

Saint-Martin does not tell us why Ptolemy, after receiving detailed reports of the regions traversed by the Brahmaputra, still lets this river flow into the Magnus Sinus. The Daona and the Bepyrus may be anything you like and it would be a waste of time to try and identify them. But as the southern of the two Gangetic tributaries coming down from Bepyrus has a situation which happens to correspond very closely to that of the lower course of the Brahmaputra, and as the nameless river joins the Ganges below the point where the river spreads into the several branches of the delta, I cannot find any reasonable cause why this nameless river should not rather be identified with the Brahmaputra, than a river which belongs to Farther India and empties itself into the Magnus Sinus. Such a mistake has been made in a later time, namely by MERCATOR but in this case Ptolemy was better informed than the German cartographer. And as Ptolemy knew the situation of the Ganges delta remarkably well, why should he not, as Saint-Martin asks, have obtained information about the great river which joins the delta from the east! Bepyrus is, so far as I can see, at least a part of the mountainous region which constitutes the Eastern Himalaya, namely, the part which is pierced by the Brahmaputra. The Indus and the Satlej were believed to rise from the southern side of the mountains; the case may have been the same with the Brahmaputra. If the Hindus already then derived the Brahmaputra from the sacred lake of Brahmakund, after forgetting its real origin far west in Tibet, Ptolemy would have had no more reason than his informants to place the source of the river on the northern side of the Emodus. Even so late as in the year when the great French geographer printed his third memoir, or 1860, the continuity of the Tsangpo with the Brahmaputra was not definitely settled.¹

Regarding the three great rivers, Ptolemy cannot be said to have known, positively, more than the two western. About the Brahmaputra we must confess our uncertainty. The source of the Satlej, on the other hand, he positively places at 132° E. Long. and 36° N. Lat., and he correctly regarded the Zadadros, Satadru or Satlej as the greatest river of Panjab. The source of the Indus he places at

dernière indication, il s'agit forcément ici du Brahmapoutre, et le nom indigène de Dihong, que porte le fleuve, rend aisément raison du mot Daonas.» And further: »la disposition du cours du Brahmapoutre, qui enveloppe et isole complètement, au sud, la partie orientale de la chaîne himalayenne, avant de venir confondre son embouchure avec l'estuaire le plus oriental du Gange, ne permet pas de conduire ailleurs que dans le Brahmapoutre même une rivière, quelle qu'elle soit, sortie du Bepyrus. Ce serait d'ailleurs une anomalie plus que singulière que Ptolémée eût nommé des fleuves qui coulent au loin à travers des régions ignorées, et que le plus grand fleuve de ces quartiers, après le Gange dont il est voisin, n'eût pas été mentionné dans les relations qui lui fournissaient des détails circonstanciés sur les pays mêmes que traverse le Brahmapoutre.»

¹ Saint-Martin says: »L'origine tibétaine du Brahmapoutre (dont la partie supérieure serait le Dzangbo, qui sort du même massif que le Sindh, le Çatadroû ou Satledj et quelques-uns des grands tributaires du Gange), cette origine tibétaine, disons-nous, a pour elle de très-grandes probabilités, et peut être regardée presque comme un fait acquis; néanmoins il lui manque la consécration, souveraine, celle d'une reconnaissance européenne que relie sans interruption le Dihong ou Brahmapoutre de l'Assam au Dzang-bo du Tibet.»