

extraordinary addition: »The place where the borax grows is called Taaquelcan; it is a torrent which passes through the mountains of Purbet, and goes, after a long course, into the great Sea, which they call Masserout,<sup>1</sup> which must be very far from the Caspian Sea. None, or very few of these people say that they have seen it, and, according to the description they give of it, it must be the Black Sea.»

The borax probably was brought down from the market of Taklakhhar (Taaquelcan). As the river is a torrent, passing through the mountains, and is said to have the same name as the place, one should feel inclined to think of the Map-chu. But as, on the other hand, it is said to fall into the great lake Masserout, [Ma(na)sserou(var)], it is more likely the Satlej. That it should have a long course before it reached the lake, is simply a misunderstanding; the informant may have said that one has to follow the river a long distance through the Purbet, or mountains, before one reaches the lake.

The first part of the passage quoted is obviously taken from van Twist, directly or indirectly, for in both cases there is borax, a river, a Purbet, and a Maserour or Masserout, the latter certainly a misprint for Masserour. The identification with the Black Sea is rather extravagant, even more so than, as also happened, when Manasarovar has been confounded with Koko-nor. It would be no use to say that my identification were guesswork, for the name of Manasarovar reached European ears only from native lips, and the natives of India have, even in our days, very seldom the slightest idea of any other lake in Tibet, than the Manasarovar. That the name was written down in a corrupt form depended on the fact that the informant did not speak sufficiently clearly, and the listener was not attentive enough.

The next time European geographers were reminded of the famous name was when Father Tieffenthaler sent his maps to Anquetil du Perron. But that story belongs to another part of this work.

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<sup>1</sup> . . . un torrent qui passe au travers des montagnes de Purbet, & se rend après une longue course dans une grande Mer, qu'ils appellent Masserout, . . .