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THE EARLIEST FIGURES OF THE BLAAUWBOK, *HIPPOTRAGUS LEUCOPHAEUS* (PALLAS, 1766) AND OF THE GREATER KUDU, *TRAGELAPHUS STREPSICEROS* (PALLAS, 1766)

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With 2 plates

INTRODUCTION

A recent study of the lectotype specimen of the Blaauwbok (Husson & Holthuis, 1969) had awakened our interest in this South African Antelope, which became extinct around 1800. One of us got the chance to procure a copy of the 1727 Dutch edition of Peter Kolb's account of Cape of Good Hope, a work containing the first description of the Blaauwbok. The study of this edition of Kolb's work lead to some interesting discoveries concerning the first published figures of the Blaauwbok and the Greater Kudu, which are discussed below.

Hippotragus leucophaeus (Pallas, 1766), the Blaauwbok

Erna Mohr (1967), in her interesting monographic account of the Blaauwbok, showed that Peter Kolb's account of the Cape of Good Hope was the first published source dealing with the animal and its occurrence in the Cape region. Kolb's description published in the original (1719) German edition was cited in full by Mohr (1967: 9-11, fig. 1), who at the same time reproduced Kolb's figure, which bears the legend "Vorstellung eines blauen Bockes". Mohr (1967: 13, 14) remarked that "den von Kolb abgebildeten Blaubock . . . allerdings auch ziemlich wunderlich aussieht . . . Das stehend, nach rechts gerichtete Tier ist im ganzen einheitlich grau gehalten, doch sind wie bei einem schwarzbunten Rind je ein schmaler heller Gurt hinter den Vorderläufen, ein Reif vor den Hinterläufen gelegt, und ein dritter Ring umfasst den Halsansatz. Der Nasenrücken hat vor der Stirn bis zum Rhinarium eine durchgehende schmale Blässe. Die Hörner sind nur sehr schmal,

verlaufen wie bei der Beisa, dem Gemsbock, *Oryx gazella* L., ohne jede Krümmung, leicht divergierend in glatter Fortsetzung der Stirn und sind nur im untern Viertel geringelt. — Falsch ist der lange Kinnbart, ebenso der kurze Ziegenschwanz, der von der Wurzel an lang behaart ist wie der eines Hauspferdes". Notwithstanding the fact that the figure in so many respects is incorrect, Mohr evidently did not doubt that what Kolb had figured was indeed the Blaauwbok. In her opinion the figure was not made on the spot, but probably only from memory, and is more or less a reconstruction from notes and memory. Mohr (1967: 13) also wondered why both Pallas (1766) and Gmelin (1789), when referring to Kolb's description of the Blaauwbok, ignored his illustration.

In the copy of the Dutch edition of Kolb's book (Kolb, 1727) that we consulted, we found that the illustrations of the German edition were not copied, but changed and embellished. Kolb's (1719) half page figure "eines blauen Bockes" is given a full page in the Dutch edition (see pl. 2) and has the inscription "Een Vreemde Bok" (= a strange or foreign buck), it is inserted opposite p. 170 and evidently does not pertain to the Blaauwbok but to the animal indicated as "Bok die geen naam heeft" (the buck without a name). Kolb's description of the latter checks quite well with the figure. Therefore we presumed that in the original German edition a mistake was made and that Kolb's figure "eines blauen Bockes" carried that inscription in error. Thereupon we consulted a copy of the original 1719 German edition of Kolb's work in the Leiden University library. To our great surprise we found that in this copy pl. 2 fig. 2 (opp. p. 140), although giving almost the exact figure reproduced by Mohr carried the inscription "Vorstellung eines frembden Bockes" (see pl. 1). The word "frembden" had the letters placed closer together than in the other words, and there can be little doubt that this word was added later to replace the word "blauen". Otherwise the figures are exactly the same, both bearing in the upper right hand corner the inscription "Fig. 2 pag. 143". Turning to p. 143 one finds that the first half of the first column deals with "Der Bock der keinen Namen", the text of which starts at the end of the second column of p. 142 and there also gives the reference "Besiehe Tab. II fig. 2". It is quite clear therefore that Kolb's figure refers to the "unnamed buck" and that in [part of] the original edition it was erroneously indicated as being of a Blaauwbok. The error must have been discovered (and corrected) after some copies had already been printed, so that there are two versions (an uncorrected and a corrected) of this edition. Mohr had a copy of the uncorrected edition, the one at the Leiden University library belonging to the corrected edition. It is now also clear why Pallas (1766: 4), who cited Kolb's Dutch edition, and Gmelin (1789: 182), who may

have used the corrected German edition, did not cite Kolb's pl. 2 fig. 2 under the Blaauwbok.

Now that Kolb's figure is not that of a Blaauwbok, the first published figure of the species is the one of a mutilated horn published by Buffon (1764: 271, pl. 31 fig. 6) as "Une corne de tzeiran", the origin of which is not known. Allamand (1778: 151, 152) commented upon this horn and referred it to the Blaauwbok, which identification was accepted by Mohr (1967: 74, fig. 50).

The second figure of the species is by Pennant (1771: 24, fig. 13) who published a sketch of the head of the Blaauwbok, which likewise has been reproduced by Mohr (1967: 19, fig. 10).

The first published figure of the whole animal is the one by Allamand (1778: 151, pl.), based on the type specimen which is still extant and at present held by the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie. This same figure has been republished by Allamand (1784) and is reproduced by Mohr (1967: 35, fig. 17), by Husson & Holthuis (1969: 149, pl. 3) and by Nissen (1971: 7, pl. 2 fig. a). Variants of this plate were published by Buffon (1782: 168-173, pl. 20), Schreber (1785: pl. 278) and Shaw (1801: 355, pl. 195).

So far, therefore, only three original figures of the Blaauwbok are known to have been published in the 18th century.

Tragelaphus strepsiceros (Pallas, 1766), the Greater Kudu

Another problem is posed by the identity of the species figured by Kolb (1719, pl. 2 fig. 2) as "Vorstellung eines blauen Bockes" or "Vorstellung eines frembden Bockes". The figure in Kolb's Dutch edition (1727, plate opposite p. 170) shows the animal in mirror image, facing left. The legs are somewhat heavier, but otherwise the copy is exact; the background in this edition is drawn by J. Wandelaar and is entirely different from that in the original. The original (Kolb, 1719: 142-143) description of this "Bock der keinen Namen" is as follows: "Es ist allhier noch ein Bock anzutreffen, welchem weder die Europäische Einwohner, noch auch die Hottentotten einen besondern Namen zu geben wissen weil keiner von beyden Nationen weiss unter welche Sorte er eigentlich solte gehörn, oder was vor ein Name ihm am füglichen zukäme. Ich will aber doch desselben Gestalt, Grösse, und äusserliches Ansehen so viel möglich beschreiben, und [p. 143:] und Ihn die Benennung anheim stellen.

Er ist etwas grösser als ein Hirsch, hat einen sehr schönen, nach dem Leibe und der Länge wohl-proportionirten Kopff, darauf ungefehr 3. Schuh hohe, runde, glatte, am Ende gleich- und spitzig zulauffende gerade Hörner stehen, die oben etwan 2. Schuh weit von einander entfernet seyn. Der Barth

unter dem Ober-Maul ist ziemlich lang, und mit den Haaren der Haut gleichfärbig, graulicht, doch etwas röthlicht untermänget. Über den gantzen Rückgrad lauffet ein weisser Strich, welcher fornem auf der Stirn, die weiss ist, anfänget, und biss an den Schwantz fortwähret. Über den vördern und hintern Leib, das ist: über die Schulter Blätter und Hinter-Backen, ingleichen über den hohlen Leib herunter, lauffen eben dergleichen weisse Striche in gerader Linie herab, welche mit dem über dem Rückgrad drey weisse Creutze machen. Der Bauch ist unten weisslichter, als das übrige des Leibes. Die Beine sind zwar ziemlich hoch, doch halten sie mit dem Leibe eine gar geschickter Proportion, weil derselbe auch gross und ziemlich lang ist, also dass er in beyden noch etwas einen Hirschen übertrifft.

Das Fleisch von diesen Böcken ist gar guten Geschmacks, und übertrifft an Delicatesse das Europäische Hirschen-Fleisch. Doch findet man sie in solcher Menge bey weiten nicht, als die bunden, blauen oder andere Böcke. Das weibliche Geschlecht dieser Böcke ist so gar gross nicht als das männliche, hat auch gantz und gar keine Hörner auf dem Kopffe, unerachtet es sonst so wol nach der äusserlichen Gestalt als in Ansehung des guten Geschmacks des Fleisches, dem männlichen in allen Stücken gleich kommet".

Kolb's figure is so crude and unnatural that Mohr probably is right in presuming that the figure has not been made on the spot, but much later, and perhaps was modelled after the description, possibly not by Kolb himself. It seems that the description, which evidently was made after an actual specimen, is more reliable than the figure. It is most likely that the animal described and figured by Kolb is a Greater Kudu, *Tragelaphus strepsiceros* (Pallas). That species has

- (1) the right size (about as large as a deer = *Cervus elaphus* L.);
- (2) the horns about 40 inches long with the "distance between the tips varying, irrespective of the length, from about 24 to nearly 40 inches" (Sclater & Thomas, 1900: 176), agreeing well with a length of 3 feet (= 36 inches) and a spread of 2 feet (24 inches) as described by Kolb;
- (3) a mane on the throat in the males, agreeing with Kolb's 'beard below the upper jaw';
- (4) the "general colour of body varying from reddish to pale slaty bluish grey" (Sclater & Thomas, 1900: 176), which agrees well with Kolb's 'uniform greyish, slightly mixed with reddish';
- (5) the dorsal mane passing "from the occiput, backwards along the nape, over the withers and down the spine to the root of the tail", "brown on the neck and shoulders, white along the back" (Sclater & Thomas, 1900: 176). Kolb described it as a 'white stripe which extends over the entire spine, starting from the forehead which is white, and ending at the tail'; he did not indicate the anterior part as brown, however;

(6) the "sides of the body and hind-quarters marked with white stripes, which vary in number from about four in the northern forms to about nine or ten in the southern (Sclater & Thomas, 1900: 176). Kolb described 3 of such transverse white lines: one over the shoulders, one over the hindquarters and one over the middle of the body. This would make Kolb's animal more like the northern form, but he must definitely have seen the southern;

(7) the females without horns, which also is a point stressed by Kolb in his description;

(8) a well proportioned body. Sclater & Thomas (1900: 177) emphasized that the species is one of the "finest of the whole long series of African Antelopes" and that it "surpasses its rival [the Sable Antelope] in elegance and appearance". Kolb at two points in his description stresses the well proportioned shape of head and body of his species.

Kolb's description, of course, is not entirely without flaws and one wonders why the spiral curvature of the horns is not mentioned by him. His statement that the horns are straight may be intended to indicate that they are not curved back as in the Blaauwbok, but one would have expected that the peculiar torsion of the horns would not have escaped Kolb's attention. Neither is the colour of the anterior part of the dorsal mane correct, as stated above, while also the number of side stripes seems rather low. Also his statement that the belly is paler than the rest is not entirely correct as according to Sclater & Thomas (1900: 176) the belly is "greyish, blacker in the middle". Nothing is said by Kolb about the white colour pattern on the face unless his statement that the forehead is white can be taken as such.

These discrepancies are so few and minor in comparison with the points of agreement, while the differences with other species are still more numerous, that we confidently may identify Kolb's 'Buck without a Name' as the Greater Kudu. It is interesting in this respect that Sclater & Thomas (1900: 177) stated: "Although the Kudu was certainly known to Kolben and other visitors to the Cape in early days, Buffon was the first writer to give us a good account of it". We can say now that Kolb actually was the first author to give an account of the species, although his illustration is poor. Buffon (1764: 303, 304), when describing the Kudu, which he named "Le Condoma", and of which he only had a skull (Buffon, 1764, pl. 39 fig. 1), curiously enough referred to Kolb's description of the unnamed buck and stated that the characters that Kolb gave of the horns "nous paroissent convenir parfaitement à l'animal dont il est ici question". It is strange that the description of the horns, which we consider the least accurate part of Kolb's description of the Kudu, was sufficient for Buffon to recognize it as a Kudu.

Allamand (1778: 146) provided a very satisfactory description and figure of the Kudu based on living and dead specimens. He also discussed Kolb's animal, taking both the description and figure into account and, though agreeing that the species had much in common with the Kudu (having the same size, the same grey colour, a beard and white stripes), he pointed out that it showed many differences and he enumerated the small number of stripes and their position, the apparent absence of white spots below the eye, but especially the shape of the horns; practically all these differences are based on Kolb's figure.

Besides the one by Buffon two figures of the Kudu earlier than that of Allamand have been published:

(1) The first of these is even older than Buffon's (1764) figure of the Kudu skull. It was published by Houttuyn (1762: 267, pl. 26) and shows the skull and a complete animal; in both the horns are well represented, but the figure of the entire animal does not at all show the peculiar colour pattern.

(2) Statius Müller (1767) in Knorr's *Deliciae Naturae Selectae* figured a frontal view of the head of the Kudu in pl. KV, and the entire animal as pl. KXI, both plates are in colour and quite well executed.

Several more figures of the Kudu have been published in the 18th century, but Kolb's is the first, be it not the best.

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Africanischen Vorgebürges der Guten Hofnung, worinnen in dreyen Theilen abgehandelt wird, wie es heut zu Tage, nach seiner Situation und Eigenschaft aussiehet; ingleichen was ein Natur-Forscher in den dreyen Reichen der Natur daselbst findet und antrifft: wie nicht weniger, was die eigenen Einwohner die Hottentotten, vor seltsame Sitten und Gebräuche haben: und endlich alles, was die Europaeischen daselbst gestifteten Colonien anbetriefft. Mit angefügter genugsamer Nachricht, wie es auf des Auctoris Hinein- und Heraus-Reise zugegangen; auch was sich Zeit seiner langen Anwesenheit, an diesem Vorgebürge merckwürdiges ereignet hat. Nebst noch vielen andern curieusen und bisshero unbekandt-gewesenen Erzehlungen, mit wahrhafter Feder ausführlich entworfen: auch mit nöthigen Kupfern gezieret, und einem doppelten Register versehen: (17), 1-846, (76), frontispiece, pls. B-Z. (The plates in this edition not only are continuously lettered B to Z (only J and U are not represented), but also are numbered: pls. B to N are numbered I to XII respectively, pl. Q has received the number XIII, pls. P and R both are numbered XIV, pls. S to Y are numbered XV to XX respectively, while pls. O and Z have no numbers).

- , 1727. Naaukeurige en uitvoerige beschryving van de Kaap de Goede Hoop, behelzende een zeer omstandig verhaal van den tegenwoordigen toestand van dat vermaarde gewest, deszelfs gelegenheit, haven, sterkte, regerings-vorm, uitgestrektheit, en onlangs ontdekte aanleggende landen; nevens een geleerde beschryving van het klimaat en aart van dat landschap; van deszelfs dieren, visschen, vogelen, planten, kruiden; mitsgaders verscheide wonderen der natuur, daar te lande ontdekt; waar by nog komt, een zeer nette en uit eige ondervinding opgemaakte beschryving van den oorsprong der hottentotten: vervattende en merkwaardig bericht van derzelter tale, godsdienst, levenswyze, zeldzame overleveringen, gewoonten, maniere van trouwen, besnydenis, opvoeding; als mede veele andere kurieuse waarnemingen aangaande de zeden van die natie; den toestand van die colonie en europeaanse inwoners: in gene andere beschryving van dit gewest te vinden. Alles, gedurende een lang verblyf aan de gemelde Kaap, na waarheit beschreven, 1: (14), 1-529, 1 frontispiece, 1 portrait, 6 maps, 13 pls. (The name of the author is given on the title-page as P. Kolbe; Mohr has pointed out that P. Kolb is the correct name).
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Plate 1

Facsimile of plate II (= plate C) of the corrected 1719 German edition of Kolb's "Caput Bonae Spei hodiernum", after the copy in the possession of the University Library, Leiden.



Plate 2

Facsimile of the plate opposite p. 170 (= fifth plate) of the 1727 Dutch edition of Kolb's description of Cape of Good Hope, after the copy in the library of L. B. Holthuis.