

T R A V E L S
I N
N U B I A ;

BY THE LATE
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APPENDIX. No. I.

Itinerary from the Frontiers of Bornou, by Bahr el Ghazal, and Darfour to Shendy.

From Bornou towards Bahr el Ghazal, lies Dar Katakou (دار كاتكو); its king is tributary to the king of Bornou, who resides at Birney (برني).^{*} The principal districts of Katakou, which have all their own chiefs, are Dar Mandara (منصرة); Dar Mckry (مكري); Dar Ankala (انكالا); Dar Afady (افدي); Dar Kolfey (كلفي). The Bedouin tribes in Katakou, are Beni Hassan† (بني حسن); Oulad Abou Khedhey (اولاد ابو خضير); El Nedjeymé (النجيمه); El Fellate (الفلاته); Beni Seid (بني سيد); Essalamat (السلامت); El Kobbar (الكبار); El Aouy Sye (العويسيه); Om Ibrahim (ام ابراهيم); El Adjayfe (العجايفه). All these tribes pay tribute to Bornou; and all pretend to draw their origin from Arabia. Some of them speak the Bornou language, while others, as the Beni Hassan, Essalamat, Om Ibrahim, speak only Arabic. The strongest among them are the Fellate. They are often at war with the king of Bornou, and have, in later times, it should seem, extended their influence over the northern limits of Soudan, quite across the continent, for they are also in great strength at Timbuctou; and about ten years ago conquered, and half ruined Kashna. Their chief force is cavalry, and their chiefs dress in robes of coloured cloth or silk.

Between Katakou and Bahr el Ghazal, flows the great river called Shary (شاري), in a

* All reports agree that there is a great fresh-water lake in the interior of Bornou, on the west side of which the city of Birney is said to be built. The size of this lake cannot be so easily determined by hearsay, for the statements respecting its length vary from four to fifteen days. Several large torrents are reported to empty themselves into it, and it contains many islands. On its east side dwell idolatrous nations, the most numerous of which are the Voey. The name of the lake is Nou, and from it the country derives the name of Bornou (برنو), or the land of Nou.

† I received this Itinerary at Mekka from one of the Beni Hassan, a remarkably shrewd young man, who knew the whole of the Koran by heart. He was of the darkest brown colour, somewhat approaching to a copper tinge; his features were decidedly Arab, having nothing of the Negroe in them.

direction, as far as I could learn, from N. E. to S. W.,* towards Bagerme, but its source was unknown. It is represented to be as large as the Nile, full of fish, and abounding with crocodiles, hippopotami, and an animal called Om Kergay (أم قرغي), said to be as large as the rhinoceros, with a very small head and mouth, but harmless. Its banks are inhabited by elephants, rhinoceroses, lions, and giraffas. The Bahr Djad (بحر جد) a considerable stream, runs into the Shary, besides several smaller ones. The tribe Abou Khedheyr reside chiefly on its banks, which are also visited in the summer by the other Bedouins, for the purpose of pasturing their cattle. From the limits of Bornou to Bahr Shary is fifteen days slow march, in the direction of the Kebly.† The route from Bahr Shary to Bahr el Ghazal is in the same direction.

The Bahr el Ghazal (بحر الغزال) is a wide extent of low ground without any mountains: it is called Bahr (i. e. sea, or river), and also Wady, because tradition reports, that in ancient times a large river flowed through it. Rice grows wild; elephants are in great numbers, and all the other wild beasts above mentioned are found in it. It is inhabited only during the rainy season, and the months immediately following it, by Bedouins, who there pasture vast herds of cows, camels, and sheep (the latter without wool like those of Shendy), and who retire, in the dry season, towards the limits of Katakou, Bagerme, and Dar Saley. They purchase the Dhourra necessary for their consumption in Dar Saley and Bagerme; and in the latter place they also procure the blue and red striped cotton stuffs there manufactured, for which they give in exchange cows, the general currency of the country in all large bargains; a fine slave girl is there worth ten cows. All these Bedouins, as well as those of Katakou, are Mussulmans, and the greater part of them speak nothing but Arabic. They have a good breed of horses, which they mount in their wars; their weapons are lances, and a few two-edged swords of German manufacture, like those used in Nubia and Abyssinia; coats of mail, worth twenty cows each, are frequent among them; they ride mares only. They live in huts (عشش) made of rushes and brushwood, and intermarry with the people of Bornou, Bagerme, and Saley. There is no trade in their country, which is not visited by any caravans; and it is not unusual to see heaps of elephants tusks collected, which no body carries away. These Bedouins are sometimes visited by Sherifs from the Hedjaz, who come by the way of Sennaar and Darfour, in order to solicit alms of the chiefs of the tribes, who respect them as descendants of the family of the Prophet. The chiefs, every three or four years, pay tribute to Bornou, consisting of horses,

* At Medina I met with another man from the Beni Hassan, who was well acquainted with the one above mentioned; he confirmed the accuracy of the Itinerary, but insisted that the Shary flowed from south to north.

† In questioning Mussulman Negroes about bearings, the only mode of obtaining a satisfactory answer, is to ask them what country or town they had before or behind them, or on either side of them, when they prayed at a certain place. The bearing of the Kebly, or Mekka, is tolerably well known all over Africa, and much attended to in praying, and it forms a much more certain point to reckon from than either the quarter of the rising or setting sun.

camels, and slaves. A man who possesses fifty cows, two camels, and a mare, is considered to be poor. Spanish dollars are found amongst them, but not as a currency. The law of retaliation is in full force. Among the Beni Hassan the price of blood (Azzeze, الذية) is two hundred cows, if a stranger kills one of them, or one hundred, if an Arab of the same tribe is the murderer, a distinction which is also made in Arabia. Few people among them read and write, or are Fakys; those who aspire to that name, study in the schools of Bagerme, Katakou, and Saley, and are held in great reverence by their countrymen. The place nearest to the Shary in the Bahr el Ghazal, is Kanem (كانم), four days distant; it is a large district inhabited by the tribes of Tendjear (تنجير) and Beni Wayl* (بني وايل); they have their own language, and speak no Arabic. Between Kanem and Shary is the Dar Karka (دار كاركا), which forms no part of the Bahr el Ghazal; it is inhabited by the Bedouins Kory (كوري), who pasture their cattle on the banks of a large river, called Bahr el Feydh (بحر الفيض), i. e. the inundating river, from its periodical risings, and which empties itself into the Shary. The Kory have a breed of very large cows, with horns two feet long.

The principal tribe in the Bahr el Ghazal is that of Beni Hassan, who pretend to be from the Hedjaz, and who assert that the Sherif Rashouan is their forefather. They are related to the Beni Hassan in Katakou. They speak no other language than Arabic, are of a deep brown colour, and have lips rather thick, but nothing else of the Negroe character; their hair is not woolly. They are subdivided into the tribes Dagghana (دغنه), which inhabits close to Kanem; Oulad Mehareb (اولاد محارب); Oulad Serar (اولاد سرار); Oulad Ghanem (اولاد غانم); Oulad Abou Aisa (اولاد ايو), and El Aszalé (الاصالغ). In the district occupied by the Dagghana, is a place called Mezrag (مزراق), in which is a fresh-water lake (بحر ما حلو, Bahr ma halou), two days journees in length, and half a day in breadth; it is called Wady Hadaba (وادي هدايا), and is always filled with water. The Bedouins of Bahr el Ghazal are continually moving about. Three or four days from them, on the northern side, live Negroe tribes of infidels, who have many languages; as El Kareyda (القريدة); El Keshreda (الكشردا); El Nouarme (النوارمة); El Famallah (الفامالله); the Arabs of Bahr el Ghazal often make predatory incursions among them, and drive away their children as slaves. If we had fire-locks, said my informant, we should soon be able to subdue them entirely.

Four or five days from Bahr el Ghazal lies Bagerme (باكرمة), a country lately conquered by the king of Saley; its inhabitants have a language of their own, but are all Mussulmans; their manufactories of cotton stuff furnish the whole of the eastern part of Soudan, with the stuff of which the people make their shirts. Once in two or three years caravans of Fakys go from Bagerme to Afnou, a journey of twenty or twenty-five days, to sell their stuffs; but they are often obliged to fight their way through the idolatrous tribes on the road. In Bagerme are the Bedouins Essalamat

* The Aeneze, the most powerful Bedouin tribe of Arabia, deduce their origin from the Beni Wayl.