

FROM BENGUELLA  
TO THE  
TERRITORY OF YACCA.

Description of a Journey into  
CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA.

COMPRISING NARRATIVES, ADVENTURES, AND IMPORTANT SURVEYS  
OF THE SOURCES OF THE RIVERS CUNENE, CUBANGO, LUANDO,  
CUANZA, AND CUANGO, AND OF GREAT PART OF  
THE COURSE OF THE TWO LATTER;

*Together with the Discovery of the Rivers Hamba, Cauali, Sussa, and  
Cugho, and a detailed Account of the Territories of Quiteca  
N'bungo, Sosso, Futa, and Yacca.*

Hermenegildo Augusto de Sá BY  
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EXPEDITION ORGANIZED IN THE YEARS 1877—1880.

TRANSLATED BY  
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WITH MAPS AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
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poor and ill-clad. The men hang about them a couple of skins, fastened to a narrow belt. The main distinction in dress appears to lie in the bracelets, the bead collars and long braids of hair adorned with cowries.

The women confine themselves to a small strip or piece of *mabella*, suspended from the girdle. Their head-dresses are various, some of them resembling those of the Quimbandi; and not unfrequently one may see the cartilage of the nose of both sexes ornamented with a piece of stick run right through it. Infants are, for the most part, carried by their mothers on their hips, on which the little creatures sit astraddle, and are kept in their place by a band of *mabella* passed round the woman's waist.

The hamlets are composed of conical huts in the construction of which a good deal of care is taken. On rare occasions they are plastered with clay, and a thatch roof crowns the edifice. An elder, elected by the people, and who is subordinate to the ruler of 'T'chiboco, is generally placed in command over each little community.

On our return from the territory of Muene Quibau, we had a visit from N'Dumba Tembo, who, congratulating us on our safe return, invited us to his residence to regale on some special *quingunde* to be prepared for the occasion, an act of courtesy which we naturally deemed it politic to accept.

Time meanwhile ran on, and we still found ourselves, on the night of the 18th July, 1878, encamped on the high table-land of 'T'chiboco, without having as yet come to any resolve respecting the route we should follow so as to obtain the best possible results from the expedition.

All suggestions to travel in an easterly direction were opposed by the extraordinary apprehensions entertained by our people, who had a firm belief that to the north-



east lay a country of cannibals, and the most extraordinary tribes of dwarfs, where the elephant and the rhinoceros ran at large and which, combined, made a passage through the territory, more especially in the rainy season, a task beyond human powers.

Day appeared on the 19th, cold and dank with heavy dew, as is usual in this region, and as early as half-past five we were seated in our hut, beside a roaring fire, pipe in mouth, and a cup of coffee by our side, discussing the never ending question of the route we should take and the means that we could dispose of on the journey.

The assistance promised us by N'Dumba Tembo was that which chiefly occupied our minds and appeared, at first sight, pleasant enough. He had, for instance, offered us the services of Caúeu, his nephew, as a guide, and given us a choice of road in a northerly direction as far as the Tenga. But we were not perfectly confident that he would stick to his word; and even if he did so, it was of no such vital interest to us, after determining the sources of the Cassai and Cuango, to make an excursion of 100 leagues or so to the Tenga, through a region, in great part, already known.

If we could only reach the Cazembe Caquinhata<sup>8</sup> and determine the exact position of the source of the Lualaba, returning afterwards across the wilds of the Samba, the task would be indeed an interesting one. But how about the Cuango?

That fatal Cuango! How could we, from such an enormous distance, come back to fix the course of that river to the parallel of 8° and go twice over the same ground? It was out of the question. Besides, when

<sup>8</sup> Caquinhata appears to signify the habitation of the Cazembe. If so, it would be more correct to style it, the *caquinhata* of the Cazembe.

dozen trees, was burning a huge fire; grass-thatched huts were standing in an irregular circle about it, and an infinity of strange objects lay scattered in every direction. On the ground, mixed with heaps of fire-wood, split up and ready for use, appeared the bones and skulls of innumerable animals, bearing the teeth marks of dogs and jackals, which had been engaged upon them after human, but scarcely less savage jaws had cast them aside; sticking out from the sides of the huts were the horns of the buffalo, the *oryx*, and other antelopes, many of them still adhering to the skulls, others detached from them and used, for the most part, in the fashioning of fetishes. Skins of many wild beasts, fastened to the flooring of the dwellings by wooden pegs, made the interior warm and soft, but, swarming as they must have been with vermin, could not otherwise conduce to the comfort of the occupants.

Huge hunks of flesh, with portions of the intestines and tails of animals suspended from horizontal rods, were being dried in the smoke for the purpose of preservation for future use; and round about the fire and moving in and out the huts were a score or so of men, partly clad in skins, of ferocious aspect, their hands and arms, and indeed great part of their bodies, besmeared with blood. These were the people of the place, and hunters by profession.

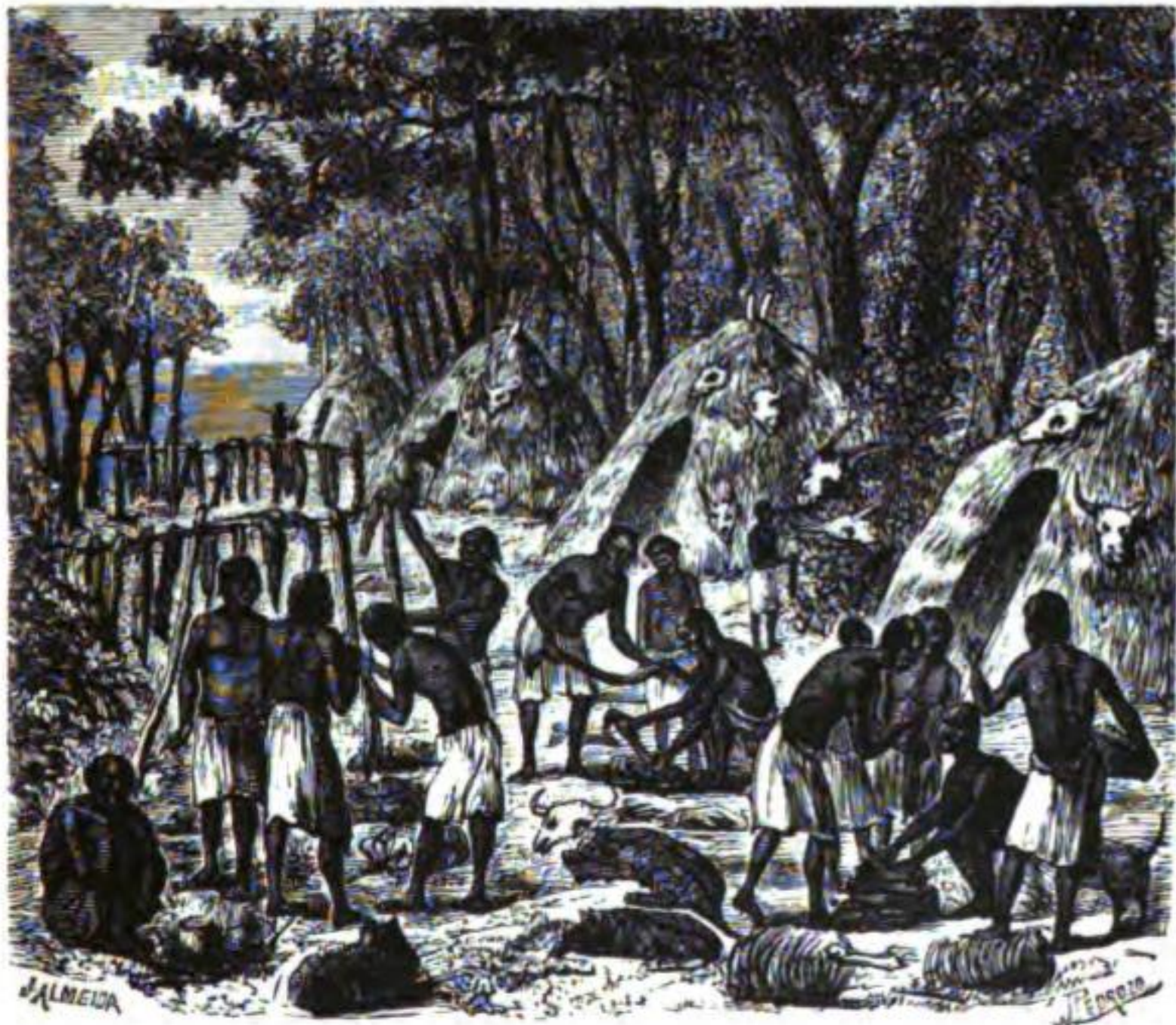
We were presented to the oldest inhabitant, who received us with a certain respect not unmixed with diffidence. He had been probably told of the wonderful precision and power of our arms, and the account had not lost in the telling.

He assured us that though game was becoming rare in Quioco, it still was to be found; that the buffalo, the elephant, and the *chicurro* (rhinoceros) were not yet



driven out of the district; that with respect to the latter he would show us an enormous horn, only recently acquired; and finally, that if we desired to scour the country, he would willingly accompany us in order that he might see our mode of hunting big game.

It being now time for breakfast we sat down before a small case, that served as a table, and began in company



THE HUNTERS' ENCAMPMENT.

of Tembo to attack a large steak of roast meat and mushrooms, and an enormous bowl of *infundi* prepared for the occasion. His Majesty seemed perfectly delighted. Nothing seemed to please him better than to take his meals in our company, and use a knife and fork in more or less European fashion. Our own satisfaction on



such occasions; however, was not so great, for we were fully aware that if any sudden indisposition befell him, we should be at once considered the exciting cause.

During breakfast we watched one of the hunters loading his gun; his ammunition consisted of paper cartridges, cut in the shape of an isosceles triangle, having a bullet at its lower extremity. With a couple of dozen of these cartridges, a piece of tinder, two flints, and a roll of tobacco, the traveller is prepared to perform a journey of ten or more leagues.

On the termination of our meal, we separated from N'Dumba Tembo, who returned by the road he came.



A TRAP.

He probably considered it beneath his dignity to visit, in company of so very mixed a crew, rhinoceros trophies and traps for panthers.

We, however, stayed on some time longer, desirous to see a little more of the mode of life and customs of these savages. Animated by this feeling we purposed entering one of the huts on the invitation of our hosts, but for the life of us could get no further than the hole which did duty for a door. A confused heap of stones, animal and fish-bones, offal and vegetable refuse blocked up the passage, and emitted so frightful an effluvium that it all

but turned our stomachs, and we gladly listened to the other proposal to make a trip into the environs.

As the path wound rapidly up the ravine we were in a few minutes clear of the fetid atmosphere of the bivouac, and inhaled with indescribable pleasure the balmy air, made delicious by the perfume of the many flowers, which had attracted us on our arrival.

The ground, as far as the eye could reach, exhibited broad undulations, like the long rolling billows of the Atlantic, for the most part clothed with trees, but occasionally bare. The extent of the prospect, the peculiar formation of the land, the rich patches of colour, and the soft, yet refreshing breeze, quite absorbed us, till we were aroused from our agreeable abstraction by loud cries from our attendants.

Looking in the direction where many fingers were pointed, we espied in the distance a vast herd of antelopes, which were too far off for any chance of a shot. If we could judge by the exclamations of "*malanca ! malanca !*" uttered by the natives they were the species known as the *Hyppotragus equinus*.

After a march of between three and four miles, we reached another encampment, similar, in every respect, to the one we had just left. Here we found the snare, but no *ongue* in it, as announced. The creature had perhaps heard of the white men's guns, and by making an extraordinary effort, had escaped during the night. We did, however, see the rhinoceros horn the old hunter had referred to; it was slightly curved and spongy, and measured nineteen inches in length. The owners wanted to sell it, as, in an indirect way, they gave us to understand, and we fancy they were rather astonished at our making no bid.

*Apropos* of the rhinoceros, our entertainers furnished us with such extraordinary information that we took



note of it, and record it here, but we of course do so with the utmost reserve. According to their account there are no fewer than five (some said six) varieties of the animal upon the African continent. Two black, with one or two horns, which of course are the *R. bicornis* and the *R. queitloa*; two dark grey, some of which possess two horns, one very large and another small, probably the *R. simus*; and two other smaller ones, quite unknown to us. Several of the hunters spoke of an ash-coloured beast with three horns, and a black one without any!

On our return to the first camp, we bade farewell to our hosts, who pressed us to remain longer to partake of a bowl of mead; and distributed among them, by way of *souvenir*, several of our cartridges, whose metallic envelopes were well-fitted to ornament their braided tresses, or tip their elongated chin-tufts.

The first object which saluted us when we got back to our *quilombo*, was a little boy, whom our people presented to us as the son of the fugitive interpreter, inhumanly abandoned by the father in his flight. The poor little fellow regarded us very wistfully, but it must be said without any appearance of fear; perhaps because he was too young to understand the danger to which he was exposed by this cruel desertion among strangers.

That the absorbing necessities of life in the interior should awaken in the mind of the native a covetous desire for everything he sees, and the consequent tendency to possess it by stealth, is intelligible enough; that the arid regions which he occasionally inhabits, and the absolute want of food should urge him on to cannibalism, is also intelligible, however horrible it may be to the civilized mind; that the brutal superstition of fetishism, aggravated by the monstrous practices of the