

been either a temple or the dwelling of an official, and the larger the caravanserai or rest-house, with stables for horses and winter sheepfolds for sheep, these animals being partly consumed by the inhabitants of the place and in part sold to travellers. In that case the house with the three rooms and four columns might very well be the dwelling-house of the caravanserai-keeper and his offices. I had no hesitation in concluding that this caravanserai or village, the last surviving remains of which we had discovered, and which was probably once surrounded by slighter and more perishable kamisch huts, was situated on the great highway that I touched in 1896 at Saj-tscheke and Jing-pen, and several other points, and which formerly ran along the southern foot of the Kuruk-tagh to Tung-chuan. The existence of a former lake is evidenced by the abundance of *Limnæa* shells and thick kamisch stubble; and on its northern shore the village stood. The lake-shore was irregular in outline, with deeply penetrating bays, projecting capes, islands, and promontories. It was equally evident, that the Kuruk-darja once entered this lake and fed it, though its mouth was a good bit to the west of the caravanserai. This last may possibly at one time have been one or two hundred meters distant from the open water; and the great number of pieces of broken pottery seem to indicate that drinking-water must always have been obtainable at the caravanserai, so that the water of the lake was no doubt fresh. The earthenware vessels, which are in many cases of considerable size, are of different shapes, as shown in the accompanying cut (fig. 286). We also discovered something that looked like the slag of glass or enamel, which would go to show that the people knew how to burn their pottery and enamel it on the spot. Both the execution and the motives of the wood-carving prove unmistakably that the people who dwelt there were not Muhamedans: the Chinese are the only people who could have produced such work.

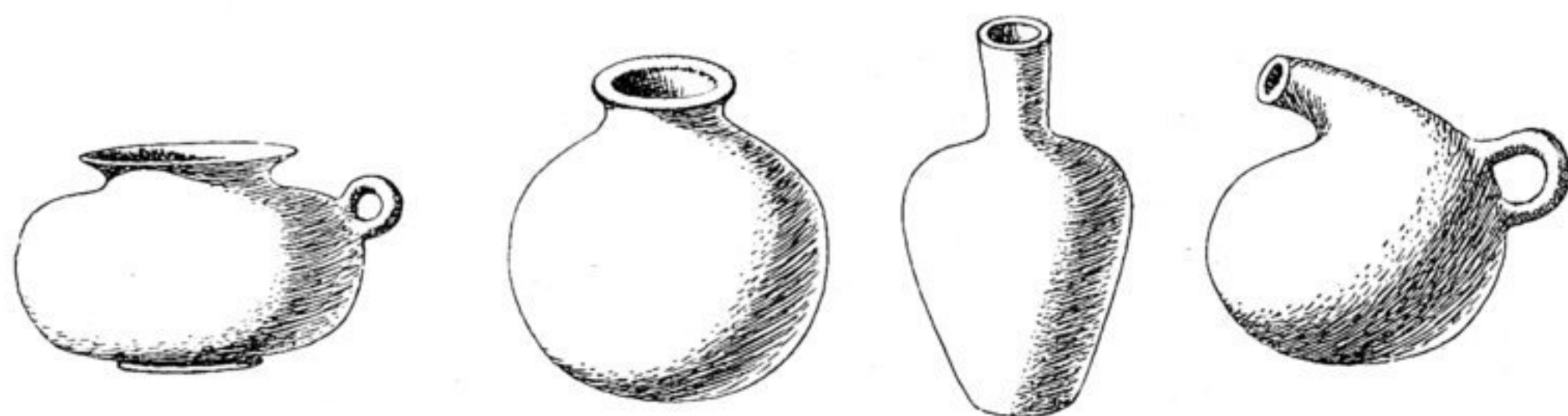


Fig. 286.

It was on 3rd March 1901 whilst travelling from Altmisch-bulak to the Karakoschun that we discovered the first ruins in this same locality. Again it was a small complex of three houses standing side by side. The middle house was built of red burnt bricks, the bricks being rectangular in shape and the dimensions  $32 \times 21 \times 5$  cm. The foundation wall is a meter thick, and does not rise more than one, or at the most two feet above the ground; it forms a quadrilateral, 5.75 by 5.37 m. in length. S.  $35^\circ$  W. of this there is an oblong house of wood, the ruins of which are in great part destroyed. The long wall measures 58.6 m. and the short wall 10.3 m. The best preserved portion was at the south-west end; this measures 8.6 m. by 10.3 m., and is divided into six small apartments. The rest