



French Expeditions to the Regions of Azjer and Hoggar, Henri Duveyrier and Colonel Flatters an Example

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Abstract

This research deals with the French expeditions to the regions of Azjer and ahagar, where we Will discuss the motives of the French expeditions to the Sahara, then Henri Duveyrier trips to Laghouat, mania, and the Tunisian jarid, then the Tuareg country, and we Will discuss colonel Flatters missions to Azjer and ahagar, and their end in bir al-gharama

Key words Azjer, ahagar, Henri Duveyrier, colonel Flatters, bir al-gharamah.

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Introduction:

From the mid-15th century AD, the competing and conflicting European powers engaged in a struggle and race to intensify geographical explorations in all regions of the world. Subsequently, these European powers entered into a struggle to explore the Sahara Desert, which was an unknown and mysterious territory for them. The Niger River and its mouth posed a problem for them for many years, and then the interior of the Sahara presented challenges for these European powers in mapping it and determining its inhabitants. With the formation of geographical societies such as the African Society and the British Royal Society, the growth of European industry and its need for markets to promote its products, and the Church's desire to spread Christianity, all these factors led to an intensification of expeditions to explore the Sahara Desert. Among the most prominent European expeditions that traversed or attempted to traverse the Sahara were those of Mungo Park (1775–1797), Hornemann (1798–1800), Clapperton (1824–1825), and Major Alexander Gordon Lane (1825). Gordon Laing, René Caillie (1824–1828), Henri Barth (1853–1855), and other European explorers

With the French occupation of Algeria in July 1830 and the subsequent occupation of Laghouat in December 1852, French attention turned to annexing the entire Algerian Sahara, including the regions of Azjer and Ahaggar. Having already occupied the desert oases bordering the Algerian Tell, such as Laghouat, Zaatcha, Boussaâda, Touggourt, and Wadi Souf, the French sought to extend their influence deeper into the Sahara and annex these areas. They launched exploratory expeditions, including those of Henri Duverger and Colonel Flatters. This study employs a descriptive historical approach, aiming to address the following question: What were the most significant French exploratory expeditions to the Azjer and Ahaggar regions?

1- Motives for French Exploratory Expeditions to the Algerian Sahara:

The outbreak of popular resistance in the north led to the transformation of the desert oases in southern Algeria into strongholds for revolutionaries and mujahideen who fled there to regroup and prepare. The French were determined to expand deeper into the Sahara, especially after the Zaatcha Oasis uprising of

1849, the movement of Sharif Muhammad ibn Abdullah in Laghouat, Touggourt, and Ouargla in 1852, and the first Ouled Sidi Cheikh revolt in southern Oran in 1864.

Trade and control of desert trade routes played a significant role in motivating French exploratory missions into the Algerian Sahara. The French, like other Europeans, were keen to track desert trade routes, goods, and exchange methods. To this end, they established scientific geographical societies, such as the African Geographical Society in 1788. These societies worked to promote the exploration and exploration of the depths of the African Sahara.

The scientific motive was a significant driving force for French explorers in their study of Sufi orders, tribes, dialects, water sources, customs, and traditions. The purpose of these expeditions was not scientific study for its own sake, but rather to utilize this research and these studies to advance into Africa and control the Sahara and its resources. The religious motive for these expeditions is also clear, as they promoted Christianity. The Church and the Archdiocese of Algiers supported these Saharan expeditions, and Cardinal Lavignier founded the "Armed Brotherhood of the Sahara" movement. The international conflict over the Sahara also motivated the launch of expeditions to explore it, ultimately aiming to control and plunder its resources. British expansionism in Africa served as an incentive for the French to intensify their expansion and exploration efforts in the Sahara. After colonizing West Africa, France sought to link its North African colonies with West Africa. France also sought to gather information about the Senussi order and its center in Jaghbub, which was active in the regions of Azjer, Ahaggar, the Algerian Sahara, and Africa in general. Furthermore, The expeditions sought to prevent the Sultan of Morocco from expanding towards Tuat and Gourara, regions bordering the Tuareg lands of Azjer and Ahaggar to the west.

2- Henri Duverger's Expeditions in the Sahara

2-1 Introduction to Henri Duverger (February 28, 1840 - 1892):

Henri Charles Duverger was born in Paris on February 28, 1840. His father, Charles, was a supporter of the Sansimonian movement, which advocated for the spread of Western civilization and supported expeditions. Duverger attended a business school in Leipzig, where he learned Arabic. From a young age, Duverger was fascinated by geography, cartography, astronomy, and the study of wild plants and birds. Duverger said of himself, "I felt an irresistible pull towards the African continent." He befriended the famous German explorer Henri Barth, whom he met in 1857. Barth offered Duverger valuable and important advice on expeditions. Henri Duverger undertook numerous journeys in the Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan Saharas, visiting regions such as Laghouat, El Menia, Biskra, and the Tunisian Jerid, before embarking on his famous expedition to the land of the Tuareg. In 1862, he traveled to Azjer and produced his very important work, "The Tuareg of the North." Duverger befriended Sheikh Othman Ould El Bekri, and this relationship and friendship played a significant role in Henri Duverger's writings and his mapping of the region in general. Henri Duverger drew a very accurate map of the Azjer and Ahaggar regions, and his map became a reference in this field for researchers and explorers. Henri Duverger died in 1892 in Paris, having committed suicide due to the disappointments he experienced in his life.

2-2 His First Exploratory Journeys: "Laghouat - El Menia - Biskra - Tunisian Jerid, July 13, 1859 - April 10, 1860"

On May 8, 1859, Henri Duverger arrived in Skikda (Philippeville) with great enthusiasm and on the advice and guidance of the German explorer Henri Barth. Duverger entered Algeria on his first personal journey, heading for the Tuat region via El Menia. From Skikda, Duverger traveled towards Constantine, Batna, El Kantara, El Ouataia, and Biskra. In Biskra, he met the military commander of the Biskra district, who told him, "Going to the M'zab will be easy, and from there you can go to Tuat." On July 13, 1859, Duverger left Biskra for El Guerrara, arriving on July 18. He then reached the M'zab region on July 21. In the M'zab, Duverger conducted studies of the region and its local inhabitants. On August 11, 1859, he departed for Metlili, where he met a group of Tuaregs who invited him to visit their land and offered to be his guides. On August 28, 1859, he departed Duveyrier traveled from Metlili towards El Menia, arriving on

August 28, 1859. He entered El Menia immediately, carrying a letter of protection from Si Hamza, leader of the Ouled Sidi Cheikh, and two men from El Menia. However, the inhabitants of El Menia and their community demanded Duveyrier's immediate departure from the oasis. The people of El Menia seized him and tied him up in the town square. The community then ordered him to leave immediately. On September 8, 1859, Duveyrier reached Metlili, passing through Laghouat, El Guerrara, Touggourt, and Biskra, which he entered on February 1, 1860. Afterward, Duveyrier visited the Souf Valley. From there, he intended to travel to the Tunisian Jerid region, but the dangers of the journey led him to seek protection from the French consul in Tunis, "De Lesseps," who granted his request. Duveyrier then visited the Tunisian Jerid region, including its capitals of Nefta and Tozeur. He returned to Algerian territory, entering Biskra on April 10, 1860, where he received an official commission. From the Governor-General of Algeria to Duverger to undertake an expedition towards the land of the Tuareg of Azjer.

2-3 His Exploratory Journey to the Tuareg Lands of Azjer and Ahaggar

In June 1865, Hetri Duverger began preparing for his second expedition, which enjoyed official support and sponsorship, unlike his first personal journey, which he intended to undertake to the Tuat region but which ended in El Menia. Duverger prepared for his expedition to the Tuareg lands of Azjer and Ahaggar, departing from Biskra. On August 14, 1860, Duverger arrived in Ghadames, accompanied by Sheikh Othman bin al-Hajj al-Bakri and a number of Tuareg. Here, Duverger describes his Tuareg companions, including Sheikh Othman: "I learned a great deal from Sheikh Othman and his Tuareg companions. They rode their light camels and walked silently like ghosts. Sheikh Othman told me that he wanted to dig water wells along the road to Ghadames." In Ghadames, many Tuareg from Azjer came to meet Sheikh Othman, a respected figure in the Azjer confederation. In Ghadames, Duverger wanted to meet Akhnoukhn, the Amenokal of the Azjer confederation. The days of Akhnoukhn's arrival in Ghadames, accompanied by a number of nobles from the Azjer Confederation tribes, were marked by opposition from the Ottoman authorities in Ghadames and Tripoli to a meeting between Akhnoukhn and Duverrier. Duverrier then traveled to Tripoli to secure permission for the meeting. He returned from Tripoli with clear recommendations from the Pasha of Tripoli and the French Consul to allow the Akhnoukhn-Duverrier meeting. On December 1, 1860, Henri Duverrier left Ghadames, accompanied by Akhnoukhn and Sheikh Othman, heading for Ghat, the capital of the Azjer Confederation. Duverrier spent over seven months there, traveling and recording observations. He then decided to travel through Fezzan, passing through Murzuq, towards Tripoli to explore the remaining areas of the Azjer region. Duverrier sailed from Tripoli to Algiers, arriving in the summer of 1863 to prepare for another major expedition to Timbuktu. However, his severe illness forced him to abandon this third exploratory journey.

Henri Duverrier's journey to Ghat and Ghadames 1859-1861: Important information about the dialects of the region and the history of the area, as Henri Duverrier obtained a copy of a book on the history of Azjer and Ahaggar written by Sheikh Ibrahim Ould Sidi, one of the Tuareg scholars, who in turn wrote it at the request of Sheikh Muhammad al-Eid bin al-Hajj Ali al-Tamassini, the sheikh of the Tijani zawiya in Tamassin. The book stated that the tribal origins of the inhabitants of Azjer go back to the Idrisids, who are Sharifs, and their tribes are the Ifoghas and the Imnane (Sultans), although some of them are from the Banu Umayya. There are also Berber Sharifs, whose blood and lineage have mixed with Arab Sharifs, whether from Morocco, Andalusia, or from the Algerian Sahara, and their names and dialect indicate their Berber origins.

3-3 Results of his expedition:

Duvrier produced an important and fundamental book on the Tuareg, their lands, customs, and genealogies, titled "The Tuareg of the North." He also created the first accurate map of the Azjer and Ahaggar regions, for which he received the Gold Medal of the Geographical Society in 1863. Henri Duverrier completed the map of Henri Barth, which reached the eastern edge of the Ahaggar Mountains.

The success of Henri Duverrier's expedition to the Azjer Tuareg lands led to the signing of the Ghadames Trade Treaty between Akhnoukhn, head of the Azjer Confederation, and France on November 26, 1862. Akhnoukhn signed the treaty, and on the French side, the officer Mircher. Duverrier's expedition also

prompted Tuareg embassies ("Me'adat") to Algeria and Paris, led by Sheikh Othman bin al-Hajj al-Bakri, with the aim of establishing relations between the Tuareg and France. The missions of Mircher, Polignac, and the engineer... Vatonne, Dr. Hoffmann, and Ismail bin Ahmed Boudarba traveled to Ghadames in 1862, marking a new impetus for French penetration into the south and serving French commercial interests. This mission succeeded in concluding an agreement with the Tuareg leader of the Azjer, Sheikh al-Hajj Akhnukhn, on November 26, 1862. The agreement stipulated the opening of trade and markets to French goods in Tuareg lands, the protection of French negotiators, and the provision of assistance to them during their travels.

4- Colonel Flatters' Missions to the Azjer and Ahaggar Regions:

4-1 Introduction to Colonel Paul Flatters:

Colonel Paul Flatters was born in Laval in 1832. He completed his primary education in Laval and joined the French army early on. In April 1855, he was sent to Crimea to participate in the Crimean War and appointed commander of the 3rd Zouave Regiment. Following the war, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1856, after the end of the Crimean War, he entered Algeria with the 3rd Zouave Regiment, becoming one of the most important military figures tasked with the affairs of the local population. Colonel Flatters became commander of the 3rd Algerian Rifle Regiment in 1861. On July 22, 1871, he was awarded the Legion of Honor. General Chanzy appointed Colonel Flatters as the supreme commander in Laghouat, where he was able to engage with the nomadic tribes. He gained influence among the nomads, forging friendships and acquaintances among the various nomadic groups, including the Larbaa, Chaamba, Tuareg, and others in the Sahara. Colonel Flatters served on the High Committee for Saharan Missions, and due to his high standing and knowledge of the nomads, he was appointed its commander-in-chief. Colonel Flatters was fair-skinned and of average build. He possessed a strong personality and was known for his candor and energy. He was highly regarded and respected by the Zouave battalions due to his military history with them. Colonel Flatters was passionate about exploring the Sahara and delving into its depths, having served on its fringes in Laghouat, where he gained firsthand knowledge of the desert. Driven by a desire to explore the Sahara, Colonel Flatters became deeply enthusiastic about connecting the desert caravans and trans-Saharan trade with France. He sacrificed his personal life for the sake of exploring the Sahara, abandoning his wife and son after beginning his work there. He contributed to the study of the railway route. He was killed by Tuareg tribesmen of the Ahaggar at Bir El Ghramah on February 16, 1881.

4-2 Introduction to Captain Dianous, Commander of the French Withdrawal to Hassi Mesguem:

Joseph Gabriel Henri Dianous was born on July 23, 1845. He joined the French army on July 12, 1867, and was commissioned as a lieutenant on September 1, 1871, and as a second lieutenant on July 2, 1874. He worked for two years in the Arab Bureau in Laghouat, where he gained considerable experience dealing with nomadic Bedouins and acquired extensive knowledge of desert affairs. He was then assigned to Kabylia as an assistant to the commander of the Arab Bureau. He actively participated in Colonel Flatters' two missions: the first in the Tuareg of Azjer and the second in the Tuareg of Ahaggar, where he was tasked with topographical matters. After the Battle of Bir El Ghrama on February 16, 1881, in which Colonel Flatters was killed, Captain Dianous led the retreating French forces, along with the remaining Chaamba and Arab participants in the mission, towards Ouargla. He was among the French who... The poisoned date flour, according to the French account of events, was offered to them by some Tuaregs as they retreated. However, he was killed along with all the remaining French soldiers in the Battle of Hassi Mesguem with the Tuareg tribes in March 1881.

4-3 Colonel Flatters' First Mission to the Azjer Region, January 1880 – May 1880:

Colonel Flatters' mission to the Azjer and Ahaggar regions falls within the framework of an official French study of the Sahara Railway, the Algeria-Sudan line. French discussions and consideration of establishing the Sahara Railway, the Algeria-Sudan line, began early, following the occupation of Laghouat on December 4, 1852. The project then stalled until 1876, when the French road and bridge engineer,

Duponchel, working for the French Ministry of Public Works, began publishing studies on the Sahara Railway. Duponchel submitted a report on the Sahara Railway to the French Minister of Public Works, De Freycinet, who was convinced and impressed by the idea of establishing the Sahara Railway and its great benefits for France. The Minister of Public Works promptly wrote to French Prime Minister Jules Ferry on July 12, 1879, outlining the benefits of constructing a railway line for France. Jules Ferry quickly approved the proposal on July 13, 1879, and ordered the formation of a high-level committee to study the Algiers-Sudan railway project. This committee was chaired by the Minister of Public Works and included, in addition to Henri Duverrier, Ferdinand de Lesseps, Colonel Flatters, and other officers and engineers. In December 1879, this committee undertook three official missions to study the Algiers-Sudan railway. The first mission, led by Choisy, was tasked with studying two railway routes: the first, Laghouat-El Menia, and the second, Biskra-Ouargla. Officer Choisy undertook the mission and achieved satisfactory and rapid results, which he submitted to the high-level committee for the study of the Algiers-Sudan railway project. Choisy was able to produce a topographical and natural study of the Laghouat-El Menia and Ouargla-Biskra railway routes. The second task was assigned to Officer Pouyanne, who was tasked with studying a railway route in southern Oran. He reached the Tiout oasis and returned. The third and most important task was assigned to Colonel Flatters, who was to study the route of the Ouargla-Sudan railway via Azjer or Ahaggar. The committee left the choice open to Colonel Flatters, who had two options: one through the Tuareg lands of Azjer and the other through the Tuareg lands of Ahaggar.

In December 1879, Colonel Flatters left Paris for Marseille and then Algiers, which he reached on January 12, 1880. Flatters was accompanied by the following officers: Major Masson, representative of the French Army General Staff; Captain Bernard; Lieutenant Le Chatelier, a lieutenant in the Algerian Riflemen and officer of the Arab Bureau in Boussaâda; Lieutenant Brosselard, a lieutenant in the 4th Legion; in addition to the engineers Beringer, a public works engineer; Rabourdin, a road and bridge engineer; Roch, a mining engineer; and Dr. Guiard, a physician and biologist. On February 4, 1880, Colonel Flatters arrived in Biskra, where he found the initial formation of the convoy prepared by the local administration in the Biskra command. On February 7, 1880, the Colonel and the convoy left Biskra for Touggourt, which they reached on February 14, 1880, where they were received by Agha Ismail Ould Kadi. On February 18, 1880, the caravan arrived at the Timacine Oasis, where it was received by Sheikh Muhammad al-Saghir, the head of the Tijaniyya order in the city, and his brother. The mission received a warm welcome at the Timacine zawiya (religious lodge), and a local leader was appointed to accompany it. On February 19, 1880, the mission reached Ouargla to purchase additional camels and recruit local workers. The mission, in its final form, consisted of 108 men, 25 of whom were armed with 74-caliber rifles. The Chaamba tribe comprised one-third of the mission, including 70 camel drivers. The caravan had 200 camels and 15 horses for the French officers. Colonel Flatters' first expedition set out south through the Ighirghar Valley, reaching the Timacine Oasis on March 29, 1880. Colonel Flatters then departed Timacine, where Si El Ala of the Ouled Sidi Cheikh arrived shortly after, having learned of the French mission. However, Si El Ala found that Flatters had already left the Timacine Oasis and continued south. Towards the dunes of Khenfousa, which Colonel Flatters reached on April 4, 1880, then Flatters reached Lake Mengwog on April 11, 1880.

On April 12, 1880, Colonel Flatters received a delegation of Tuareg from the Azjer Confederation, branches of the Ifoghas and Imtaghasten tribes. However, this Tuareg delegation refused any agreement or cooperation with Colonel Flatters without the advice and opinion of Akhnoukhn Amnoukal, the Azjer Confederation leader, who was far away in Ghat. At the same time, the Ahaggar Ahitaghal Amnoukal was in the southwest in the Ahaggar Mountains near the Tuat region. Subsequently, news reached Flatters that Akhnoukhn had sent a message to Tripoli and was awaiting a reply from there to Colonel Flatters' message and his request to pass through Azjer territory. Flatters waited a long time at Lake M'Taghigh, which he reached on April 11. Colonel Flatters decided to leave quickly towards Ouargla and set off from Lake M'Taghigh on the morning of April 21, 1880. On the way back, the engineering teams accompanying Colonel Flatters carried out geographical and astronomical studies. A topographical survey published its work and tables. Near Ouargla, the caravan split. One group, led by Flatters, headed directly to Ouargla, while the other, led by Captain Masson, proceeded to conduct various studies along the way.

Colonel Flatters arrived in Ouargla on May 17th. On May 18th, 1880, Colonel Flatters was in Laghouat, where he departed with the Ouargla depot. Colonel Flatters headed directly to the city and then sailed to Paris to meet with the High Commission and present a report on the first mission in the Tuareg region of Azjer. On May 19th, 1880, the remnants of the mission, led by Captain Masson, representative of the French General Staff, arrived in Ouargla. On May 21st, 1880, the expedition reached Laghouat. The members of the mission remained in Laghouat until June 3rd, 1880, when the mission was disbanded and the local participants from the Chaamba and the Bedouin of Larbaa in Laghouat were dismissed.

4-2 Colonel Flatters' Second Mission to the Ahaggar Region, November 18th, 1880 February 16, 1881:

In the summer of 1880, Colonel Flatters met in Paris with the High Committee for the Study of the Saharan Railway Project. The committee, in consultation with Colonel Flatters, decided to arm the second expedition. This expedition consisted of the following officers: Colonel Flatters, the expedition commander; Captain Masson, representing the French Army General Staff, as deputy commander; Lieutenant Dianus; and the following non-commissioned officers: Boubeguine and Denéré; and the engineers: Berger, Roche, and Santos. The expedition also included 300 camels, 26 camel drivers, 47 local riflemen, 4 guides from the Chaamba tribe, one guide from the Zawiya of Ouled Sidi Cheikh, and four men from the Ifoghas Azjer tribes: Abdelhakim, Ounti and his son, and Hamma Ould Djebbour. In addition, there was the head of the Tijaniyya zawiya, guides, and laborers from the Ouled Nail and Bedouin tribes of Larbaa in Laghouat. On November 18, 1880, the second expedition departed. From the city of Laghouat, on November 30, 1880, the second mission arrived in Ouargla. On December 4, 1880, the caravan departed from Ouargla towards Wadi Mya. On December 21, 1880, Colonel Flatters encountered a Tuareg trade caravan who informed him that the Amenokal of Ahaggar, Ahitaghah, was in Ain Salah, accompanied by 200 camel herders from the Tuareg of Ahaggar. Colonel Flatters quickly sent a message to Ahitaghah through one of his Chaamba companions, Sheikh Ben Boujemaa. On January 18, 1881, Colonel Flatters and his camp arrived at Amguid. In Amguid, Colonel Flatters decided to encamp while awaiting Ahitaghah's response. On January 22, 1881, Colonel Flatters' envoy, Sheikh Ben Boujemaa, arrived in Ahitaghah carrying a message from the Amenokal of Ahaggar. The message expressed goodwill and granted permission for the caravan to pass, provided local customs were respected. In the message, Ahitaghah promised to send Tuareg guides and escorts to At Colonel Flatters' camp, on January 25, 1881, the Tuareg guides and leaders sent from Ahitaghah arrived. Colonel Flatters then dismissed some members of the expedition, namely the four Ifoghas who had set out with him, as well as Mohammed Ben Rajaa from the Chaamba, ordering them to return to their quarters. It was to Mohammed Ben Rajaa of the Chaamba that the Chaamba survivors of the Battle of Bir El Ghrama would arrive.

Colonel Flatters regularly sent messages to the Ouargla headquarters as he advanced, providing updates on the mission's progress. The last of these messages was sent on January 29, 1881, from his base in Amguid. After this, news of the expedition ceased, causing panic and fear among the French officers at the Ouargla headquarters, who worried about the mission's fate. On February 10, 1881, Flatters' expedition reached a point on the northeastern edge of the Ahaggar Mountains called Timassit. On that day, a Tuareg man named Al-Alam arrived at Colonel Flatters' camp and informed him that an embassy of the Tuareg notables of the Ahaggar Confederation was en route. On February 12, 1881, the Tuareg embassy arrived at Colonel Flatters' camp. The embassy was led by Atissi Ould Cheikhat, two relatives of Ahitaghah, and 30 notables and tribal leaders from the Ahaggar Confederation. The meeting was cordial and included greetings. On February 13th, the Tuareg embassy left Colonel Flatters' camp, while Colonel Flatters continued his march through rugged mountainous terrain.

On February 16th, 1881, the day of the Battle of Bir El Ghrama, in which Colonel Flatters was killed, the events of the day began very early in the morning. Flatters wanted to reach a water source, as the camels were thirsty and the camp's water stores were running low. The Tuareg guides advised Colonel Flatters to head southeast in search of Bir El Ghrama to replenish the caravan's water supply. After ten hours of continuous walking, the Tuareg guides decided they had taken the wrong route and should head northeast. Flatters left the camp, provisions, and weapons under the command of Captain Dianus, while Colonel Flatters, Captain Mason (the deputy commander of the mission), officers, engineers, guides,

Chaamba tribesmen, and camels headed towards the sought-after Bir El Ghrama. The camels were extremely thirsty. They all arrived at the location of Bir El Ghrama, a dense forest of local trees called At the well, the camels rushed to water, accompanied by their Chaamba camel drivers and some French officers. Flatters and his deputy sat a little way from the water source. At that moment, a great commotion, shouts, and wails could be heard. It was about 300 Tuareg men attacking the well and the men with swords, spears, and other bladed weapons. Colonel Flatters and his deputy, Mason, were killed instantly without warning. Flatters' escorts fired back, but this did not deter the Tuareg from their massive attack. Everyone was killed except for 12 Chaamba camel drivers who fled at nightfall to a camp led by Captain Dianus. The camp was 5 kilometers from the site of the attack. The Chaamba guides arrived at the French camp, and everyone was in a state of shock, fear, and extreme terror. After a long meeting led by Captain Dianus, with the participation of the leader of the Tijaniyya Sufi order, Dianus decided against confrontation and instead headed towards Ouargla, more than 1600 kilometers away. The column left early the next morning, but the Tuareg were still waiting. They pursued the French column through the ravines and valleys. The Tuareg fed poisoned date flour to the rear of the column. Captain Dianus and the remaining Frenchmen ate the poisoned date flour, while the Chaamba refused. The date flour, mixed with a local herb, caused madness but not death.

On March 10, 1881, Captain Dianus decided to engage the Tuareg in a final, decisive battle against the French column retreating from Bir El Ghrama. In the Battle of Hassi Mesguem, all the French were killed without exception, along with all the Chaamba soldiers, the leader of the Tijaniyya order, and others. Only 12 Chaamba survivors remained, who then scattered and wandered aimlessly through the deserts, ravines, and valleys. The surviving Chaamba searched for the tents of the nomadic Chaamba. On March 11, 1881, all the Tuareg pursuing the French column disappeared. Four of the surviving Chaamba reached the camp of Mohammed Ben Rageh, who had been their guide. At the start of the second mission on March 12, 1881, these four Chaamba arrived in Ouargla, where they informed the Khalifa Agha of Ouargla, Muhammad ibn Belkacem, of the events that had taken place. The Ouargla treasury then mobilized 14 of its men and headed towards Hassi Mesguem, 600 km south of Ouargla, to search for the remains of the expedition, but they found nothing and returned to Ouargla without any significant result.

4-3 Results of Colonel Flatters' Mission in the French Expansion Strategy:

The French military sought a swift and decisive revenge against the Tuareg tribes to maintain France's position and restore the prestige of the French army in the Sahara. Major Bellin, commander of the Laghouat district, proposed mobilizing and arming the Chaamba tribes against the Tuareg, especially since most of the victims of Colonel Flatters' mission were Chaamba. However, the French General Staff abandoned the idea of recruiting and arming the Chaamba to reclaim the lost glory of the French army at Bir El Ghrama. Some officers then suggested launching a punitive military campaign into Tuareg territory, consisting of 200 armed men, 80 cavalry, and a caravan of 900 camels. However, all these proposals were frozen and discontinued due to French fear of the unknown in Tuareg lands.

General unrest and instability occurred in Tuareg regions, including the assassinations of several Europeans, among them the three French missionaries, Richardson, Murat, and Balat. Near Ghadames on January 4, 1882, the Tuareg were accused of carrying out the operation. A series of assassinations also occurred in Tuareg lands, including the killing of Officer Balat in 1886, and Officer Campbell Dulles in 1889 between Aouf and Akabli, accused of complicity in the murder of the leader of Ain Salah, Abdelkader Ben Bajouda. Then came the killing of Granbel in the Kouni region by supporters of Rabah al-Sudani, and the killing of the Marquis Maurice near Ghadames in 1896. Also, Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Tayeb Ben Ibrahim, who had taken 20 local armed men to accompany the French explorer Flumand on a journey to Ain Salah in 1889, was killed. He was attacked by a large group of about 75 Saharan Arabs, resulting in the death of Mohamed Tayeb Ben Ibrahim and his companions. The events of the Flatters expedition had a tremendous impact on the Sahara, paralyzing French penetration for a long period, rejecting the Saharan railway project, and delaying the exploration of the central Sahara. A European explorer also died mysteriously in the Draa Valley. Charles Soller in 1881.

Following the assassination of Colonel Flatters, and in order to free up French forces for expansion into the Sahara, General Thomassin, Governor of Oran, proposed winning over Si Kaddour Ould Hamza, leader of the Cheraga branch and the fourth commander of the 1864 revolt led by the Ouled Sidi Cheikh against France. France dispatched Bouhafs Laghouati, who negotiated and signed an agreement with Kaddour Ould Hamza in May 1883. The agreement stipulated the following:

First: The French authorities would rebuild the shrine of Sidi Cheikh Hadd El Ousra in the village of El Bayadh Sidi Cheikh, which had been destroyed by the French in the summer of 1881.

Second: The French authorities would provide Si Kaddour and his family with annual compensation of sixty thousand francs for property confiscated from them since 1864.

Third: Si Kaddour Ould Hamza would be appointed to head a major command in El Bayadh, with several other members of his family appointed to positions under him.

Fourth: Si Kaddour and his family would be responsible for persuading all members of the The sheikhs of the Tuareg families in Morocco were urged to return to Algeria, regardless of their circumstances. This agreement was indeed reached several weeks later, with most members of this family voluntarily returning to Algeria and France in 1883.

Various disturbances occurred in the Tuareg regions of Azjer and Ahaggar. In August 1887, the so-called "invasion" of the Taitouq tribe took place at Hassi Infel. The details are as follows: some camels belonging to the Chaamba of the Mawadi in El Menia were grazing at the Dhaya al-Darina pasture northeast of El Menia. However, a Chaamba resident of Ain Salah, Madoubouhafs bin Lakhel, informed the Chaamba leader, Qaddour bin Belkhir, that 40 camels from the Ahaggar Tuareg, a branch of the Taitouq tribe, were approaching to invade the Chaamba. Following this, Qaddour bin Belkhir convened a meeting of his tribesmen and dispatched a group of scouts, locally known as "shawafa," to monitor the movements of the approaching Taitouq Tuareg. The Chaamba intercepted them at... At Hassi Infel, a battle ensued, leading to the dispersal of the Taitouq tribesmen. A group of them were arrested, including Qanan Aq Atisi, a nobleman of the Taitouq, and Amstan Aq Sardah, another nobleman. The Chaamba of the Mawadi then handed these Tuaregs over to the French authorities in El Menia, who transported them to Ghardaia and then to Algiers, where they were imprisoned in Bab Azzoun. Two of them were taken for display at the 1889 Paris World's Fair before returning to Algiers. In October 1892, a Tuareg delegation arrived in Wadi Souf. At the request of the French authorities in Wadi Souf, the delegation decided to travel to Algiers to greet the Governor-General. The delegation conveyed to the Governor the peaceful sentiments of all the chiefs and leaders of the Azjer Confederation towards the French authorities. The delegation returned via Wadi Souf, impressed by the warm welcome and hospitality of the Governor-General. The idea for this Tuareg delegation originated with Abdelnabi Aq Ghali, a member of the Ifoghas tribe. He is the nephew of Sheikh Ben El Hadj El Bekri, and both are from the Imtaghasten tribe of Ifoghas. Abdelnabi went to Ahaggar and there met with Ahitaghel Amnoukal, the head of the Ahaggar Federation. Ahitaghel summoned all the tribal chiefs and leaders to this meeting, which was held in Atakor in Ahaggar. The aim was to convince the Ahaggar of the benefits of relations and rapprochement with the French. Si Ahmed, the nephew of the Marabout Tijani Mohamed El Seghir El Tamassini, attended this meeting, which concluded with an agreement on the meeting and its objectives. Ahitaghel gave his approval, and three notables from Ahaggar joined the meeting: Ntiri Ag El Hadj Moussa, Hadj Mohamed Ag Idar, and Sidi Ali Ben Ntiri, all three from the Iskhamarn tribe; Abdelnabi Ag Ghali, the nephew of Sheikh Othman Ben El Hadj El Bekri; and Ag Si Mohamed Ag Moussa and Sidi El Bay Ag Bada, who are from Ifoghas. The meeting also included Si Ahmed, the nephew of the Marabout Si Mohamed El Seghir El Tamassini, and Si El Aroussi Mokadem. The Zawiya of Qamar in Wadi Souf, both of whom are affiliated with the Tijaniyya order, discussed the purpose, results, and aspirations of the Tuareg regarding their relationship with France in an interview conducted by Emile Masqueray with Abdelnabi and other members of the delegation.

Conclusion:

After this presentation on the exploratory journeys to the lands of the Awjar and Ahaggar by both Henri Duverrier and Colonel Flatters, I have attempted to conclude the following:

France committed all its forces to exploring and then controlling the fringes of the Sahara, and then began to look towards the depths of the Sahara immediately after the occupation of Laghouat in December 1852.

Several European and French expeditions were undertaken to the lands of the Tuareg of the Awjar and Ahaggar. Among the most famous was the expedition of the German explorer Henri Barth, who visited the lands of the Tuareg of the Awjar and reached the eastern edge of the Ahaggar Mountains. His expedition is considered one of the most important exploratory journeys and holds great scientific and geographical significance. Another notable expedition was that of Ismail Boudarba to Ghat, during which his Arab Muslim heritage helped him enter the Awjar confederation and reach Ghat, the capital of this region, and meet with Akhnakhun Amnoukal Awjar. Ismail Boudarba recorded his journey and published it in French.

Henri Duverrier's expedition is considered one of the most important French expeditions to the lands of the Tuareg of the Awjar and Ahaggar, which resulted in his famous book on the Tuareg, entitled *The Tuareg of the north*, and Henri Duverger also became acquainted with important and influential Tuareg figures, including Sheikh Ben Hadj El Bekri, Akhnukhn, leader of the Azjer confederation, and El Bekkay, with whom he intended to visit Timbuktu, but illness prevented him from making the trip. One of the most significant outcomes of Henri Duverger's journey was the Ghadames trade agreement of November 26, 1862.

In 1879, France mobilized to complete the Sahara Railway project. This vital and large-scale project was adopted by the engineer Duponchel and the Minister of Public Works, De Francaite. It culminated in the formation of a high committee for studies of the Sahara Railway, specifically the Algiers-Sudan line. This committee commissioned three missions to study the routes of three railway lines: Chouzey, to study two lines, El Meniaa-Laghouat and Biskra-Ouargla; Bouyan, in the southern Oran region, which ended in the Tiout oasis and returned to Oran; and the third and most critical mission, that of Colonel Flatters, to study the Ouargla-Sudan route. Colonel Flatters undertook two journeys, the first to the Azjer Tuareg region, which was characterized by its civilian and peaceful character, and extending from January 1880 to May 1880, Flatters attempted, during this first mission, to meet with Akhnoukhn Amnoukal, the leader of the Azjer confederation, but failed. This mission concluded with significant geographical and topographical findings, as the route of a railway line along the Ighirghar Valley was determined.

In November 1880, Flatters began his second journey to the Tuareg region of Ahaggar. This second mission was characterized by its military nature, as the number of armed men in the expedition was increased. Flatters attempted to contact Ahitaghil Amnoukal of Ahaggar, who promised to come, but he was unable to meet him. Flatters' second mission ended with the Battle of Bir El Ghrama on February 16, 1881. Some French analysts suggested that the name Bir El Ghrama was fitting, as "ghrama" in Arabic means tribute, implying that the French paid a tribute for entering Tuareg territory. News of the Battle of Bir El Ghrama reached Ouargla in April 1881 via some Chaamba tribesmen. The Battle of Bir El Ghrama and the killing of... The Flatters were a major event throughout the Sahara, as the region witnessed a series of assassinations targeting various locations and individuals. These included the Draa Valley in Morocco, a route used by the camels of the Chaamba and Tuareg tribes, as well as the Tuat and Fezzan regions. The victims included diverse figures such as missionaries, geographers, explorers, officers, and Sufi leaders.

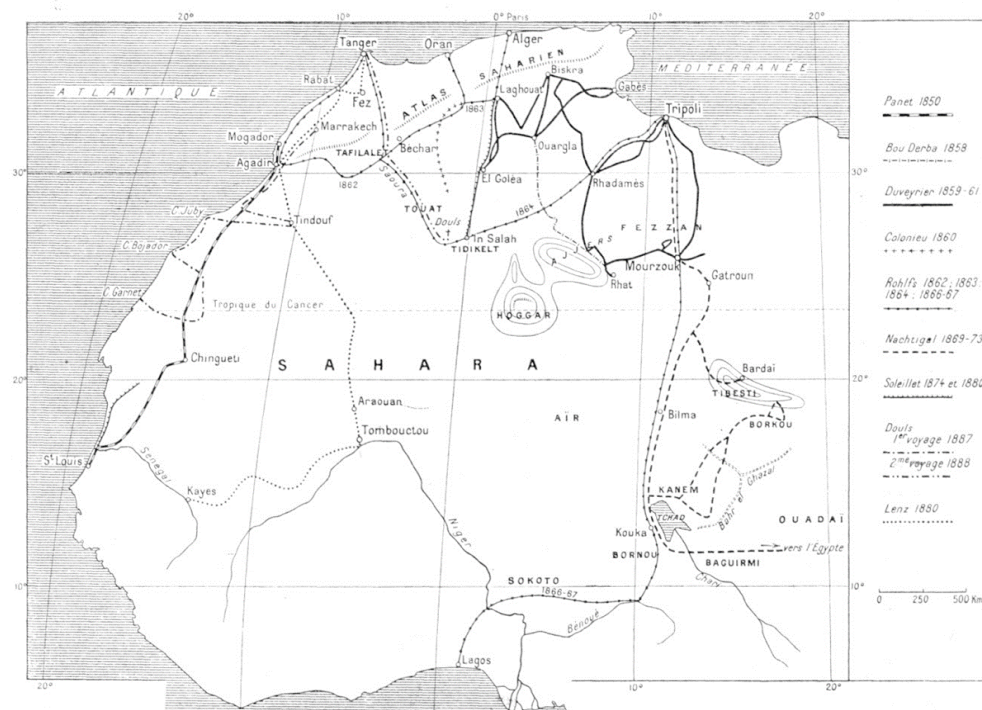
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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Map showing the routes of expeditions, including those of Ismail Boudarba to Ghat, Henri Duverrier, and Colonel Flatters.



Demoulin F. L'exploration du Sahara. In: Annales de Géographie, t. 40, n°226, 1931. 347

Appendix 2: Henri Duverrier, circa 1862, when he was in the land of the Tuareg of Azjer



Duveyrier vers 1862

Source: Hetri Duverrier, Tuaregs of the North, 1864, after the front page of the book (unnumbered).

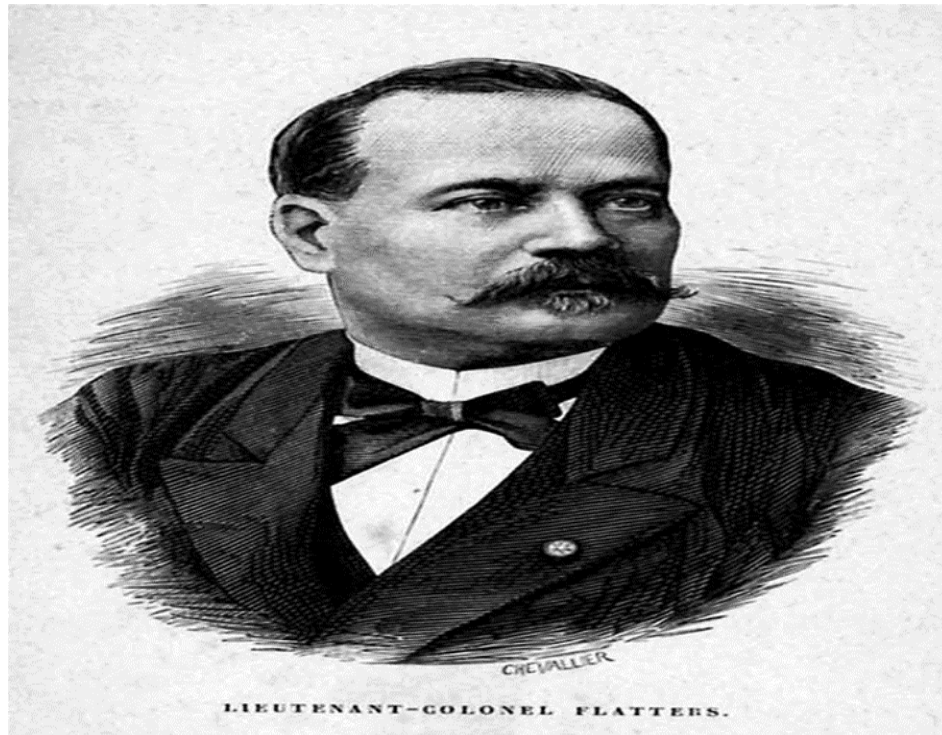
Appendix 4: Sheikh Othman Ibn al-Hajj al-Bakri with his son and companion in Paris, 1862



le monde illustre, 7.06.1862 ,p360

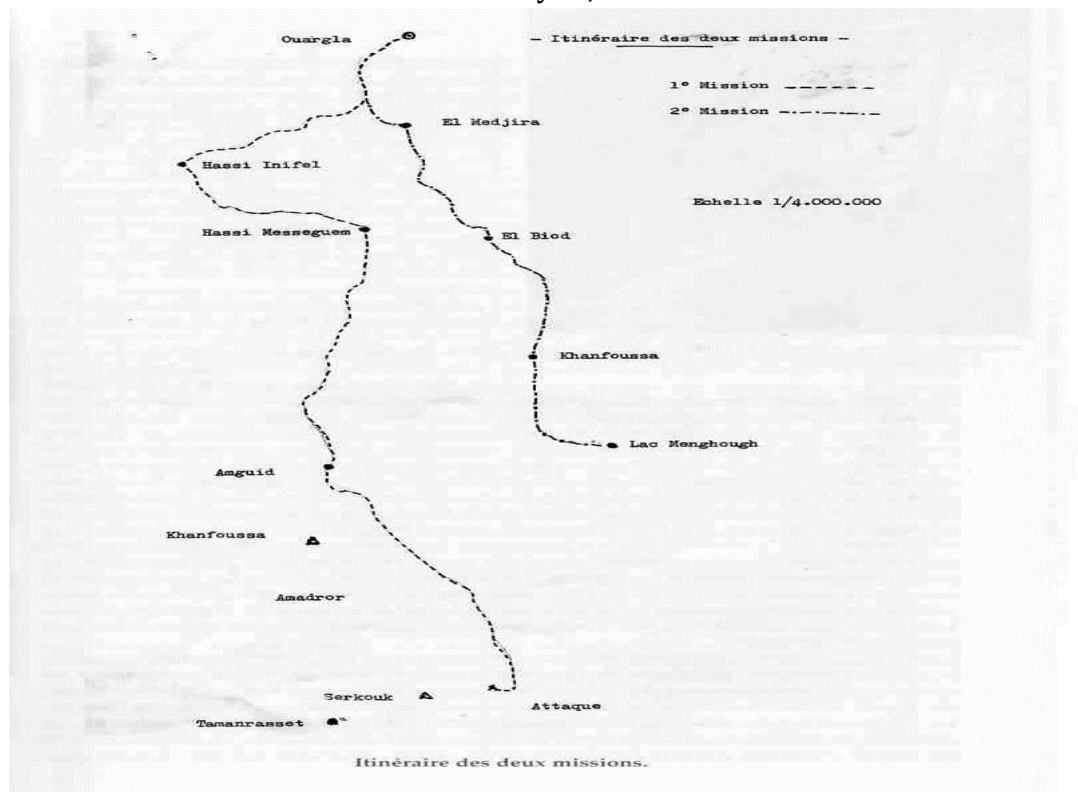
Appendix 4 Paul Flatters

<https://reviewofconphil.com>



Source: Henri Brosselard 1889, cover page,

Appendix 5: Map showing the route of Colonel Flatters' mission and the location of the attack on February 16, 1881



The Tragic Mission, Flatters, Jean-Jacques Bourrette, p. 6

Source: www.ercleAlgerianiste-lyon.org

Dated July 10, 2024

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