

their history is in some respects different from the example I have already commented upon, I will add a series of sketches illustrating them as well; but they are such as to require no further explanation. About twenty minutes farther on we passed yet another similar pair of *boldschemals*, that on the left called Tajek Pavane-joleg-ottogho, while the one on the right was nameless. Both contained pools of water, and were embowered amid magnificent poplar forests of considerable age. All along we had on our right the Al-katik-köl, which, although now dried up, was once, I was informed, a lake of great size; but the canal or canals which connected it with the river have disappeared without leaving any traces behind them. The bottom of the lake (*kölning-dschaji*) is now completely overgrown with dense reeds, tamarisks, and other bush vegetation. The space between the river and the lake is occupied by forest and steppe, and on the west of the lake towers the high sand, although we only saw its yellow summits peeping above the reed-beds once or twice all day. I was told that there are a few solitary poplars still growing even on the same shore. Next came, on the left, a pool, the last surviving remnant of

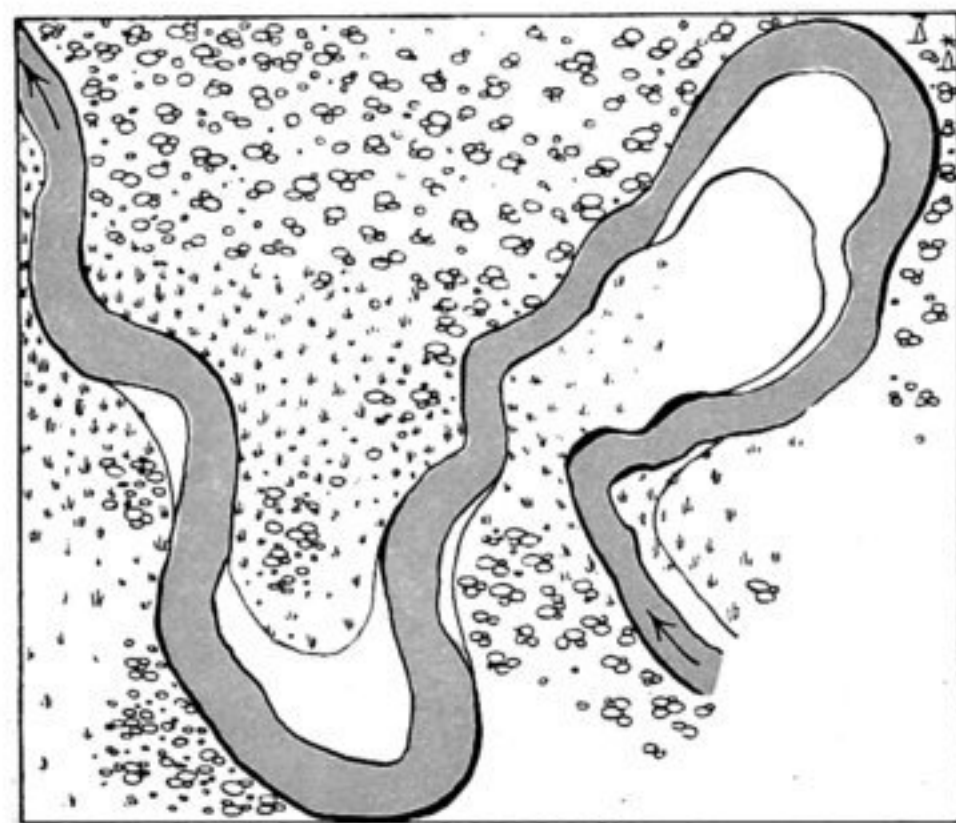


Fig. 173. COURSE OF TARIM BEFORE FORMATION OF THE TWO BOLDSCHEMALS.

some old *boldschemal*, and then immediately below it yet another. This last, which rejoices in the name of Jaghlik-tschökön-otak, is wonderfully distinct and beautifully formed, with the horn-like expansions of the river penetrating into the old channel at each extremity, and a crescentic pool at its inner or middle part.

After that the river flows pretty directly towards the south, though as usual with numerous sinuosities, none of them however especially sharp. Upon reaching some low sand, with vigorous poplar forest growing amongst it, I was informed by my guides, that we had here reached the end of the Al-katik-köl. Here again, along a very short stretch of river, we discovered a third pair of *boldschemals*, one on

each side, each plainly distinguishable and regularly formed, in all respects like those we have already noticed. The one on the right was called Arghamtschi-baghladi. Its neighbour on the left was without a name; it was formed in 1898, and was full of water, like its *vis-à-vis*. The water in their upper extremities approached within two or three meters of the present water-line level of the river, and there can be no doubt that, at the period of high flood, water flows out of the river into both these abandoned loops. This I infer partly from the contour of the surface, and partly from what I was told, namely that both *boldschemals* are first-rate fishing-grounds. For whilst it is true that there might be fish in the deeper parts of the loop at the time it was cut off, still these would soon have been all caught in the nets of the natives, so that it is only where the stock of fish is kept up by the repeated inflow of the river that one can legitimately speak of good fishing-waters. Although it is not known when these *boldschemals* were formed, I should say that the one on the right is the older, at all events it contained the greater quantity of water. But after all there cannot be any very great difference in their ages, for the very fact of the