

GYON¹ is that which circleth the land of Ethiopia where are now the negroes, and which is called the Land of Prester John. It is indeed believed to be the Nile, which descends into Egypt by a breach made in the place which is called ABASTY. The christians of St. Matthew the Apostle are there, and the Soldan pays them tribute on account of the river, because they have it in their power to shut off the water, and then Egypt would perish.²

every atlas to the beginning of last century, if not later, repeated the fiction. A traveller of the seventeenth century, the general of his order and therefore perhaps no vulgar friar, says that *he saw* the Ganges near Goa, where one of its branches entered the sea. And far more recent and distinguished geographers have clung to the like ideas. Ritter more than half accepts the Chinese story of the Dragon Lake of Pamer. Buchanan Hamilton, who did so much for the geography both of India and of Indo-China, not only accepted the stories of the Burmese regarding the radiation of rivers, but himself suggested like theories, such as that of an anastomosis between the Brahmaputra and the Irawadi; whilst the old fancies of the African map makers have been revived in our own time. (See *Strachey*, in *J. R. G. S.*, vol. xxiii, first paper; *Ritter*, *Erdkunde*, vii, 496; *Burnes*, iii, 180; *Journ. Asiatique*, ser. ii, tom. x, 415; *In.*, xi, 42; *Burton*, in *J. R. G. S.*, xxix, 307; *Blaeu's Atlas*, Amsterdam, 1662, vol. x; *Coronelli*, *Atlante Veneto*, 1691, etc.; *Viaggi di P. Filippo*, etc., p. 230.)

¹ The Septuagint has Γῆν for the Nile in *Jeremiah* ii, 18, and in *Ecclesiasticus*, xxiv, 37; from the former passage the term was adopted in the Ethiopic books. Many Fathers of the Church thought Gihon passed under ground from Paradise to reappear as the Nile, and the other rivers in like fashion. Ludolf quotes many examples of what he justly calls this foolish story of Gihon and its subterranean wanderings. But such notions were not originated by the church; for Pomponius Mela supposes the Nile to come under the sea from the antichthonic world, and other heathen writers believed it to be a resurrection of the Euphrates. (*Ludolf*, i. c. 8, § 10-12, and *Comment.*, pp. 119, 120; Note by *Letronne* in *Humbolt's Examen Critique*, etc., iii, 122, 123.)

² For *Abasty* in this paragraph the author probably wrote *Abascy*; (the *c* and *t* are constantly confounded), the *Abasci* of Polo, from the Arabic name of Abyssinia *Habsh*. Here again in the fourteenth century is Prester John in Africa (see *ante*, p. 182); as the Catalan Map and Sigoli also show him.

This tribute alleged to be paid by the Soldan of Egypt to the King of Ethiopia or Abyssinia is mentioned by Jordanus also (*Mirabilia*, p. 40), and he names the reported amount as five hundred thousand ducats, though he omits the ground of payment. It is also spoken of by Ariosto:

“Si dice che 'l Soldan Re dell' Egitto