

Where is the lake of Berwan? *A priori* it is certain that Edrisi exaggerates its size, for no freshwater lake exists in these regions, being 40 farsakh long and 72 French miles broad. But why should he not exaggerate when the Puranas talk of a pond in Kailas as large as a sea, and Masudi speaks of a northern freshwater sea?

Edrisi has heard that rivers flow into Berwan from all sides. The lake has sweet water and much fish. The inhabitants of the cities of Berwan and Oudj drink the water of the lake. All this agrees exactly with Manasarovar, which is a freshwater lake, rich in fish, receiving many affluents from the surrounding mountains, and with natives on the hilly banks, who drink the water of the lake. There are no cities now, but eight temples, of which five are built on the very shore and three on hills.

The coincidence seems not to leave anything to be desired when we read in Edrisi that south of the lake is a high mountain. He does not mean Gurla Mandata. He simply means one of the passes, for he has heard of a road crossing the mountain. It may be Lipu-lek or any other pass leading from Purang to the southern valleys. He even knows that the southern side of this mountain faces the mountains of India, as is indeed the case. His pass is very flat, like a plateau, and there is a hut or hospice for travellers. Edrisi greatly exaggerates the happiness everybody feels upon reaching the summit of the mountain. Perhaps he has been told that caravan-men, when walking up to the vertex of the pass, salute the spirits of the mountains and sing a song, as the Ladakis do even nowadays, and he has adorned this ceremony in his own way. But Edrisi does not believe a bit of the whole story, which, nevertheless, is a *»chose de notorité publique»*.

Berwan may be a corruption for Purang, and Manasarovar may have been called the lake of Purang by Mohammedans. Which other fresh-water lake in western Tibet could have been meant? There are none which could have been known to Mohammedan travellers. The Manasarovar is on the highroad to Eastern Tibet and Lhasa. And only the Manasarovar was a lake of wide-spread fame. There is a road from Berwan to Buthinkh. Should this place be Lhasa? And the river Chermakh, Yere-tsangpo or upper Brahmaputra? The five days' journey do not impress me in the least. In 1328 Friar ODORICO DE PORDENONE calls Lhasa, Gota, which CORDIER thinks is Pota(la); Buthinkh may stand for Bota or Pota, Buthan, Barontala? But here we are more liable to mistakes.

Already in 1683 GIACOMO CANTELLI, on his map *La Gran Tartaria*,¹ has placed Lago di Beruan in Regno di Bovtan which he represents as a part of Tobat, Thibet or Thebet. The capital is also called *»Thibet forsan Boutan»*, and lies west of the lake. On the shores of the lake are two cities Beruan and Vga, obviously corresponding to Edrisi's Berwan and Oudj. Cantelli gives as his sources the

¹ See Pl. XXXIII.