

into CATHAY, where, by a change of name, it is called CARO-MORAN, i.e. Black Water, and there is found bdellium and the onyx stone. I believe it to be the biggest river of fresh water in the world, and I have crossed it myself. And it has on its banks very great and noble cities, rich above all in gold. And on that river excellent craftsmen have their dwelling, occupying wooden houses, especially weavers of silk and gold brocade, in such numbers (I can bear witness from having seen them), as in my opinion do not exist in the whole of Italy. And they have on the shores of the river an abundance of silk, more indeed than all the rest of the world put together. And they go about on their floating houses with their whole families just as if they were on shore. This I have seen. On the other side of Caffa the river is lost in the sands, but it breaks out again and forms the sea which is called BACUC, beyond THANANA.<sup>1</sup>

Egypt, Sinai and Palestine with Leonardo Frescobaldi and other Florentines in 1384: "'Tis true that this soldan is obliged to pay a yearly ransom or homage to Prester John. Now this potentate Prester John dwells in India, and is a christian, and possesses many cities both of christians and of infidels. And the reason why the Soldan pays him homage is this, that whenever this Prester John chooses to open certain river sluices he can drown Cairo and Alexandria and all that country; and 'tis said that this river is the Nile itself which runs by Cairo. The said sluices stand but little open, and yet the river is enormous. And so it is for this reason, or rather from this apprehension, that the Soldan sends him every year a ball of gold with a cross upon it, worth three thousand gold bezants. And the lands of the Soldan do march with those of this Prester John." (*V. in Terra Santa, etc.*, Firenze, 1862, p. 202).

<sup>1</sup> Dobner has *Chana* (the *c* for *t* again), but the Venice MS. has the name right, *Thana*, i.e., Azov. In the confusions of this paragraph Mari gnolli outdoes himself. He jumbles into one river the Phison, Ganges (or Indus), Wolga (or Oxus), Hoang-Ho and Yangtse Kiang, and then turns them all topsy turvy. The *Kara-Muren*, or Black River of the Tartars, as he correctly explains it, is well known to be the Yellow River of the Chinese. But it is not a river whose shores and waters are crowded with the vast population described, and his descriptions here appear to be drawn from his recollections of the Yangtse Kiang. The river lost in the sands is perhaps the Oxus, which he would probably pass on his way from Sarai to Almalig, but he *may* mean the Wolga which he saw at Sarai, and which has the best claim to be said to form the Sea of Baku, i.e., the