

Further on<sup>1</sup> he again remarks that the river of Siam comes, to the greatest part, from Lago di Chiamay. On account of the great volume of water this river carries down, the Siamese call it Menam, that is so much as »Mother of the Waters». Then it falls into the sea.<sup>2</sup>

The text, therefore, leaves no room for a doubt, so far as all the rivers, except one, are concerned. As to the Irrawaddi there can be no mistake, for it flows through Ava and Pegu. But Gastaldi's map, Pl. XVI, illustrating the text, does not agree with Barros' description. The map has only four rivers leaving the lake, the text speaks of six, of which the three to the east join and form the Menam, which on the map is only one single river the whole way. The three western rivers go to the Gulf of Bengal. One of them, the one farthest west, traverses the Kingdom of Caor. On its right bank are the cities of Caor and Comotay. Above Chatigan it enters the delta of the Ganges, which it joins at the Ganges-branch on which the city of Bengala is placed. Consulting only Gastaldi's map of 1550, it would be impossible to tell whether this river is meant to be the Meghna or the Brahmaputra or anything else. The second eastwards is the Irrawaddi, and the third is, as indicated by Martaban, Salwen, though its mouth in relation to Tawa and Pegu is misrepresented on the map.

If we remember for a moment the long and hard fight about the source and origin of the Brahmaputra, and that only in our days the transverse valley through which it pierces the Himalaya has been absolutely settled, though situated so near Calcutta, we should not feel surprised that 360 years ago mistakes were committed by those who first heard of these rivers and the countries they crossed. The geographers of generations had to accept the hydrography which Barros with the whole pondus of his name had given, and the mysterious lake with its four rivers crystallized out on the maps, and was impossible to be got rid of until a later time came with fresh information. And still we have to confess that certain parts of the course of Salwen-Lu-chiang and of the Mekong—Lan-tsan-chiang are unknown. The latter river, however, is, on Gastaldi's map in Ramusio, the first to the east, which, under the name

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 433, A.

<sup>2</sup> As this passage has been quoted in many works and believed in as Gospel during nearly 200 years, I give it also in Ramusio's text. He starts with the Irrawaddi: »che parte tutta la terra di Pegu, il qual vien dal lago di Chiamay, che sta verso tramontana per distantia di 200 leghe nella interior parte della terra, dal quale procedono sei notabili fiumi, tre che si congiungono con altri, & fanno il gran fiume che passa per mezzo del regno di Siam, & gli altri tre vengono à sboccar in questo colfo di Bengala. Vno che vien trauersando il regno di Caor, donde il fiume prese il nome, & per quelle di Comotay, & per quello di Cirote, doue si fanno tutti le eunuchi che sono condotti di Leuante, & vien ad vscir di sopra di Chatigan in quel notabil braccio del Gänge per mezzo della isola Sornagan, l'altro di Pegu passa per il regno Aua che è dentro fra terra, & l'altro esce in Martaban fra Tauay & Pegu in latitudine di 15. gradi . . . . . Et seguendo piu innanzi 40. leghe è il capo di Singapura, doue principia al lungo del dito indice la settima diuisione che è de li fin al fiume di Siam, che la maggior parte de quello procede dal lago di Chiamay. Al qual fiume per causa della molta abundantia delle acque, che porta seco li Siamini chiamano Menam, che vuol dir madre dell' acque, & entra nel mare . . .