

deacon of Liège, whom the Book represents to have been Legate in Syria, and who in any case was a personage of much gravity and influence. From him they got letters to authenticate the causes of the miscarriage of their mission, and started for the further East. But they were still at the port of Ayas on the Gulf of Scanderoon, which was then becoming one of the chief points of arrival and departure for the inland trade of Asia, when they were overtaken by the news that a Pope was at last elected, and that the choice had fallen upon their friend Archdeacon Tedaldo. They immediately returned to Acre, and at last were able to execute the Kaan's commission, and to obtain a reply. But instead of the hundred able teachers of science and religion whom Kúblái is said to have asked for, the new Pope, Gregory X., could supply but two Dominicans; and these lost heart and drew back when they had barely taken the first step of the journey.

Judging from certain indications we conceive it probable that the three Venetians, whose second start from Acre took place about November 1271, proceeded by Ayas and Sivas, and then by Mardin, Mosul, and Baghdad, to Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, with the view of going on by sea, but that some obstacle arose which compelled them to abandon this project and turn north again from Hormuz.\* They then

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\* [Major Sykes, in his remarkable book on *Persia*, ch. xxiii. pp. 262-263, does not share Sir Henry Yule's opinion regarding this itinerary, and he writes :

“To return to our travellers, who started on their second great journey in 1271, Sir Henry Yule, in his introduction,<sup>1</sup> makes them travel *via* Sivas to Mosul and Baghdád, and thence by sea to Hormuz, and this is the itinerary shown on his sketch map. This view I am unwilling to accept for more than one reason. In the first place, if, with Colonel Yule, we suppose that Ser Marco visited Baghdád, is it not unlikely that he should term the River Volga the Tigris,<sup>2</sup> and yet leave the river of Baghdád nameless? It may be urged that Marco believed the legend of the reappearance of the Volga in Kurdistán, but yet, if the text be read with care and the character of the traveller be taken into account, this error is scarcely explicable in any other way, than that he was never there.

“Again, he gives no description of the striking buildings of Baudas, as he terms it, but this is nothing to the inaccuracy of his supposed onward journey. To quote the text, ‘A very great river flows through the city, . . . and merchants descend some eighteen days from Baudas, and then come to a certain city called Kisi,<sup>3</sup> where they enter the Sea of India.’ Surely Marco, had he travelled down the Persian Gulf, would never have given this description of the route, which is so untrue as to point

<sup>1</sup> Page 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Yule*, vol. i. p. 5. It is noticeable that John of Pian de Carpine, who travelled 1245 to 1247, names it correctly.

<sup>3</sup> The modern name is Keis, an island lying off Linga.