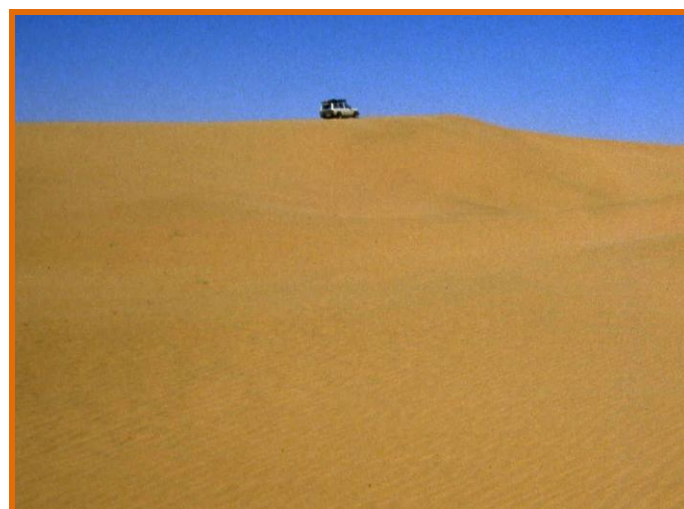


Pictures about

*My car journeys to the Sahara
in Morocco & Algeria & Tunisia
1975 1983 1985 1989*

Bernd Rohrmann



sahara landscapes

the sahara, located in algeria and stretching out into the surrounding countries (see map below), is the largest desert in the world, about 10 mio square kilometers, and also the hottest one.

the famous/infamous sand dunes are only a third of the saharian landscape, two thirds are either gravel plains or stone plateaus, including high mountains (tahat: 2916 m). trees are pretty rare.

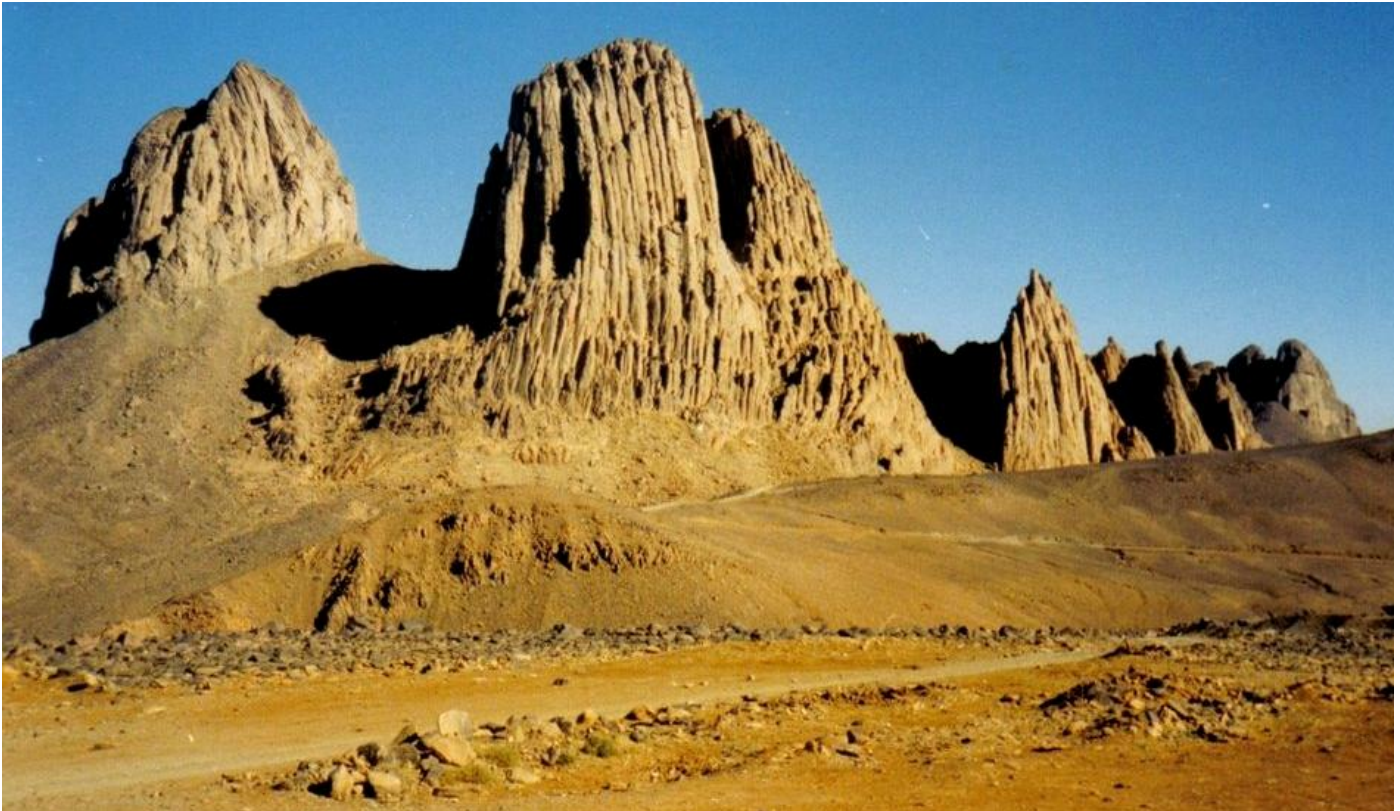




the sahara is a very inhospitable area, and except of some oases there are no settlements for hundreds of kilometers. yet in its own unique way it is also full of beautiful landscapes - thus for some globetrotters, like me, it was very tempting to go there, and so i did, three times ...

in this booklet a small selection of photographs is presented.

furthermore, the routes used for these voyages, mostly rough ones, and the cars and their equipment are shown as well.



The highest, and very rough mountains are in the hoggar mountain range, north of tamanrasset. quite a few of them cannot be reached easily, because there are no settlements, and thus no tracks.

the assekrem mountains, including the highest peak (2916 m), are part of the hoggar area.



large parts of the sahara, hundreds km, are plain areas covered with stones of about every size and colour.

1983 Voyage

1985 Voyage

1989 Voyage

tracks (not sealed)

intended tours yet not realized because of car trouble

this map (my old summary one, reprinted) shows the routes of the conducted three sahara travels. the first and the second one could not be realized as intended because of trouble with the car, marked with [o]. the original plan is shown in the map as dotted line. however, in the third travel all intentions were realized.



this road in algeria looks nice, yet it's long before reaching the sahara - which says giddyay with sand dunes!



roads & tracks in the sahara - rough roughh roughhh ...



damaged "sealed" roads are common -- yet the real predicament are of course sand dunes, big and bigger!



sometimes one drives along on a neat sealed road, is not scared by a few little cute sand dunes, optimistically trusting the well-prepared sahara car and its large tyres - -

and then something really biggg appears at the horizon ... will there be a track around that menace?



sahara oases

there are very many oases in the algerian sahara, established wherever there is a river. some are quite large, such as djanet, el oued, ghardaia, ouargla, tamanrasset, yet numerous are very small and can only just support residents. the northern oases are mainly inhabited by tuaregs and various arabs, the southern ones are often settled by people of african background. palm trees are the hub of each oasis.

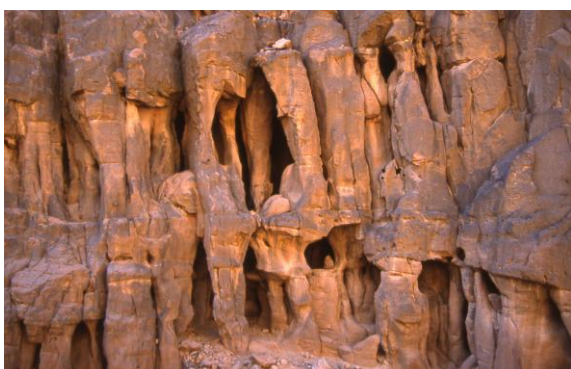


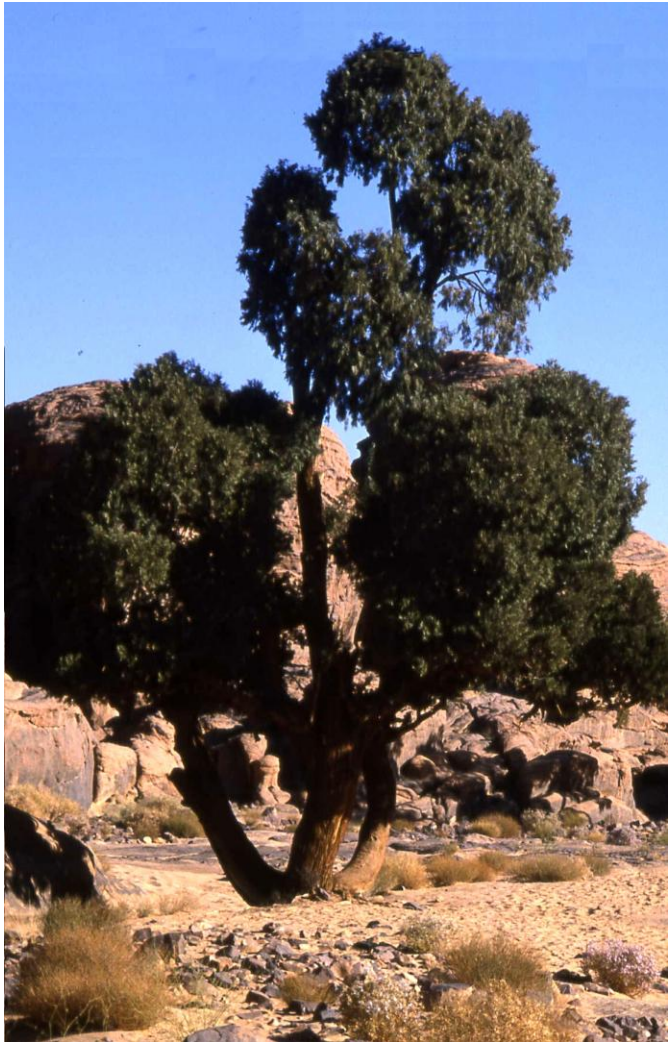
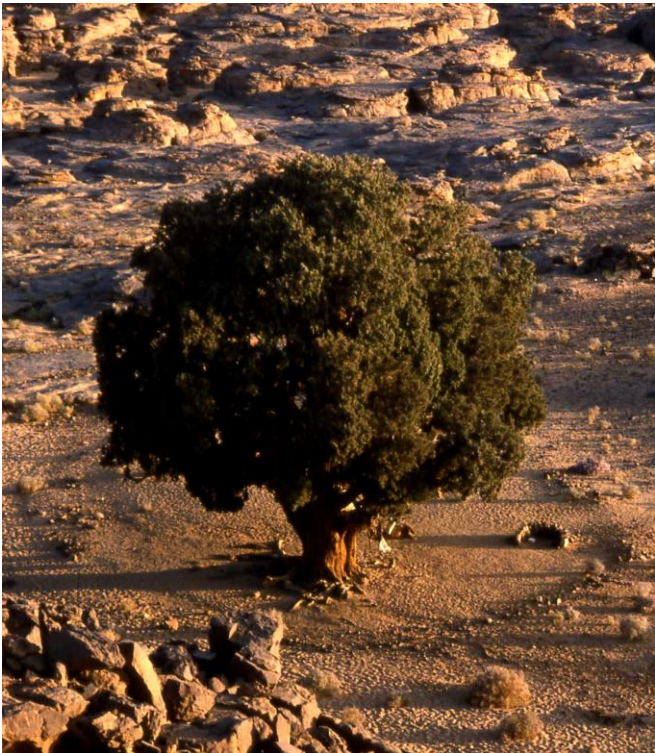


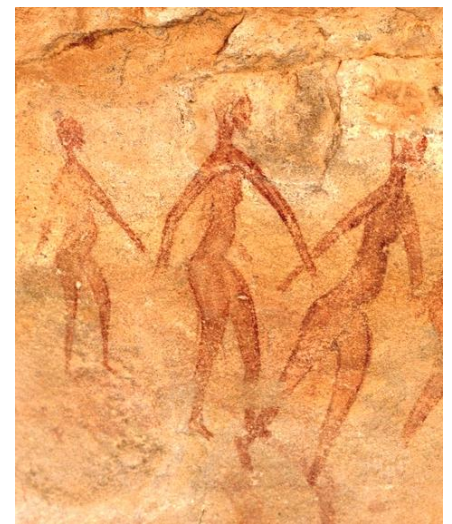
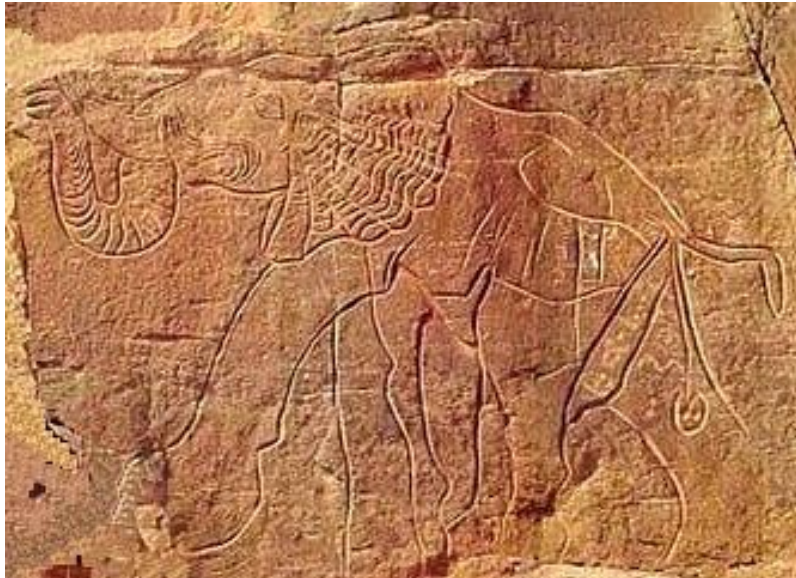
tassili mountains & national park

visiting the tassili n'ajjer mountains - a national park and world heritage site - starts in the town of djanet. this can not be done privately, one has to book an authorized service. the walk up takes hours and is demanding; usually the guides use some donkeys to carry people's luggage.

tassili is famous for its stunning landscapes, especially unique rock formations, and even more so for its prehistoric rock art - thousands of drawings and paintings have been found up there.







obviously in historic time there were lots of settlements on the plateau, but nowadays no one is living there. when walking through this large terrain, looking at the large trees and exploring less-visited side areas, one may even find some antique pieces, as i did - this was long time ago a jar!



sahara plants



of course palm trees yielding dates are the essence of plants in the sahara. yet there are also many flowers which grow wherever some humidity is at times - quite colourful little plants ...



my sahara car #1: toyota landcruiser fj55

essentials for sahara voyages:

strong engine, large wheels/tires, high ground distance, considerable robustness; 4wheel drive is a must. the toyota fj55 had a powerful 4.3 l petrol engine, and 2x4 gears.

my own preparations included: physical engine protection, extra-large tires, additional holders for the roof rack, 6 portable petrol tanks (20 l each), 2 for holders in the front of the car, 4 to be stored on the roof, metal grids for front lamps, backlights and some windows, extra-large jack, electrical and hand pump for tires, metal shields to use if digging out of a sand dune, movable strong front lamp, a car-adapted large compass, and a strong trumpet-like extra horn. later i mounted a 2nd reserve wheel.

set-up for camping:

back bench removed; mattress (200x90 cm) on wooden plates; self-made storage boxes from aluminium, mounted above the wheel frames in the back; foldable table; back end usable as seats; mini-fridge; curtains for all windows; washing lines; and special alarm system. furthermore, i established three water tanks two inside, one on the roof). a pipe for a 'mini-shower' was available. the bed was built in 13 cm above the cars floor, and this created a large storage room for food and technical tools. (see pic's below). the bed could also be set up on the roof rack.

team:

all sahara voyages were planned and conducted together with my partner, katrin.



failures:

unfortunately this car broke down on both sahara travels - once the gearbox cracked, once the front-wheel drive stopped working (see [o] in map above). however, i could drive back to europe in both cases - without 4wheel drive though, and in moderate speed only.

the reason that the gearbox cracked: it was a used 3-years old car. the previous owner had mis-used the 4-wheel drive - thus it was damaged, yet i didn't know that.

otherwise the toyota fj55 worked well in all conditions, and the strong engine was indeed a good feature.

my sahara car #2: nissan patrol stationcar long

essentials for sahara voyages:

powerful 3 l diesel engine, well-proportioned 2x4 gears, smooth gear-shift.

similar to the fj55. again i mounted extra-large tires, strengthened the roof rack, added metal grids for lamps and windows and so on. the very large jack was now placed on the front, and the metal shields on the back of the car; all 6 petrol tanks were positioned on the roof. i maintained to carry a second reserve wheel.

set-up as camping car:

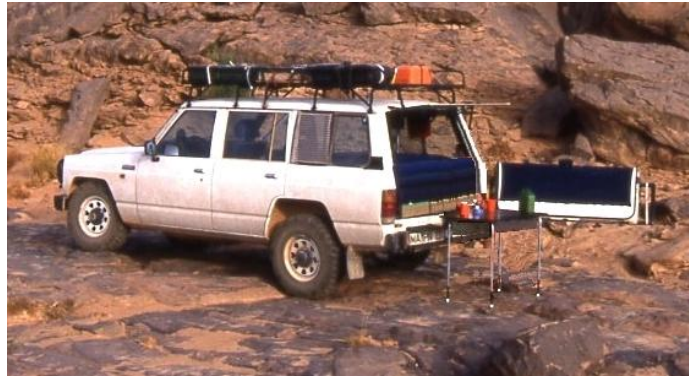
regarding my equipment installed in the fj55, i either mounted it in the patrol, including three water tanks, mattress (200x90 cm) on wooden plates, foldable table, fridge, curtains for all windows, washing lines; or i established new constructions, like self-made storage boxes from aluminium, mounted above the wheel frames in the back, metal steps to climb on the roof, and special alarm system. sitting in the back, with the table there, was again set up. the second reserve wheel was positioned on the roof as platform for photography.

failures:

none - i had never problems with this healthy 'down-to-earth' car. it was bought as new.

of course my considerable experiences from sahara voyages 1 and 2 were a good starting point.





my sahara cars on heavy tracks



so what "dangereuse"?

in quite a few regions the area is flat, so flat there are dozens of routes right beside each other. yet every now and then a mud gap or a dust hole makes driving a bit more demanding - how to get through?



seemingly harmless yet almost the death for not-so-strong cars are the feared "wellblechpisten", heavily corrugated tracks.



the two most severe trouble zones are large sand dunes and extremely rough rock areas. in sand dunes cars get easily stuck, and it's heavy work to overcome this. it can need half a dozen attempts ...



