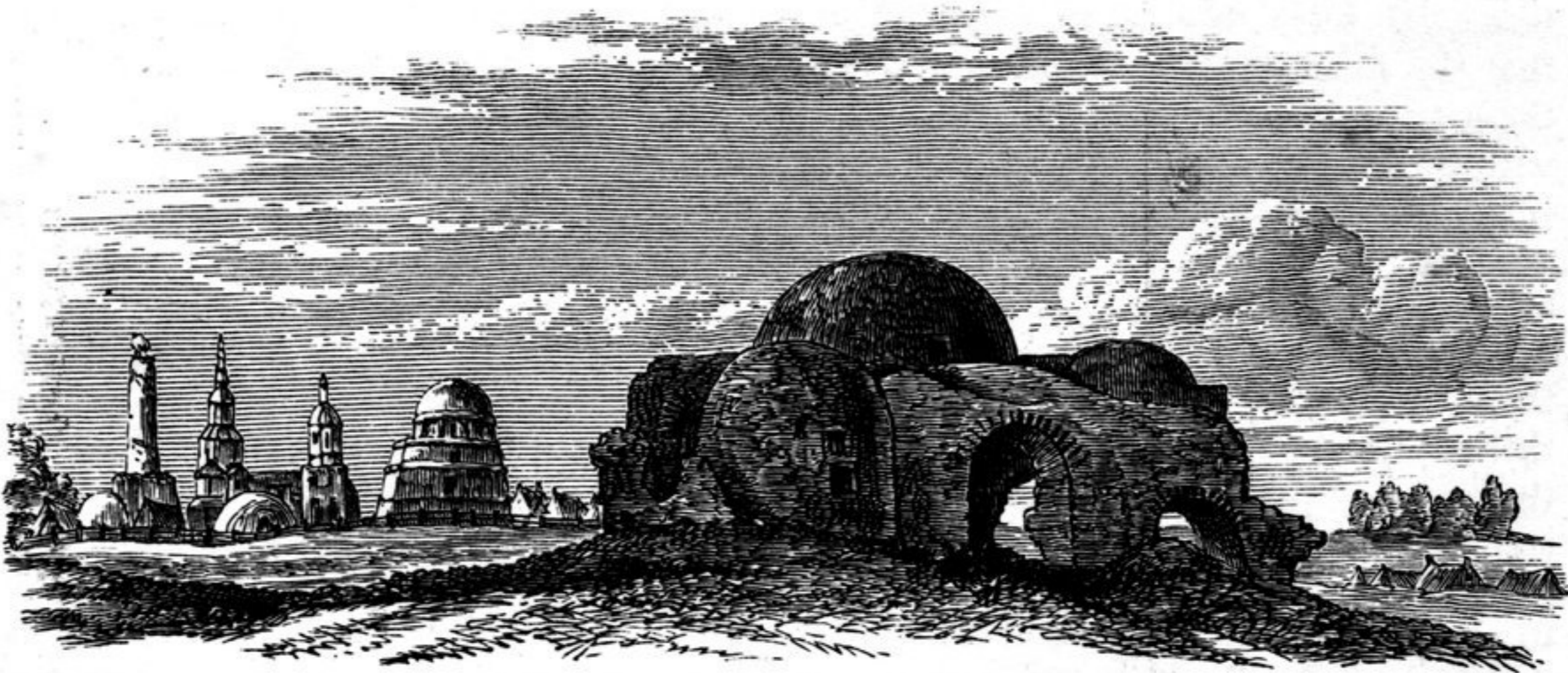


formed the staple articles of trade. The last item derived from Bolghar the name which it still bears all over Asia. (See Bk. II. ch. xvi., and Note.) Bolghar seems to have been the northern limit of Arab travel, and was visited by the curious (by Ibn Batuta among others) in order to witness the phenomena of the short summer night, as tourists now visit Hammerfest to witness its entire absence.

Russian chroniclers speak of an earlier capital of the Bulgarian kingdom, Brakhimof, near the mouth of the Kama, destroyed by Andrew, Grand Duke of Rostof and Susdal, about 1160; and this may have been the city referred to in the earlier Arabic accounts. The fullest of these is by Ibn Fozlán, who accompanied an embassy from the Court of Baghdad to Bolghar, in A.D. 921. The King and people had about this time been converted to Islam, having previously, as it would seem, professed Christianity. Nevertheless, a Mahomedan writer of the 14th century says the people had then long renounced Islam for the worship of the Cross. (*Not. et Extr.* XIII. i. 270.)



Ruins of Bolghar.

Bolghar was first captured by the Mongols in 1225. It seems to have perished early in the 15th century, after which Kazan practically took its place. Its position is still marked by a village called Bolgari, where ruins of Mahomedan character remain, and where coins and inscriptions have been found. Coins of the Kings of Bolghar, struck in the 10th century, have been described by Fraehn, as well as coins of the Mongol period struck at Bolghar. Its latest known coin is of A.H. 818 (A.D. 1415-16). A history of Bolghar was written in the first half of the 12th century by Yakub Ibn Noman, Kadhi of the city, but this is not known to be extant.

Fraehn shows ground for believing the people to have been a mixture of Fins, Slavs, and Turks. Nicephorus Gregoras supposes that they took their name from the great river on which they dwelt (*Βούλγα*).

[“The ruins [of Bolghar],” says Bretschneider, in his *Medieval Researches*, published in 1888, vol. ii. p. 82, “still exist, and have been the subject of learned investigation by several Russian scholars. These remains are found on the spot where now the village *Uspenskoye*, called also *Bolgarskoye* (Bolgari), stands, in the district of Spask, province of Kazan. This village is about 4 English miles distant from the Volga, east of it, and 83 miles from Kazan.” Part of the Bulgars removed to the Balkans; others remained in their native country on the shores of the Azov Sea, and were subjugated by the Khazars. At the beginning of the 9th century, they marched northwards to the Volga and the Kama, and established the kingdom of Great Bulgaria. Their chief city, Bolghar, was on the bank of the Volga, but the river runs now to the west; as the Kama also underwent a change in its course, it is possible that formerly Bolghar was built at the junction of the two rivers. (Cf. *Reclus*,