

كتاب مروج الذهب للمسعودي

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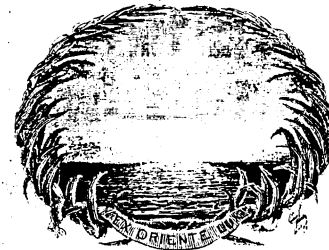
"MEADOWS OF GOLD AND MINES OF GEMS:"

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC

BY

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the Moslims. He has a number of elephants: his dominions occupy a tongue of land, and are so rich in mines of gold and silver, that gold and silver is the medium of their commerce.

Next to this country is the kingdom of et-Tákín الطاقيني. The king is on friendly terms with the neighbouring sovereigns and with the Moslims; his military forces are less considerable than those of the kings whom we have named. In this kingdom are the prettiest women of all India. They are praised for their beauty in books, *De Coitu* \* كتب الباء, and sailors are exceedingly anxious to buy them. They are known under the name of Tákínians. Beyond this kingdom is that of Rahmá رهي, which is the title for their kings, and generally at the same time their name. His dominions border on those of the king of the Khazars; and, on one side, on those of el-Ballahrá, with whom he is frequently at war. Rahmá has more troops, elephants, and horses, than the Ballahrá, the king of el-Khazar and of et-Tákin. When he takes the field, he has no less than five thousand elephants. He never goes

\* A work of this title, by the celebrated Rhazes, is in the library of Leyden. The number of curious observations, the correct and practical ideas, and the novelty of the notions of eastern nations on these subjects, which are contained in this book, render it one of the most important productions of the medical literature of the Arabs.

to war but in winter, because the elephants cannot bear thirst. His forces are generally exaggerated; some believe that the number of fullers and washers in his camp, is from ten to fifteen thousand. The above-mentioned kings fight in squares, every one amounting to twenty thousand men; so that every one of the four sides of the square has five thousand men.

In the kingdom of Rahmá cowries are used as the medium of exchange in commerce. His country abounds in silver, gold, and aloes, and there the finest cloths known are manufactured. From this country a sort of hair, called الصيمن saïman, is exported, which is fastened on ivory and silver, and used as fly-flaps. Servants, with such instruments in their hands, stand at the head of the kings when they hold court.

In his country is an animal of the name of النشان (السنان) المعلم, which common people call the *unicorn* الكركدن. It has in its forehead one horn and is not as great as the elephant, but much higher than the buffalo. This animal bellows like a bull. Elephants take flight from it, because, God knows, there is no animal stronger than this. Its bones are not divided into limbs, but the legs are without articulation; hence, it cannot bend its limbs. It lives in forests and woods, and when it sleeps it leans on a tree. The Hindus and the Moslims in India eat the flesh of this animal, for it enters into

the class of bulls and buffaloes. Most Hindus are unacquainted with this animal; but in the kingdom of Rahmá it is more frequent, and its horn is there purer and finer. The horns are white, with a black figure in the middle, on a white ground; representing the outlines and shades of the figures of men, guinea-fowls, fish, and of the unicorn itself, or of some other animal found in those countries. This horn is wrought, and they make girdles and ribbons of it, just as such ornaments are made of gold and silver. These articles form part of the dress of the kings and nobles of China; and they are so much valued, that such a girdle costs from two to four thousand dinars. From these girdles ornaments of gold are suspended, and they look exceedingly well: sometimes they are inlaid with precious stones and gold. The figures, in the horn of the unicorn, are black, on a white ground; sometimes, however, they are white on a black ground. El-Jáhit believes, that the unicorn is a seven months' camel, which stretches its head out from the womb of the mother to graze, and then it draws it in again. He relates this extraordinary fact in his book "On Animals" كتاب الحيوان. This story led me to inquire of the merchants of Síráf and 'Omán, who visit those places, and whom I saw in India: everybody was surprised at my question, and assured me, that the pregnancy and delivery of the unicorn are not different from that of the buffalo. I do not

know how el-Jáhit learnt this story; whether he found it in some book, or whether it had been related to him.

The king Rahmá has maritime and inland provinces. On his empire borders a kingdom, which has no sea: the name of the king is el-Kás (الكاس). The inhabitants are white; they have their ears slit; and the men and women are very handsome. They have elephants, camels, and horses.

The neighbour of this king is the king of el-Farbikh (الفريخ or الفريخ) (Kámirús?); who possesses maritime provinces and inland provinces, his dominions being situated on a peninsula. The sea throws ambergris on shore, and the country is productive of pepper and elephants. He is brave and proud. But he is less powerful than proud, and less brave than overbearing.

The inhabitants of the country of el-Maujah الموجه which comes next, are of a white complexion and handsome; they do not slit their ears. They have horses and the necessary warlike equipment for defence. Their country is rich in musk. We have described the musk-deer in the preceding pages. The inhabitants dress like the Chinese. Their country is defensible against invasion by its mountains, the summits of which are white; and there are no higher mountains, either in India or in es-Sind, than these. The musk of their country is