
Hergiswil, 24 June 2013

EurAsia archaeological projects Brief report on 2012 + plans for 2013

The detailed archaeological reports will be published on the society's website at the end of March at:
www.exploration-eurasia.com

I. Kesken Kala, Kazakhstan

Excavation of a Khorezmian (5th–7th century) and Oghuz (9th–12th century CE) city

Excavations of the temple palace complex continued in late autumn and winter 2012. This is the first discovery of a temple belonging to the Oghuz Turkish confederation. Further altars with protomes were uncovered, along with a large quantity of pottery and a sacred (?) clay figurine. The investigation of the neighbouring district and the cemetery also continued.



The temple palace complex

160-page report

2013:

Normal continuation

II. Tuva, Southern Siberia, Russia

Discovery and exploration of Scythian and Hunnic-Sarmatian graves

In 2011, the University of St. Petersburg conducted a geomagnetic survey of the target area, but this provided little evidence of further tombs hidden beneath the surface. All measurement data was thoroughly reviewed in 2012 by the Institute for Geomagnetic Research at the State Office for the Preservation of Historical Monuments in Munich. Unfortunately, this secondary analysis confirmed the results from 2011. This means that the team cannot search specifically for further graves, but would have to rely on chance finds and structures accidentally exposed by soil erosion. It was therefore decided to terminate the project. An interim scientific report was published by the University of Bonn in 2011 and is available on the EurAsia website. A final report will follow in 2014.



Bronze belt buckle from the Hunnic period

2013:

- Negative expert opinion by Dr Fassbinder, Munich: Russian data from 2011 has been correctly recorded and evaluated; due to the specific mineral content of the sand, the terrain does not allow for better measurements.
- Project is complete, final report expected in 2014.
- Possible visual re-inspection of the site in 2015 to check whether further graves may have been exposed by the annual flooding.

III. Novopokrovka II, Kyrgyzstan

Excavation of a fortified settlement and a presumed Buddhist monastery

The work focused exclusively on the centre of the settlement, without reaching the presumed Sogdian layer. Part of the post-Sogdian layer (approx. 8th-10th century) was used as a waste pit during the Karakhanid period (11th-12th century), which is why a large number of ceramic finds, some of them intact, were made.

The results of a comprehensive geotectonic investigation of the walls in the south-eastern sector in 2010-11 were published in 2012. They show that the city was destroyed by a strong earthquake towards the end of the 12th century and not by a war event as previously assumed. (The article will be available on the EurAsia website.)



One of the two excavations in the central sector



Early Karakhanid pottery

2013

Continuation in the centre

IV. Vardana, Uzbekistan

Excavation of a Sogdian and medieval city in the oasis of Bukhara

In 2012, Dr. Silvia Pozzi, who has been conducting archaeological work in the oasis of Bukhara for several years, took over the management of our project. Last year's excavations in the citadel confirmed that the city was founded in the 4th century AD. The royal palace located in the citadel was built in the 4th to 5th centuries and fundamentally renovated at the end of the 7th century. At the same time, the city fortifications were massively reinforced. Among the rich finds, an engraved Sassanid seal (ca. 5th-7th century) stands out and will be analysed further. In addition, the entire excavation was carefully measured and mapped.



Overall view from the west



Ceramic vessel



Dr Pozzi with some excavators

2013:

Continuation of excavations in the palace of the citadel Trial

excavation in Sharistan

Overcoming the difficulty of finding good workers

Increase in budget to finance an additional archaeologist and three workers, high inflation

Publication about a Sassanid seal amulet discovered in Vardana in a journal of the IsMEO (Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente), Rome, end of 2013.

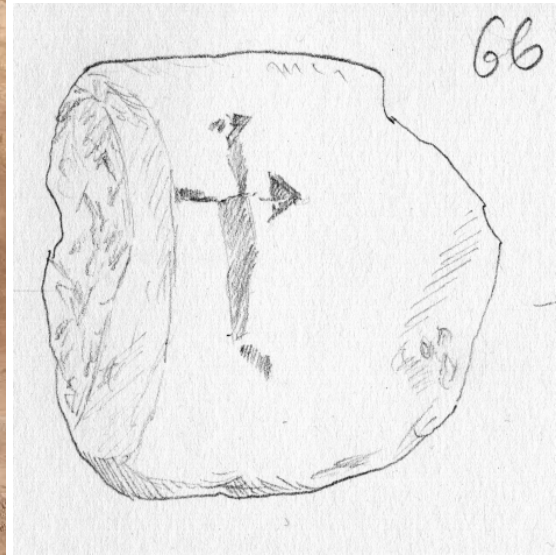
VI. Qarshovul, Uzbekistan

Excavation of a presumed Christian Nestorian city, which is very rare in Central Asia

After special ceramic finds in 2011 pointed to a Christian settlement context, the team discovered a cemetery with gravestones in 2012, each with a rudimentary cross carved into it. This confirms that there was a Christian settlement here. In 2013, parallel to the further excavation of the cemetery, a palaeoanthropological examination of the bones will be carried out in an attempt to assign the buried individuals to a specific ethnic group. The duration of settlement at this site and the connection to a neighbouring archaeological site where Abbasid coins were discovered remain unknown.



Grave from the necropolis



Drawing of a gravestone

2013

Problems:

- Report on discovered coins and amulets pending
- Palaeoanthropological examination of the bones in 2013 questionable
- Partially insufficient financial transparency in 2012.
- Poor cooperation between Dr A. Savchenko and Uzbek archaeologist Dr Sheyko, Tashkent.

Solutions:

- Immediate termination of cooperation with Savchenko
- Clarification of outstanding issues
- Continuation with a new, as yet undetermined coordinator, but interest on the part of Uzbekistan somewhat unclear.
- Immediate implementation of a binding form for financial settlements, including signatures by all service providers and receipts for expenses over USD 50. Valid for all projects.

VII. Sanjar Shah, Tajikistan

Excavation of the fortified residence of a Sogdian ruler and an excellently preserved citadel

In 2012, excavations focused on the previously unexplored north-eastern sector, where clear evidence (fire altar, god figures) of a Zoroastrian sanctuary of the Central Asian type was discovered. A topographical survey of the entire Sanjar Shah plateau was carried out. As no traces of ordinary settlements with streets have been found in Sanjar Shah to date, the site was probably not a town, but the seat of a regional feudal lord who ruled over neighbouring settlements. For this reason, a topographical survey of the four ruin complexes east of Sanjar Shah was carried out in 2012 and the early medieval site of Qutlugh Tepe was partially excavated. The results of this survey and the excavation of Qutlugh Tepe are still pending.



The north-eastern sector of Sanjar Shah



Terracotta figure of a deity

2013

Problems:

- Metal roof still pending, as is its financing by Tajikistan
- Lack of evaluation of the survey of the eastern surroundings of Sanjar Shah
- No report on the excavation of Qutlugh Tepe
- Financial inconsistencies in 2011
- Financial inconsistencies in 2012 and lack of financial report
- Poor cooperation between Dr. A. Savchenko and Tajik archaeologist Dr. Kurbanov

Solutions:

- Immediate termination of cooperation with Savchenko
- Clarification of outstanding issues, in particular financial irregularities
- Continuation of the project secured by Dr Kurbanov
- New coordinator: Dr Pavel Lurje, archaeologist and linguist. Oriental Department of the Hermitage, St Petersburg.
- Immediate implementation of a binding form for financial statements, including signatures by all service providers and receipts for expenses over USD 50. Valid for all projects.

Rejected/pending projects

Rejected:

Mongolia: Research into two Xiongnu settlements. Dr Bryan Miller

Kazakhstan: Desk research on the Wusuin necropolis of Kargali. Dr Shvets, Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Pending:

Uzbekistan: Uch Kulakh Sogdian citadel. Prof. Antela-Bernardez, Barcelona, possibly 2014

Afghanistan: Buddhist temple near Kabul, possibly 2014, depending on security situation, reputable Afghan partner and financial transparency.

Further

The public annual event was held for the fifth time in Basel, for the fourth time in the Skulpturhalle, and was very successful with approximately 270 attendees. Prof. Dr Klaus Schmidt, professor at the University of Erlangen and employee at the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin, spoke about the archaeological excavation he led, "Göbekli Tepe – Stone Age sanctuaries in south-eastern Turkey".

Sunday, 17 November 2013, 11:00 a.m.

Prof. Dr. Sören Stark: The archaeology of the early Turks in Central Asia.

10th anniversary in 2014

Postponed. Cooperation with a university or museum with its own Central Asia department is essential! Options remain: Linden Museum Stuttgart, University of Halle-Wittenberg (Orient

department). CB 24 June 2013

Pilatusstrasse 20, P.O.B. 36, CH-6052 Hergiswil. Tel: + 041 610 33 74; Fax: + 041 610 49 32
Email: contact@exploration-eurasia.com Internet: www.exploration-eurasia.com