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THE TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

South African Philosophical Society.

I. *The Geography of South-Western Africa.* By H. C. SCHUNKE.

[Received Jan. 10, 1879.]

FOR some considerable time back the writer's attention has been drawn to the River system between the Cunène and the Liambey, and it was his great wish to go to that part of Africa to explore; but has as yet—on account of ill health and for other reasons—not been able to go sufficiently far inland to discover anything new to geographers.

To make up for it he has been engaged for some years in gathering information on the geography of South-Western Africa, and is now preparing a map of the regions between the latitudes of Walvisch Bay and Mossamedes and as far east as the Victoria Falls on the Liambey. It is to be accompanied by a description of the country and examination of the available data for the construction of the map. Some months more will be required to complete this, and the writer therefore intends to give here in a few words a prodrome to the work.

In giving a short description of the country lying within the limits of the map we may begin with the Coast region between Walvisch Bay and the Cunène. It is dry and sandy and almost entirely destitute of water. Near Walvisch Bay this strip of desert is broadest, gradually diminishing and ending at the mouth of the Cunène. No vegetation, excepting near the dry river-beds, is found on the ever-shifting sand-hills, only near Walvisch Bay we have the Nara plant bearing a melon-shaped fruit.

Then we have Hereröland comprising the valleys of the Tzoachaub and Omaruru, the Omuramba ua Matako, eastwards the sand-flats of the Omaheke and to the north the Otjozondjupa

Mountains or Waterbergen. The greater part of the population, Ovahereró and Ovàmbantieru, are found along the Tzoachaub, the Omaruru and Omuramba ua Matako which are periodical rivers, with numerous fountains and water-pits. In consequence most of the Mission stations are found on these rivers. Otjimbinguè, Otjikango, Okahautja (the great Chief's place) and Otjozasu and Windhoek are situated on the Tzoachaub and its affluents—Okombahe, Okozondje and Omburo are on the Omaruru river.

The course of these rivers and also the general physical features of the country around them have been very fairly delineated by travellers and missionaries, and especially the routes from Walvisch Bay to Omaruru and from Walvisch Bay to Otjimbinguè and Windhoek form a base to a rough survey of the country.

North of the Omaruru river, rising rapidly from the Coast-desert, a very mountainous district extends to the Cunène, known as the "Kaoko." Its western part is very rugged and cut up by numerous periodical westward-flowing rivers, containing in their beds fountains of fresh water. On account of the almost insurmountable difficulties of the terrain for making roads through this country it has been *terra incognita* to white people until 1877, when two missionaries of the Rhenish Society, Messrs Böhm and Bernsman, ventured to traverse it. They travelled from Okombahe on the Omaruru north-westwards and almost parallel with and at a mean vertical distance from the coast of about 60—70 miles until they arrived after a long and tedious journey at Ohamuheke, called by the Namaquas Zes-fontein, in about the latitude of Cabo Frio (according to *their* log), probably the point is not so far north, as travellers who go over a difficult road and who lay down their points without the aid of astronomical observations, only keeping time of travelling and direction by compass, are as a rule apt to exaggerate their distances. The description the travellers give of Ohamuheke and other places is indeed favourable; the quantity of water found there being even in excess of that issuing from the slopes of the famous Otjozondjupa.

The missionaries returned partly by a route more distant from the coast, joining again their old tracks at Ondijombo ya hambeke, and returned to Okombahe highly satisfied with the result of their inspection tour.

The altitudes of the places passed through on going to Ohamuheke give an average of about 1700 feet; on the return road more inland an average of 3300 feet above sea level was obtained. The fountains and pits in the Kaoko contained fresh water, and grass is found almost everywhere; the travellers say that the strip of desert opposite Ohamuheke must be much narrower than at Walvisch Bay. The climate is on account of the fresh water and the elevated position very healthy.

The Kaoko was inhabited formerly by Hererò, who gradually migrated south-eastwards towards the Omuramba ua Matakò and the Omaruru and Tzoachaub, where they found brackish fountains, which they prefer to the fresh water in the Kaoko. Some of the Hererò were driven to the mouth of the Cunène by hordes of Namaqua in Jonker Africaander's days, and are now exceedingly hostile towards white people; they have several times driven traders and hunters back, who to avoid the long and wearisome journey to Walvisch Bay sought a way to Great Fish Bay or the mouth of the Cunène or even to Mossamedes.

I may here add that the Kaoko is part of the reserve placed at the disposal of the English Government by the Hererò Chief Kamaherèrò, and will perhaps one day prove useful—there being at present hardly any natives.

From the Kaoko eastwards there is an extensive high plateau of an average altitude of 3500 feet. It is covered with a vegetation of thornbush and grass; water is very scarce there. The plateau slopes to the north and east towards the Omuramba u Orambo and the Omuramba ua Matakò. On the south and south-east side it falls abruptly and has all the appearance of a high mountain-range, like the Free State and Transvaal plateaux when looked at from Natal or Zululand. Numerous fountains issue along this south-eastern slope of the plateau, and amongst them are the most interesting and important springs of the Otjozondjupa or Waterberg. The vegetation is here luxurious, and much land could be brought under cultivation. East of the Omuramba ua Matakò we have the Omaheke or Sandveld, a dry and sandy desert extending eastwards to Lake Ngami. In fact, between the Omuramba and Ngami a horn of the Kalahari desert pushes itself in as far as latitude 17° S. gradually diminishing in breadth, and making access to the great rivers to the north-east almost impracticable. Hardly any water is found in this bush-covered desert, only a kind of water-melon thrives here and gives means of subsistence to wandering Bushmen and cattleless Hererò called Oratjimba.

To the north of the high plateau of Damaraland above described we have the plains of Ovampoland, containing much fertile alluvial soil covered with a thin layer of fine white sand some inches deep. The population is composed of agriculturists divided into various small tribes headed by independent chiefs. Not a stone is found in this region except some very recent calcareous formations near the fountains. A great part of the country is subject to the inundations of the Cunène and its affluents. Higher up east of the Cunène the country becomes still more fertile, the vegetation more luxurious, game more abundant, but the climate also more unhealthy. The Cunène described by the two or three travellers who have reached its

banks from the south side is a beautiful river and well navigable for smaller boats (like Stanley's "Lady Alice"). It has been lately found that the mouth is not obstructed, and thus the Portuguese government are having two small steam-boats built for the Cunène river navigation.

The Cunène rises on the highlands—crossed by Cameron on his walk across Africa—to the south of Bihè close to the sources of two other very important rivers: the Cubango and Quatu. After flowing for some distance in a southerly direction the Cunène bends to the west and discharges its waters into the Atlantic not far south of Great Fish Bay, forming thus the southern boundary of the province of Mossamedes.

Bordering the desert which lies east of Ovampo and Hereròland a large river flows south and south-east—in its upper course called Cubango, in its lower Okavango. In 1859 C. Andersson the Damaraland traveller reached this river near the Chief Tjikango's place and found a tribe who cultivated the soil on both its banks. Andersson was unable to ascertain much about this river, as to where it came from and where it flowed to: he simply fixed the position of the point where he touched the river. Whether this river was in connection with the Cunène or the Zambesi or the Teoghe he did not know. On the map of Dr Petermann this river is made to join (though with a dotted line) the Omuramba u Orambo. That this is entirely incorrect I am in the position to shew.

More than twenty years ago the Portuguese government employed the Hungarian, Ladislaus Magyar, who had been officer in the Austrian navy, to explore the rivers Cunène, Cubango and Quatu. The result was as follows: Magyar found that the three rivers rise on the same highland and not far from one another. The Cunène flows south and south-west; the Cubango and Quatu (Kntatu) first diverging then flowing parallel to the south-east. The Cubango is according to the description of Magyar the same as the Okavango. Some distance south of the point where Andersson touched the Okavango, the river turns to due east and flows into the larger and deeper Quatu, one day's journey west of Libebe, which Magyar calls Darica. According to Magyar the united rivers under the name of Teoghe or Tonke River flow into Lake Ngami after having sent off a branch stream towards the Zambesi called the Tsò.

Magyar died before he could publish his whole work, and many of his notes were lost.

It was believed by Dr Petermann and some others that Magyar had exaggerated his distances and that the confluence of the Quatu (or, as Petermann has it, Cuito) and Okavango *must* be far above the point where Andersson touched the Okavango, and that

Teoghe and Cubango or Okavango had nothing in common, that they are entirely unconnected rivers. The points Darico and Bunja are thus thrown some hundred miles away from their actual positions, and the Okavango, according to Andersson and others a navigable stream, is forced to join the Omuramba u Orambo, a periodical river. The Teoghe takes its rise in a sandy desert near Libebe, instead of near Bihè in the latitude of Benguela. According to Dr Petermann, the Cubango and Quatu (Cuito)—both called by the Portuguese “Rio caudoloso,” which means strong, broad, rapidly-flowing stream, in fact a large river—are supposed to disappear in the sand-bed of an Omuramba. The writer carefully studied the letters sent by Magyar to Professor Hunfalvy at Pesth, and also his official despatches to the governor of Benguela, besides Andersson’s “Okavango,” and cannot conceive how Dr Petermann can have arrived at such conclusions. It is beyond doubt by Magyar’s papers that Darico and Libebe are one and the same place, and that the Cubango (Okavango) and Quatu (Cuito) join, a day’s journey west of Libebe. The name of the tribe at and near Libebe is “*Baviko*”: is it not possible that Darico stands for Bavico? Very often in Africa the names of tribes are given to places. In African languages there is not much—we may even say there is no—difference between *v*, *l* and *r*, so it is easily possible that the *v* in Bavico has been changed into *r*. The prefix *Du* is there instead of *Ba*. We must not be astonished at its being wrongly put by Magyar, for the Portuguese and many travellers constantly are putting wrong prefixes to names of places. Perhaps Magyar was not familiar enough with the rules of African languages.

To my greatest joy I saw my confidence and belief in Magyar’s observations confirmed by the writer of an article (not exactly unknown to me but who does not give his name) in the “*Argus*” in the beginning of 1876. He—perhaps not knowing even that Magyar had travelled over the same parts more than 20 years before—confirms everything Magyar says about the Okavango and Quatu. The unknown writer crossed the Okavango at the same spot where Andersson touched the river in 1859.

After having travelled eastwards over a flat country slightly elevated above the Okavango and having crossed the Omurambaa, Okafumu and Okakenny he found himself within a day’s journey of the Great Quatu River. He was however compelled to retreat on account of the tsetse fly which threatened to destroy his valuable—very likely salted—horses. He states also that the Okavango flows due east from near Bunja and joins the Quatu a short distance west of Libebe. That the united rivers are the Teoghe or Tonke the writer of the article was fully able to say, because he had travelled from Lake Ngami to Libebe years ago.

This refutes Dr Petermann’s geography of this part of Africa

entirely, and proves that Magyar was right. We have seen that the unknown writer of the "Argus" article agrees also in the position of the confluence of the two streams with regard to Tjikongo's place, Bunja and Libebe, and therefore Darico is Bavico or Libebe. The Rev. Dr Hahn who has lived many years in South-West Africa and has travelled much, who was one of the first who reached the Cunène from the south, expresses himself very favourably for Magyar and believes him to be highly trustworthy.

Both rivers are navigable for cargo-boats, and Andersson has also shewn that the Teoghe is navigable from Lake Ngami.

The writer cannot understand why Magyar should have been misunderstood by great geographers, though his papers shew that he carried instruments, and being a naval officer he very likely was accustomed to their use.

From the Okavango an Omuramba branches off not far from the point where its course becomes entirely east near Bunja. This Omuramba is called Sheshongu and it joins the Teoghe. It is mentioned by Green and is also shewn on Mr Palgrave's map of Damaraland.

For the present the writer will say no more about the subject until he is able to lay the map before the Society, and will then go more minutely into the question of the river-system of South-Western Africa, and will shew his sources of information more clearly.

II. *On the Stone Implements of South Africa.* By E. J. DUNN, F.G.S.

[Received March 25, 1880.]

Enough work has not yet been done nor have sufficient implements been collected to admit of generalizing, but in a field so extensive as South Africa where instruments and weapons of stone abound, not only distributed over the surface, but imbedded in the soil to a depth of many feet, the necessary interest is certain eventually to be excited and the material obtained for more elaborate work than is at present possible.

Collections have been formed by Dr Dale, who discovered and made known the remarkably well-formed and varied types of implement found on the Cape Flats near Salt River; the discovery was made about sixteen years ago, and numerous examples have been forwarded to Europe. Representative specimens are deposited in the South African Museum, the Christy Collection, the Oxford Museum, and in the private collections of Sir J. Lubbock and