favourite haunts of the elephant are the larger stretches of uninhabited 'bush' with suitable watering-places, which are to be found on the northern shore of Chad and along the rivers, especially the Shari and Logone, whose banks Barth reckons to be the places in Africa which are richest in elephants.²⁰⁹ Starting from here the animals wander farther afield even into inhabited localities—making the paths in the soft soil impassable for pedestrians owing to their deeply-trampled footprints. So there is scarcely a district in Bornu where it has not been observed, except in the extreme north-west. Where the elephant is not hunted, it does not appear to be timid,²¹⁰ but this supposition becomes less and less tenable as the number of fire-arms increases.^[210 a]

²⁰⁸ Kund, *loc. cit.*, p. 5.

²⁰⁹ Barth, iii. 162.

²¹⁰ Nachtigal, i. 565. [The Customs Clerk when proceeding to Kauwa, inside the Chad Game Reserve, in 1908, reported that he was held up for an hour by an elephant on the road who stood and looked at him. A subordinate Customs Officer, one Shegorama, a man of imagination, assured me that once when riding inside the Reserve he had had his cap taken off by an elephant.]

^[210 a] The whole of the British shore of Chad is a strict game reserve. There are a considerable number of elephants there, whose destructive habits have entirely driven the natives off the rich farming land there.]

The second largest many-toed animal of Africa, the rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros bicornis*, belongs likewise to the fauna of Bornu, but is much rarer and has only a restricted area of distribution. Indeed, it is only indigenous in the low-lying country on the Shari and Logone, especially in the Kung 'bush', south of about 10° north latitude, where it would appear to be more numerous and to be dreaded on account of its malicious character.²¹¹

Wherever rock formations appear in Bornu and even where they are not very apparent, one is sure of finding the smallest of African creatures of this family, the widely-distributed dassie, *Hyrax abyssinicus*. Numerous wild boars inhabit the plains and must be exceedingly common on the Shari according to Nachtigal's narrative, though he does not mention their species.²¹² Where they are not hunted they appear to be far from timid, at least if one can credit Barth's account. The latter expresses himself on this subject as follows: 'A company of naked boys were splashing and playing about in the water and seemed on the best of terms with a number of wild boars; I have never seen these animals in such quantities in the Sudan as in the neighbourhood of the Shari. Calves and goats were feeding on the plain with wild

²¹¹ Cf. Barth, iii. 313; Kund, *loc. cit.*, p. 4; Stieber, *loc. cit.*, p. 118; Dominik, *loc. cit.*, p. 260 ff. [The rhinoceros is also found on the Bornu-Yola border and along the Gongola. The Kanuri say there are two kinds of rhino which they call 'Kargadan' (large) and 'Kumarima' (small).]

²¹² Nachtigal, ii. 542.

boars in their midst.'²¹³ It has not yet been definitely settled whether one of the bush-pigs (*Potamochoerus*) is found in Bornu; it is nearly always confused even in trustworthy reports with the formidable and strange-looking wart-hog, *Phacochoerus africanus*, with its misformed head and terrible tusches, which may even reach a foot in length. This animal is found far inside the confines of the Sahara and is still common even in Air.²¹⁴

Wherever fairly large rivers, or collections of water that outlast the dry season, exist, the inevitable river-horse, *Hippopotamus amphibius*, is never absent. Chudeau mentions the appearance of the river-horse even in the swamps of the Manga country.²¹⁵ Gerhard Rohlfs and his predecessors still report large herds—up to 100 head—of these pachyderms on Lake Chad,²¹⁶ but on the other hand a contagious disease, of which Nachtigal makes mention,²¹⁷ appears to have greatly thinned their numbers, at least temporarily, and even now one commonly finds tusches and other remains of these beasts on the shores of the lake. In the Shari-Logone region on the contrary the hippopotamus has always been equally common. Many places there 'literally swarm' with these animals.²¹⁸ What holds good of the tameness of the

²¹³ Barth, iii. 311.

²¹⁴ Foureau, *Documents scientifiques*, ii. 1008.

²¹⁵ *La Géographie, loc. cit.*, p. 332.

²¹⁶ Barth, ii. 326; Rohlfs, i. 331.

²¹⁷ Nachtigal, ii. 288.

²¹⁸ Nachtigal, ii. 573.