

Alberta. We went to watch the camel races in the Sinai. They were fast, noisy and chaotic. There was so much sand; sand in my hair, in my eyes, my eyebrows, my eyelids, my eyelashes, my ears, my mouth, my throat, my nostrils, my toenails, my fingernails and in other places as well...

There was sand, gravel and dust everywhere; in my shoes, in my socks, my stockings, my tights, my trousers, my knickers, my skirt, my blouse, my bra, my shirt, my vest, my scarf, my shawl, my handbag, my backpack, my wallet and my umbrella !

Camels are remarkable. They were domesticated over 5000 years ago. They can carry heavy loads over long distances without food or water. They can easily drink 100 litres of water in a few minutes. They mate in the sitting position !

The course was a long stretch of terrain, sandy and uneven. The camels were followed by a pack of cars, driving wildly and struggling to be able to encourage their favourites as closely as possible.

Most of the riders are very young boys of about four years. It is said that the children are sometimes fixed by straps to the camel because, when they scream with fright the animals run faster.

The boys were sitting precariously above the ground while their camels reached a speed of 65 km / h. Some were thrown off. Some were injured.

Our guide told us that thousands of young children have been taken from their homes to be used as camel jockeys and The United Arab Emirates banned the use of children under 15 as jockeys in 2002.

Other countries have followed their example and in 2007 the Emir of Qatar ordered that all races use robots instead of humans.

'I have to see that,' said Mike. 'It's a good idea. Where can we see it ?'

'At Rosetta in the Nile Delta, next Saturday. That is where I live,' said the Egyptian.

'Rosetta !' exclaimed Mike. 'Do you know of the Rosetta Stone, Alberta ?' 'Of course,' I replied.

'Rosetta Stone was a gothic rock band in the 90s. I saw them play in Whitby one Saturday night. I wore my witch costume. It was a very exciting gig '

'No ! not the pop group. I mean the piece of granite which was discovered by the French lieutenant Pierre-Francois Bouchard in 1798 during the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon. It contains a decree published in Memphis in 196 BC. It is inscribed in three languages and was the key for understanding the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The French scholar, Jean-Francois Champollion published the first translation of the Rosetta Stone hieroglyphics in 1822. The Rosetta Stone is now in the British Museum.

Incidentally, I am an archaeologist and egyptologist (as well as a doctor, vet. hypnotist and linguist) and seeing Rosetta will be particularly interesting for me.' 'That is fantastic !' said the Egyptian. 'In that case I have something very special to show you, but it must be in absolute confidence.'

to be continued ...