



Investigation of the Sultan Alp Arslan tomb with geophysical methods, in the historical Merv city (Turkestan)

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Sultan Alp Arslan (1029-1072) was the second Sultan of the Seljuq Empire and great-grandson of Seljuq the eponymous founder of the dynasty. Sultan Alp Arslan's victories changed the balance in near Asia completely in favour of the Seljuq Turks and Sunni Muslims. His victory at Manzikert (26 August 1071) is often cited as the beginning of the end of Byzantine power in Anatolia, and the beginning of Turkish identity in Anatolia. Sultan Alp Arslan eliminated the obstacles to the conquest of Anatolia and played a major role in making this territory a homeland for the Seljuqs. By taking the Emperor captive, Sultan Alp Arslan gained great fame but in 1072, on an expedition to Western Turkestan, he met with death in an unexpected way and at a relatively early age, in his 42nd year. There have been found different stories of the death of this great Turkish Sultan in certain sources. Unfortunately, there has not been found The Sultan's resting place until now.

This paper is concerned with the investigation of the Sultan Alp Arslan Tomb in the historical Merv (Marv) city in Turkestan, by using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and gradiometer methods. The GPR and gradiometer surveys have been realized in Gavur Fortress, Sultan Fortress, Er Fortress districts and between two big Fortresses in old Merv city in selected nine study areas. We also gathered data in and around Sultan Sancar Tomb. GPR surveys were performed during January 2014 employing Ramac CU-II system equipped with a 250 MHz shielded antenna, on one meter spaced profiles. Similarly a Geoscan system was used to take magnetic data. The results of all these investigation revealed that there were possible traces for the buried tomb of the Sultan Alparslan in Gavur Kale around Cuma Mosque and around Sultan Sancar Tomb in the study region. However, the project team was changed after our study, and the new team did not excavated our determined areas.

Acknowledgement

This project has been supported by Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). This study is a contribution to the EU funded COST action TU1208 "Civil Engineering Applications of Ground penetrating Radar" (www.GPRadar.eu, www.cost.eu).