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THE HISTORY
AND
DESCRIPTION OF AFRICA

AND
OF THE NOTABLE THINGS THEREIN CONTAINED,

WRITTEN BY
AL-HASSAN IBN-MOHAMMED AL-WEZAZ AL-FASI,
A MOOR, BAPTISED AS GIOVANNI LEONE, BUT BETTER KNOWN AS

LEO AFRICANUS.

DONE INTO ENGLISH IN THE YEAR 1600,
BY
JOHN PORY,

And now Edited, with an Introduction and Notes,
BY
DR. ROBERT BROWN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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A GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORIE of AFRICA,

Written in Arabicke and Italian

by JOHN LEO a More, borne
*in Granada, and brought up
in Barbaric.*

*Wherein be hath at large described, not onely the qualities, situations, and true
distances of the regions, cities, townes, mountaines, rivers, and other places
throughout all the north and principall partes of Africa; but also the
descents and families of their kings, the causes and events of their warres,
with their manners, customes, religions, and civile government, and
many other memorable matters: gathered partly out of his owne di-
ligent observations, and partly out of the ancient records and Chronicles
of the Arabians and Moors.*

Before which, out of the best ancient and moderne writers, is prefixed a generall
description of Africa, and also a particular treatise of all the maine lands
and Isles vnderdescribed by *John Leo*.

*And after the same is annexed a relation of the great Princes, and the manifold religions
in that part of the world.*

Translated and collected by JOHN PORY, lately
of Gonerill and Caius College
in Cambridge.



LONDINI,
Jmpensis Georg. Bishop.

1600

is somewhat tawnie, of the colour of a lion; in the night he comes on lande to feed vpon the grasse, and keepeth in the water all the day time. The Africans tame and manage some of these horses, and they prooue exceeding swift; but a man must beware how he passe ouer deepe riuers with them, for they will sodainly diue vnder water. Also in these riuers of Ethiopia are bred a kinde of oxen, which liue euery night vpon the lande. Here likewise breedeth another strange creature, called in the Congonian language Ambize Angulo, that is to say, a hogge-fish, being so exceeding fatte, and of such greatnes, that some of them weie aboute five hundred pound.⁴⁸ This abundance of waters, together with the heat of the climate, which proceedeth from the neerenes of the sunne, causeth the countrey to be most fruitfull of plants, herbes, fruits, and corne; & much more fertile would it be, if nature were helped forward by the industrie of the inhabitants. Heere also, besides goates, sheepe, deere, Gugelle, conies, hares, ciuet-cats, and ostriches, are great swarmes of tigris, which are very hurtfull both to man and beast. The Zebra or Zabra⁴⁹ of this countrey being about the bignes of a mule, is a beast of incomparable swiftnes, straked about the body, legges, eares, and other parts, with blacke, white and browne circles of three fingers broad; which do make a pleasant shew. Buffles, wilde asses, called by the Greekes Onagri, and Dantes (of whose hard skins they make all their targets) range in heards vp and downe the woods.

The elephant. Also here are infinite store of elephants of such monstrous bignes, that by the report of sundrie credible persons, some of their teeth do weigh two hundred pounds, at sixteene ounces the pound: vpon the plaines this beast is swifter than any horse, by reason of his long steps; onely he cannot turne with such celeritie. Trees he ouerturneth with the strength of his backe, or breaketh them between his teeth; or standeth vpright vpon his hinder feete, to

The Zabra.

The elephant.

browse vpon the leaues and tender sprigs. The she elephants beare their brood in their wombes two yeeres before they bring foorth yoong ones: neither are they great with yoong, but onely from seuen yeeres to seuen yeeres. This creature is saide to liue 150. yeeres; hee is of a gentle disposition; and relying vpon his great strength, he hurteth none but such as do him iniurie; only he will in a sporting maner gently heaue vp with his snowte such persons as he meeteth. He loueth the water beyond measure, and will stande vp to the mid-body therein, bathing the ridge of his backe, and other parts with his long promuscis or trunke. His skin is fower fingers thicke; and it is reported, that an elephant of this countrey being stricken with a little gunne called Petrera, was not wounded therewith, but so sore brused inwardly, that within three daies after he died. Heere are likewise reported to be mightie adders or snakes of fiae and twentie spannes long, and fiae spans broad, which will swallow vp an whole stagge, or any other creature of that bignes. Neither are they here destitute of Indie-cockes and hens, partridges, feasants, and innumerable birds of praie, both of the lande and of the sea; whereof some diue vnder the water, which the Portugals call Pelicans.

Ouer against the most southerly part of the said king-
dome of Congo, where it confineth with Angola, lyeth an
Isle called Loanda, being twentie miles long, and but one
mile broad at the most, betweene which and the maine
land is the best port of all that Ocean. About this Isle do
haunt infinite store of whales, where, notwithstanding no
amber at all is found; which is a manifest argument that
it proceedeth not from these creatures. Here they fish for
certaine little shels, which in Congo and the countries
adioyning are vsed in steed of mony. The well-waters of
this Isle, when the sea ebbeth, are salte, but when it floweth
they are most fresh and sweet. In this Isle⁶⁰ the Portugals

*The isle and
hauen of
Loanda.*