

About Discrepancies In The Rock Paintings Of Tassili N'ajjer Between Taken Paintings Statements And Originals

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ABSTRACT

Through this topic, the two researchers are trying to draw the attention of the elite interested in Tassilian rock art as well as students, to a group of scientific errors, which is group of contemporary researchers they do not belong to the colonial stage, fell into it, as their books are now considered references to which we return.

These are errors mainly related to changing the name of the original site of the rock scene, meaning that the same scene is attributed to a different site every time, or that one scene is broken up into several scenes, each of which is in turn attributed to a different site.

We also sometimes find archaeological taken paintings statements that are incomplete in comparison with the original scenes or do not match them completely.

Or the same researcher will change the name of the site to which the scene is attributed from one author to another.

Through this topic, we are not questioning the credibility of these researchers or their scientific abilities, but rather we are only trying to remove the confusion about these paradoxes.

Keywords: Sahara; Tassili n'Ajjer; GPS; rock art; Sefar; Jabbaren

Introduction

Since the revelation of the rock art of Tassili n'Ajjer by Lieutenant Brenans in 1933, several studies have been devoted to it, which have contributed to making this Saharan prehistoric art known, including: The painted rocks of Tassili-n-Ajjer d 'Henri Breuil in 1952 (based on taken paintings statements from Brenans, with the collaboration of Henri Lhote) and the two works of Henri Lhote.

Discovering the frescoes of Tassili (Arthaud, 1958) and Towards other Tassilis (Arthaud, 1976). We can also cite: the work of the ethnologist Yolande Tschudi The rock paintings of Tassili n'Ajjer (1956) and, by Jean Dominique Lajoux, Wonders of Tassili n'Ajjer (Le Chêne, 1962) and Tassili n'Ajjer, art rock art of the prehistoric Sahara (Le Chêne 1976), which constitute reference works for students and researchers. In some of the publications that followed, such as that of Malika Hachid: Le Tassili des Ajjer, Aux sources de l'Afrique 50 centuries avant les pyramides (1998), there appeared criticism of the methods used by Lhote for the taken paintings statements – sponge wetting and calque application - a technique taught by Breuil (Lajoux, 2012, p. 49), in order to make scenes more visible. By this process, it was found that paintings were irreversibly altered. Furthermore, the quality of these taken paintings statements themselves has been called into question, notably those published by Breuil based on documents provided by Brenans, as well as those by Lhote, whose fidelity to the original is not constant and sometimes from an artist's vision more than from a faithful transcription. Breuil also had the habit of improving the graphics that seemed incomplete to him.

Malika Hachid described these taken paintings statements as "not conforming to scientific standards", and spoke of "poetic restitutions". (Hachid 1998, p. 187).

She also showed that there was an aesthetic choice, to show the most beautiful scenes, while passing over other less spectacular ones in silence and, more serious, that there could be an arbitrary assembly of scenes belonging

to different panels of the same station, when it was not at distant stations (fig. 01), (Hachid M, 1998, fig. 268, p. 188)



Figure 01: One of Henri Lhote's taken paintings of a scene from Eheren but the entire right part of which is located in Tissoukai (Sahara. 10 000 Years between pasture and desert, s.d., pp. 430-431 instead of 250-251).

In addition to these taken paintings statements not conforming to the originals, there were also false or apocryphal ones, made without Lhote's knowledge, and revealed by Dominique Lajoux in *Murs d'images* (2012), relating for example the history of the famous scene "bird-headed goddesses" (Lajoux, 2012, p. 47-48) or even the reproduction of the Tamrit antelopes (Lajoux, 2012, p.68) (Fig. 02 and 03).



Fig. 02: *The headed goddesses Bird* (Lhote, 1973, Pl III)

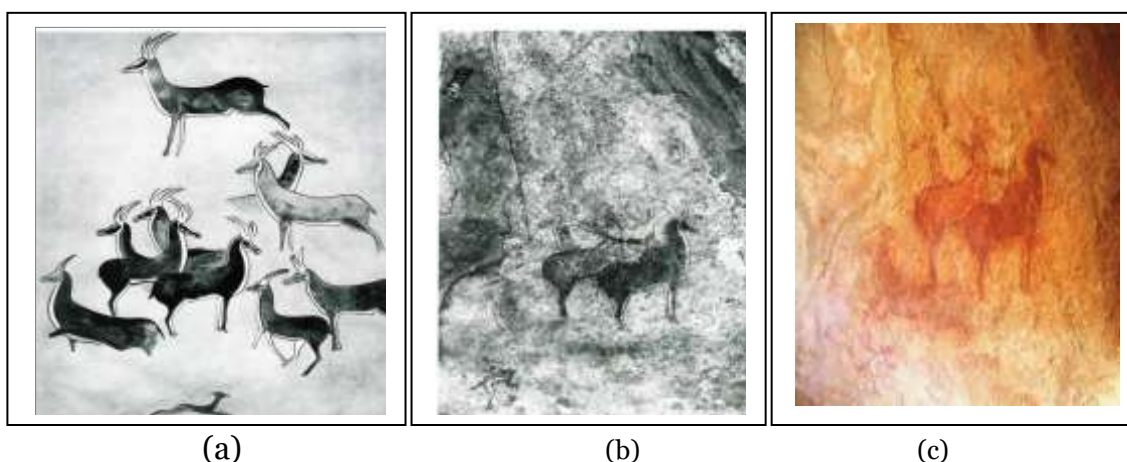


Fig. 03: "a" *The horse antelopes of Tamrit according to Lhote's taken paintings statements* (Lhote, 1973, Fig 14), "b" *the photo of the Antelopes taken in 1956 which contradicts the survey* (Lajoux, 2012, p 68), "c" *This photo taken in 2004 shows us that this scene has not changed since 1956. (C.GPS: 24°-38-137 / 9° 38 503).*

However, despite these criticisms making certain publications suspect, we note that authors, without having seen the scenes or compared the sources, have taken up many of these taken paintings statements and made them a basis for study in their works. This is the case of Umberto Sansoni in *Le più antiche pitture del Sahara. L'arte delle Teste Rotonde*, where he has took up the scene of the bird-headed goddesses (Fig. 02) to show the Egyptian influence on Tassilian rock art (Sansoni, 1994, fig. 205 and 206 p.261). There would be less harm if Lhote was the only one to have flouted reality and contributed to spreading errors.

Because other authors have acted in the same way, as we have verified by consulting the works. Thus of Yolande Tschudi in the book already cited, where we find an incomplete taken paintings statements (fig.4) of a scene from In Itinen or Titrans n'Elias (Tschudi, 1956, p.45, pl. VIII), which was taken up by Jean-Loïc Le Quellec in *Symbolism in Saharan rock art* (1993, fig 46-21, p. 184). Still at from Tschudi, another taken paintings statements where we can see a couple in coitus (Tschudi Y, 1956, fig. 24), but there must have been a herd of cattle on the left part of the scene and which the author omitted to include (fig.5).

These are not the only examples. We find other incomplete taken paintings statements in Sansoni's work cited above: he forgot the entire left part of a scene from Sefar (Sansoni, fig. 69 p.124) (fig. 7); another taken paintings statements by Timenzounine (fig. 204) does not correspond to the original scene (Fig. 8), but it was reproduced in one of his articles published in the AARS notebooks (Sansoni U, 2002, fig 11, p.223)

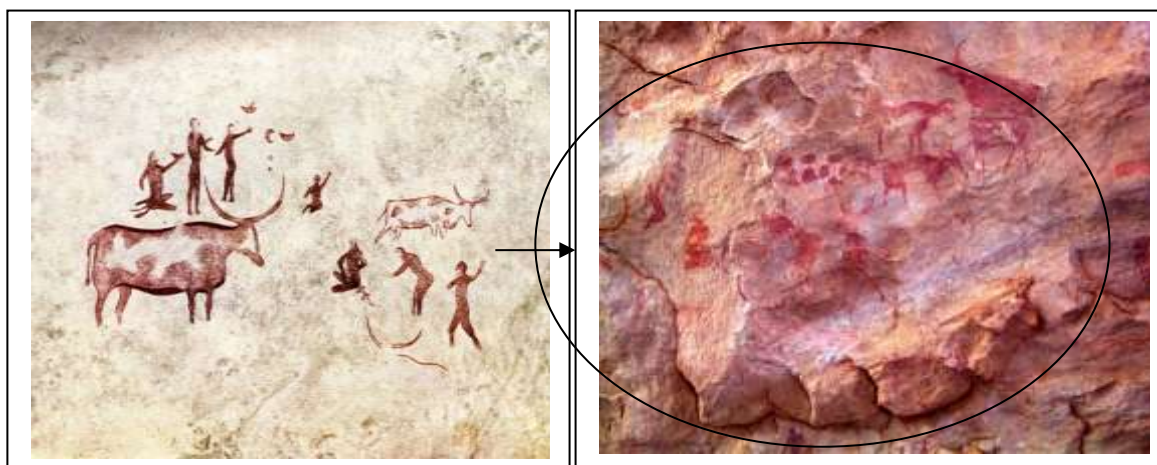


Fig. 4 We clearly notice by comparing the photograph and the taken paintings statements that it have not been faithfully represented the details of this scene from In-Itinen (C.GPS: 24-38-932/9°-40-651).

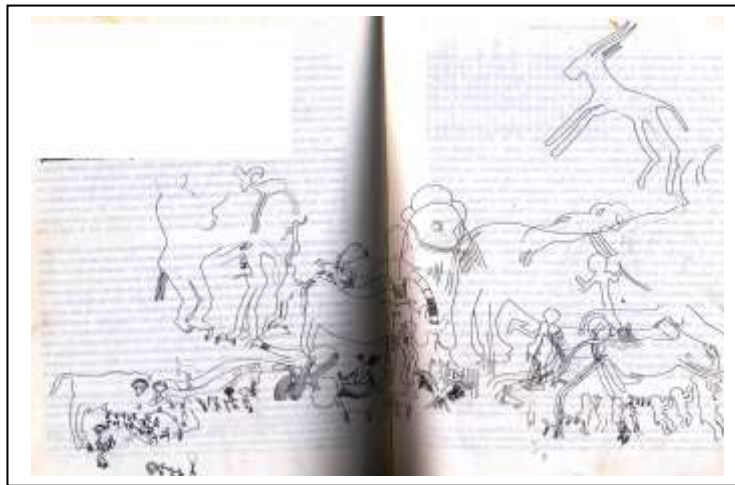


Fig.5: (a), taken paintings statements of a scene of coitus in In-Itinen according to Y.Tschudi,(b), photograph of the same scene, we can clearly see that the author omitted to take into account the herd of cattle. (C.GPS: 24-38-932/9°-40-651).

In the list of anomalies, there is still that of changes in position of certain Tassili scenes when they pass from one author to another, adding to the confusion. We will cite a few examples. Malika Hachid, in her work, where she rightly criticizes Lhote, does not herself escape criticism, when she situate one of the certified scenes of Sefar (Fig.6) in the site of Tin-Tekelt (Hachid M ,fig 320, p. 214). Another scene from the same site, where we can see a woman with her child riding an ox (Hachid M, fig. 380, p. 248) was moved by Mr. Hachid to Eheren, while in return, she publishes two other portions of the same fresco (Hachid M, fig. 395, p254. and fig.368, p. 243) in the same work and located them in Sefar??? And at this same site which is Sefar, the author adds another scene



(Fig. 10, the well-known one of the archer of Jabbaren (Hachid M, Fig. 331 p 223).



(a)



(b)

Fig. 7: (a): taken painting statement of the Sefar scene according to U.Sansoni, (b): photograph of the scene where the missing left part is indicated on the statement. (C.GPS: 24-39-291/9°-44-203).

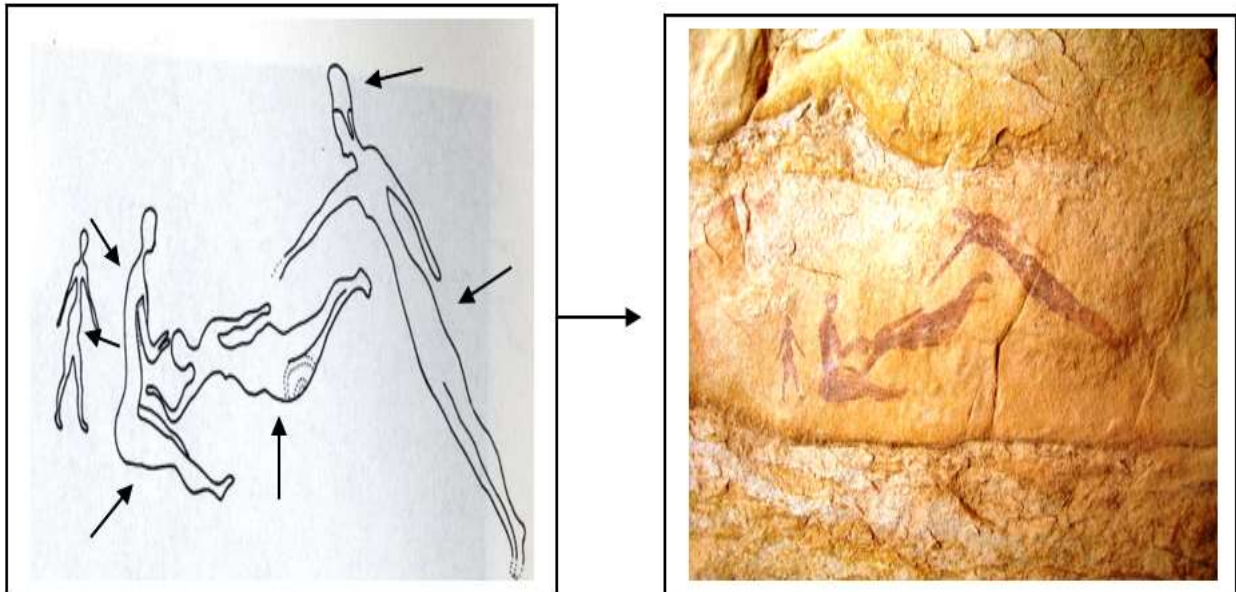
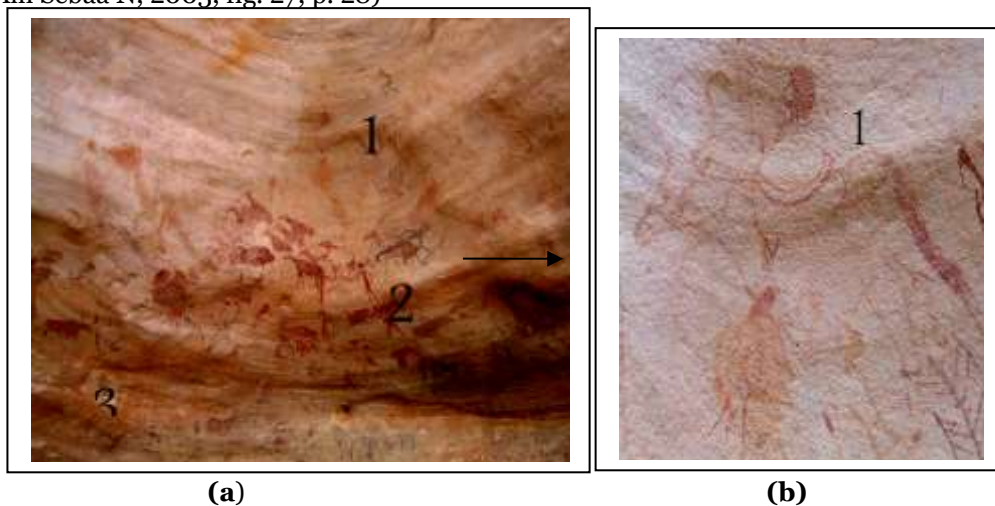


Fig. 8: *The taken statement of this scene from Timenzouzine does not correspond totally to the photograph. (24°-37-488/ 9°-39-860).*

In a second work *The first Berbers: between Mediterranean, Tassili and Nil* (Édisud, 2000) Malika Hachid seems to insist on the fact that the scene of the woman on the ox of Sefar is located in Eheren (Hachid, 2000, fig. 72, p. 60) and, for another scene from Oued Touhami (Fig.11) which she places at Oued Bouhedien, which is in southern Tadrart (Hachid M.fig.147, p 117). This divergence manifests itself once again between Malika Hachid who positions another rock art painting board published in the above-mentioned book (Fig.12) in In-Eddoune (Hachid M, 2000, fig 71, p. 72) and between Alain Sèbe the author of the book *Tikatoutine: 6000 years of Saharan rock art*, in which he situate the same board at Tissalatine.

We also notice that this author, who is Alain Sèbe, in turn presents differences in the positioning of certain frescoes in the same book, such as the painting of In-Oughraben (Agba Tafelalet) (Fig.13) which we found inadvertently in Foua-Foua. Another cultural scene that Aumassip Ginette positioned at Tin Teferiest (Fig. 14) in one of his articles (Aumassip G, 1997, p. 57) and which we find moved to Ozan-Eharé by Lajoux in his book "image walls". (Lajoux J-D, 2012, p 281). Karl Heinz Striedter published in 1984 a work entitled (*Felsbilder der Sahara*) in which the scene of the ox at the hydra (Fig.15) which is located in Jabbaren, was moved to Séfar (fig. 105) and that Ain Sebaa reproduced, in full, in his article published on the occasion of the year of Algeria in France (Ain Sebaa N, 2003, fig. 27, p. 28)



(a)

(b)



(c)

Fig. 9: Scenes (a, b and c) are part of the same Sefar fresco.
(C.GPS: 24-39-848/9°-44-063).



Fig.10: Jabbaren's archer



Fig.11: Oued Touhami
(C.GPS: 24°-39-596/9°-42-209)



Fig.12: this image is the subject of difference between Malika Hachid who places it in In-Eddoune and between Alain Sèbe who positions it in Tissalatine

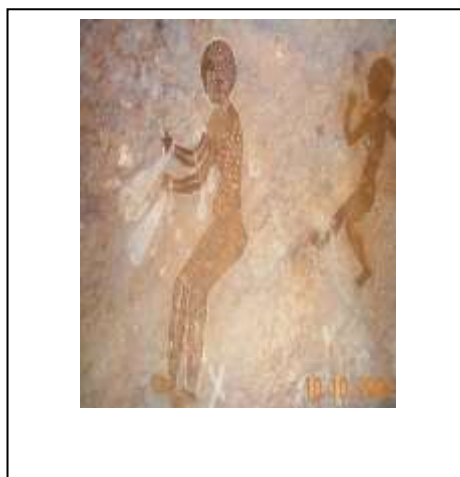


Fig.13: painting of *In Oughraben* that the author Alain Sèbe placed in *Foua-Foua*).



Fig.14: Agriculture scene
(According to Aumassip and Striedter)



Fig.15: ox at hydra (*Jabbaren*)

In another article by Denis Vialou “Prehistoric cave art between universality and diversity”, still on the occasion of the year of Algeria in France (in Algeria, two million years of history: art of origins, 2003), a scene from Tin Tazarift, (Fig. 16) has been situated in Sefar (the photo was taken by Beddiaf M, ex-director of OPNT fig. 2,p.46)



Fig.16 : *The row boat of Tin Tazarift*

Le Corre Florence in an article published in the works of L'A.P.E.M.O. of 1984, took from one of Striedter's works, but without citing a bibliographical reference, "the scene of the lady with the globule" by Tan Zoumaitek (Fig.17) which was moved to Tin Tazarift (Le Corre F, 1984. pl XXIX, fig.1).



Fig.17: *Lady with globules by Tan Zoumaitek. (C GPS: 24°-38-790/ 09°-38-508)*

In his latest book *Mur d'images*, we note that Lajoux has situated the large scene of Tin Aboteka's Negroid Hunters in Sefar (Lajoux J-D, 2012.p, 194) while in the previous edition *Merveilles du Tassili* from 1962, the same scene is placed in its original site (Lajoux J D, 1962. P, 166). (Fig.18); why this change? Another scene from Jabbaren, in the same work, was moved to Sefar, adding to the confusion (Lajoux J-D. 2012, p. 120) (Fig. 19). To finish with these few examples, Abdelaziz Ferrah, in "The Algeria, ancient civilizations of the Sahara", reproduced two scenes, one from Tin Tazarift (Fig.20) (fig. 220, p.201) and the another from Timenzouzine (Fig.21) (fig 199 p 190) but which he has situated in Sefar.



Fig.18: *The Great Hunter of Tin Aboteka* **Fig.19:** *Agriculture scene? (Jabbaren)*



Fig.20: Pastoral scene at Tin-Tazarift

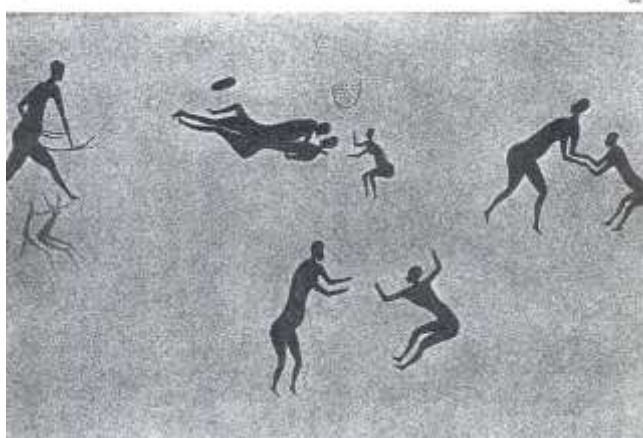


Fig.21: Games of the love (Timenzouzine)

Conclusion:

The desired aim of this note is not to discredit the work of other researchers, but to emphasize the existence of these inaccuracies, which harm the quality of publications and lead to misunderstandings result in to errors of interpretation even to misinterpretation.

What is the solution ? Having become aware of these faults or thoughtlessness, its must to strive for greater vigilance, through careful rereading, crossed if possible, and a return to the sources.

The creation of a computerized database certified by competent authors should contribute to avoid this type of error.

As for reading rock art images, must have to start from excellent quality cliches photos and be helped by the computer processing of images, as permitted by the Destrech software which allows the document to be processed in such a way as to make appear what is at the limit of the visible. So, will be able to enrich the documentation and reduce the risk of error.

For scene and sites localization, we have geolocation systems, called GPS- included in some perfected cameras - which allow the scenes to be very precisely located, a location that could be coupled with established site plans using a GPS logger coupled with an autonomous mapping system , (<http://pichotjm.free.fr/Photos/GPS/GPS.html>).

The naming of sites should be based on local toponymy, which would become definitive reference. That supposes a complete and multidisciplinary review of Saharan rock art sites, a long-term work which cannot have a chance to succeed with the current political conditions.

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