

LANDSCAPES OF THE SAHARA



FERNAND FOUREAU

Explorers' Camp at Maader Souf · 1890 ·
Albumen print, 12 × 17.6 cm

The nine expeditions that Fernand Foureau led to the Sahara between 1884 and 1896 provided further milestones in our knowledge of the great desert. Along with a wealth of other details, his trip to Tademaït in 1890 yielded precious information about the feasibility of a trans-Saharan railway line

from Ouargla to In Salah and the best route for this to take. The small team of just eight men carried with them trunks containing vital measuring equipment: chronometers, barometers, thermometers and a theodolite on a tripod (pictured in the photograph).



FERNAND FOUREAU

Black Hamada at Tadmait · 1890 · Albumen print, 1.24 × 17.1 cm

Accompanied by Chaamba guides and camel drivers, Foureau travelled through different landscapes: seas of sand, or *ergs*, made up of endless sand dunes; rocky, arid stretches of *reg*, or desert pavement; clayey areas of *maader* along stream beds; and *hamadas*, rocky plateaus whose very hard ground was extremely difficult for camels to negotiate. On 1 March 1890 Foureau reached the 'black' hamada on the southern side of Tadmait,

but he had to turn back because he did not have a large enough escort to be able to venture safely into the Tuareg territory of the Tidikelt and Ahnet regions. Foureau was one of the most highly honoured explorers of the Société de Géographie: he was awarded the Prix Erhard (1889), Prix Duveyrier (1895) and Prix Janssen (1896) for his work on the Sahara, and in 1901 he received its Grande Médaille d'Or for his trans-Saharan expedition.

ROMAN SITES IN ALGERIA



GUSTAVE DE COURCIVAL

Route from Batna to Biskra: El Kantara, Dachera [Village] of Khrekar, Southeast Side · 1861–62 · Lightly albumenized salt print, 16.1 × 20.9 cm

The marquis Stellaye Baigneux de Courcival was a cavalry officer in the 3rd Hunter Regiment, stationed in Algeria from September 1861 to July 1865. He was a member of the expeditionary force to the Souf oases in 1861 and 1862 and early on in the expedition produced one of the first in a series of photographic accounts of the northeast of Algeria, from Setif to the Hodna and Aures mountains, and up to the great oases at Souf and Touggourt. After returning to France he became a member of the Société Française de Photographie (in 1869) and of the Société de Géographie (in 1872). His work was exhibited at the International Geographical Congress held in Paris in 1875.

GUSTAVE DE COURCIVAL

Triumphal Arch at Timgad, near Batna, West Side · 1861–62 · Lightly albumenized salt print, 9.5 × 15 cm

Although the expeditionary force's primary goal was strategic and military – to gain control of the territory it travelled through – it also had a scientific purpose. Courcival in particular was commissioned to compile a record of the archaeological sites in southern Algeria. In his report he paid special attention to ancient Roman monuments such as the triumphal arches at Djémila and Timgad, seeking perhaps to give some legitimacy to France's 'civilizing mission' by showing how much it valued and cared for Algeria's classical heritage.

GUSTAVE DE COURCIVAL

Heads of Statues, Praetorium at Lambaesis, near Batna · 1861–62 · Lightly albumenized salt print, 13.5 × 20.4 cm

Courcival's photographic work was complex in its effects. While obviously documentary and scientific in approach, his photographs were also laced with literary and aesthetic allusions. With his keen interest in documenting the still visible traces of the Roman Empire's prestigious past, Courcival unconsciously drew an analogy with France's colonial aspirations, which were in full swing by the middle of the Second Empire.



AFRICA

PEOPLES OF THE NIGER REGION



ATTRIBUTED TO
PIERRE DELANNEAU

Griot from Senudebu · 1882 · Albumen print,
21.5 × 16.2 cm

Lieutenant Colonel Gustave Borgnis-Desbordes carried on the work of the military commander Joseph Gallieni in the Sudan, researching the feasibility of constructing a railway from Senegal to the Niger. He led three reconnaissance missions between 1880 and 1883 but ran up against troops belonging to the Dyula chief Samori Ture. Cavalry captain Pierre Delanneau, who was a member of these expeditions and was commissioned to map the upper Senegal River basin, was also a photographer and brought back a collection of images that were then given to the Ministry of the Navy and Colonies and the Société de Géographie.

ATTRIBUTED TO
PIERRE DELANNEAU

Women from Senudebu · 1882 · Albumen
print, 21.5 × 16 cm

The French chose Senudebu, in Bundu, a small state south of the Senegal River, as the site on which to build a fort in the Falémé valley. Delanneau mapped the road from Kayes to Bakel via Senudebu and knew the area well. The photographs he took of local people were carefully composed, and several were engraved and reproduced in the book *The Pioneers of Sudan* by Jacques Méniaud, published in 1931.





ATTRIBUTED TO
PIERRE DELANNEAU

Locals in Bamouk · 1882 · Albumen print,
16 × 20.8 cm

As they progressed towards the Niger River, the French expeditions noted the ethnic diversity of the people in the area, on whom they depended to form alliances, sign treaties and secure their advance into Sudan. Delanneau took several portraits of ambassadors and local chieftains, but he also photographed village inhabitants, often noting their 'ethnic type' and sometimes their profession: griot, pastor, warrior or hunter, for example.



Vue intérieure d'un tala



Murs extérieurs d'un tala



Entrée du tala de Léi



Une rue intérieure du tala



Cases haoussas à Léi



Entrée intérieure des cases



Les terrasses du tala

EXPEDITION TO DETERMINE THE CONGO-CAMEROON BORDER

OPPOSITE

EUGÈNE BRUSSAUX

Tata Houses and Huts at Léré · 1906-7 ·
Silver prints mounted on board, 54 × 40 cm

In 1906, commander Henri Moll was appointed to lead an expedition to determine the boundary between the French Congo and German Cameroon. The Société de Géographie sent Eugène Brussaax, a man with considerable experience in the field, to join the mission. He was station chief in the French Congo, had accompanied Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza on expeditions, and was passionate about Africa. He returned from the trip with a photographic account of great ethnographic value, collections of objects, and lists of vocabulary covering three different languages: Fula, Gbaya and Mundang. In these photographs he took the time to look in detail at the *tata* huts, terraces, circular granaries and perimeter towers in Léré, which together created the impression of a crenellated old town.

EUGÈNE BRUSSAUX

Mundang Winnower · 1906 ·
Gelatin silver print, 27.2 × 19.5 cm

Writing about the young woman in this picture, Brussaax commented: 'A sculptor could not hope for a better model than this woman winnowing millet, standing in an attitude of graceful freedom, tossing the two wide calabashes rhythmically up and down in the air with the lightness and ease that come from long practice, making them seem no heavier in her nimble hands than a palm-leaf fan resting in the fingers of a Tanagra figurine.' The photograph was reproduced in *L'illustration* in 1907 and prompted the sculptor Ernest Guilbert to make a figure from it, which was cast in bronze by the Barbedienne foundry. Brussaax subsequently filed – and won – a piracy suit against Guilbert, clearly establishing that artistic copyright applied also to photography.



OVERLEAF

EUGÈNE BRUSSAUX

Mundang Horsemen · 1906 ·
Gelatin silver print, 23 × 36 cm

The members of the Moll mission were fascinated by the horse races that the Mundang held, which made them think of medieval jousting. Their chests bound with strips of metal and wearing tall headdresses with flying plumes, the men would parade around on

horses decked with harnesses and caparisons, brandishing assegais for effect. All these photographs were collected into an album and presented, richly bound, to the mission's two patrons, German Emperor Wilhelm II and the French president Armand Fallières.





PORTRAITS OF ETHIOPIA



ÉDOUARD JOSEPH BIDAULT
DE GLATIGNÉ

Unloading a Caravan, Jaldessa · c. 1888 ·
Albumen print, 22.3 × 28 cm

In 1878, Édouard Joseph Bidault de Glatigné moved to Aden, Yemen, where he opened a photography studio. He stayed there for ten years, undertaking a trip to Harari Region in 1888, a few months before he returned to France. Jaldessa, on the border between Oromo and Somali territory, was where camel drivers turned back and headed for home, leaving local drivers to take over and transport their loads the rest of the way to Harar.

ÉDOUARD JOSEPH BIDAULT
DE GLATIGNÉ

Danakil Warriors from the Bita Tribe, Erer ·
c. 1888 · Albumen print, 28.4 × 22.9 cm

At the village of Erer, the Issa, Oromo and Afar (Danakil) tribes crossed paths. As such it was a very dangerous area, with frequent territorial disputes and armed conflicts, and travellers often had to obtain a permit to pass through it. Travellers had to be armed and be accompanied by guides – even though, as the explorer Jules Borelli made clear, the guides themselves ‘were all warriors who had killed several men’, adding that ‘on top of the usual ornaments, they wound bands of beef or sheep fat around their necks and chests, which gave off a nauseating smell.’



ÉDOUARD JOSEPH BIDAULT
DE GLATIGNÉ

Galla [Oromo] Woman · c. 1888 · Albumen
print, 28 × 22.4 cm

During his trip to Harari Region, Bidault de Glatigné spent several months staying with the poet Arthur Rimbaud, who wrote in his letters of his friend ‘wandering through the Harari mountains taking photographs’. Rimbaud was also interested in photography and dreamed of producing a book on the Oromo area and presenting it to the Société de Géographie. The project was never realized, but the remarkable set of photographs that Bidault de Glatigné produced went some way to making the poet’s dreams a reality.

