

BARBARA KAIM

## THE FOURTH SEASON OF EXCAVATIONS AT GURUKLY DEPE, SOUTHERN TURKMENISTAN (2013)

The fourth season of the Polish-Turkmen excavations at Gurukly Depe lasted from September 15 to October 18, and was a continuation of the archaeological exploration that started here in 2010. The excavations were financed by Research Grant No. 2012/07/B/HS3/00908 from the National Science Centre and conducted by the Polish team in cooperation with the Archaeological Park *Köne Serakhs* headed by Director Anamurat Amanberdiev. The participants were: Barbara Kaim, Nazar Buławka, Dominika Kossowska, Maja Rzeplińska (University of Warsaw), Piotr Piekarczy (State Archaeological Museum in Warsaw) – archaeologists, and a group of students: Paweł Borycki, Nina Czapska, Weronika Kozyra, Klaudia Stoch, Kamila Supeł (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw) and Michał Górny (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). We were accompanied by our inspector Atamurat Odayev, the representative of the Archaeological Park *Köne Serakhs*.

The 2013 season at Gurukly Depe continued the long-term goals outlined before the work on the site was undertaken, i.e. to obtain a stratigraphic-chronological



sequence of the occupation of the site from its origins to its abandonment and an assessment of the successive stages of the Parthian and Sasanian pottery production in the region.

The season was concerned with excavating structures located in the two main parts of the site, i.e., the eastern and the western ones (Fig. 1). In the western part,

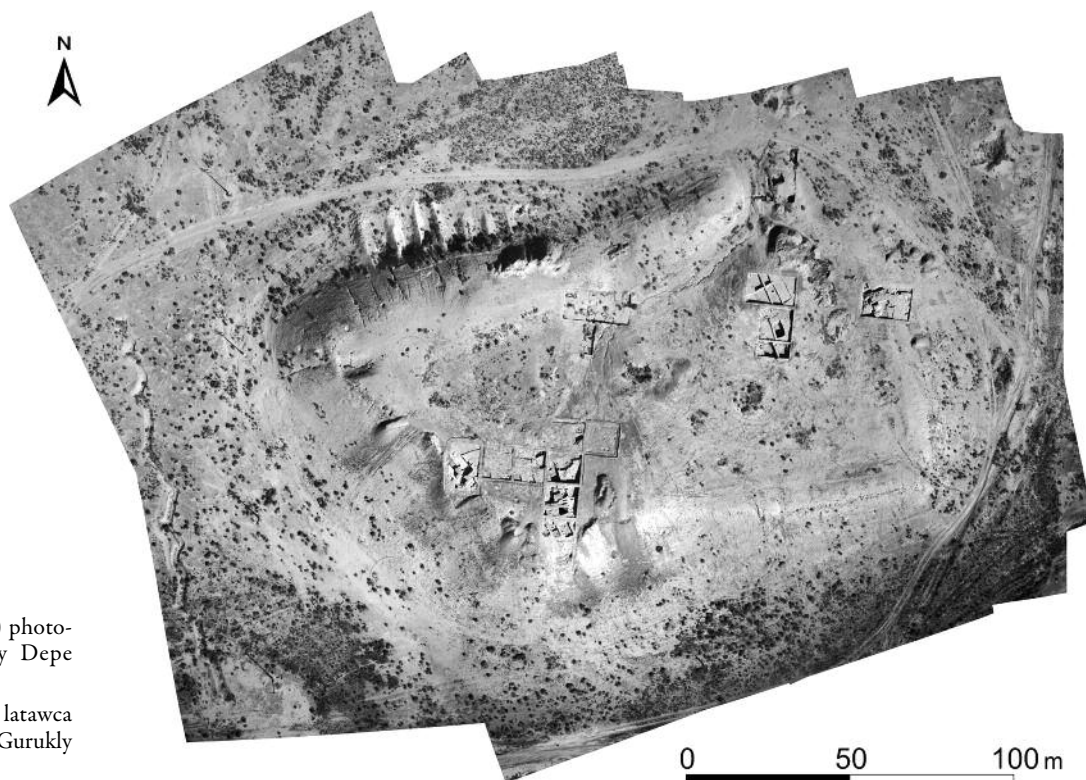


Fig. 1. Aerial (kite) photograph of Gurukly Depe (M. Bogacki).

Ryc. 1. Wykonane z latawca zdjęcie stanowiska Gurukly Depe.

excavations in four trenches explored during the previous seasons (14 I, 13 I, 12 I, 11 I and 12 F)<sup>1</sup> were continued and a new trench (F 13) was opened (**Fig. 2**). The main objective of the work here is to uncover more of the remains of a supposed residence of a local landlord in order to get a more complete view of it. Excavations in Trench 13 I exposed a complex of four rooms on the southern side of the residence. The rooms represent the second (numbered from the surface downwards) architectural phase of the building. The floors of the rooms consist of at least three layers of sun-dried and baked bricks. The reason for which so solid floors were constructed was probably the fact that

the rooms were built on the remnants of older structures. To investigate the relationship between the rooms and structures found in Trenches 12 I and 11 I, the structures unearthed in Trench 12 I during the first season in 2010 and corresponding to the last occupation phase of this part of the site have to be removed, which is planned for the 2014 season.

Also still uncertain is whether dwellings with floors paved with fired bricks discovered in Trenches 11 F and 12 F (**Figs. 3, 4**), just behind the north-western corner of the residence, were built when the residence was in function or after its abandonment.

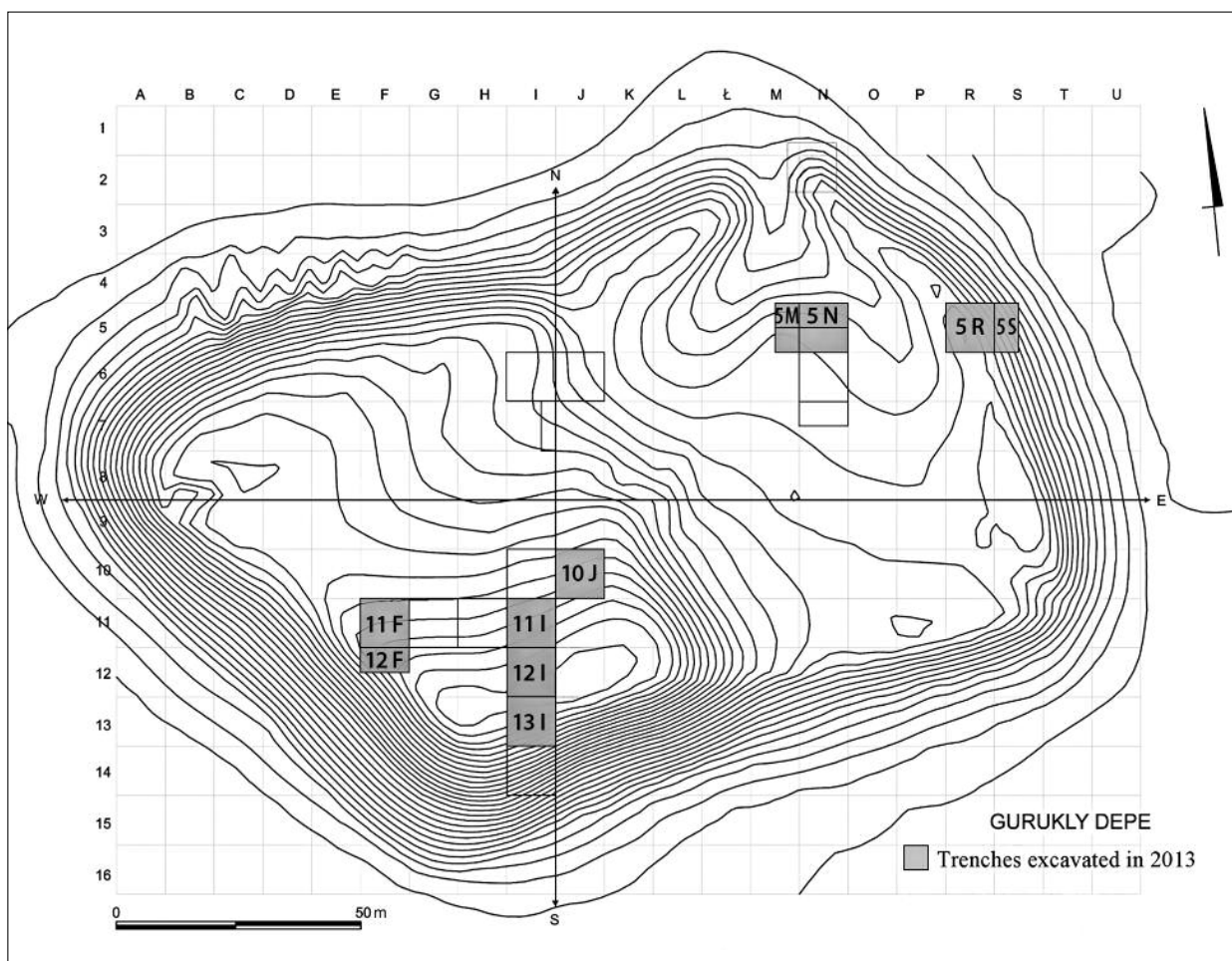


Fig. 2. Topographical map of Gurukly Depe with the location of trenches (Drawing J. Kaniszewski, P. Borycki).

Ryc. 2. Mapa topograficzna Gurukly Depe z lokalizacją wykopów.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. B. Kaim, *The Second Season of Excavations at Gurukly Depe, Southern Turkmenistan*. 2011, "Światowit" IX (L)/A (2011), 2012, fig. 1.

Fig. 3. Aerial (kite) view of Trenches 11 F and 12 F (Photo M. Bogacki).

Ryc. 3. Wykonane z latawca zdjęcie wykopów 11 F i 12 F.

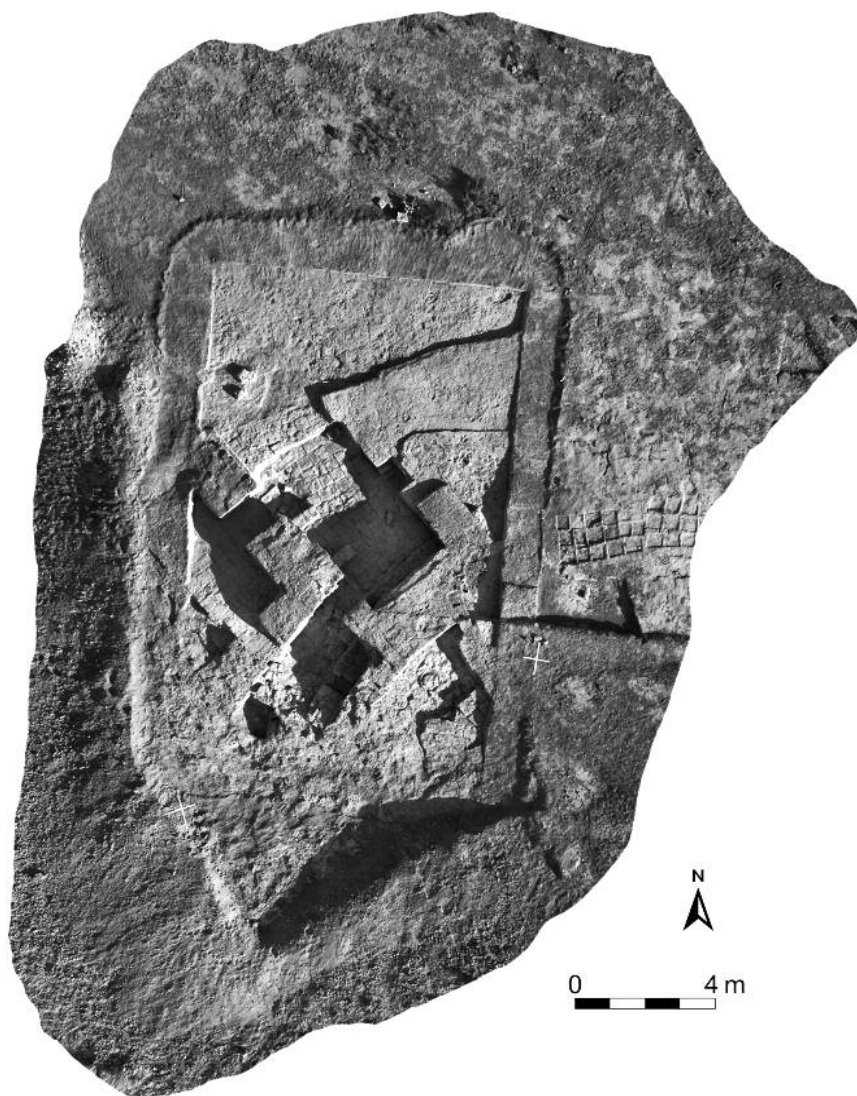


Fig. 4. Interior of the room with the floor paved with fired bricks in Trench 11 F (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 4. Wnętrze pomieszczenia z podłogą wyłożoną wypalonymi ceglami w wykopie 11 F.



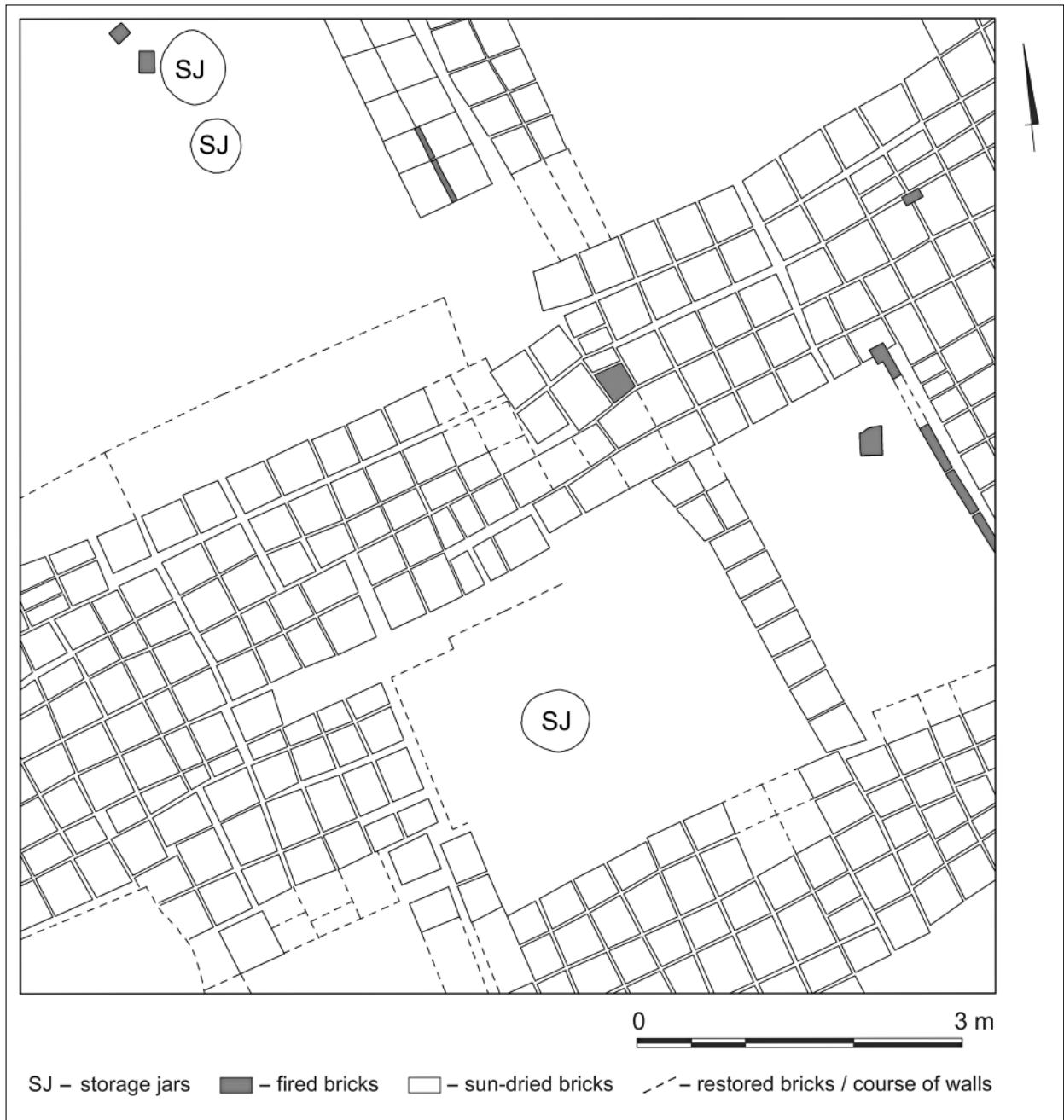


Fig. 5. Plan of the sub-surface structures unearthed in Trench 10 J (Drawing P. Borycki, N. Buławka).

Ryc. 5. Plan konstrukcji odsłoniętych tuż pod powierzchnią w wykopie 10 J.

In continuation of the work started in 2012, Trenches 12 J and 10 J were shovel scraped with the aim to determine the northern extent of the residence. The shovel scraping in Trench 10 J revealed another part of the north outer wall of the residence and the walls of structures adjacent to it on the north and south. The plan of structures uncovered ca. 10 cm beneath the present ground surface (**Fig. 5**) indicates a complex history of the building: additional walls butted up against these forming a room adjacent to the south face of the outer wall of the residence

effectively reduced its size. Moreover, the construction of a secondary, one-brick-wide wall split the room into two parts.

A group of rooms, probably part of a larger structure, was excavated within Trenches 5 N and 5 M, in the eastern part of the site. Excavations stopped here after the level of mud brick floors had been reached but, as it is suggested by the results of earlier (2012) work in the adjacent sector 6 N, the original floors remain to be explored.

Fig. 6. Fragments of a bone inlay found in Trench 12 I (Photo M. Bogacki).

Ryc. 6. Fragmenty intarsji z kości znalezione w wykopie 12 I.

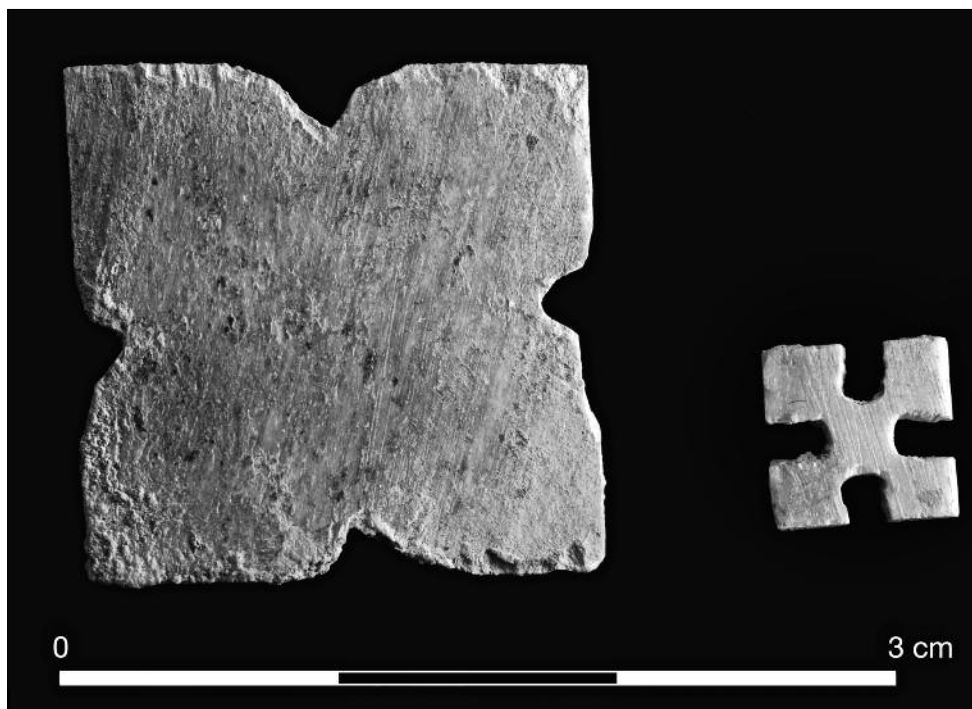
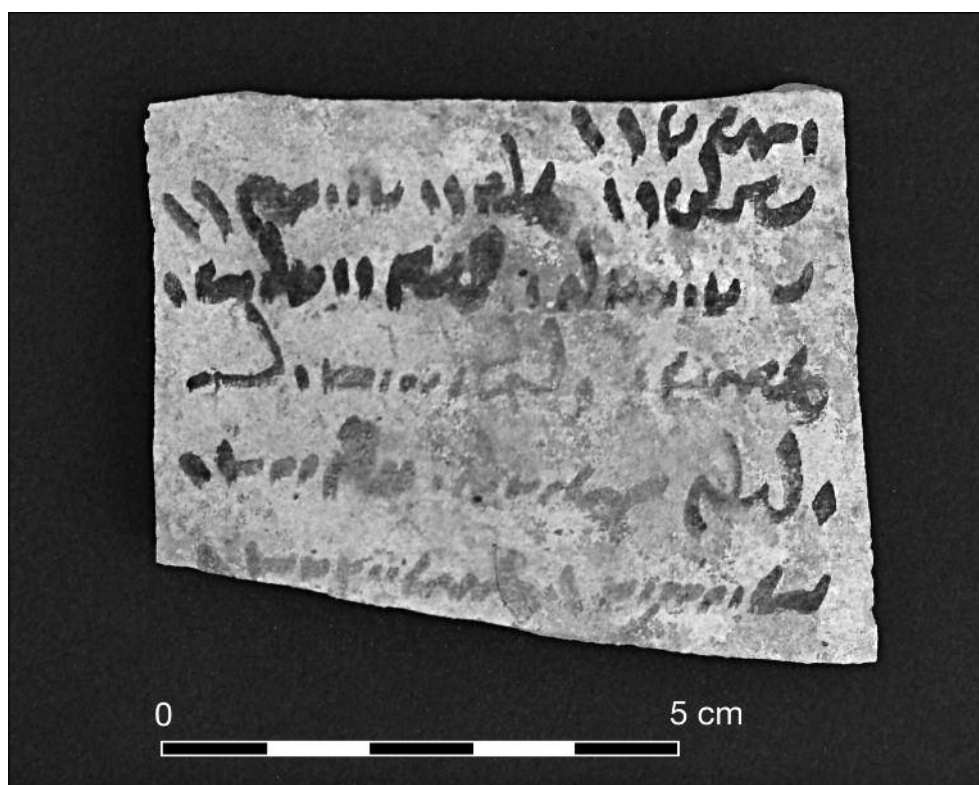


Fig. 7. Ostrakon with an Arabic inscription found in Trench 5 R (Photo B. Kaim).

Ryc. 7. Ostrakon z napisem arabskim znaleziony w wykopie 5 R.



A more complex picture of the settlement's history emerges as the result of excavation in two trenches (5 R and 5 S) opened in 2011, in the middle of the eastern side of the site. At least four major phases in the existence of the defensive wall surrounding the settlement have been identified till now.

Phase I is represented by poorly preserved mud brick structures unearthed during the 2011 season directly beneath the surface but so badly affected by wind erosion and destroyed by numerous deep pits that their nature is not possible to determine. Although their exact date is uncertain, fragments of early Islamic pottery – even if mixed

with non-homogenous material – as well as the size of mud bricks (30–32×30–32×7 cm) used here suggest the early Islamic period. Some rows of bricks of the same dimensions were used for reconstruction of a semi-circular tower whose original walls were constructed during the third phase of mud bricks measuring 34×34×7 cm. The tower with its inner rectangular chamber must have been left unused for a longer period of time since its original walls are preserved to a height not exceeding 1 m. The walls were constructed directly on only roughly levelled remains of a defensive wall with an inner corridor of the last phase and on the bricks of its latter deliberate infilling. The details of this earliest wall construction are still unclear and require further excavation.

Among small finds recovered during 2013 season is a coin of the Sasanian king Peroz (459–484) and coin of Kavad's I 'first reign' (488–498) which give the *terminus post quem* for the architectural remains unearthed in Trench 11 I during the 2011 season. Two tiny pieces of bone inlay (**Fig. 6**) and several fragments of early Islamic ostraca (**Fig. 7**) represent spectacular but rather sparse collection of small finds of the 2013 season.

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#### CZWARTY SEZON WYKOPALISK NA STANOWISKU GURUKLY DEPE W POŁUDNIOWYM TURKMENISTANIE (2013)

Podczas kolejnego, czwartego sezonu prac wykopaliskowych na stanowisku Gurukly Depe w południowym Turkmenistanie kontynuowano prace zarówno w zachodniej, wyższej, jak i we wschodniej, niższej części stanowiska (**Ryc. 1, 2**). W części zachodniej skoncentrowano się na rekonstrukcji planu rezydencji należącej prawdopodobnie do lokalnego właściciela ziemskiego, natomiast charakter pomieszczeń odsłoniętych dotychczas w części wschodniej, a stanowiącej część jakiegoś większego zespołu, pozostaje

jeszcze nieznan (Ryc. 3, 4). Kontynuowano też prace w wykopach 5 R i 5 S wytyczonych we wschodnim boku muru obronnego otaczającego osadę.

Spośród drobnych zabytków znalezionych podczas tego sezonu wymienić należy kolejne monety władców sasanidzkich, dwa małe, wykonane z kości, fragmenty intarsji (**Ryc. 6**) oraz ostraka z okresu wczesnomuzułmańskiego (**Ryc. 7**).