

hemselves. They take along with them to the mining district oxen, lumps of salt, and iron, and when they reach its neighborhood they make a halt at a certain spot and form an encampment, which they fence round with a great hedge of thorns. Within this they live, and having slaughtered the oxen, cut them in pieces, and lay the pieces on the top of the thorns, along with the lumps of salt and the iron. Then come the natives bringing gold in nuggets like peas, called *tancharas*, and lay one or two or more of these upon what pleases them, the pieces of flesh or the salt or the iron, and then they retire to some distance off. Then the owner of the meat approaches, and if he is satisfied he takes the gold away, and upon seeing this its owner comes and takes the flesh or the salt or the iron. If, however, he is not satisfied, he leaves the gold, when the native seeing that he has not taken it, comes and either puts down more gold, or takes up what he had laid down, and goes away. Such is the mode in which business is transacted with the people of that country, because their language is different and interpreters are hardly to be found. The time they stay in that country is five days more or less, according as the natives more or less readily coming forward buy up all their wares. On the journey homeward they all agree to travel well-armed, since some of the tribes through whose country they must pass might threaten to attack them from a desire to rob them of their gold. The space of six months is taken up with this trading expedition, including both the going and the returning. In going they march very slowly, chiefly because of the cattle, but in returning they quicken their pace lest on the way they should be overtaken by winter and its rains. For the sources of the river Nile lie somewhere in these parts, and in winter, on account of the heavy rains, the numerous rivers which they generate obstruct the path of the traveller. The people there have their winter at the time we have our summer. It begins in the month Epiphi of the Egyptians and continues till 'hoth,'⁸ and during the three months the rain falls in torrents, and makes a multitude of rivers all of which flow into the Nile.

The facts which I have just recorded fell partly under my own observation and partly were told me by traders who had been to those parts.

8. From July to September.

3. TUAN CH'ËNG-SHIH

CHINA'S DISCOVERY OF AFRICA. 863.

Although China long had contacts with the world beyond her frontiers, intercourse with the countries beyond Asia was encouraged during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) by a long period of peace and the cosmopolitan outlook of China's rulers. The selection below is from the Yu-yang-tsa-tsu, a general book of knowledge, written by the Chinese scholar Tuan Ch'êng-shih (d. 863 C.E.).

It is, however, in the T'ang period that the first definite information appears in Chinese sources on the countries beyond India, and what is to the point here, on Africa. There is a curious work, written by the scholar Tuan Ch'êng-shih, who died in A.D. 863, called the *Yu-yang-tsa-tsu*. This book was published in the *Chin-tai-pi-shu* by Mao Chin (1598–1657). The antiquity of the text is guaranteed by the *Hsin T'ang-shu*, by Ou-yang Hsiu, completed in 1060, which has an abridged extract of it. From the chapter in which a number of exotic plants are described, it is clear that part of his information is derived from priests of *Fu-lin*, that is Tach'in or the Roman Orient and Magadha in India. Hirth has called attention to this text; in his translation, however, there are a few curious errors which make a new translation necessary.

The text runs: "The country of Po-pa-li is in the southwestern sea. (The people) do not eat any of the five grains but eat only meat. They often stick a needle into the veins of cattle and draw blood which they drink raw, mixed with milk. They wear no clothes except that they cover (the parts) below their loins with sheep-skins. Their women are clean and of proper behaviour. The inhabitants themselves kidnap them, and if they sell them to foreign merchants, they fetch several times their price. The country produces only ivory and ambergris.¹ If Persian merchants wish to go into the country, they collect around them several thousand men and present them with strips of cloth. All, whether old or young draw blood and swear an oath, and then only do they trade their products. From olden times on they were not subject to any foreign country. In fighting they use elephants' tusks and ribs and the horns of wild buffaloes as lances and they wear cuirasses² and bows and arrows. They have twenty myriads of foot soldiers. The Arabs make frequent raids upon them."

What is this country? Hirth first identified it with Berbera, on the Somali coast. This identification is confirmed by an important notice in a work about which we shall have to say a little more presently. It is the *Chu-fan-chih*, written by Chao Ju-kua, a Commissioner of foreign trade at Ch'üan-chou in Fukien province. It was

From J. J. L. Duyvendak, *China's Discovery of Africa* (London: Arthur Probsthain 1949), pp. 12–15, 22–24. Reprinted by permission.

1. A substance used in perfumes (ed.).

2. A piece of close-fitting armor for protecting the breast and back; it was originally made of leather (ed.).

completed in 1226. About one-third of its contents is drawn from an earlier work, the *Lingwai-tai-fa*, written by Chou Ch'ü-fei in 1178. This book has a note on a country called Pi-pa-lo which runs as follows:

"The country of Pi-pa-lo has four chou (departmental cities) and for the rest (the people) are all settled in villages which each try to gain the supremacy over the others by violence. They serve Heaven and do not serve the Buddha (presumably meaning that they are Mohammedans). The country produces many camels and sheep and they have camels' meat and milk as well as baked cakes as their regular food. The country produces dragon's saliva (amberggris), big elephants' tusks, and big rhinoceros horns. Some elephants' tusks weigh more than 100 catties and some rhinoceros horns more than 10 catties. There is also much putchuk, liquid storax gum, myrrh, and tortoise-shell which is extremely thick, and which (people from) other countries all come to buy. 'Among the products there is further the so-called camel-crane (i.e. the ostrich, called by the Persians *ushumrugh* and by the Arabs *teir-al-djama*, both meaning "camel-bird"), whose body to the crown is 6 or 7 feet high. It has wings and can fly, but not to any height.' Among quadrupeds there is the so-called *tsu-lu* (giraffe), striped like a camel and in size like an ox. It is yellow in colour. Its front legs are 5 feet high and its hind legs are only 3 feet. Its head is high up and is turned upwards. Its skin is an inch thick. There is also a mule with red, black, and white stripes wound as girdles around the body. Both (these kinds) are animals of the mountain wilds. They are occasional variations of the camel. The inhabitants are fond of hunting and from time to time they catch them with poisoned arrows."

The *Hsin T'ang-shu*, as I said, reproduces part of the notice on Berbera of the *Yü-yang-tsu-tsu*. It also has a short entry on another African territory, which so far as I am aware has not been noticed in this connection, viz. on Ma-lin, that is Melinda. The text says: "South-west from Fu-lin (that is the country of the Roman Orient of which 'Ch'ü-san, Alexandria, is indicated as the western border), after one traverses the desert for two thousand miles is a country called Ma-lin. It is the old P'o-sa. Its people are black and their nature is fierce. The land is pestilential and has no herbs, no trees, and no cereals. They feed the horses on dried fish; the people eat *hu-mang*; the *hu-mang* is the Persian date. They are not ashamed of debauching the wives of their fathers or chiefs, they are (in this respect) the worst of the barbarians. They call this: to seek out the proper master and subject. In the seventh moon they rest completely (i.e. Ramadan). They (then) do not send out nor receive (any merchandise) in trade and they sit drinking all night long."

There is a short note on Ts'eng-po, identified with Zanguebar, which is not particularly interesting, and one on K'unlun Ts'eng-ch'i which deserves our attention. It is in the section dealing with countries on the sea.

"K'unlun Ts'eng-ch'i is in the southwestern sea. It is adjacent to a large island in the sea. There are regularly great p'êng birds. When they fly they obscure the sun for a short time. There are wild camels, and if the p'êng birds meet them, they swal-

3. A unit of weight used in China that is generally equal to 1 1/3 pounds avoirdupois (ed.).

low them up. If one finds a feather of the p'êng bird, by cutting the quill, one can make a water-jar of it.

The products of the country are big elephants' tusks and rhinoceros' horns.

In the west "there is an island in the sea on which there are many savages. Their bodies are black as lacquer and they have frizzled hair. They are enticed by (offers of) food and then captured and sold as slaves to the Arabic countries, where they fetch a very high price. They are employed as gate-keepers, and it is said that they have no longing for their kinsfolk."

There can be little doubt that the island mentioned is Madagascar. The p'êng bird is the legendary rukh, and perhaps it was the presence of the now extinct dodo which is at the origin of the story that it was found there. Marco Polo says that it can swallow an elephant. Yule explains the story of the quills as the fronds of the raphia palm; Ferrand identifies it with the use made of the *langana* (Malgash), a big bamboo, about 15 centimeters in diameter and 2 meters long, in which the knots have been perforated with the exception of the one at the end, so as to turn it into a water vessel. These *langana* are particularly used by the coast tribes of Madagascar.

The capturing of slaves brings up an interesting question. Chou Ch'ü-fei inserts another sentence: "Thousands of them are sold as foreign slaves."

It is certain that some of these slaves came to China. Foreign slaves were designated by various names. K'un-lun-nu, K'un-lun slaves is one of them. The word *k'un-lun* has had an interesting history. Used early on as the name of the fabulous mountains in the West, the home of Hsi-wang-nu, the word originally seems to mean the round vault of the sky, in which as it were, these gigantic Tibetan mountains seem to lose themselves. Etymologically, it is certainly connected with the bipom *hun-lun*, "chaos." The K'un-lun mountains are also identified with the Anavatapia mountain and the Surmeru in India, well known in Buddhist literature. Now the Chinese have applied the term *k'un-lun* to the peoples, mostly of the Malay race, whom they found at the ends of the earth. At first chiefly confined to the races of the South-West, later, as the geographic knowledge of the Chinese expanded, the same term was applied to the native races of the countries around the Indian Ocean, including the Negroes.

We also find Seng-chih-nu, slaves from Seng-chih, which undoubtedly is the same as Ts'eng-ch'i, as transcription of Zanggi, the general Arabic word for Negroes. In the name of the country K'un-lun Ts'eng-ch'i (k'i), we may therefore recognize the country of the blacks, Zanzibar, prefixed by the appellation K'un-lun, a curious, though perhaps accidental, reminder of the Malay origin of the inhabitants of Madagascar.

Slaves are further called: *kuei-nu*, "devil-slaves," *yeh-jen*, "wild men," *hei-hsiao-sai*, "black servants," *fan hsiao-sai*, "barbarian servants," or *fan-nu*, "barbarian slaves." These names may sometimes have designated Malay slaves in general, but often they undoubtedly refer to Negro-slaves. We hear about them quite early: the priest Tao-an is called K'un-lun-tzai, "the K'un-lun," or the Ch'i-tao-jen, "the lacquered monk," because he was so dark in spite of his being a northern Chinese. The later consort of Emperor Chien-wen of the Chin dynasty was nicknamed "K'un-lun" by the courtiers, because she was tall and of a dark colour. The *P'ing-chou-k'o-t'an*

writes: "In Kuang-chou most of the wealthy people keep devil-slaves. They are very strong and can lift (weights of) several hundred catties. Their language and tastes are unintelligible. Their nature is simple and they do not run away. They are also called 'wild men.' Their colour is black as ink, their lips are red and their teeth white, their hair is curly and yellow. There are males and females (*N.B.*: the term for animals is used). They live in the mountains (or islands) beyond the seas. They eat raw things. If, in captivity, they are fed on cooked food, after several days they get diarrhoea. This is called 'changing the bowels.' For this reason they sometimes fall ill and die; if they do not die one can keep them, and after having been kept a long time they begin to understand people's language, although they themselves cannot speak it. There is one kind of wild men near the sea who can enter the water without blinking their eyes. They are called K'un-lun slaves."

That the slave-trade, whether of Negroes or other tribes of the Indian Ocean was pretty extensive also appears from a notice in the *Ling-wai-tai-tai*: "The people of Chan-ch'eng (Champa) buy male and female slaves; and the ships carry human beings as cargo." Chao Jukua adds that a boy was priced at 3 taels of gold or the equivalent in aromatic wood. Slaves were also used on board ships for mending a leaky ship from the outside under water.

There is a strange pathos in the thought of these melancholy, silent, black slaves, who were supposed to have no longing for their home, in medieval China, used as doorkeepers.

4. IBN BATTUTA

THE EAST AFRICAN COAST. 1331.

The celebrated Muslim traveler Ibn Battuta (1304-1368/9) traversed nearly the whole of the Muslim world and beyond during his many years of wandering. Born in Tangiers, he made the first of his four pilgrimages to Mecca when he was twenty-one; thereafter, his passion was to "travel throughout the earth," never twice by the same road. His second journey took him through southern Iraq and southwest Persia, then to Tabriz and northwestern Mesopotamia. He subsequently traveled along the Red Sea, down the East African coast, and returned via the Persian Gulf. His fourth journey took him to Constantinople and from there to India, where he arrived in September 1333. He resided in India for several years in the service of the Sultan, traveling to China on the latter's behalf in 1342. Ibn Battuta then returned to the West, visiting Andalusia and the western Sudan. The account of this intelligent and perceptive observer provides an invaluable picture of the East African coast in 1331.

From *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, A.D. 1325-1354, trans. and edited by H. A. R. Gibb (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1962), vol. II, pp. 373-382. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society. In this selection inserts bracketed into the text are those of H. A. R. Gibb.

I travelled from the city of Adan by sea for four days and arrived at the city of Zaila, the city of the Barbara¹ who are a people of the negroes² Shafites in rite. Their country is a desert extending for two months' journey, beginning at Zaila and ending at Maqdashaw. Their cattle are camels, and they also have sheep which are famed for their fat. The inhabitants of Zaila are black in colour, and the majority of them are Rafidis.³ It is a large city with a great bazaar, but it is in the dirtiest, most disagreeable, and most stinking town in the world. The reason for its stench is the quantity of its fish and the blood of the camels that they slaughter in the streets. When we arrived there we chose to spend the night at sea in spite of its extreme roughness, rather than pass a night in the town, because of its filth.

We sailed on from there for fifteen nights and came to Maqdashaw, which is a town of enormous size.⁴ Its inhabitants are merchants possessed of vast resources; they own large numbers of camels, of which they slaughter hundreds every day [for food], and also have quantities of sheep. In this place are manufactured the woven fabrics called after it, which are unequalled and exported from it to Egypt and elsewhere. It is the custom of the people of this town that, when a vessel reaches the anchorage, the *sumbags*, which are small boats, come out to it. In each *sumbag* there are a number of young men of the town, each one of whom brings a covered platter containing food and presents it to one of the merchants on the ship saying "This is my guest," and each of the others does the same. The merchant, on disembarking, goes only to the house of his host among the young men, except those of them who have made frequent journeys to the town and have gained some acquaintance with its inhabitants; these lodge where they please. When he takes up residence with his host, the latter sells his goods for him and buys for him; and if anyone buys anything from him at too low a price or sells to him in the absence of his host, that sale is held invalid by them. This practice is a profitable one for them.

When the young men came on board the vessel in which I was, one of them came up to me. My companions said to him "This man is not a merchant, but a doctor of the law," whereupon he called out to his friends and said to them "This is the guest of the qadi." There was among them one of the qadi's men, who informed him of this, and he came down to the beach with a number of students and sent one of them to me. I then disembarked with my companions and saluted him and his party. He said to me "In the name of God, let us go to salute the Shaikh." "And who is the Shaikh?" I said, and he answered, "The Sultan," for it is their custom to call the sultan "the Shaikh." Then I said to him "When I am lodged, I shall go to him," but he said to me, "It is the custom that whenever there comes a jurist or a sharif or a man

1. Zaila, on a sandy spit on the Somali coast due south of Aden, was included at this time in the Ethiopian kingdom of Awfat or Ifat. . . . By the term *Barbara* the Arabic geographers apparently mean the Hamitic tribes who are neither Abyssinian (*Habash*) nor negroes (*Zinj*), and more especially the Somalis, although Ibn Battuta here includes them among the negroes.

2. Arabic *Zinj* or *Zanj*, a term ultimately derived from Persian or Sanskrit. Probably in the language of the seamen of the Persian Gulf.

3. I.e., Shiites, probably of the Zaidi sect.

4. Mogadishu was founded in the tenth century as a trading colony by Arabs from the Persian Gulf, the principal group being from al-Hasa. . . .

of religion, he must first see the sultan before taking a lodging." So I went with him to the sultan, as they asked.

*Account of the Sultan of Magdashaw.*⁵ The sultan of Magdashaw is, as we have mentioned, called only by the title of "the Shaikh." His name is Abu Bakr, son of the shaikh Omar; he is by origin of the Barbara and he speaks in Magdishi, but knows the Arabic language. One of his customs is that, when a vessel arrives, the sultan's *sumbuq* goes out to it, and enquiries are made as to the ship, whence it has come, who is its owner and its *rubban* (that is, its captain), what is its cargo, and who has come on it of merchants and others. When all of this information has been collected, it is presented to the sultan, and if there are any persons [of such quality] that the sultan should assign a lodging to him as his guest, he does so.

When I arrived with the qadi I have mentioned, who was called Ibn al-Burhan, an Egyptian by origin, at the sultan's residence, one of the serving-boys came out and saluted the qadi, who said to him "Take word to the intendant's office and inform the Shaikh that this man has come from the land of al-Hijaz." So he took the message, then returned bringing a plate on which were some leaves of betel and areca nuts. He gave me ten leaves along with a few of the nuts, the same to the qadi, and what was left on the plate to my companions and the qadi's students. He brought also a jug of rose-water of Damascus, which he poured over me and over the qadi [i.e. over our hands], and said "Our master commands that he be lodged in the students' house," this being a building equipped for the entertainment of students of religion. The qadi took me by the hand and we went to this house, which is in the vicinity of the Shaikh's residence, and furnished with carpets and all necessary appointments. Later on [the serving boy] brought food from the Shaikh's residence. With him came one of his viziers, who was responsible for [the care of] the guests, and who said "Our master greets you and says to you that you are heartily welcome." He then set down the food and we ate. Their food is rice cooked with ghee, which they put into a large wooden platter, and on top of this they set platters of *kushan*.⁶ This is the seasoning made of chickens, fleshmeat, fish, and vegetables. They cook unripe bananas in fresh milk and put this in one dish, and in another dish they put curdled milk, on which they place pieces of pickled lemon, bunches of pickled pepper steeped in vinegar and salted, green ginger, and mangoes. These resemble apples, but have a stone; when ripe they are exceedingly sweet and are eaten like [other] fruit, but before ripening they are acid like lemons, and they pickle them in vinegar. When they take a mouthful of rice, they eat some of these salted and vinegar conserves after it. A single person of the people of Magdashaw eats as much as a whole company of us would eat, as a matter of habit, and they are corpulent and fat in the extreme.

5. The various Arab tribes occupied different quarters in Mogadishu (hence presumably its expansion), but recognized the supremacy of the tribe of Muqri, who called themselves Qahtanis, i.e. south-Arabians, and furnished the qadi of the city. The sultanate seems to have emerged only towards the end of the thirteenth century, and the most noted of its sultans was this Abu Bakr b. Fakhr al-Din.

6. *Kushan* is probably a term of the Persian Gulf seamen for seasonings of meat and vegetables resembling curries, served with rice. The origin may be related to Persian *gushan*, glossed as "meats and fruit pulps."

After we had eaten, the qadi took leave of us. We stayed there three days, food being brought to us three times a day, following their custom. On the fourth day, which was a Friday, the qadi and students and one of the Shaikh's viziers came to me, bringing a set of robes; these [official] robes of theirs consist of a silk wrapper which one ties round his waist in place of drawers (for they have no acquaintance with these), a tunic of Egyptian linen with an embroidered border, a furred mantle of Jerusalem stuff, and an Egyptian turban with an embroidered edge. They also brought robes for my companions suitable to their position. We went to the congregational mosque and made our prayers behind the *maqsura*.⁷

When the Shaikh came out of the door of the *maqsura* I saluted him along with the qadi; he said a word of greeting, spoke in their tongue with the qadi, and then said in Arabic "You are heartily welcome, and you have honoured our land and given us pleasure." He went out to the court of the mosque and stood by the grave of his father, who is buried there, then recited some verses from the Quran and said a prayer. After this the viziers, amirs, and officers of the troops came up and saluted him. Their manner of salutation is the same as the custom of the people of al-Yaman; one puts his forefinger to the ground, then raises it to his head and says "May God prolong thy majesty." The Shaikh then went out of the gate of the mosque, put on his sandals, ordered the qadi to put on his sandals and me to do likewise, and set out on foot for his residence, which is close to the mosque. All the [rest of the] people walked barefoot. Over his head were carried four canopies of coloured silk, with the figure of a bird in gold on top of each canopy.⁸ His garments on that day were a large green mantle of Jerusalem stuff, with fine robes of Egyptian stuffs with their appendages underneath it, and he was girt with a waist-wrapper of silk and turbaned with a large turban. In front of him were sounded drums and trumpets and fifes, and before and behind him were the commanders of the troops, while the qadi, the doctors of the law, and the sharifs walked alongside him. He entered his audience-hall in this disposition, and the viziers, amirs, and officers of the troops sat down in a gallery there. For the qadi there was spread a rug, on which no one may sit but he, and beside him were the jurists and sharifs. They remained there until the hour of the afternoon prayer, and after they had prayed it, the whole body of troops came and stood in rows in order of their ranks. Thereafter the drums, fifes, trumpets, and flutes are sounded; while they play no person moves or stirs from his place, and anyone who is walking stands still, moving neither backwards nor forwards. When the playing of the drum-band comes to an end, they salute with their fingers as we have described and withdraw. This is a custom of theirs on every Friday.

On the Saturday, the population comes to the Shaikh's gate and they sit in porticoes outside his residence. The qadi, jurists, sharifs, men of religion, shaikhs, and

7. The enclosure in the congregational mosque reserved for the ruler.

8. Ibn Battuta does not call these by the name of the ceremonial parasol, *jir*, the use of which had been apparently introduced by the Fatimid caliphs of Egypt and spread to all parts of the Muslim world. But apart from the fact of the four "canopies" (*qibab*), it is difficult to see how these differed from the parasols, especially as the latter too were often surmounted by the figure of a bird.

those who have made the Pilgrimage go in to the second audience-hall, where they sit on platforms prepared for that purpose. The qadi will be on a platform by himself, and each class of persons on the platform proper to them, which is shared by no others. The Shaikh then takes his seat in his hall and sends for the qadi, who sits down on his left; thereafter the jurists enter, and the principal men amongst them sit down in front of the Shaikh, while the remainder salute and withdraw. Next the sharifs come in, their principal men sit down in front of him, and the remainder salute and withdraw. If they are guests, they sit on the Shaikh's right. Next the shaikhs and pilgrims come in, and their principal men sit, and the rest salute and withdraw. Then come the viziers, then the amirs, then the officers of the troops, group after group, and they salute and withdraw. Food is brought in; the qadi and sharifs and all those who are sitting in the hall eat in the presence of the Shaikh, and he eats with them. If he wishes to honour one of his principal amirs, he sends for him, and the latter eats with them. The rest of the people eat in the dining-hall, and the order of eating is the same as their order of entry into the Shaikh's presence. The Shaikh then goes into his residence, and the qadi, with the viziers, the private secretary, and four of the principal amirs, sits for deciding cases among the population and petitioners. Every case that is concerned with the rulings of the Divine Law is decided by the qadi, and all cases other than those are decided by the members of the council, that is to say, the viziers and amirs. If any case calls for consultation of the sultan, they write to him about it, and he sends out the reply to them immediately on the reverse of the document as determined by his judgment. And this too is their fixed custom.

I then sailed from the city of Maqdashaw, making for the country of the Sawahil [Coastlands], with the object of visiting the city of Kulwa in the land of the Zinj people. We came to the island of Mambasa, a large island two days' journey by sea from the Sawahil country.⁹ It has no mainland territory, and its trees are the banana, the lemon, and the citron. Its people have a fruit which they call *jammun*, resembling an olive and with a stone like its stone. The inhabitants of this island sow no grain, and it has to be transported to them from the Sawahil. Their food consists mostly of bananas and fish. They are Shafites in rite, pious, honourable, and upright, and their mosques are of wood, admirably constructed. At each of the gates of the mosques there are one or two wells (their wells have a depth of one or two cubits), and they draw up water from them in a wooden vessel, into which has been fixed a thin stick of the length of one cubit. The ground round the well and the mosque is paved; anyone who intends to go into the mosque washes his feet before entering, and at its gate there is a piece of thick matting on which he rubs his feet. If one intends to make an ablution, he holds the vessel between his thighs, pours [water] on his hands and performs the ritual washings. All the people walk with bare feet.

9. *Sahih*, literally "coastland," meant in maritime usage a port serving as an entrepôt for the goods of its hinterland. . . . Mambasa is separated from the mainland only by a narrow strait, but Ibn Battuta apparently means that it is two days sailing time from the "Coastlands" properly so called, i.e. the trading ports to the southward.

We stayed one night in this island and sailed on to the city of Kulwa, a large city on the seacoast," most of whose inhabitants are Zinj, jet-black in colour. They have tattoo marks on their faces, just as [there are] on the faces of the *Limis* of Janawa.¹⁰ I was told by a merchant that the city of Sufala¹¹ lies at a distance of half a month's journey from the city of Kulwa, and that between Sufala and Yufi, in the country of the *Limis*, is a month's journey; from Yufi gold dust is brought to Sufala.¹² The city of Kulwa is one of the finest and most substantially built towns; all the buildings are of wood, and the houses are roofed with *dis* reeds. The rains there are frequent. Its people engage in *jihad*, because they are on a common mainland with the heathen Zinj people and contiguous to them, and they are for the most part religious and upright, and Shafites in rite.

Account of the Sultan of Kubwa. Its sultan at the period of my entry into it was Abul-Muzaffar Hasan, who was called also by the appellation of Abul-Mawahib, on account of the multitude of his gifts and acts of generosity. He used to engage frequently in expeditions to the land of the Zinj people, raiding them and taking booty, and he would set aside the fifth part of it to devote to the objects prescribed for it in the Book of God Most High. He used to deposit the portion for the relatives [of the Prophet] in a separate treasury; whenever he was visited by sharifs he would pay it out to them, and the sharifs used to come to visit him from al-Iraq and al-Hijaz and other countries. I saw at his court a number of the sharifs of al-Hijaz, amongst them Muhammad b. Jammaz, Mansur b. Lubaida b. Abu Numayy, and Muhammad b. Shumaila b. Abu Numayy, and at Maqdashaw I met Tabl b. Kubaish b. Jammaz, who was intending to go to him. This sultan is a man of great humility; he sits with poor brethren, and eats with them, and greatly respects men of religion and noble descent.

An anecdote illustrating his generosity. I was present with him on a Friday, when he had come out [of the mosque] after the prayer and was proceeding to his residence. He was accosted by a poor brother, a Yamanite, who said to him "O Abul-Mawahib," he replied "At your service, O faqir—what do you want?" The man said, "Give me those robes that you are wearing." He said "Certainly I shall give you them." The man said "Now," and he said "Yes, now," went back to the mosque and into the khatib's chamber, where he dressed in other garments, and having taken off those robes he called to the poor brother "Come in and take them." So the faqir came in, took them, made a bundle of them in a kerchief, placed them on his head and went off. The population were loud in their gratitude to the sultan for the humil-

10. Kulwa (Kulwa is not otherwise attested), Quiloa of the Portuguese chronicles, now Kilwa Kisiwani in Tanganyika (8°57' S., 39°34' E.), 340 miles south of Mombasa. . . .

11. *Limis* is a variant form of *Lamian*, applied by the Arab geographers to the (supposedly cannibal) tribes of the interior. Janawa was the name given to the country of the pagan tribes south of the Muslim lands in West Africa, which passed into Portuguese and thence into English as Guinea.

12. Sufala, at 20°10' S., 34°42' E., was the southernmost trading station of the Arabs in Africa, founded by colonists from Mogadishu.

13. Yufi is the kingdom of Nupe in West Africa. This confusion between the gold dust of the Niger and the mined gold ore of Sufala and the assumption of a connection between them are probably due to some misunderstanding on Ibn Battuta's part.

ity and generosity that he had displayed, and his son, who was his designated heir, took the clothing from the poor brother and gave him ten slaves in exchange. When the sultan learned of the gratitude expressed by the people to him for that action, he too ordered the faqir to be given ten head of slaves and two loads of ivory, for most of their gifts consist of ivory and it is seldom that they give gold. When this worthy and open-handed sultan died (God have mercy on him), he was succeeded by his brother Daud, who was of the opposite line of conduct. When a petitioner came to him he would say to him "He who gave is dead, and left nothing behind to be given." Visitors would stay at his court for many months, and finally he would make them some small gift, so that at last solicitors gave up coming to his gate.

5. IBN BATTUTA

MALI. 1352.

AUDIENCES OF THE SULTAN OF MALI

Sometimes the sultan [of Mali] holds meetings in the place where he has his audiences. There is a dais in that place, situated under a tree, with three big steps called *penpi*. The dais is covered with silk and embellished with cushions, and above it is placed a parasol that looks like a silken dome. On the top of the parasol is a golden bird as big as a sparrow hawk. The sultan goes out by a well-used door in a corner of the castle. He holds his bow in his hand and wears his quiver on his back. On his head he wears a gold hat that is held in place by a band, also of gold. The ends of the hat are tapered like knives longer than a hand's span. Most often he is dressed in a red velvet tunic, made of either European cloth called *mothanfus* or deep pile cloth.

The singers come out in front of the sultan, and they hold *kanakir* (instruments whose name in the singular is doubtless *konbara*, which means lark) of gold and silver. Behind him are about 300 armed slaves. The sovereign walks patiently, advancing very slowly. When he arrives at the *penpi*, he stops and looks at those who are there. Then he slowly goes up onto the dais as the priest mounts his pulpit. As soon as the sultan is seated, drums are beaten, a horn is sounded, and trumpets blare.

What I Found to Be Praiseworthy About the Conduct of the Negroes in Contrast to What I Found to Be Bad

Among the good qualities of this people, we must cite the following:

1. The small number of acts of injustice that take place there [in Mali], for of all people, the Negroes abhor it [injustice] the most. Their sultan never pardons anyone

From Ibn Battuta, *Ibn Batoutah*, trans. from the Arabic by C. Defremery and B. R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1863), vol. IV, pp. 405-407, 421-424, 440-442. Trans. from the French by Nell Elizabeth Painter and Robert O. Collins.

guilty of injustice.

2. The general and complete security that is enjoyed in the country. The traveler, just as the sedentary man, has nothing to fear of brigands, thieves, or plunderers.

3. The blacks do not confiscate the goods of white men who die in their country, even when these men possess immense treasures. On the contrary, the blacks deposit the goods with a man respected among the whites, until the individuals to whom the goods rightfully belong present themselves and take possession of them.

4. The Negroes say their prayers correctly; they say them assiduously in the meetings of the faithful and strike their children if they fall these obligations. On Friday, whoever does not arrive at the mosque early finds no place to pray because the temple becomes so crowded. The blacks have a habit of sending their slaves to the mosque to spread out the mats they use during prayers in the places to which each slave has a right, to wait for their master's arrival. These mats are made from a tree that resembles the palm but that bears no fruit.

5. The Negroes wear handsome white clothes every Friday. If, by chance, one of them possesses only one shirt or a worn-out tunic, he at least washes and cleans it and wears it to the public prayers.

6. They are very zealous in their attempt to learn the holy *Quran* by heart. In the event that their children are negligent in this respect, fetters are placed on the children's feet and are left until the children can recite the *Quran* from memory. On a holiday I went to see the judge, and seeing his children in chains, I asked him, "Aren't you going to let them go?" He answered, "I won't let them go until they know the *Quran* by heart." Another day I passed a young Negro with a handsome face who was wearing superb and carrying a heavy chain around his feet. I asked the person who was with me, "What did that boy do? Did he murder someone?" The young Negro heard my question and began to laugh. My colleague told me, "He has been chained up only to force him to commit the *Quran* to memory."

Some of the blameworthy actions of these people are:

1. The female servants and slaves, as well as little girls, appear before men completely/naked. I observed this practice a great deal during the month of Ramadan [the ninth month and time of fasting in the Muslim year], for the usual custom among the Negroes is for the Commanders to break the fast in the sultan's palace and for each of them to be served by female slaves who are entirely nude and who bring the food to the number of twenty or more.

2. All the women who come into the sovereign's house are nude and wear no veils over their faces; the sultan's daughters also go naked. On the twenty-seventh night of the month of Ramadan, I saw about a hundred female slaves come out with the food for the sultan's palace, and they were nude. Two of the sovereign's daughters, who had been gifted with very large chests, accompanied the slaves and had no covering whatsoever.

3. The blacks throw dust and ashes on their heads to show that they are educated and as a sign of respect.

4. Negroes practice a sort of buffoonery when the poets recite their verses to the sultan, as described elsewhere.

5. Finally, a good number of the Negroes eat vultures, dogs, and asses.

THE COPPER MINE

The copper mine is situated outside Takedda. Slaves of both sexes dig into the soil and take the ore to the city to smelt it in the houses. As soon as the red copper has been obtained, it is made into bars one and one-half handspans long—some thin, some thick. Four hundred of the thick bars equal a ducat of gold; six or seven hundred of the thin bars are also worth a ducat of gold. These bars serve as a means of exchange, in place of coin. With the thin bars, meat and firewood are bought; with the thick bars, male and female slaves, millet, butter, and wheat can be bought.

The copper of Takedda is exported to the city Couber [Gobir], situated in the land of the pagan Negroes. Copper is also exported to Zaghai [Dyakhwa-western Masina] and to the land of Bernon [Bornu], which is forty days distant from Takedda and is inhabited by Muslims. Idris, king of the Muslims, never shows himself before the people and never speaks to them unless he is behind a curtain. Beautiful slaves, eunuchs, and cloth dyed with saffron are brought from Bernon to many different countries. . . .

6. ANTONIUS MALFANTE

TAWAT AND THE WESTERN SUDAN TRADE. 1447.

No details are known about the author of the following letter, written from Tawat (Tuat) in 1447 by Antonius Malfante and addressed to Giovanni Maritano in Genoa. Tawat was centrally located in the Sahara and was an important oasis on the road from Aïr, over which passed trade from the Hausa city-states of northern Nigeria.

After we had come from the sea, that is from Hono [Honein], we journeyed on horseback, always southwards, for about twelve days. For seven days we encountered no dwelling—nothing but sandy plains; we proceeded as though at sea, guided by the sun during the day, at night by the stars. At the end of the seventh day, we arrived at a *ksour* [Tabelbert], where dwelt very poor people who supported themselves on water and a little sandy ground. They sow little, living upon the numerous date palms. At this *ksour* [oasis, ed.] we had come into Tawet [Tawat, a group of oases]. In this place there are eighteen quarters, enclosed within one wall, and ruled by an oligarchy. Each ruler of a quarter protects his followers, whether they be in the right or no. The quarters closely adjoin each other and are jealous of their privileges. Everyone arriving here places himself under the protection of one of these rulers, who will protect him to the death: thus merchants enjoy very great security, much greater, in my opinion, than in kingdoms such as Thermicemo [Tlemcen]

From The Voyages of Cadamosto and Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century, trans. from the Italian and edited by G. R. Crone (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1937), pp. 85-90. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society. In this selection the place names in brackets have been supplied by G. R. Crone.

and Tunisie [Tunis].

Though I am a Christian, no one ever addressed an insulting word to me. They said they had never seen a Christian before. It is true that on my first arrival they were scornful of me, because they all wished to see me, saying with wonder "This Christian has a countenance like ours"—for they believed that Christians had disguised faces. Their curiosity was soon satisfied, and now I can go alone anywhere, with no one to say an evil word to me.

There are many Jews, who lead a good life here, for they are under the protection of the several rulers, each of whom defends his own clients. Thus they enjoy very secure social standing. Trade is in their hands, and many of them are to be trusted with the greatest confidence.

This locality is a mart of the country of the Moors, to which merchants come to sell their goods: gold is carried hither, and bought by those who come up from the coast. This place is De Amamento [Tamentit], and there are many rich men here. The generality, however, are very poor, for they do not sow, nor do they harvest anything, save the dates upon which they subsist. They eat no meat but that of castrated camels, which are scarce and very dear.

It is true that the Arabs with whom I came from the coast brought with them corn and barley which they sell throughout the year at "f. saracen, la nostra mina."

It never rains here: if it did, the houses, being built of salt in the place of reeds, would be destroyed.² It is scarcely ever cold here: in summer the heat is extreme, wherefore they are almost all blacks. The children of both sexes go naked up to the age of fifteen. These people observe the religion and law of Muhammad. In the vicinity there are 150 to 200 *ksour*.

In the lands of the blacks, as well as here, dwell the Philistines [the Tuareg], who live, like the Arabs, in tents. They are without number, and hold sway over the land of Gazola³ from the borders of Egypt to the shores of the Ocean, as far as Massa and Safi, and over all the neighbouring towns of the blacks. They are fair, strong in body and very handsome in appearance. They ride without stirrups, with simple spurs. They are governed by kings, whose heirs are the sons of their sisters—for such is their law. They keep their mouths and noses covered. I have seen many of them here, and have asked them through an interpreter why they cover their mouths and noses thus. They replied: "We have inherited this custom from our ancestors." They are sworn enemies of the Jews, who do not dare to pass hither. Their faith is that of the Blacks. Their sustenance is milk and flesh, no corn or barley, but much rice. Their sheep, cattle, and camels are without number. One breed of camel, white as

1. A Saracen was the Arab coin known as the *dinar*; *Mina* was a measure equalling approximately half a bushel. The "f." perhaps stands for "six."

2. De la Roncière suggests that this is not a description of Tamentit but of Taghaza, where the houses were all built of rock salt.

3. Gazola (the *Gazula* of Idrisi) appears on many portolan charts, sometimes applied to a town, sometimes to a region. On the Pizigani chart of 1373 there is a cape, probably Cape Nun, called "Caput finis Gozole." It has been derived from the Berber people, the Guezzalah, a branch of which inhabited the Sus, as used by Malfante it appears to be applied to the same area as "Sarra," or Sahara, of other contemporary writers.

snow, can cover in one day a distance which would take a horseman four days to travel. Great warriors, these people are continually at war amongst themselves.

The states which are under their rule border upon the land of the Blacks. I shall speak of those known to men here, and which have inhabitants of the faith of Muhammad. In all, the great majority are Blacks, but there are a small number of whites [i.e. tawny Moors].

First, Tsegida,⁴ which comprises one province and three *ksour*; Checoli,⁵ which is as large.

Chuchiam,⁶ Thambet [Timbuktul], Geni [Djenné], and Meli [Mali], said to have nine towns:

Thora [unidentified], Oden [Wadan], Dendi,⁷ Sagoto [unidentified], Bofon [unidentified], Igdem [unidentified], Bembo,⁸ all these are great cities, capitals of extensive lands and towns under their rule.

These adhere to the law of Muhammad.

To the south of these are innumerable great cities and territories, the inhabitants of which are all blacks and idolators, continually at war with each other in defence of their law and faith of their idols. Some worship the sun, others the moon, the seven planets, fire, or water; others a mirror which reflects their faces, which they take to be the images of gods; others groves of trees, the seats of a spirit to whom they make sacrifice;⁹ others again, statues of wood and stone, with which, they say, they commune by incantations. They relate here extraordinary things of this people.

The lord in whose protection I am, here, who is the greatest in this land, having a fortune of more than 100,000 *doubles* [a billion coin], brother of the most important merchant in Thambet, and a man worthy of credence, relates that he lived for thirty years in that town, and, as he says, for fourteen years in the land of the Blacks. Every day he tells me wonderful things of these peoples. He says that these lands and peoples extend endlessly to the south: they all go naked, save for a small loincloth to cover their privates. They have an abundance of flesh, milk, and rice, but no corn or barley.

Through these lands flows a very large river¹⁰ which at certain times of the year inundates all these lands. This river passes by the gates of Tambet, and flows through Egypt; and is that which passes by Carium.¹¹ There are many boats on it, by which they carry on trade. It would be possible, they say, to descend to Egypt by this river, were it not that at a certain spot it falls 300 cubits over a rock,¹² on account

4. Takedda, five days' march west-south-west of Agadez.

5. Possible Es Suk (Tadmekka), north of Takedda at the head of the Tilemsi valley.

6. Probably Gao.

7. Dendi, probably the original home of the Songhai.

8. Possibly Bambar, a town on the Middle Niger.

9. Cf. Seligmann. "The Bambara have been little affected by Islam and retain their animistic beliefs and ancestor worship. Each village has its presiding spirit (*dasiri*) or divine ancestor, usually resident in a tree at which sacrifices are made and prayers offered by the *dinguigi* on all important occasions."

10. The Niger. It is to be noted that Malifante correctly implies that it flows eastwards, of which there was no certain knowledge till the end of the eighteenth century.

11. Carro. On the confusion between the Niger and the Nile.

12. This appears reminiscent of the cataracts of the Nile.

of which boats cannot go or return. This river flows at about twenty days' journey on horseback from here.

These people have trees which produce an edible butter,¹³ of which there is an abundance here. I have seen them bearing it hither: it is as wonderful an unguent as the butter of sheep. The slaves which the blacks take in their intestine wars are sold at a very low price, the maximum being two *doubles* a head. These peoples, who cover the land in multitudes, are in carnal acts like the beasts; the father has knowledge of his daughter, the son of his sister. They breed greatly, for a woman bears up to five at a birth. Nor can it be doubted that they are eaters of human flesh, for many people have gone hence into their country. Neither there nor here are there ever epidemics.

When the blacks catch sight of a white man from a distance, they take to flight as though from a monster, believing him to be a phantom. They are unlettered, and without books. They are great magicians, evoking by incense diabolical spirits, with whom, they say, they perform marvels.

"It is not long since I was in Cuchia [Gao], distant fifty days' journey from here, where there are Moors," my patron said to me. "A heathen king, with five hundred thousand men, came from the south to lay siege to the city of Vallo. Upon the hill within the city were fifty Moors, almost all blacks. They saw that they were by day surrounded by a human river, by night by a girdle of flames and looked upon themselves as already defeated and enslaved. But their king, who was in the city, was a great magician and necromancer; he concluded with the besieger a pact by which each was to produce by incantation a black goat. The two goats would engage in battle, and the master of that which was beaten, was likewise to consider himself defeated. The besieger emerged victorious from the contest, and, taking the town, did not allow one soul to escape, but put the entire population to the sword. He found much treasure there. The town to-day is almost completely deserted save for a poverty-stricken few who have come to dwell there."

Of such were the stories which I heard daily in plenty. The wares for which there is a demand here are many: but the principal articles are copper, and salt in slabs, bars, and cakes. The copper of Romania [the Byzantine Empire], which is obtained through Alexandria, is always in great demand throughout the land of the Blacks. I frequently enquired what they did with it, but no one could give me a definite answer. I believe it is that there are so many peoples that there is almost nothing but is of use to them.

The Egyptian merchants come to trade in the land of the Blacks with half a million head of cattle and camels—a figure which is not fantastic in this region.

The place where I am is good for trade, as the Egyptians and other merchants come hither from the land of the Blacks bringing gold, which they exchange for copper and other goods. Thus everything sells well; until there is nothing left for sale. The people here will neither sell nor buy unless at a profit of one hundred per cent. For this reason, I have lost, Laus Deol, on the goods I brought here, two thousand *doubles*.

13. The Karité tree, the most characteristic of the Savannah. The butter is obtained from the

From what I can understand, these people neighbour on India.¹⁴ Indian merchants come hither, and converse through interpreters. These Indians are Christians, adorers of the cross. It is said that in the land of the Blacks there are forty dialects, so that they are unable to understand each other.

I often enquired where the gold was found and collected; my patron always replied "I was fourteen years in the land of the Blacks, and I have never heard nor seen anyone who could reply from definite knowledge. That is my experience, as to how it is found and collected. What appears plain is that it comes from a distant land, and, as I believe, from a definite zone." He also said that he had been in places where silver was as valuable as gold.

This land is twenty-eight days' journey from Cambacies,¹⁵ and is the city with the best market. It is twenty-five days from Tunis, from Tripoli in Barbary twenty days, from Trimecen [Tlemcen] thirty days, from Fecia [Fez] twenty days, from Zaffi [Safi], Zamor [Azamor] and Messa twenty days on horseback. I finish for the present; elsewhere and at another time, God willing, I will recount much more to you orally. I am always at your orders in Christ.

Your ANTONIUS Malfant

14. Probably Abyssinia, the kingdom of Prester John, which was regarded in the Middle Ages as one of the Three Indies.

15. Probably Ghadamess.

7. GOMES EANNES DE AZURARA THE DISCOVERY OF GUINEA. 1435.

Gomes Eannes de Azurara was the Royal Chronicler of Portugal during the time that Prince Henry the Navigator inaugurated the systematic exploration of the coast of West Africa. Although the dates of his birth and death remain unknown, Azurara was probably born in the province of Minho at the beginning of the fifteenth century. He appears to have obtained a post in the Royal Library during the brief reign of Dom Duarte (1433-1438), or shortly thereafter, as assistant to Royal Chronicler Fernando Lopez, whom he later succeeded. In 1453 he completed the Chronica de Guinea, which describes the Portuguese discoveries along the West African coast and which remains one of the earliest records of European activity in West Africa.

So the Infant, moved by these reasons, which you have already heard, began to make ready his ships and his people, as the needs of the case required; but this much you may learn, that although he sent out many times, not only ordinary men, but

From Gomes Eannes de Azurara, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, trans. from the Portuguese by C. Raymond Beazley and Edgar Prestage (London: Hakluyt Society, 1896), vol. 1, pp. 30-34, 39-43. Reprinted by permission of Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Hakluyt Society.

such as by their experience in great deeds of war were of foremost name in the profession of arms, yet there was not one who dared to pass that Cape of Bojador and learn about the land beyond it, as the Infant wished.¹ And to say the truth this was not from cowardice or want of good will, but from the novelty of the thing and the wide-spread and ancient rumour about this Cape, that had been cherished by the mariners of Spain from generation to generation. And although this proved to be deceitful, yet since the hazarding of this attempt seemed to threaten the last evil of all, there was great doubt as to who would be the first to risk his life in such a venture. How are we, men said, to pass the bounds that our fathers set up, or what profit it can result to the Infant from the perdition of our souls as well as of our bodies—for of a truth by daring any further we shall become wilful murderers of ourselves? Have there not been in Spain other princes and lords as covetous perchance of this honour as the Infant? For certainly it cannot be presumed that among so many noble men who did such great and lofty deeds for the glory of their memory, there had not been one to dare this deed. But being satisfied of the peril, and seeing no hope of honour or profit, they left off the attempt. For, said the mariners, this much is clear, that beyond this Cape there is no race of men nor place of inhabitants: nor is the land less sandy than the deserts of Libya, where there is no water, no tree, no green herb and the sea so shallow that a whole league from land it is only a fathom deep, while the currents are so terrible that no ship having once passed the Cape, will ever be able to return.

Therefore our forefathers never attempted to pass it: and of a surety their knowledge of the lands beyond was not a little dark, as they knew not how to set them down on the charts, by which man controls all the seas that can be navigated. Now what sort of a ship's captain would he be who, with such doubts placed before him by those to whom he might reasonably yield credence and authority, and with such certain prospect of death before his eyes, could venture the trial of such a bold feat as that? O thou Virgin Themis, saith our Author, who among the nine Muses of Mount Parnassus didst possess the especial right of searching out the secrets of Apollo's cave, I doubt whether thy fears were as great at putting thy feet on that sacred table where the divine revelations afflicted thee little less than death, as the terrors of these mariners of ours, threatened not only by fear but by its shadow, whose great deceit was the cause of very great expenses. For during twelve years the Infant continued steadily at this labour of his, ordering out his ships every year to those parts, not without great loss of revenue, and never finding any who dared to make that passage. Yet they did not return wholly without honour, for as an atonement for their failure to carry out more fully their Lord's wishes, some made descents upon the coasts of Granada and others voyaged along the Levant Seas, where they took great booty of the Infidels, with which they returned to the Kingdom very honourably.

¹ Infant is the title of any legitimate son of a king of Spain or Portugal except the eldest. This reference is to the Infant Prince Henry (1394-1460), commonly known as "the Navigator," the third son of King João (or John) of Portugal. Cape Bojador is located at 26°15' North latitude at the western base of the Atlas Mountains of Morocco (ed.).