

HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE QUAGGA

[*Equus quagga* Gmelin, 1788; Mammalia, Perissodactyla]

COMPRISING SOME REMARKS ON BUFFON-EDITIONS PUBLISHED IN HOLLAND

by

P. TUIJN

(*Artis-Bibliotheek, University of Amsterdam*)

Acknowledgements. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help of Mr. M. D. Haga (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Print Room), who suggested the subject, had the photographs of the Gordon-drawing prepared and provided me with many important details. For informations and kind assistance I am indebted to Miss A. J. Versprille (Municipal Archives, Leyden) and the following gentlemen: P. J. H. van Bree (Zoological Museum, University of Amsterdam), W. F. del Campo Hartman (Central Bureau for Genealogy, the Hague), G. J. van Ojen (H.Q. General Staff, dept. Military History, the Hague), M. P. H. Roessingh (State Archives, the Hague) and W. Zondervan (Regional Archives "De Liemers en Doesburg", Doesburg).

THE GORDON-ATLAS

As our knowledge of extinct mammals is rather poor, it seems worthwhile to publish the following notes on the Quagga.

Mr. Haga was so kind as to call my attention to the 6 volumes of bound watercolour-drawings in the Print Room at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam known as the Gordon-Atlas. It consists of 456 drawings by or executed at the indications of Robert Jacob Gordon (see Note I) during expeditions into the interior of South Africa starting from the Cape of Good Hope in the years 1773-1790. Gordon's widow took the drawings with her to England.

BRITTEN (1914) published an article on the history of the Gordon-Atlas, which shows that the whereabouts of the collection are unknown between 1797-1802 (see also DAWSON, 1958, p. 490, 491; GODÉE MOLSBERGEN, 1914).

The collection comprises maps, topographical views, plants, natives, quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, fishes and insects (see Note VI). Some of the drawings bear descriptive notes in Dutch by Gordon. So does the one of the Quagga (no. 190; see figs. 1 and 2; see Note

VII). A rather free English translation of these notes follows here.

Text on the front of the Quagga drawing (fig. 1): "Height in front 1 'Maate' and $7\frac{1}{2}$ 'duimen' (88.4 cm, see remark below) ----- at the back 1 'Maate' and 8 'duimen' (89.7 cm).

Length from head to tail 1 'Maate' and 17 'duimen' (113.2 cm).

Length of the tail 14 'duimen' (36.7 cm).

When I speak of Maat in a drawing, this means my ruler which has a length of '2 voet $2\frac{1}{4}$ duim rijnlants' (1 'rijnlantse voet' is 31.4 cm, 1 'duim rijnlants' is 2.62 cm, so a Maat is 68.7 cm).

From the knee down to the feet is a pale liver colour, so are both the knees, the back as far as the stripes on (^p = and) the belly is brown as far as the teats.

A young quagga; the first syllable is pronounced with a strong click of the tongue, we pronounce this hottentot word without a click. Possibly this animal is the onager."

Text on the reverse of the Quagga drawing (fig. 2): "This animal was a filly, and with other foals, followed her mother, who went in a herd of about 70 adult quaggas. I chased her on horseback, and cutting her off from the herd, she lost sight of them, whereupon she followed my horse of her own accord as if it were her mother, as a young zebra does. This being far in the bosjesmans land, I let her run away the next day, for lack of milk to rear her.

This animal was '2 voet 10 duim rijnlants' (89.0 cm) high, in front. At the back one 'duim' taller and from head (beginning of the muzzle) to tail '3 voet $7\frac{1}{4}$ duim' (113.2 cm) long, and the tail which is flattish '14 duim' (36.7 cm) long. They reach the size of the zebra, and keep clear of these. Their call is a barking whine repeated in quick succession, with much 'kwak kwak' in it. They are good to eat, the

meat however is somewhat sweet, our farmers don't like it, the hottentots do. When a dog comes too near, it kicks hard and there are cases (known) where it took hold of it with its teeth, so the hyenas, called wolves here, are afraid of it. Nowadays one does not find these animals near the Cape. There is hardly a difference between this foal and the adult, except in size. Yet one finds some yellowish individuals. The difference between the mare and stallion is small too. The head of an adult quagga is somewhat larger in proportion. I saw some Boers put them to the wagon. They draw very well and are tough and strong, but malicious, biting and kicking, yet they are thought to be more gentle of character than the zebra".

The differences in the measurements of the height of the animal on the front and on the reverse of the drawing, though very small, are remarkable (see also Note IV).

The drawings of the Gordon-Atlas looked familiar to me and about 20 of them proved to have been used by Allamand for his additions to Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* edited in Holland.

The drawing of the Quagga (fig. 1) is to be found again as Planche III * in vol. 12 of the Dutch translation of Buffon's work, edited in Amsterdam in 1781 (see Note II, no. 3). The engraving is an almost exactly reversed copy of Gordon's drawing, whereas the description of Allamand, who mentions Gordon as his source of information, follows the text on the whole closely. There are, however, some differences. Whereas Gordon writes clearly about a group of about 70 adult Quaggas (on the reverse of the drawing, fig. 1, first line), Allamand mentions only 10. A curious error is made in the translation of Allamand's description of the Quagga (vol. 12, 1781, p. 27) probably made after the drawing, where he states that the Quagga is "regularly striped with black from the end of the buttocks to above the shoulders". In the edition in French (see Note II, no. 2), one finds it correctly written (vol. 36, 1785, p. 14): "depuis le bout du museau jusqu'au-dessus des épaules" (see Note III).

Though Gordon speaks of a Quagga filly, and the animal depicted on the drawing and the engraving mentioned above may well be a female, the sex is changed in *Supplément Tome VI* (1782, pl. VII, p. 88) of the first Paris edition, though the text suggests that Allamand's plate has been used (Buffon's picture is signed: De Sève).

For several reasons I do not think Allamand ever did see the drawings now assembled in the Gordon-

Atlas but only copies of them sent to him by Gordon. This might explain the differences between written and printed text, and between drawing and engraving (which, however, could also be accounted for by attributing these to carelessness of the engraver).

There are several almost identical drawings in the Gordon-Atlas, for instance of the giraffe, so it appears not to have been unusual for Gordon to prepare copies of his drawings.

Moreover, in various letters to Hendrik Fagel (kept in the State Archives, the Hague), who seems to have been his mentor and confidential agent and to whom he sent his reports about his expeditions and his gifts for the Prince-Stattholder William V and Allamand as well, Gordon writes about a set of copies, which he keeps for himself of all the maps, plans and drawings (see note IV). This being known, it seems all the more improbable, that Allamand returned the drawings to Gordon. Some drawings by Gordon are mentioned in the sales-catalogue of Vosmaer's collection (*Catalogue de livres ... de Portraits ... d'Instruments ... de Pierres ... délaissés par feu M. Arnout Vosmaer ... dont la vente publique se fera ... le 17 Mars 1800 ... par B. Scheurleer, Libraire à la Haye*; p. 267, 268: nrs. 51, 52, 56). They might have belonged to Allamand and according to an annotated copy of this catalogue, now in the possession of Mr. C. J. J. G. Vosmaer, Leyden, they were bought by Leurs. Possibly in the British Museum too there are some drawings by Gordon, which were originally attributed to Masson (LYSAGHT, 1959). Whatever one may think, Allamand's complete set of Gordon-drawings, comprising at least 20 sheets (see above), has not been found to this day.

QUACGA OF 1855

Another item on the Quagga is a bill, dated 19th July 1855, made out by H. Verstraaten (see Note V) to "the Society *Natura Artis Magistra*", for skeletonizing the following objects "to be mounted later on":

"Equus zebra	f 30,—
Equus guagga	„ 30,—
Ursus malaijanus	„ 15,—
Total	<u>f 75,—</u>

Very probably the bill regards the Quagga which was purchased by the Amsterdam Zoological Society "*Natura Artis Magistra*" (then comprising the Zoological Gardens as well as the Museum; the latter was passed on at a later date to the University of Amsterdam) at Knowsley Hall in 1851 (cf. SWIERSTRA, 1888) and which died 2-1-1853 (cf. ANONYM, 1852, p. 96; a

Hoogte van Vooren 1. Maate en 7. $\frac{1}{2}$

van agteren 1. 8.

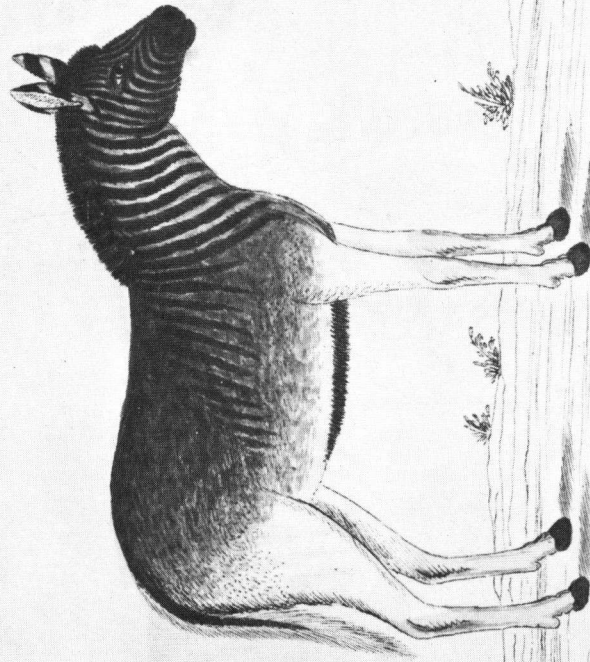
Langte van Kop t. Staet 1. 17.

Langte van de Staet 14.

als ik in enige tekening van maat spreekt
is zulks myn maatstok 2 voet $\frac{1}{4}$ duim vyzeland

van de Knie en tot an de Voeten Bleke boven Boven
wie ok beide Knie

de Rug tot an de Schouwen en de Buik is bruin tot an de heupelghe.



een Jonge Kwaagga. de eerste afteekening werd met een hand te
kenen. de Jonge afteekening is afgehaald uit de tekening van de Quagga
mogen de 3 de 2 de en 3 de

Fig. 1. Drawing of the Quagga in the Gordon-Atlas. 24 × 36 cm. (copyright Foto-Commissie Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

letter from Kerbert cited by LYDEKKER, 1904, p. 430).

So the specimen is probably one of those animals depicted in "Cleanings from the menagerie and aviary at Knowsley Hall" (Hoofed Quadrupeds), Knowsley, 1850, Pl. LIV signed: BWH (= B. Waterhouse Hawkins) Knowsley, 1847.

According to the archives of the Royal Zoological Society "Natura Artis Magistra", the skeleton was mounted, as may be learned from the following data.

There is a Dutch letter from H. Verstraaten, dated 19th July 1855, which reads:

"Dear Sir,

With pleasure I heard from our colleague ter Meer, that you would be so kind as to pay me for the skeletons, which are ready but for the mounting.

I take the liberty and send you a letter stating the costs, and an account of the additional charge for the mounting.

Honoured by any answer from you, I have the honour to call myself with respect, dear Sir, your obedient servant, H. Verstraaten."

The bill dated 19th July 1855, mentioned above, clearly was enclosed, just as the supplementary bill for mounting plank and bars, still with the letter in the archives, which reads:

"Equus zebra	f 12,—
Equus quagga	„ 12,—
Ursus malayanus	„ 8,—"

Now there is a curious draft in Dutch dated 31st August 1855, which reads:

"Sir,

Herewith the amount of your bill dated July 19th last with the request to finish and deliver the skeletons as soon as possible, especially that of the giraffe (!). Please send the signed receipt by return mail".

signed: "G.F.W."

These initials, no doubt, stand for G. F. Westerman, the founder, and at the time director, of "Natura Artis Magistra". Finally there is a short note from Verstraaten dated 4th September 1855, in which he acknowledges the receipt of the money and returns the bill.

What has happened to this skeleton and to the hide of this Quagga is not known. Anyway, they are no longer in Amsterdam. The hide could be the one

actually in the Tring Museum, which, presented by Rothschild in 1889, has been traced to Frank, the well-known merchant in natural history objects in Amsterdam (RIDGEWAY, 1909). Though this is no proof at all of their being identical, the resemblance of RIDGEWAY's text-fig. 159 (1909) to the fat-bellied Quagga on the right in Hawkins' drawing (cf. RIDGEWAY, 1909, text-fig. 174) is curious.

QUAGGA OF 1872

WINKLER (\pm 1880) mentions the purchase at Antwerp on 2nd February 1872 of a female Quagga originating from the Cape of Good Hope, which apparently died before 1883. This animal was not mentioned by SWIERSTRA (1888).

QUAGGA OF 1883

In the collections of the Zoological Museum of the University of Amsterdam, which now include those of "Natura Artis Magistra", the only Quagga items are a skull (not mentioned by RZAŚNICKI, 1949) and a mounted hide (fig. 3) both belonging to the famous last living specimen of the world, which was purchased in 1867 and died in 1883 (Kerbert, cited in LYDEKKER, 1904). Curiously, this animal was not mentioned by SWIERSTRA (1888) either.

NOTE I

Robert Jacob Gordon was baptized 29th September 1743, in the Reformed Church of Doesburg, province of Guelderland.

His father, Jacob Gordon, serving with one of the regiments of the Scotch Brigade at the time, was born 6th January 1701 at Schiedam and died at Leyden 1st February 1776. His mother was Johanna Maria Heydenrijck, who died in the Hague at about 17th August 1783 and was buried at Leyden 21st August.

Robert Jacob started his military career in 1759 in his father's regiment, while pursuing his studies at the same time at the Harderwijk University, into which he was enrolled 12th September 1759 "sub rectore Joanne Alexandro Guinando Pagenstecher" as: "R. J. Gordon Drusiburgo-Gelrus, L. Hum." (personal communication from Mr. A. H. H. M. Mathijssen).

In 1773-1774, during a stay of about a year at the Cape of Good Hope, he made his first expedition into the interior. After some years in Holland he was appointed captain to the Cape-garrison and on 1st June 1777 he again set foot ashore at the Cape of Good Hope. He was an ardent Orangist and in 1779 gave the Orangeriver its name in honour of Stadtholder Willem V, Prince of Orange.

In 1795 Gordon committed suicide, when the English fleet and army, which with his own help had taken possession of the Cape of Good Hope, were not, as he had been induced to believe, going to keep it in the name of

William V, at the time in exile in England, but hoisted the Union Jack instead.

Gordon did know the works of Buffon and commented on them in litteris (cf. text on "blauwe bok" drawing in the Gordon-Atlas, no. 159). During the period 1774-1777 he saw Vosmaer (cf. VOSMAER, 1784) and possibly Allamand as well.

More extensive biographical data, with many literature references, are published by GODÉE MOLSBERGEN (1914) and BARNARD (1950), whereas Gordon's importance for botany is especially stressed in articles by DYER (1949) and KARSTEN (1959-1961).

NOTE II

It appears that there is still much unknown about the different Buffon editions published in Holland, and therefore some additions to the latest bibliography I know i.e. by GENET-VARCIN and ROGER (1954)¹⁾ may be of use. These authors mention:

1. An edition in French (no. 148): La Haye, P. de Hondt, 1750, which I could not find in Holland thus far. According to Mr. Nissen (in litt.) the first 3 volumes are in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, S 2497). Probably no further volumes were published by this editor, since in Pieter de Hondt's publisher's list of 1753 as well as in his list of 1756 the fourth volume still had to appear. Possibly J. H. Schneider took over (see 2); on 13th July 1769, anyway, when 11 volumes were already published, he got the privilege for the French augmented edition for a period of 15 years from the "Staten van Holland en Westfriesland" (Schneider's copy of this decision is preserved in the Library of the "Vereniging ter Bevordering van de Belangen des Boekhandels" in Amsterdam).
2. An edition in French (no. 150): Amsterdam, J. H. Schneider, 1766-1799, 38 vols.; in the several examples of copies of this edition that I know, vols. 16-24 (*l'Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux*, 1796-1799), 25, 26 (*Hist. Nat. des Quadr. Ovipares et des Serpents*, 1799), 27-31 (*l'Hist. Nat. des Minéraux*, 1798-1799) and 38 (*Suppl. Tome VII*, 1799) are edited by Blussé at Dordrecht. Whereas the decree of the "Staten van Holland en Westfriesland" is dated 1769 (see above, Note II, 1), the privilege is mentioned already on the title-pages of the volumes 1 and 2 (1766). In the following volumes it is not mentioned till it reappears on the title-page from volume 12 (1769) onwards. For the volumes published by Blussé apparently no privilege was obtained.
3. An edition in Dutch (no. 217): Amsterdam, 1808, 26 vols.; possibly what is meant is the Dutch edition started by Schneider, Amsterdam (vol. 1-17, 1773-1785), continued by Blussé, Dordrecht (vol. 18, 1793), afterwards taken over by Allart, Amsterdam (vol. 19 + Register, 1801-1802), who continued the series with the Dutch translation of *l'Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux* (7 vols., 1801-1807). It must be mentioned that in the one example of a copy of this series that I have seen, these 7 volumes are numbered 1, 2, 3, 23, 24, 25, 26! Plates and text of

these 7 volumes are identical with those of the corresponding volumes of the edition in French (see above, 2). Whether the last 2 volumes were ever published, I do not know. The Universiteits-Bibliotheek at Leyden possesses an edition in Dutch of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* (without Daubenton's anatomical descriptions) in 10 volumes, Schneider, Amsterdam 1773-1785. Though the page numbering is different, the text is identical with the part published by Schneider of the edition just mentioned. The same matter was used: e.g. in volume 9 only the title-page (vol. 16) was changed, so on page 65 at the bottom it says: "XVI. deel!"

NOTE III

It would be interesting to know whether Allamand ever wrote in Dutch. As far as I could ascertain, his correspondence was written either in Latin or French, whereas his contributions (in Dutch) to "Verhandelingen uitgegeven door de Hollandsche Maatschappij der Wetenschappen te Haarlem" (Proceedings published by the Holland Society of Sciences at Haarlem) bear the note that they are translated from the French. So probably the Quagga-text was originally written in French though first published in Dutch (1781). It should be mentioned that theoretically the French text could have been published at the same time or even earlier. For the preceding volumes of the editions in French and Dutch were finished in 1778 and 1779 respectively. As it was not unusual at all to publish the volumes in instalments and as the Quagga-article in both editions in that event must have been one of the first instalments of the volume issued (appearing on page 14 and 27 respectively), it could well be that later on there was some delay in the completion of the volume in French resulting in it being only finished in 1785.

In this connection it should be recorded that the order of the articles in these two editions is quite different. As the edition in Dutch was started only after 15 volumes of the edition in French had been published, additions could be inserted which in the edition in French were published in a later volume, and so sometimes a more logical sequence of the articles could be obtained.

NOTE IV

Gordon was assisted in his drawing-work by a soldier of his company (see his letter dated 10th April 1778, p. 2, in *Fagel-Archief* 2515, State Archives, the Hague). This accounts for the two different handwritings on the drawing (figs. 1 and 2; see also "Rhinoceros Bul" in Gordon-Atlas, no. 205). As is stated in his letter of 13th May 1779 (p. 2, in *Fagel-Archief* 2533), Gordon copied at least a number of the drawings himself.

Lately an article by KOEMAN (1951) came to my notice. He found some maps and drawings in the Archives of the Topographical Service at Delft, which proved to be executed by Gordon. The corresponding copies in the Gordon-Atlas are according to KOEMAN by a different hand, so the Gordon-Atlas contains the work of at least two different artists.

NOTE V

The following data on Verstraaten were found in the Municipal Archives at Leyden: he was born at Leyden,

¹⁾ When my paper was in the press I received the first instalment of Dr. Claus Nissen's publication: *Die zoologischen Buchillustration* (Stuttgart, 1966). In this long-awaited important work the editions of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* have been extensively treated.

7th November 1790. After having been a house-painter for about 10 years he became employed at the "Rijks-museum voor Natuurlijke Historie" in 1821, first as an assistant, later as a taxidermist. He retired in 1866 and died at Leyden, 3rd January 1869.

NOTE VI

The 6 half-bound volumes of the Gordon-Atlas bear on the spine the arms of the Duke of Sutherland and the words: The/Gordon/African/Collection.

There are 2 volumes (70 × 99 cm) entitled *Views and Plans* containing 68 drawings.

The other 4, measuring 68 × 50 cm, are entitled *Plants* (108 drawings, several of them also representing insects), *Men, Reptiles and Fishes* (55 drawings), *Quadrupeds* (115 drawings) and *Birds* (110 drawings). The Dutch titles of the drawings were all copied in the Supplement to Catalogue 316 of Maggs Bros. (109, Strand, London W.C.), probably dating from 1913.

In the volume *Birds* one finds the following note: "A collection made/by Colonel Gordon/of Dutch Family

settled/at the Cape & highly/esteemed by the/Dutch Government.

It was intended to be sold/at a public auction/but bought by/The Marquis of Stafford/about 1802."

This Marquis of Stafford was the father of the first Duke of Sutherland.

NOTE VII

Two more Quaggas appear in the Gordon-Atlas. One of the animals depicted on Gordon's copy of a "bosjemans drawing" (volume *Quadrupeds*, nr. 193, 18.7 × 30.5 cm) is recognizable as a Quagga: a dark horse-like animal with light belly and legs and striped head and neck; along the neck is written in Dutch: "black and white mane".

One finds the other Quagga on one of the maps (volume *Views and Plans*, Part 1, no. 3, 180 × 196.5 cm). Several animals are represented there, some of them copies of drawings in the volume *Quadrupeds*. This Quagga differs somewhat from my fig. 1, for instance in the position of the legs and in the distinct dark tuft which ends the tail. Over it is written in Dutch: "Cape Quagga, I believe the Onager."

LITERATURE

- ANONYM, 1852: Diergaarde van den Graaf Derby, op Knowsley bij Liverpool, in: *Natura Artis Magistra* Jaarboekje 1853, 93-96.
- BARNARD, S. J., 1950: Robert Jacob Gordon se loopbaan aan die Kaap, in: *Argief. Jaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* XIII (1), 319-446.
- BRITTEN, J., 1914: Robert Jacob Gordon (1741-1795), in: *J. Bot. London* LII, 75-77.
- DAWSON, W. R., editor, 1958: *The Banks Letters*.
- DYER, R. A., 1949: Colonel R. J. Gordon's contributions to South African Botany, in: *S. A. Biol. Pamphlet* no. 14, 44-62.
- GENET-VARCIN, E., et J. ROGER, 1954: Bibliographie de Buffon, in: *Corpus Général des philosophes Français. Auteurs Modernes, Tome XLI, 1. Oeuvres philosophiques de Buffon*, Paris.
- KARSTEN, MIA C., 1959-1961: Francis Masson, a gardener-botanist who collected at the Cape, in: *J. South Afr. Bot.* 25-27.
- KOEMAN, C., 1951: Een nieuwe ontdekking van kaarten en tekeningen van R. J. Gordon, in: *Tijdschr. Kon. Ned. Aardr. Gen.* 68, 452-458.
- LYDEKKER, R., 1904: Note on the skull and markings of the Quagga, in: *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 426-431.
- LYSAGHT, A., 1959: Some 18th century bird paintings in the Library of Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), in: *Bull. Brit. Mus. (N.H.) Hist. Series* 1, 251-371.
- MOLSBERGEN, E. C. GODÉE, 1914: Robert Jacob Gordon, de Afrikareiziger.
- RIDGEWAY, W., 1909: Contribution to the study of the Equidae; 2. On hitherto unrecorded specimens of *Equus Quagga*, in: *Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 563-586.
- RZAŚNICKI, A., 1949: Complete list of the specimens of skeletons and skins of *Equus quagga quagga* (Gm) preserved in the museums of the whole world in 1939, in: *Ann. Mus. Zool. Pol.* XIV (5), 69-73.
- SWIERSTRA, K. N., 1888: Systematische Naamlijst van Gewervelde Dieren voor de Diergaarde levend ingekomen van 1 Mei 1838 tot 30 April 1888, in: *Bijdragen tot de Dierkunde, Feestnummer*, 1-104.
- VOSMAER, A., 1766-1804: *Regnum Animale. Beschrijving ... Gnou ...* (1784), 1-14.
- WINKLER, T. C., about 1880: De gestreepte paarden van Artis, in: *Blaadjes voor den Bezoeker* 3.