

CHAPTER X.—THE EXCAVATIONS IN GHIAUR KALA (OLD MERV).

GENERAL SUMMARY.

Among the extensive ruins of Old Merv, those that lie farthest to the east are called by the people of to-day "Ghiaur Kala." They consist of a broad plateau-like elevation with a rolling surface, surrounded by a chain of closely contiguous, conical hills, the present representatives of the former walls of the city. Within this large and nearly square inclosing wall there is a smaller, nearly circular inclosure which attaches itself on its north side to the general wall of the larger city. It incloses a small, topographically independent part of the city; and its wall, rising to a great height, dominates the surrounding area. In the middle of this small inclosure there rises a tumulus-like elevation. On the southeast and west it is connected, through a low plateau, with the encircling wall, from which it is separated on the north by a deep valley or plain. In this depression there rises an independent, smaller plateau, adjoining the northern portion of the wall. Of the walls there remain only insignificant ruins, which give the impression of having been built upon the remains of older ones.

The excavations in Ghiaur Kala were undertaken on a much smaller scale than in the kurgans of Anau and served merely for preliminary examination. The city was attacked at four points—at two points each within and without the circular inner wall (see figs. 420 and 421).

On the top of the hill, 82 feet high, which has the significance of an acropolis, a large cut was made toward the northern declivity. It had a breadth of 25 feet and was about 50 feet in length (upper digging), and it was sunk by means of four terraces, to a depth of 40 feet 4 inches. (The figures referring to levels will here be reckoned from the top of the hill downward.) At the foot of the hill, in the depression to the north, there was started a pit (lower digging) 33 feet long and 20 feet wide, which was sunk by means of a terrace to a depth of 16 feet.

On the plateau of the larger city, 200 paces to the south of the wall encircling the acropolis, there was laid out the outer digging I, 45 feet long and 10 feet wide. Here, by means of two terraces, a depth of 27 feet was reached. Outer digging II was the place at which were found seven large supply vessels standing *in situ*, which were discovered at first in sinking a shaft. This was on the plateau of the larger city. The uncovering of these vessels was undertaken by Mr. Homer Kidder, who describes the find. Besides these excavations, three galleries were driven horizontally into the heart of the acropolis hill from its west side.

Lastly, here too, as at Anau, several shafts were sunk for physiographic study which have contributed little to the archeological problem.