

21. Field-Notes on some Mammals in the Bahr-el-Gebel, Southern Sudan. By Major J. STEVENSON HAMILTON, C.M.Z.S.

[Received October 18, 1919: Read November 18, 1919.]

(With Chart.)

It should be noted that my intimate personal experience extends only to the area between Bor and Shambe, and from these points eastwards to a distance of 80 miles, N. and N.E. of Shambe 60 miles, and west of the river about 20 miles. It is only in this area that I have been resident. As regards the region between Mongalla and Bor, I have spent only two months of the dry season there, and south of Mongalla I know the country only from occasional short visits.

THIANG (*Damaliscus tiang* Heugl.).

West bank.—Through the flat country from Lado northwards to Shambe.

East bank.—From a little south of Bor northwards to the limit of the area considered.

Found east of the Nile in much greater numbers than to the west. Country probably more suitable. The great open plains in the Nuer, and in the west of the Dinka country seem especially fitted to their habits. The type found west of the river is of much deeper coloration and contrasted markings than that occurring west of it, forming perhaps a different local variety.

During the dry months Thiang may be seen on these plains in countless numbers. In the vicinity of water-pools herds of from 1000 to 2000 are common, and two or three such herds may be in sight at one time.

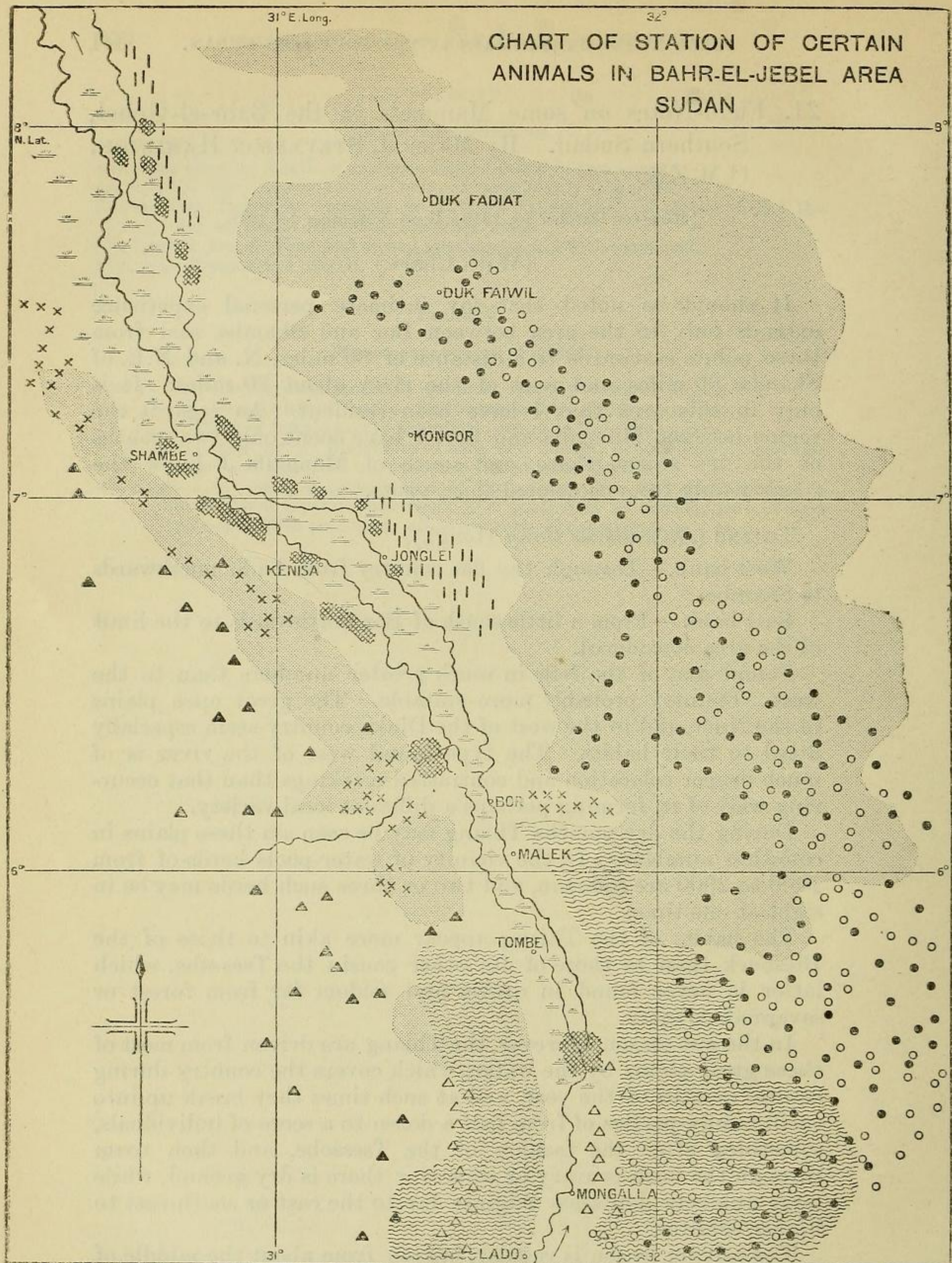
The habits of the Thiang appear more akin to those of the Blesbuck than to those of its other cousin the Tsessobe, which latter is never found in droves and seldom far from forest or savannah country.

In the wet season, however, the Thiang are driven from most of those great plains by the water, which covers the country during several months of the year, and at such times they break up into small family-parties of from half a dozen to a score of individuals, something after the fashion of the Tsessobe, and then roam through the bush-country or wherever there is dry ground, while large numbers doubtless migrate far to the east or south-east to higher country.

The calving season is regular, lasting from about the middle of February to about the middle of March—that is to say, it takes place just previous to the advent of the first rains, and in this assimilates closely to the habit of the Tsessobe.

While in large herds in the open, Thiang are very wary and will seldom allow approach nearer than 250 yards; probably at

CHART OF STATION OF CERTAIN ANIMALS IN BAHR-EL-JEBEL AREA SUDAN



Miles 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 Miles

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Damaliscus corrigum</i> <i>Bubalis lelwel</i> <i>Kobus leucotis</i> <i>Kobus vaughani</i> <i>Kobus kob thomasi</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Rhinoceros simus</i> <i>Gazella albonotata</i> <i>Equus burchelli</i> <i>Kobus maria</i> |
|--|--|

but no further. With the first rains they disappear to the south, and though a few may be found lingering well on into the summer in the low country east of Mongalla (lat. $4^{\circ} 30'$), I am of the opinion that the great majority migrate *very long distances towards the higher and drier country lying in the extreme S.E. of the Sudan near the East African border*, and that somewhere among these plateaux lie their summer quarters. Here they come not very far from the northern range of the true *thomsoni*, and are not separated from this animal by any natural boundary so formidable as that formed by the Sobat River and its swamps, which cut the species off from *G. rufifrons* in the north. Moreover, the Mongalla Gazelle never ranges within 100 miles of the Sobat River, the intermediate country being, in fact, unsuited to the habits of Gazelles to a considerable degree. Probably the form is almost exactly intermediate between *thomsoni* and *rufifrons*, with tendencies towards the former.

It is not found west of the Bahr-el-Gebel.

WHITE RHINOCEROS (*Rhinoceros simus*).

This animal exists all along the west bank of the Nile in the dry season, but is always very rare in the area under consideration. The natives say they drink at the river at night, and retire great distances into the forest during the day.

The above notes, which only deal with quite a small area of country (approximately 200 miles by 150) and have no pretensions to discuss the distribution of the animals mentioned outside thereof, tend to show how peculiarly patchy even within the same small area the distribution of any given species tends to be, and is an example on a small scale of what we often find and with as little apparent reason throughout the whole continent of Africa.