

MARSDEN, following CORONELLI's *Atlas* (1696), and perhaps because he felt that in spite of Polo's text the two islands must have been nearer Socotra, had thought of the « Two Brothers » Islands (or « Two Sisters »), Samhā and Darzā, or even of 'Abd-al-Kūrī, all lying between Socotra and Cape Gardafui. Moreover, such an opinion would seem to be supported by Nicolò de' Conti. Conti, who was himself at Socotra on his way back from India to Venice in the first half of the 15th cent., speaks of the island as lying a hundred miles off the mainland and being mainly inhabited by Nestorian Christians. Opposite Socotra, at a distance of no more than five miles were two islands, distant a hundred miles one from the other; one was inhabited by men, the other by women; from time to time men would go to the women, or women to the men, and after six months everyone returned to his own island; to trespass beyond the six months would have entailed sudden death (cf. M. LONGHENA, *Viaggi... di Nicolò de' Conti*, Milan, 1929, 158-159; *Pe*, 136). It is of course impossible that islands lying five miles from Socotra should be a hundred miles distant one from the other (or even « thirty » as in RAMUSIO, I, 342 B); but, with due allowance for the fact that Conti's account has reached us only in Poggio's *rifacimento* and also that Conti has probably been influenced by Polo, it is certain that his text rather suggests the « Two Brothers » than any other location. One might be tempted to suppose that the whole paragraph in Conti is but a distorted echo of Polo's text, the « five » and the « hundred » miles representing the « five hundred » miles of the earlier traveller, while the three months' stay has been unduly extended to six. But this can hardly account for the fact that some survival of the story attached to Socotra at the time of the Portuguese discoveries (cf. Y, II, 405).

About thirty years after Polo, Jourdain Cathala had heard the same tale as the Venetian traveller (cf. CORDIER, *Les Merveilles de l'Asie*, 87-88 and 120, pl. XIV) : « Between this India [Tertia] and Greater [India], people say that there are the islands of women only, and of men only, where the men cannot long live in the islands of the women, and *vice versa*. Nevertheless they will live well ten or fifteen days and cohabit together (*simul*, not *scilicet*, as in CORDIER); when those women give birth to a male child, they send him to the men, and if it be a female, keep her to themselves ». CORDIER adds in a note that the « Kingdom of Women » lay east of Java. But the notice occurs in the section devoted by Jourdain Cathala to his India Tertia, which, according to CORDIER himself (p. 60), is « the east of Africa ». On the other hand, the author's Greater India begins at Malabar in southern India. So it is clear that the islands of men and of women were supposed by Jourdain Cathala, just as they were by Polo, to lie between India and Africa.

YULE (Y, II, 405) is in a way right when he says that « it is not perhaps of much use to seek a serious identification of the locality of those Islands », but they raise a curious problem. As YULE himself remarked, « Fra Mauro places the islands to the south of Zanzibar, and gives them the names of 'Mangla' and 'Nebila' ». On the other hand, « Sochotra » (Socotra) duly appears on Fra Mauro's map at the entrance of the Red Sea with the near islands of « Abdelchori » (*Zu*, 64, gives « Abbelcuria ») and, according to ZURLA (*Zu*, 64), « Curia » and « Muria », but, on my somewhat blurred photograph, I can see only indistinct lineaments of one name, and nothing of the other. This is almost certainly due to information obtained from Conti, whom Fra Mauro knew personally, but Conti is not responsible for Mangla and Nebila. Apart from Sochotra, correctly marked on his map, Fra Mauro locates somewhat further south than, and in the vicinity of, Mangla and Nebila, a greater island called