

who went thither. He also sent to procure the release of an envoy of his who had been despatched thither, and had been detained; so both those envoys had many wonderful things to tell the Great Kaan about those strange islands, and about the birds I have mentioned. [They brought (as I heard) to the Great Kaan a feather of the said Ruc, which was stated to measure 90 spans, whilst the quill part was two palms in circumference, a marvellous object! The Great Kaan was delighted with it, and gave great presents to those who brought it.<sup>6</sup>] They also brought two boars' tusks, which weighed more than 14 lbs. a-piece; and you may gather how big the boar must have been that had teeth like that! They related indeed that there were some of those boars as big as a great buffalo. There are also numbers of giraffes and wild asses; and in fact a marvellous number of wild beasts of strange aspect.<sup>7</sup>

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NOTE I.—Marco is, I believe, the first writer European or Asiatic, who unambiguously speaks of MADAGASCAR; but his information about it was very incorrect in many particulars. There are no elephants nor camels in the island, nor any leopards, bears, or lions.

Indeed, I have no doubt that Marco, combining information from different sources, made some confusion between *Makdashau* (Magadoxo) and *Madagascar*, and that particulars belonging to both are mixed up here. This accounts for Zanghibar being placed entirely *beyond* Madagascar, for the entirely Mahomedan character given to the population, for the hippopotamus-teeth and staple trade in ivory, as well for the lions, elephants, and other beasts. But above all the camel-killing indicates Sumáli Land and Magadoxo as the real locality of part of the information. Says Ibn Batuta: "After leaving Zaila we sailed on the sea for 15 days, and arrived at Makdashau, an extremely large town. The natives keep camels in great numbers, and they slaughter several hundreds daily" (II. 181). The slaughter of camels for food is still a Sumáli practice. (See *J. R. G. S.* VI. 28, and XIX. 55.) Perhaps the *Shaikhs* (*Escege*) also belong to the same quarter, for the Arab traveller says that the Sultan of Makdashau had no higher title than *Shaikh* (183); and Brava, a neighbouring settlement, was governed by 12 shaikhs. (*De Barros*, I. viii. 4.) Indeed, this kind of local oligarchy still prevails on that coast.

We may add that both Makdashau and Brava are briefly described in the Annals of the Ming Dynasty. The former *Mu-ku-tu-su*, lies on the sea, 20 days from *Siao-Kolan* (Quilon?), a barren mountainous country of wide extent, where it sometimes does not rain for years. In 1427 a mission came from this place to China. *Pu-la-wa* (Brava, properly Baráwa) adjoins the former, and is also on the sea. It produces