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THE FIRST SEASON OF EXCAVATION AT GURUKLY DEPE, SOUTHERN TURKMENISTAN, 2010 (PL. 213–215)

The first field season of the Polish-Turkmen excavations at Gurukly Depe took place from 18 September till 20 October 2010 with the participation of the following members from the Polish side (Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw): Barbara Kaim, archaeologist, Joanna Piątkowska-Małecka, zooarchaeologist, Maciej Grabowski, PhD student of archaeology, Monika Róžańska, archaeologist, Maja Rzepińska, PhD student of archaeology, Kamila Pilarska, student of archaeology, and from the Turkmen side: Anamurat Amanberdiev, Director of *Köne Serakhs*, Atamurat Ödäyew, inspector.

Gurukly Depe (N 36° 36' 56"; E 61° 13' 37") is a local toponym ("Depe with a tail") for a distinctively shaped artificial mound located about 11 km north of the town of Serakhs, in the Serakhs Oasis, at the eastern edge of Ahal Welayaty, in southern Turkmenistan. The site lies c. 1.3 km east of a modern road connecting the city of Tedjen with Serakhs and 0.5 km east of the Herdekli-yap canal, which is part of the Kichi-aga-yap irrigation network, one of the three ones which water the oasis.

The archaeological site of Gurukly Depe consists of two parts: 1) the *depe*, with the elevation of 13 m and the area of 2.8 ha at the bottom; and 2) the area south and east of the *depe*, called Gurukly Shaheri, the cultural layers of which represent remains of a town of the Islamic period. The place of our investigation is the *depe*. This area has the shape of a quite regular rectangle (160×130 m) and consists of two parts of different height: the western part is much higher than the eastern one. The highest area of the site is its south-western part which slopes rather steeply down to the east, the west and the south, and gently to the north; then northward from a shallow depression the surface of the *depe* rises slightly again. The nature of the depression which is also observed in the eastern part of the *depe* where it runs slightly diagonally to the vicinity of the north-western corner is not clear. However, it seems probable that it is a result of modern human activity because other evidence of illegal excavation, as well as destructive activity of the former Soviet army can be observed on the surface of the site. A fortification wall surrounding the site was damaged near the north-eastern corner probably in order to facilitate the entry of military vehicles to the inside. We were informed that a deep pit in the north-western edge was excavated in order to hide a tank. Also, military vehicles stationed at the foot of the northern side



of the *depe*, concealed between high earth embankments. Numerous pits visible mainly near the edges of the *depe* were made by treasure hunters intrigued by storage jars, as it is evidenced by pottery sherds lying nearby.

The site was identified as a Parthian-Sasanian fortified residence during the archaeological survey conducted by the Polish team in the Serakhs Oasis in 2007 and 2008. Despite the relatively small scale of the excavations carried out during the first season at Gurukly Depe, the proposed chronology is confirmed by pottery forms characteristic for the Parthian and the Sasanian periods, a silver Sasanian coin and a gold Sasanian ring found there. Only parts of mud brick walls of some constructions were unearthed in each of four excavation units opened in the western and the eastern parts of the site. Thus, the nature of this occupation and the construction history of these areas remain to be clarified.

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PIERWSZY SEZON WYKOPALISK NA GURUKLY DEPE W POŁUDNIOWYM TURKMENISTANIE, 2010 R.

Polska Misja Archeologiczna w Iranie i Azji Środkowej, Instytutu Archeologii UW, rozpoczęła wykopaliska na stanowisku Gurukly Depe w oazie Serachs, w południowym Turkmenistanie. Pierwszy sezon badawczy potwierdził wyniki wcześniejszych prac powierzchniowych odnośnie chronologii osadnictwa, natomiast jego charakter pozostaje jeszcze do wyjaśnienia. Stanowisko archeologiczne

Gurukly Depe składa się z dwóch części: *depe*, czyli sztucznego wzniesienia, o maksymalnej wysokości sięgającej 13 m i powierzchni ok. 2,8 ha, oraz rozciągających się u podnóża pozostałości po miasteczku z okresu muzułmańskiego zwanych Gurukly Shaheri. Miejscem rozpoczętych badań jest *depe*, kryjące pozostałości rezydencji okresu partyjskiego i sasanidzkiego (III w. p.n.e. – VII w. n.e).



Fig. 1. Satellite view of the site of Gurukly Depe (Google Earth).

Ryc. 1. Zdjęcie satelitarne stanowiska Gurukly Depe.



Fig. 2. Topographical map of Gurukly Depe (by J. Kaniszewski).

Ryc. 2. Mapa topograficzna Gurukly Depe.

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Fig. 3. Gurukly Depe. View from the south (photo B. Kaim).
Rys. 3. Gurukly Depe. Widok z południa.



Fig. 4. Gurukly Depe. View from the north-east (photo B. Kaim).
Ryc. 4. Gurukly Depe. Widok z północnego wschodu.



Fig. 5. Fragment of a terracotta figurine (photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 5. Fragment figurki terakotowej.