

and, above all, that they were familiar with the regions around Kailas and Manasarovar. They were indeed descendants of the Aryans and had possibly at one time come down into India by this road. Perhaps in their minds there remained a dormant recollection at the wanderings of their ancestors across the mountain fastnesses of the western Himalayas.

India was known to Herodotus, but, contrary to Megasthenes, he does not mention the mountains to its North, much less Tibet. And yet we hold from his times the curious story of the gold-digging ants. Alexander and his generals carried the knowledge of the wonderful world of the East a giant step forward, and they called the Himalaya Emodus. Eratosthenes speaks of Paropamisus and Imaus, yet Strabo is the one, among the ancient geographers, who creates out of the material which he has succeeded in collecting, the grandest description of the countries of Southern Asia. Far better than his predecessors, he knew the mountains to the North, and a long time had to pass before Europe got as clear an idea of India and its rivers as Strabo possessed. The geography of Arrian is founded on that of Megasthenes and Eratosthenes. The mountains among which lie the sources of the Ganges, he calls Paropamisus or Caucasus, and with a sure hand he draws up the orographical and hydrographical system of the great continent. But as little as any other classic author, he had any idea of the existence of Tibet. They knew only the southern parts of the Himalayas. Ptolemy surpasses the old Greeks and Romans. Much of his knowledge he drew from Marinus of Tyrus. His picture of India and its hydrography is masterly. Quite correctly he makes Satlej out to be the largest river of the Panjab, and even shows on the map where its sources are situated. But no trace of Tibet, or the rivers of Tibet, is to be found in his picture of the country North of India. On the contrary, he presses Kwen-lun and the Himalayas together into one single mountain-range, so that Tibet is effaced into nothingness between them. Even 1,500 years after his time, the Europeans committed quite the same mistake in their representations of Southern Asia. But also the fundamental lines of the Asiatic world, drawn up by Ptolemy, put their stamp indelibly on 15 centuries. Therein consists his enormous significance for the historical development of geography. He gave to his own time a fund of collected and solid knowledge, but he acted as a check on later epochs who, in blind belief in his authority, held fast to his image of Southern Asia as to an unshakable dogma. In a time when Galilei made his revolutionary discoveries in the heavens, Ptolemy still ruled almost absolutely on the earth.

During the age of the Caliphs, geographical learning flourished among the