

BARBARA KAIM

THE FIFTH SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT GURUKLY DEPE, SOUTHERN TURKMENISTAN (2014)

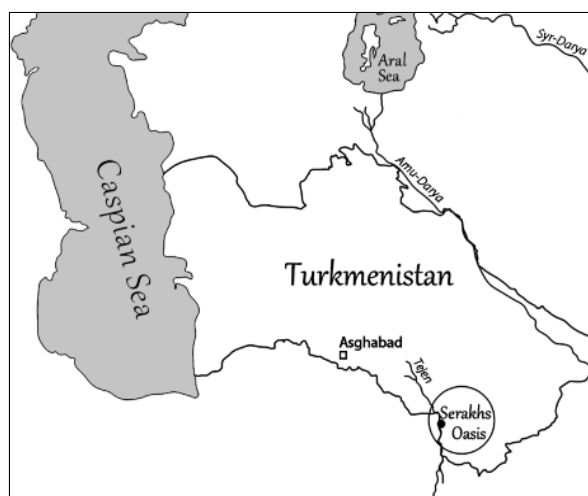
Keywords:

The fifth season of excavations at Gurukly Depe, a Partho-Sasanian site near Serakhs, took place from 14 September to 18 October 2014 and was a continuation of excavations started here in 2010.¹ As in previous years, our archaeological works were financed by Research Grant No. 2012/07/B/HS3/00908 from the National Science Centre and conducted by the Polish-Turkmen team directed by the author. The participants were: Maja Rzeplińska (University of Warsaw), field assistant and supervisor of Trenches 11 F and 12 F; Nazarij Buławka (University of Warsaw), supervisor of Trenches 13 I and 14 I; Piotr Piekarczyk (State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw), supervisor of Trenches 5 R and 5 S; Inspector Atamurat Odayev,

the representative of the Archaeological Park Köne Serakhs, who gave logistical support for the expedition. We were assisted by a group of students from the Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw: Paweł Borycki, supervisor of Trench 11 L, Agata Kostrzewa, Agata Michalewicz, Daniel Prusaczyk, Weronika Sobiech, Joanna Szymczak, and Daria Trzos.

During the fifth season, our archaeological works were focused on two areas of the site: one located on its highest, south-western part where remnants of a manor house are unearthed and the other, on the eastern part of the site, in the middle of the east side of a defensive wall (Fig. 1).

With fifteen trenches excavated or scraped so far in the south-western part of the site, we are able to draw a more complete plan of the manor house. However, the method employed does raise significant problems of interpretation in that we record the walls of the building that happen to be visible just several centimetres below the surface. They are not necessarily all contemporary and further exploration in this area is still needed to determine



phases of the building history. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, results of our work suggest that the building consisted of a series of rooms adjacent to the outer wall of the building. In Trench 13 I, the excavation of four such rooms revealed during the 2013 season on the south side of the manor house was continued. The work is very difficult and slow because all rooms were filled with regularly laid layers of sun-dried and backed bricks. Apparently, the area occupied by the manor house of the Late Sasanian Period was being prepared for the construction of a new building of which little has survived except some fragments of its walls. They are preserved to a maximum height of 20–30 cm and represent the last architectural phase in this part of the site. Only in one of the rooms in Trench 13 I a mud brick-paved floor was reached. Fragments of three large storage jars were found on it. They were supposedly used for storing cereals. In the course of our excavations, a very large number of fragments of this type of vessels was recovered in this part of the site. This suggests that agricultural products collected from fields of the manor house's owner were stored here.

¹ B. KAIM, *The First Season of Excavations at Gurukly Depe, Southern Turkmenistan, 2010*, "Światowit" VIII (XLIX)/A (2009–2010), 2011, 207–208, pls. 213–215; eadem, *The Second Season of Excavations at Gurukly Depe, Southern Turkmenistan, 2011*, "Światowit" IX (L)/A (2011), 2012, 233–237; eadem, *The*

Third Season of Excavations at Gurukly Depe, Southern Turkmenistan, 2012, "Światowit" X (LI)/A (2012), 2013, 203–207; eadem, *The Fourth Season of Excavations at Gurukly Depe, Southern Turkmenistan (2013)*, "Światowit" XI (LII)/A (2013), 2014, 241–246.

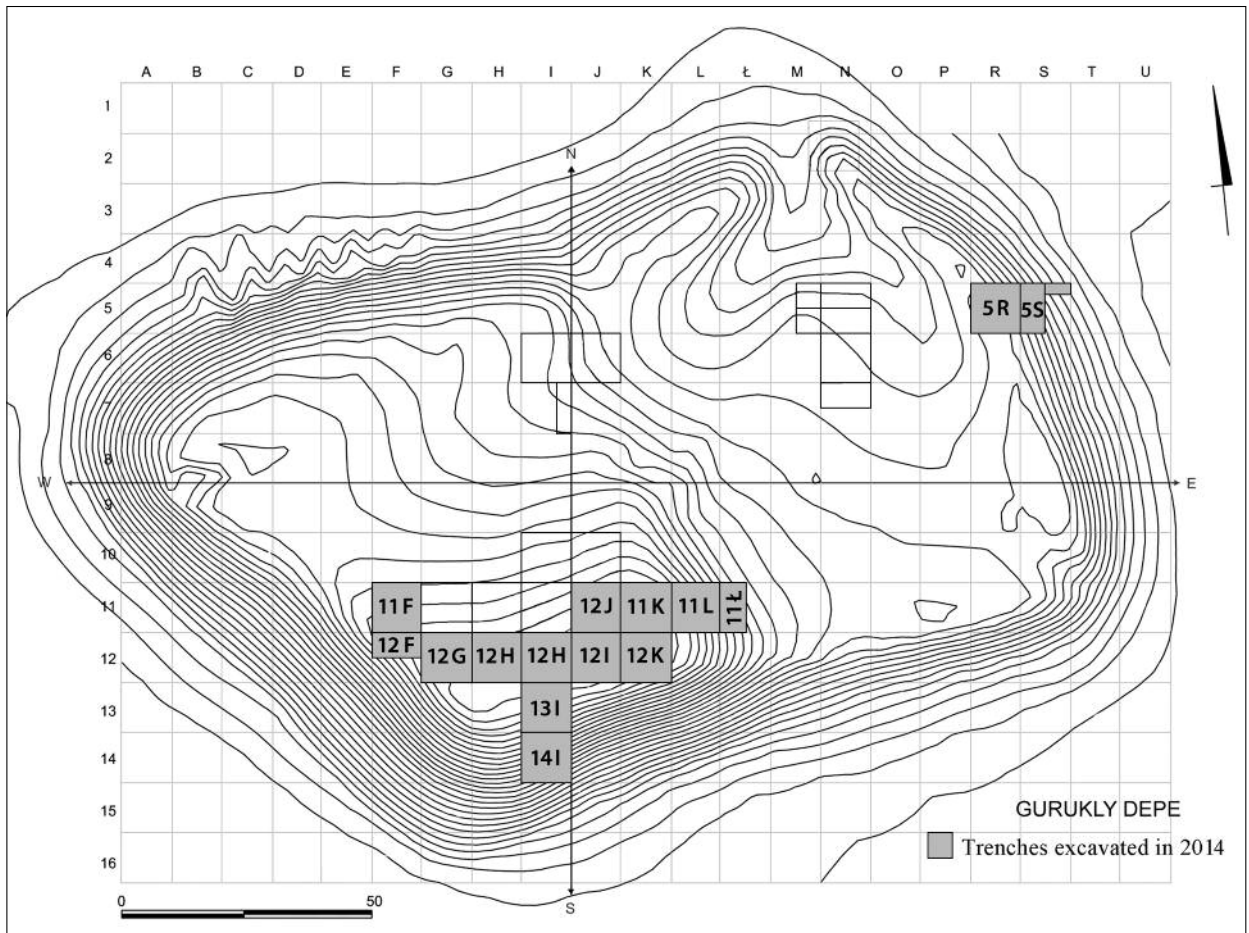


Fig. 1. Topographical map of Gurukly Depe with the location of trenches (Drawing J. Kaniszewski, P. Borycki).

Ryc. 1. Mapa topograficzna Gurukly Depe z lokalizacją wykopów.



Fig. 2. Trench 11 L. Outer wall of the manor house and the walls of rooms adjacent to it (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 2. Wykop 11 L. Mur zewnętrzny rezydencji i widoczne ściany przylegających doń pomieszczeń.



Fig. 3. Excavation of defensive wall in Trench 14 I (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 3. Prace przy odsłanianiu muru obronnego w wykopie 14 I.

The walls of three rooms abutting to the eastern outer wall of the building were uncovered in Trench 11 L (Fig. 2). Here the rooms were also filled with layers of bricks.

The southern side of the residence adjoined a defensive wall surrounding this part of the site (Fig. 3). Roughly at the middle of the excavated part of this wall, an oval tower (5.2×1.5 m) protrudes from its front line. A base of the wall has not yet been reached. There is also a lack of any dating evidence for its construction. It is expected that further excavation will produce sufficient material for properly established chronological relationship between the manor house and the construction of the fortification wall.

Houses with spacious rooms, with floors paved with backed bricks, adjoin the northern face of the excavated building. Part of such a house, which probably represents the last building phase in this part of the site dated initially to the 7th c. AD was unearthed in Trenches 11 F and 12 F. The last season of excavation conducted here revealed some earlier structures on the ruins of which the above mentioned house was built.

In the eastern part of the site, the excavation in Trenches 5 R and 5 S that was started in 2011 was continued in 2014. A small sounding excavated in Trench 5 S revealed a platform of compacted clay on which a defensive wall with inner corridor of the third phase was constructed. The platform was probably built on the ruins of a wall of the earliest, i.e., fourth phase of the defensive wall construction but this has to be proven by future excavations.

The last season of excavations at Gurukly Depe yielded a multitude of pottery fragments, mainly of the Late Sasanian Period (Fig. 4) but only a few small finds, such as a Sasanian carnelian stamp seal with representation of a bird (Fig. 5), a late Parthian coin and a flint tool discussed below by Karol Szymczak.

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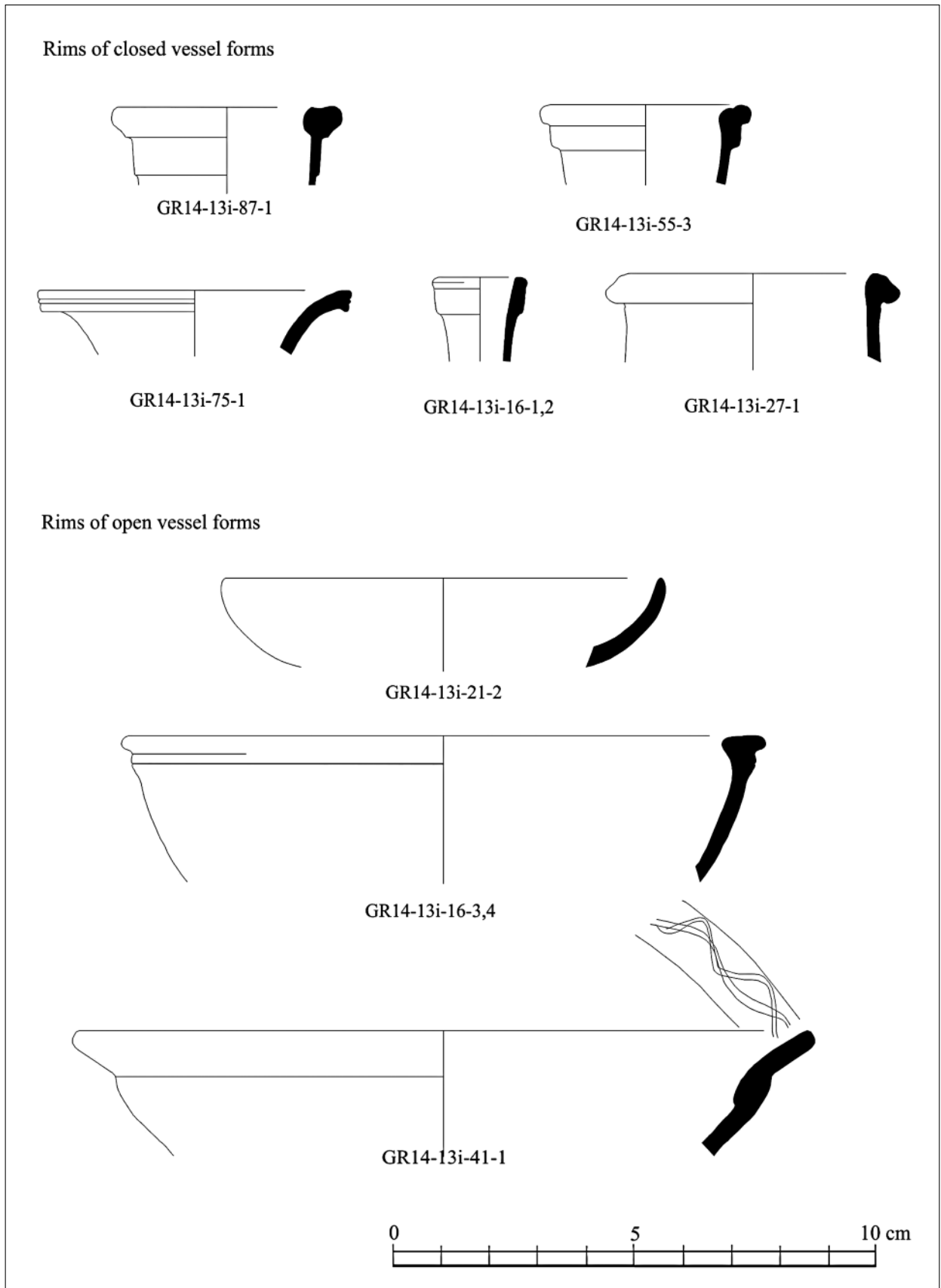


Fig. 4. Late Sasanian pottery from Gurukly Depe (Drawing N. Buławka).

Ryc. 4. Ceramika okresu późnosasanidzkiego z Gurukly Depe



Fig. 5. Sasanian stamp seal with representation of a bird, from Trench 12 K (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 5. Sasanidzka pieczęć stemplowa z przedstawieniem ptaka, znaleziona w wykopie 12 K.

BARBARA KAIM

PIĄTY SEZON WYKOPALISK NA STANOWISKU GURUKLY DEPE W POŁUDNIOWYM TURKMENISTANIE (2014)

Podczas kolejnego, piątego sezonu prac wykopaliskowych na stanowisku Gurukly Depe, w południowym Turkmenistanie, kontynuowano prace zarówno w południowo-zachodniej, najwyższej, jak i we wschodniej, niższej części stanowiska. W części południowo-zachodniej, oprócz odczyszczania widocznych tuż pod powierzchnią zarysów ścian rezydencji należącej prawdopodobnie do lokalnego właściciela ziemskiego, prowadzono prace wykopaliskowe w wykopach 13 i 14 I, 11 L, 11 Ł, 11 F, 12 F (Ryc. 1). Pomieszczenia, których zarysy odczyszczono w wykopach 11 L i 13 I, były wypełnione kilkoma warstwami cegieł

(Ryc. 2). Dotarcie do podłóg pomieszczeń wymaga więc wyjmowania cegieł wypełniska, co bardzo spowalnia tempo prac. Kontynuowano też wykopaliska w wykopach 5 R i 5 S założonych na wschodnim boku muru obronnego otaczającego osadę (Ryc. 3).

Śród drobnych zabytków znalezionych podczas tego sezonu wymienić należy sasanidzką pieczęć stemplową (Ryc. 5), monetę z okresu późnopartyjskiego (I–II w.) oraz prezentowane poniżej przez Karola Szymczaka narzędzie krzemienne.

KAROL SZYMCZAK

A FLINT TOOL FOUND DDURING THE FIFTH SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT GURUKLY DEPE, SOUTHERN TURKMENISTAN (2014)

Keywords:

The flint artefact in question (**Fig. 1**) was found during the fifth season of excavations at Gurukly Depe, in Trench 11 I, in a mud brick dump deposit. It can be safely considered as residual.

It was produced of brown yellowish raw material, with minor lighter intrusions in its siliceous mass. Since it was found in the southern part of the country, we can suppose that it is a local variety of flint, widely used by Neolithic inhabitants of this region. It perfectly fits a description given by J. Connolly who says that in the series of lithics collected from the site of Jeitun, some 15 km north-west of Ashkhabad, flints of light and medium yellowish brown colour clearly prevail.¹ A minute fragment of the well-preserved, white cortical surface on the artefact under examination would suggest that the raw material was collected in the vicinity, or directly from its primary outcrops.

From a technical point of view the artefact should be described as an elongated flake with parallel side edges; it is probably not a fragment of a blade, because a small trace of cortical surface is located on the distal, transversal edge of the flake.

Negatives present on the dorsal face of the artefact would point out that the flake was the next of consecutive similar flakes knapped off from the same striking surface. The presence of a partly removed hinge, visible on the right side edge suggests that the point of percussion was slightly moved to the left, in relation to the previous one.

The dorsal face of the right side edge was finally shaped, especially along its proximal part, with an irregular, though clearly visible (functional?) retouch. Single, very fine negatives of functional damage could also be found on the ventral face of the same edge. Very fine traces of similar, though more continuous functional nibbling could be also



observed on both faces of the left side edge. The butt, point of percussion, and the proximal part of a large, well-exposed bulb, are not preserved – they were struck off by a single stroke directed from the dorsal face, applied exactly on the inter negative scar. Undoubtedly, it was an intentional operation, forming a small, but very clear, well-shaped niche, right in the middle of the proximal slant-wise edge of the artefact.

Quite massive, slightly slant towards the left, is the distal transversal edge of the flake. In majority it is shaped with a very irregular, coarse retouch. Only its medial part is finally formed by also irregular, crushing, but more fine edge retouch, which allowed to mark a small niche, being a symmetrical equivalent to a niche present on the proximal edge. Along the entire course of the right side edge, also on its dorsal, but especially ventral face, clear traces of continuous lustre can be observed, even with a naked eye. This lustre bears all features characteristic for “sickle gloss,” which appears on working edges of flint tools serving for cutting herbaceous plants rich in silica, such as grassy (*graminae*) plants, including cereals.

¹ J. CONNOLLY, *The 1994 Knapped Stone Assemblage from Jeitun*, (in:) D. HARRIS, *Origins of Agriculture in Western Central Asia*.

An Environmental-Archaeological Study, Pennsylvania 2010, 181.

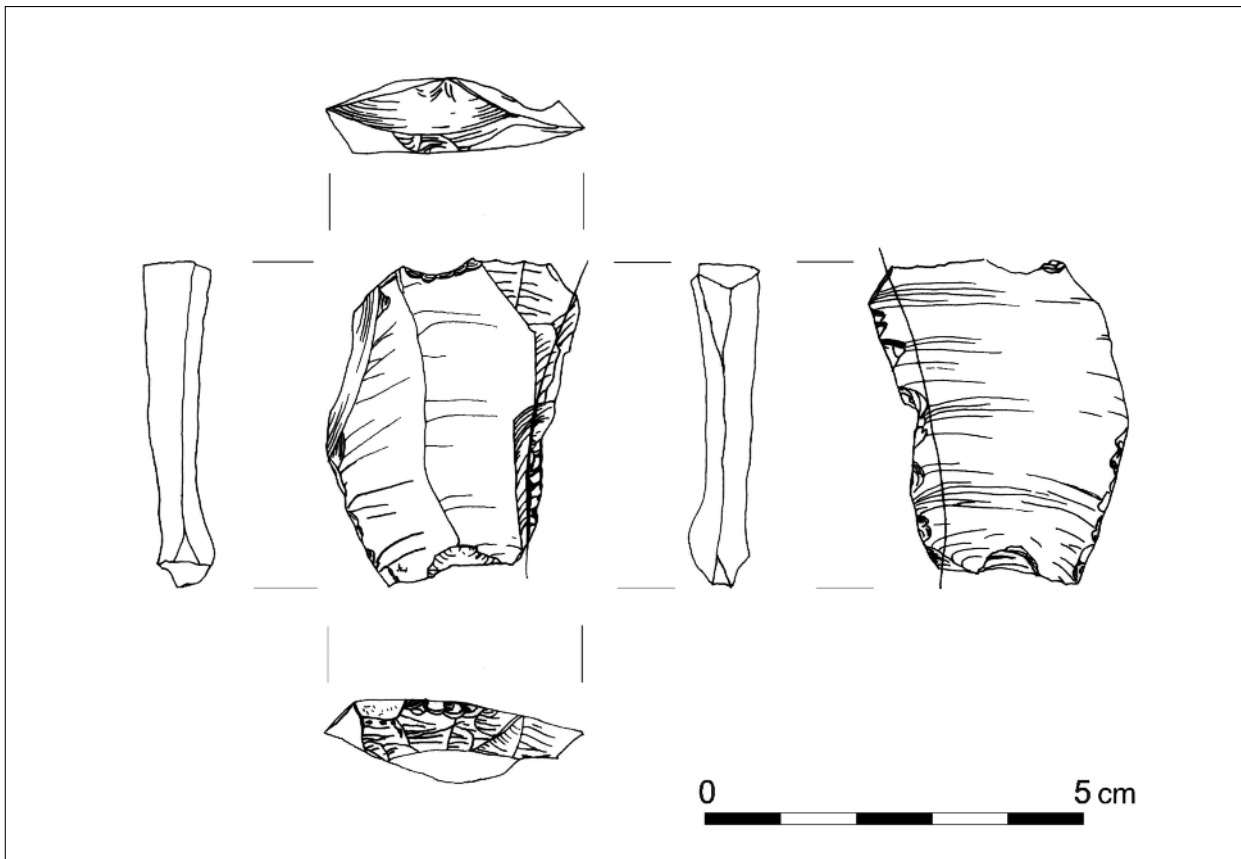


Fig. 1. Flint tool from Gurukly Depe, 2014 (Drawing K. Szymczak).
 Ryc. 1. Narzędzie krzemienne z Gurukly Depe, sezon 2014.

Taking all this into account, we can assume that the examined find should be interpreted as a sickle insert – one of flint elements forming a sharp working edge of a sickle. The niches on the proximal and distal transversal edges of the implement could help to install it inside a bone, antler, or wooden handle. Many experiments have shown that composite tools like that could be quite effective for harvesting cereals and/or other species of grasses.²

Similar flint tools are quite common in all lithic assemblages produced by early farming communities, not only these inhabiting the area along the Kopet-dag mountain chain.³

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² G.F. KOROBKOVA, *Orudâ truda i hozâistvo neolitičeskikh plemen Srednej Azii*, “Materialy i issledovaniâ po arheologii SSSR” 158,

1969, 21, fig. 3:12.

³ D.R. HARRIS, *Origins Of Agriculture...*, 119–124.

**NARZĘDZIE KRZEMIENNE ZNALEZIONE PODCZAS PIĄTEGO SEZONU WYKOPALISK
NA STANOWISKU GURUKLY DEPE W POŁUDNIOWYM TURKMENISTANIE (2014)**

Podczas piątego sezonu wykopalisk w Gurukly Depe, w wykopie 11 I, w warstwie depozytu powstałego wskutek erozji ścian wzniesionych z cegieł suszonych, znaleziono krzemiany przedmiot wykonany z żółtawobrązowego krzemienia z niewielkim wtrąceniami. Ponieważ znaleziono go w południowym Turkmenistanie, można przypuszczać, że jest to lokalna odmiana krzemienia, powszechnie stosowana przez mieszkańców tego regionu w epoce neolitu. Mały fragment dobrze zachowanej, białej po-

wierzchni korowej na badanym artefakcie sugeruje, że surowiec zebrano z wychodni znajdującej się w niezbyt dalekiej odległości od stanowiska Gurukly Depe.

Z technicznego punktu widzenia artefakt powinien być opisany jako podłużny wiór z równoległymi krawędziami bocznymi, który najprawdopodobniej służył jako wkładka sierpowa zamocowana w kościanej, rogowej lub drewnianej oprawie.