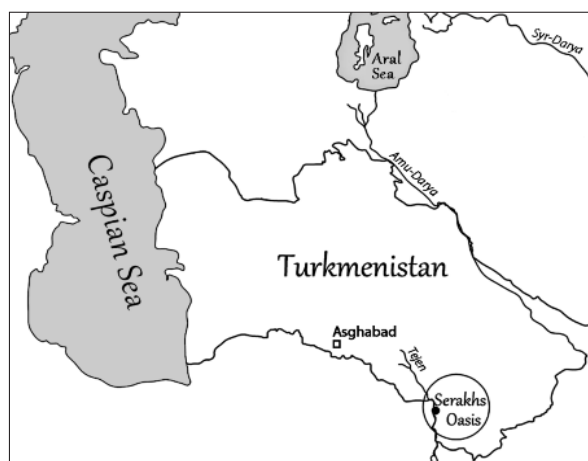


BARBARA KAIM

## THE THIRD SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT GURUKLY DEPE, SOUTHERN TURKMENISTAN (2012)

Between 15 September and 17 October 2012 the Polish-Turkmen archaeological mission carried out its third excavation season at the ancient site of Gurukly, a Partho-Sasanian fortress (*qala*) in the Serakhs oasis, southern Turkmenistan. The excavations were financed by Research Grant No. N N109 092639 from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and were conducted by the Polish team, directed by the author, in cooperation with the Archaeological Park *Köne Serakhs* headed by Director Anamurat Amanberdiev. The participants were: Nazar Buławka, Monika Rożańska-Kardaś, Maja Rzeplińska (University of Warsaw), Piotr Piekarz (State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw), Atamurat Odayew (Archaeological Park *Köne Serakhs*) – archaeologists, and a group of students from the Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw: Paweł Borycki, Marta Höffner, Dominika Kossowska, Marta Kuśnierek, Adrianna Madej, Dominika Majchrzak and Katarzyna Turczyn.

Two major aims of the 2012 season were: 1) extension of the architectural plans uncovered during the first two seasons; 2) clarification of the sequence of occupation of the site.



Good progress was made in these two aspects, however we are still far from satisfying results. Nothing is yet known of the earliest levels, concealed beneath the remains of the Sasanian Period and almost certainly dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD or even earlier as it is suggested by pottery sherds. In pursuit of the first aim, excavation was continued on the higher, west part of the site and on its lower, east part (Fig. 1).

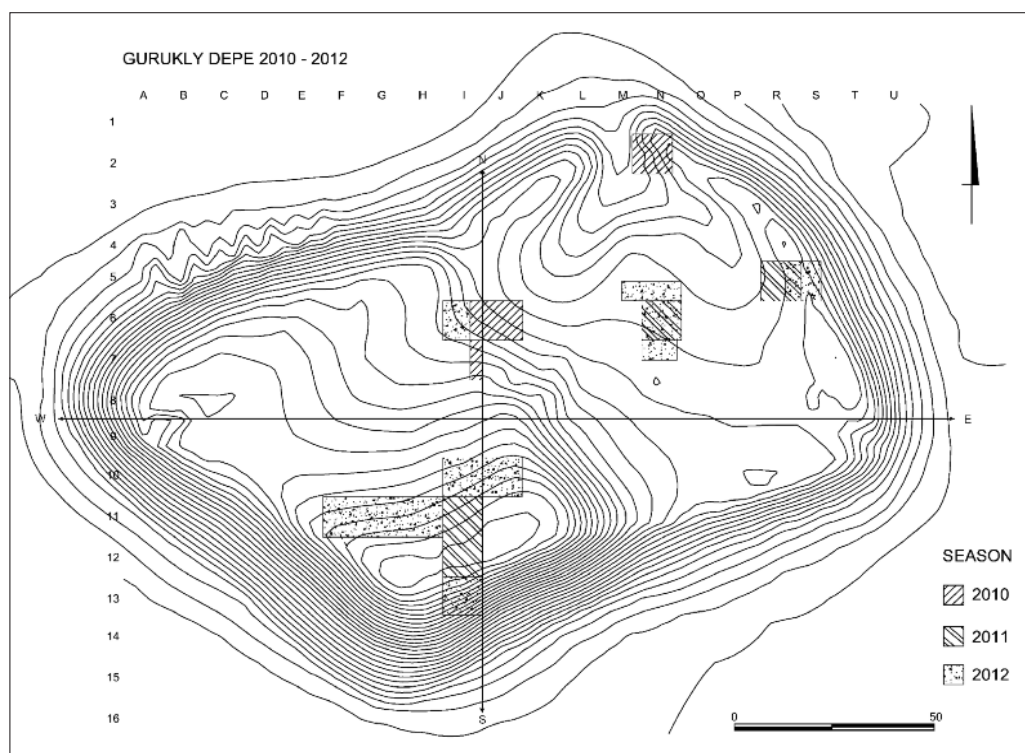


Fig. 1. Topographical map of Gurukly Depe with the location of the trenches (Drawing J. Kaniszewski, M. Rożańska-Kardaś).

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



Fig. 2. Exploration in Trenches 6 N and 7 N (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 2. Prace w wykopach 6 N i 7 N.

The excavations in the eastern part of the site were conducted on the eastern, outer side of the defensive wall and in the middle of the area where several rooms of a large mud brick house were exposed (Fig. 2). Six rooms of the house have been recognized here up to now. Two of them, revealed partially in Trench 7 N, were intensively used as household areas what is suggested by thick layers of greenish colour, as well as by considerable amount of ceramic fragments and animal bones. The function of other rooms (Trenches 5 N, 6 N and 7 N) could not be determined until removing the fragments of fallen vaults (Fig. 3) overlying deposits and floors. Of two major phases of architectural development of this large mud brick house which have been recognized up to now, the last one belongs to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD, as it is suggested by pottery fragments and a silver coin of Yazdegird II (AD 438–457).

Excavation in Trenches 5 R and 5 S which were opened in the middle of the eastern side of the defensive wall surrounding the settlement, revealed two phases of its construction. Remains of a poorly preserved solid wall, preliminary dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> c. AD, were unearthed during the 2011 season. The second phase is represented by a semi-circular tower with an inner room, partially exposed in the lower parts of the trench.

Work in the western part of the site focused on the exploration of a large building, possibly a manor house of a local land-owner constructed at the highest point of the *qala*. The 2012 objective was to expose an architectural plan of the building here. It was apparent by the end of the first season (2010) that differential erosion across this area had meant that initial structures and deposits uncovered ca. 10.2 m beneath the present ground surface had belonged to different phases. The erosion was successively more severe as one proceeded northwards, i.e. downslope, across Trenches 12 I and 10 I; there is about 3 m difference in the ground surface between the southern and northern parts of the area. We decided to concentrate our work in 2012 in the northern side of the building in an attempt to expose here its earliest external wall. The surface-stripping by shovel was chosen as a useful method to provide a plan of sub-surface structures. The surface of Trenches 12 J, 11 F, 11 G and 11 H were then all shovel scraped.

As a consequence, the exterior, northern wall of the building was unearthed on the length of about 40 m. The wall is about 2.4 m wide and composed of five rows of bricks (38×38×x? cm) (Fig. 4). In the western part of Trench 11 H the line of wall changes gently its course to the north and moves back to the south in the eastern part of Trench 11 G.

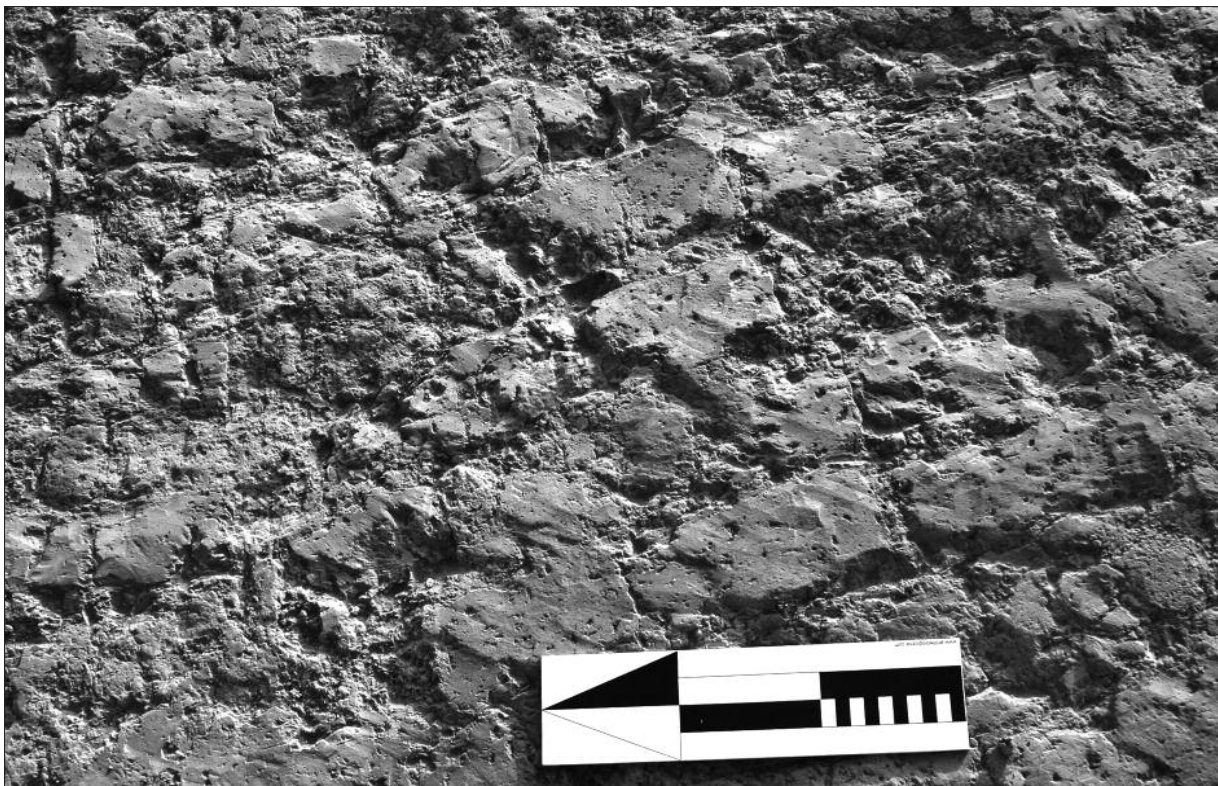


Fig. 3. Bricks of fallen vault in Trench 5 N (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 3. Cegły zawalonego sklepienia w wykopie 5 N.



Fig. 4. Bricks of the exterior, northern wall of a residence in the west part of Gurukly Depe (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 4. Cegły zewnętrznego, północnego muru rezydencji w zachodniej części Gurukly Depe.



Fig. 5. Remains of the walls unearthed in Trench 13 I – ready to draw in a plan (Photo B. Kaim).  
Ryc. 5. Pozostałości murów odsłoniętych w wykopie 13 I – gotowe do narysowania planu.



Fig. 6. Terracotta figurine of an animal (Photo B. Kaim).  
Ryc. 6. Terakotowa figurka zwierzęcia.

A new trench (13 I) was opened to investigate the southern side of the building. The remains of the building's final phase were uncovered here (Fig. 5), but it is too early to determine their exact character.

The situation in the area of Trench 6 I, located north of the supposed residence, is even less clear. So far, only fragments of mud bricks were exposed here, but the question to which structure they originally belonged remains unanswered. Here, as in other trenches, excavations will be continued next year.

Some small finds were found during the excavations at Gurukly Depe. These included two Sasanian silver coins (Trench 7 N and 5 R), four *ostraca* (Trench 7 N), several dozen spindle whorls, some terracotta figurines (surface finds) (Fig. 6), and as usual, hundreds of pottery fragments.

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BARBARA KAIM

## TRZECI SEZON WYKOPALISK NA STANOWISKU GURUKLY DEPE W POŁUDNIOWYM TURKMENISTANIE (2012)

Podczas trzeciego sezonu wykopalisk na stanowisku Gurukly Depe, w południowym Turkmenistanie, kontynuowano prace zarówno w zachodniej, wyższej, jak i we wschodniej, niższej części stanowiska. Na terenie tej ostatniej, w wykopach 5 N, 6 N i 7 N odsłonięte zostały ściany kolejnych pomieszczeń dużego domostwa powstałego w V wieku, a w wykopach 5 R i 5 S – górne partie murów półokrągłej baszty z pomieszczeniem wewnętrznym, strzegącej wejścia do *qala*.

Głównym celem prac prowadzonych w zachodniej części stanowiska była rekonstrukcja planu przypuszczalnej

warownej rezydencji. Aby odtworzyć przebieg jej północnej fasady, odczyszczono powierzchnię wykopów 12 J, 11 F, 11 G i 11 H, usuwając pokrywającą konstrukcję warstwę 10–20 cm. W rezultacie tych prac, na odcinku 40 metrów, odsłonięty został mur grubości 2,4 m, zbudowany z pięciu rzędów kwadratowych cegieł. Rozpoczęto także prace w wykopie 13 I usytuowanym w obrębie południowej części rezydencji. Spośród drobnych zabytków wymienić należy dwie srebrne monety władców sasanidzkich, cztery ostraka, kilkadziesiąt przeszłików i kilka figurek terakotowych.