

the reciproca. reflection of passing events and ancient cosmical views, and the progressive modification which the latter effected in these mythical representations of history. In the wanderings of the heroes returning from Troy, Aristonicus makes Menelaus circumnavigate Africa more than five hundred years before Neco sailed from Gadeira to India.*

At the period which we are here considering, of the history of Greece before the Macedonian expeditions into Asia, there occurred three events which exercised a special influence in extending the views of the Greeks regarding the universe. These events were the attempts to penetrate beyond the basin of the Mediterranean toward the east; the attempts toward the west; and the establishment of numerous colonies from the Pillars of Hercules to the northeastern extremity of the Euxine, which, by the more varied form of their political constitution, and by their furtherance of mental cultivation, were more influential than those of the Phœnicians and Carthaginians in the Ægean Sea, Sicily, Theria, and on the north and west coasts of Africa.

The advance toward the East, about twelve centuries before our era, or one hundred and fifty years after Rameses Miamoun (Sesostris), is known in history as the expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis. The true version of this event, which is clothed in a mythical garb, and concealed under a blending of ideal images, is simply the fulfillment of a national desire to open the inhospitable Euxine. The myth of Prometheus, and the unbinding of the fire-kindling Titan on the Caucasus by Hercules, during his expedition to the East; the ascent of Io from the Valley of the Hybristes† to the heights of the Caucasus; the myth of Phryxus and Helle, all indicate

* Strabo, lib. i., p. 38, Casaub.

† Probably the Valley of the Don or of the Kuban. See my *Asie Centrale*, t. ii., p. 164. Pherecydes expressly says (*Fragm.* 37, *ex Schol. Apollon.*, ii., 1214) that the Caucasus burned, and that, therefore, Typhon fled to Italy; a notice from which Klausen, in the work already mentioned, s. 298, explains the ideal relation of the "fire-kindler" (*πυρκαεύς*), Prometheus, to the burning mountain. Although the geognostical constitution of the Caucasus (which has been recently so ably investigated by Abich), and its connection with the volcanic chain of the Thianschan, in the interior of Asia (which I think I have shown in my *Asie Centrale*, t. ii., p. 55-59), render it in no way improbable that reminiscences of great volcanic eruptions may have been preserved in the most ancient traditions of men, yet we may rather assume that a bold and somewhat hazardous spirit of etymological conjecture may have led the Greeks to the hypothesis of the burning. On the Sanscrit etymologies of Graucus (or shining mountain), see Bohlen's and Burouf's statements, in my *Asie Centrale*, t. i., p. 109.