

CHAPTER X.

THE VIEWS OF DIFFERENT EUROPEAN GEOGRAPHERS.

1. GENERAL REMARKS.

In the Introduction to his »Recueil de documents sur l'Asie Centrale» CAMILLE IMBAULT-HUART, referring to the extremely rare *Hsi-yü-t'u-chih*, expresses the following opinion:

Nous en extrairons divers fragments non sans intérêt sur la géographie et l'histoire ancienne et moderne des peuples de l'Asie centrale, lesquels ne peuvent être bien connus que par les livres chinois: on sait en effet qu'à plusieurs époques de leur histoire, les Chinois parcoururent en vainqueurs l'Asie centrale et portèrent même leurs armes jusque sur les bords de la mer Caspienne¹, et qu'ils eurent pendant de longues années des relations suivies avec les peuples de l'Asie occidentale.

The truth of these words was understood more than a hundred years ago, and, so far as the geography is concerned, the principles contained in them, were, in a wider and more perspicacious way exercised by KLAPROTH, RITTER and HUMBOLDT, than by the geographers of any other country. In the orographical systems which, on the basis of Chinese information, were drawn up on European maps of Central Asia, the *Ts'ung-ling mountains* always played a very important part.

2. KLAPROTH.

We begin with KLAPROTH, who had to go through a hard school of many years before he was able to furnish the material necessary for the foundation of such a heavy construction. It is interesting to see how he imagined the orographical systems of Central Asia at an early period of his life as a scholar. Such an article he has called: »Ueber die Theile von Mittelasien jenseit des *Mus-Tag*, in sofern sie den Alten bekannt waren.» In this connection it has its *raison d'être* principally because it is taken from the Chinese geography of the *Ta-ch'ing-i-t'ung-chih*, Peking 1754.²

To begin with Klaproth thus determines the boundaries of *Central Asia*: to the west the *Caspian*, to the south the river *Gihon*, the mountains *Hindu-kush* and *Kentaisse* (*Gang-disri*), and the lake *Koko-nor*; to the east and north the *Altai mountains* and their different southern ramifications. The *Tien-shan* is thus described: »Es fängt an der Nord-

¹ In reality this notice carries too far; cf. CHAVANNES, *T'oung pao* 1906, p. 210.

² *Asiatisches Magazin*, verfaßt von einer Gesellschaft Gelehrten und herausgegeben von JULIUS KLAPROTH. Erster Band. Weimar 1802, p. 27 et seq. — Klaproth was born in 1783. Consequently he was only 19 years old at the publication of this article. This fact also gives to the article a kind of psychological interest.