



The French Mission to Lake Chad: Discussion

Author(s): H. E. M. Cambon and P. A. Talbot

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Rainy season. Our observations give : absolute minimum 70.2° Fahr., September; absolute maximum 104.4° Fahr., September. The temperature is slightly less high than in the previous season, but as the hygrometrical state of the atmosphere rises steadily, reaching its maximum in August, it is much more painful to bear. The winds blow very irregularly from the south-west. They are very strong only during the tornadoes, and they then blow from different quarters. Well-characterized tornadoes run generally from east to west, and very rarely from west to east. The following are the results of rainfall observations at our meteorological station of Chad (Bol) :

July	6 days' rain ; rainfall 32^{mm} ·1 or 1·3
August	11 " ; " 134^{mm} ·3 " 5·4
September	4 " ; " 21^{mm} ·7 " 0·9
October	2 " ; " 4^{mm} ·3 " 0·2
November	no rain
December	"
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Total for 1908	192^{mm} 4 or 7·8

The year 1908 was considered as very rainy ; we estimate that two-thirds of the rainfall of that year (5·2 inches) would be approximately the mean of the annual rainfall on Lake Chad.

7. *Note on the Determination of Altitudes.*—Our altitude reckonings in the country east of Lake Chad were based on the simultaneity of observation of the atmospherical pressure between the meteorological station of Chad and other points whose altitude was to be determined. Every precaution was taken to suppress errors due to the instruments. But it is well known that the formula of Laplace becomes of less certain application when the distance between the stations increases. The Eguei country being approximately 190 miles from Bol, we estimate that 33 feet (corresponding to a total error of 1 mm. of pressure) will represent the possible uncertainty in one sense or the other, in the results we have obtained.

8. In the *Bulletin du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle*, 1909, No. 6, p. 375, Mr. L. Germain says that the Tilho mission brought back a great deal of material for scientific study, amongst which that coming from Eguei offers special interest, as it fills up a gap in our knowledge, and gives us a fresh proof of the uniformity of the fauna throughout the regions included between the Nile and the Senegal.

The PRESIDENT (before the paper) : We have come here to-night to enjoy what I think may be fairly described as a peaceful invasion of the French army, the French forces being under the command of our distinguished guest, Captain Tilho. In 1907, a party of French officers and men under the same commander met in Africa a party of English soldiers, their object being (our ancestors would hardly believe it) not to fight, but to settle in a peaceful way certain questions concerning a boundary, and I am delighted to say that those labours have been brought to a perfectly harmonious conclusion, the final act concerning this mission having been signed this very day. Nothing could be more satisfactory. Captain Tilho on that mission was accompanied by several colleagues, by Lieut. Mercadier, by Dr. Gaillard, and by Captain Lauzanne. After the conclusion of his labours as regards the boundary, the French Government very wisely, if I may venture to say so, deputed him to undertake a careful scientific examination of Lake Chad and all the region lying to the north-east of it. I am not going to anticipate what he will tell us about that mission. One remark, however, I must make, because I am sure he would not make

it himself, and that is, as regards our detailed knowledge of Lake Chad, we are far more indebted to French officers for our existing information than to any other body of men. Of these explorers Captain Tilho and Captain Audoin no doubt stand out as pre-eminent. Captain Tilho was no doubt selected for this his second expedition to Lake Chad because he was well acquainted with that part of the world, and also because of his distinguished career in the French army. He had seen service both in Madagascar and West Africa. He is a good English scholar, but being a little troubled with modesty, he has asked his colleague, Lieut. Mercadier, also an officer with a distinguished career, to kindly read the paper for him.

The PRESIDENT (after the paper): In my preliminary remarks I said that these two officers were eminently qualified to speak on questions connected with native administration, and that makes their concluding remarks, in which they have expressed the appreciation of the British administration in Africa, very pleasant for us to hear. Lieut. Mercadier has come, as I believe, all the way from active service in Algeria in order to read this paper here to-night. Captain Tilho and his comrades have come here from a distance to tell us of their interesting travels, and I should like to tell them, as I am certain I may in the name of every English man and every English woman here, that we regard their presence to-night as an International compliment which we much appreciate. Such meetings, where we have French officers describing their friendly relations with English officers, augur well for the happy relationships between the two countries, whether it be in Europe, where we are separated by a stormy channel, or whether it be in Africa, where we seem to be separated merely by an invisible line and a few telegraph poles.

H. E. M. CAMBON (French Ambassador): I thank the Royal Geographical Society for the reception given by it to Captain Tilho and the officers of the French Mission for the settlement of the boundaries of Nigeria.

In the lecture just delivered, you take note of Captain Tilho's reference to the good relations which have uniformly subsisted between the English and the French officers of the Boundary Commission. They have acted together on a footing of perfect friendliness, and their labours have been pursued without any friction. They have been inspired with the sentiments of sincere goodwill animating the two Governments and the two nations. In Equatorial Africa we have both a task which imposes on us great responsibilities, and may be full of dangers. Only on condition of standing closely united with each other shall we successfully accomplish our mission. Thanks to our union, we shall be able to maintain peace in regions hitherto abandoned to lawlessness, insecurity, and the nefarious deeds of slave dealers; we shall show once more how France and England are ministers of progress in the world, and that the *Entente Cordiale* is destined to become an instrument of civilization.

Major O'SHEE expressed his admiration of the French work and administration in Africa.

Mr. P. A. TALBOT: May I first venture to congratulate Captain Tilho on his most interesting paper, and the lecturer on his extraordinary command of our language? As one who has spent an exciting, never-to-be-forgotten, and most hungry time on Lake Chad in 1904, I should like to make a few remarks, and should be grateful to have the opportunity of asking one or two questions. The fall of the lake must, indeed, have been very rapid in 1904-5, since, as we have heard, at the beginning of 1904 navigation was easy with the Benoit-Garnier of a draught of 24 inches, while at the end of that year we had difficulty with a boat of only 9 inches draught. There is a tradition among the Borgu who live in the

north-east part of Nigeria, that a long time ago the upper bend of the Niger did not flow in its present course, but turned to the east. Now if there is any truth in that tradition, the probable course of the river might have been by Lake Chad and the Bahr el Ghazal or the Eguei to the Nile. That would harmonize the traditions both of the Borgu and of the ancient geographers of Europe and Egypt, and our old friend Herodotus would turn out to be right once more. The tradition would also account for the presence of Nilotic fish in the lake: I believe the proportion is thought to be about 40 per cent. Nilotic to 60 per cent. Nigerian. May I ask by what method the differences of height were obtained round Lake Chad, whether by triangulation or levelling, or in what other manner? There has been considerable discussion lately as to the presence of flying fish in the lake. The first specimen of this variety was caught farther to the south by M. Jean de Brazza in a butterfly-net, as it skimmed over the surface of the water. I happened to see one myself, but additional testimony is wanted, and perhaps Captain Tilho or one of his companions could supply the deficiency. I should also like to express my appreciation of the heroic endurance necessary for star-work in this locality, as I can personally testify to the remarkable biting propensities of the local mosquitoes. With regard to the slave trade, may I say that it seems to me impossible for any nation, with the resources at its disposal, to have done more than our neighbours across the Channel have done for the last fifteen or twenty years to bring the regions of Northern and Central Africa into a state of law and order. Every geographer must have watched with interest and admiration the steady and indomitable advance in the formation of that vast empire which now acknowledges French sway there. Those who know how long it has taken to overcome a few of the difficulties which confronted ourselves in Northern and Southern Nigeria can appreciate, perhaps better than others, the immensity of the task which faced the great nation with whom we are happily on such friendly terms. In conclusion, although one of the most junior officials in Southern Nigeria, may I beg to thank Captain Tilho and the lecturer for their very kind remarks with regard to the British Administrators of the two colonies.

The PRESIDENT: Unless there is any one else who wishes to take part in this discussion I think I will bring it to a close. I will express, as I know I may, your cordial thanks to Lieut. Mercadier for the charming way in which he has read this lecture in our language, for all his comrades for having come here, and, above all, to Captain Tilho for the interesting geographical paper, containing so much valuable knowledge, which he has given us.

Captain TILHO briefly expressed his warm thanks to the meeting and to the Society for the way in which he and his comrades had been received.

THE MONGOLIA-SZE-CHUAN EXPEDITION OF THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.*

By Colonel P. K. KOZLOFF.

By the exploration of Mongolia and the Koko-nor province the expedition accomplished two-thirds of the task imposed on it by the Geographical Society. There remained the last third, the last period of its activity, the Sze-chuan section, for which the expedition made

* For narrative of the first portion of the expedition, see *Geographical Journal* for October, 1909. Map, p. 380.