

journeys in the fourth volume of this book. In the first volume, I have particularly followed the revisions and translations made by Klaproth, Abel Rémusat, Bushell, Bretschneider, Rockhill, de Rhins, Herrmann and others. Klaproth could already by the aid of Chinese sources give a very good description of the hydrographical conditions of Southern Tibet. In many instances his conclusions were remarkably accurate, and they prove how well informed were the authors of whose writings he had made use. Generally, the picture of, for instance, the sources of the great Indian rivers, left by the Chinese, is much more reliable and true than the conception Europeans still alive have formed of the same regions. I try to analyse the Chinese geographers' descriptions of different extents of land in South-western Tibet and to compare their results with my own. In this point I have found excellent guidance in d'Anville's map of Tibet, founded on Chinese sources, and in Dutreuil de Rhins' conscientious explanations of the Ta-ch'ing map. The Chinese are generally much less accurate in their orographic than in their hydrographic drawings. Their maps of the sources of the Satlej and the Brahmaputra, and of the northern tributaries to the Tsangpo, were the best materials existing before my journey.

After this, I pass on to speak of the knowledge Europe had of Tibet during the middle ages. First among the travellers from this period stands Pian de Carpine, who began his journey in 1245, and only incidentally tells some fantastic stories from Tibet. Rubruck started seven years later for the Far East, and he increased to a certain extent the materials of information left by Pian de Carpine. Marco Polo is the first European who has given any reliable descriptions of the inaccessible land. All that he has to tell, especially about the customs and usages of the peoples, carries the stamp of the greatest veracity. He is the foremost of all the travellers of the middle ages and the pioneer for Asiatic exploration of all times. Odoric is, on the other hand, the first European to have travelled straight through Tibet in its proper sense, and he has even visited Lhasa, in the year of 1330. But he has scarcely anything to tell about the country. His contemporary Mandeville was a swindler who had stolen his information from Odoric and others. To this epoch also belongs Benjamin of Tudela, who completed his journeys in 1173. The following is all that he has to say about Tibet: »The country of Tuboth, which is three months journey distant from Arabia», and: »In four dayes journey from hence (Samar-cheneth) you come to Tubot a Metropolitan Citie, in the Woods whereof sweet smelling Mosse is found.»¹ After the times of the great travellers, the existence of

¹ Purchas His Pilgrims, Vol. VIII page 559 and 576. I quote him here, because I have neglected to mention his name in the following text.