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EurAsia archaeological projects: brief report on 2009

Dear members and sponsors,

At the start of the new year, we would like to give you a brief update on last year's successful excavations. The detailed archaeological reports will be published on the Society's website in March.

I. Novopokrovka II, Kyrgyzstan

Excavation of a fortified settlement and a presumed Buddhist monastery

In 2009, the excavation focused on the centre of the site, where two different layers were discovered, one Karakhanid from the 11th century and an older one that has not yet been dated. It is very encouraging that this older layer has remained intact; this is where the presumed Buddhist temple may have been located. Continued work in the south-eastern suburb suggests the existence of a separate medieval mint. The project also attracted considerable interest in the daily press in the capital Bishkek in 2009. Work will continue to focus on the centre of the settlement in 2010.

II. Tuva, Southern Siberia, Russia

Discovery and exploration of ancient Turkic graves, sanctuaries and stone images, 6th-8th centuries

In 2009, excavation continued on the extensive Hunnic-Sarmatian necropolis from the 3rd/2nd century BCE – 3rd century CE, which was discovered in 2008. Further iconographically highly interesting bronze belt and decorative buckles were discovered, as well as an intact grave containing fine ceramics and glass jewellery. In 2010, the entire burial ground will be the subject of a geomagnetic survey conducted by a team from the University of Novosibirsk.

III. Urgut, Uzbekistan

Excavation of a Christian monastery from the 7th/8th to 12th centuries.

The highly successful excavation has been completed, although the question of conservation remains open. An initial publication of the research results appeared in the USA in 2009¹, the first in German will appear in issue 3 of *ANTIKEN WELT* (May 2010), and the corresponding PDF will be emailed to members. Further specialist publications will follow.

IV. Note, Kazakhstan

Excavation of a medieval town dating from the 6th to the 13th/14th century.

In 2009, an illustrated interim report in three languages (Russian, English, Kazakh) was published. Excavations are currently on hold due to inconclusive discussions with the local city administration regarding certain safety issues.

V. Kesken Kala, Kazakhstan

Excavation of a Khorezmian (5th-7th century) and Oghuz (10th-12th century CE) town

The 2009 excavations confirmed that the site was already inhabited before the Khorezmian era, i.e. before the 5th century CE. Unfortunately, a kurgan (tumulus grave) from the 2nd-1st century BCE had been robbed. Eight silver coins from the Khorezmian period were discovered, as well as abundant

¹ Erica Hunter (editor) *The Christian Heritage of Iraq*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway 2009. ISBN 978-1-60724-111-9

pottery from the same period in a 100m² hall. In 2010, excavations will continue both in the centre of the complex and in the Ogghuzen necropolis discovered in 2009.

VI. Sanjar Shah, Tajikistan

Excavation of a heavily fortified Sogdian city from the 6th-8th century CE.

The tower of the Sogdian citadel has been completely excavated (picture on the left). It is the best-preserved military structure in the entire Sogdian culture and therefore absolutely unique. Due to its unstable structural condition, all work and budgets in 2010 will focus on stabilising the tower.

Another sensational highlight was the discovery of an excellently preserved dress from the 7th or 8th century, which is being expertly treated at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. (Picture on the right)



VII. Vardana, Uzbekistan

In 2009, surveying began on the fortified city of Vardana from the 5th century AD, located in the oasis of Bukhara. This excavation will be particularly time-consuming, but also revealing, as the site was inhabited for over 1400 years, until the 19th century. An initial trial excavation was carried out at the citadel.

VIII. Further

- The examination of a cooperation with the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin, for a new project in southern Russia has been postponed to 2011 for financial reasons.
- Four further requests for support from the Society were rejected.
- The public annual event was held in Basel for the second time.

Finally, we would like to thank all our members for their invaluable and much appreciated support.

We would be very grateful if you would continue your valued membership. Despite the difficult economic situation, it remains the Society's goal to continue all projects in a professional manner. The membership fee is CHF 500, as last year.

With best wishes for a happy and successful 2010 and kind regards

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