**Kyzyl Gul - The Relicts of an Abandoned Village in Kugitang Piedmont (South Uzbekistan)**

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**Abstract**

The relicts of an abandoned village were discovered during an archaeological field survey in the autumn expedition of 2017. The following season (2018) we focused on the detailed survey and documentation of the site. A systematic field survey was conducted there, which was based on the collection of finds that are visible on the surface. In the selected part of the site we recorded the visible relicts by total station, sorted and analysed them. We recognized 22 linear features, 16 circular/square features and we marked 4 spots which show the area behind the features. Among the finds the Early Middle Age predominantly prevail, nevertheless there were collected also finds belonging to the Bronze Age, Late Kushan Period, High Middle Age, Late Middle Age, and Pre-Modern Period.

**Keywords**

Abandoned village, surface survey, landscape archaeology, Central Asia, Early Middle Age.

**Introduction**

During September 2018 we focused on the detailed documentation of the defunct village of Kyzyl Gul (Paskhurt Basin, South Uzbekistan) that was discovered during the field season 2017 (Augustinová *et al.* 2017, 139–159). After the discovery of the site, we proceeded to analyze the satellite imagery for a rough idea of the layout of the site. The results were consequently (in following season 2018) compared with the situation in the terrain and supplemented with a systematic surface survey with detailed measurements of the features visible in the terrain. The project of the Institute of Classical Archaeology, Charles University in Prague in cooperation with Termez State University (represented by Sh. Shaydullaev) was led by Anna Augustinová (Institute of Classical Archaeology, Charles University in Prague) in collaboration with Petr Mach (Institute of Archaeology, Charles University) and Petra Cejnarová (Institute of Classical Archaeology, Charles University). Besides the authors, Ladislav Damašek (Institute of Archaeology, Charles University) was highly involved in the processing (redrawing, describing, classifying) of the pottery finds. The evaluation of the collected finds was carried out in collaboration with Shapulat Shaydullaev (Termez State University in Termez, Uzbekistan) and with Ladislav Stančo (Institute of Classical Archaeology).

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**Fig. 1: Panoramic view of the site Kyzyl Gul from the north-west (photo by P. Mach).**

**Location and environment conditions**

The study site, Kyzyl Gul, is situated in the south-western tip of the Paskhurt Basin, 3.6 km from the centre of the village Goz, on the right side of the road connecting the village of Goz with the villages of Aktash and Charvag. The most dominant feature – the remains of an old construction, probably mosque[[1]](#footnote-1) (E 66°42'03.0" / N 37°36'23.9") – are visible from this road (**Fig. 1**).

The site lies at an approximate altitude of 650 m.a.s.l. in the slightly descending steppe belt that runs from the ridge of the Kugitang Mountains. To the south, the rock ridge of Pyshtykara (raised 150 m above the steppe belt) creates a natural border between the Paskhurt Basin and the Sherabad Oasis in the lowland.

The border between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan runs along the ridge of the Kugitang Mountains (approx. 14.8 km to the north-west of the site). It is also possible to cross the borders approx. 16.6 km to the south of the site between the ridges of the Kugitang Mountains and Pyshtykara Range.[[2]](#footnote-2) The lowland in the Sherabad Oasis can be reached through the gorge of Goz Dagana (*dagana* = Uzb. ‘mountain pass’) to the south-east of the village of Goz, which lies between two ridges – Pyshtykara (to the south) and Karachagyl (to the north).

The site of Kyzyl Gul has a very low intensity of vegetation with two types of plants represented by *Artemisia diffusa* and by *Salsola stockii* (Senikov *et al.* 2016, 110).

From today’s point of view, the nearest water supply is situated in the village of Goz represented as a no name spring near to the prominent tomb of Suleyman Ota (E 66°43'37.2" / N 37°37'24.3"; Augustinová *et al.* 2017, 149).

1. The wooden remains of the building were not till now analysed in detail. Preliminarily we consider the remains of building to be an old mosque. This assumption is based on its wooden construction that is not typical for the common houses in region, as well as on its dominant placement on the elevated spot. The place is also designated as ‘mosque’ in local tradition. Nevertheless, the closer thorough observation of the architecture of the feature will be necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Take into consideration that this description is based on the natural conditions but the political situation would not currently allow the passage. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)