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**HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF THE STONE AND THE BRONZE
AGE OF THE ARAL SEA REGION****Y. S. Kurmaniyazov**Kyzylorda University named after Korkyt Ata.
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Abstract. The article considers the history of the study of the Northeastern Aral Sea from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age. Archaeological excavations at every stage have shown that the history of the Northeastern Aral Sea region is deep and dates back to the Paleolithic era. As a result of the geographical location of the region and the first study, the region belongs to the Neolithic and Bronze Age, but in recent years new materials have been obtained from this region. There were presented conclusions of scientists who studied this territory in connection with the discovered monuments. Subsequent research revealed new monuments in the Aral Sea region of Karakum, especially in the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Taking into account the natural conditions of this region, it is possible to say about ancient monuments only on the basis of archaeological artifacts. In most of these sites, the cultural layer has not been preserved; artifacts from different eras and fragments of ceramics were found on the surface of the site. The scholars have divided the typology into periods, based on these archaeological finds.

Key words: Archeology, Aral Sea region, Ceramics, Stone tools, Monuments, Aral Sea region of karakum

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ИСТОРИЯ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ КАМЕННОГО ВЕКА И ЭПОХИ БРОНЗЫ ПРИАРАЛЬЯ

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается история изучения Северо-Восточного Аральского моря от каменного века до бронзового века. Археологические раскопки на каждом этапе показали, что история региона Северо-Восточного Приаралья глубока и восходит к эпохе палеолита. В результате географического положения региона и первых исследований регион относится к эпохе неолита и бронзы, но в последние годы из этого региона были получены новые материалы. Приведены выводы ученых, изучавших эту территорию, в связи с обнаруженными памятниками. Последующие исследования выявили новые памятники в Приаральских Каракумах, особенно в эпоху неолита и бронзы. Учитывая природные условия этого региона, о памятниках старины можно сказать только на основании археологических артефактов. В большинстве этих памятников культурный слой не сохранился, на поверхности памятника встречаются артефакты разных эпох и фрагменты керамики. На основании этих археологических находок ученые разделили типологию на периоды.

Ключевые слова: Археология, Приаралье, керамика, каменные орудия труда, памятники, Приаральские Каракумы

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Introduction

It is well known that the natural conditions of the Aral Sea region were identified the permanent neighborhood and economic interaction of farmers and pastoralists throughout all periods of historical development, after the separation of these types of economic activities. The lower reaches of the Syr Darya and the population of this region play a special role in the history of this process, since this territory was located in the center of the nomadic world of the Eurasian steppes, surrounded by groups of sedentary and semi-sedentary pastoralists, both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. The scientific basis for the study of the culture and history of the ancient nomads of the steppe and semi-desert part of the Aral Sea region are rather scant mentions in written sources and archaeological materials, the volume of which has become quite significant over the past half century. In addition, one should take into account the data on the ecology of the region, which, in combination with ethnographic materials, make it possible to reconstruct the history of the economic development of the territory (Figure 1).

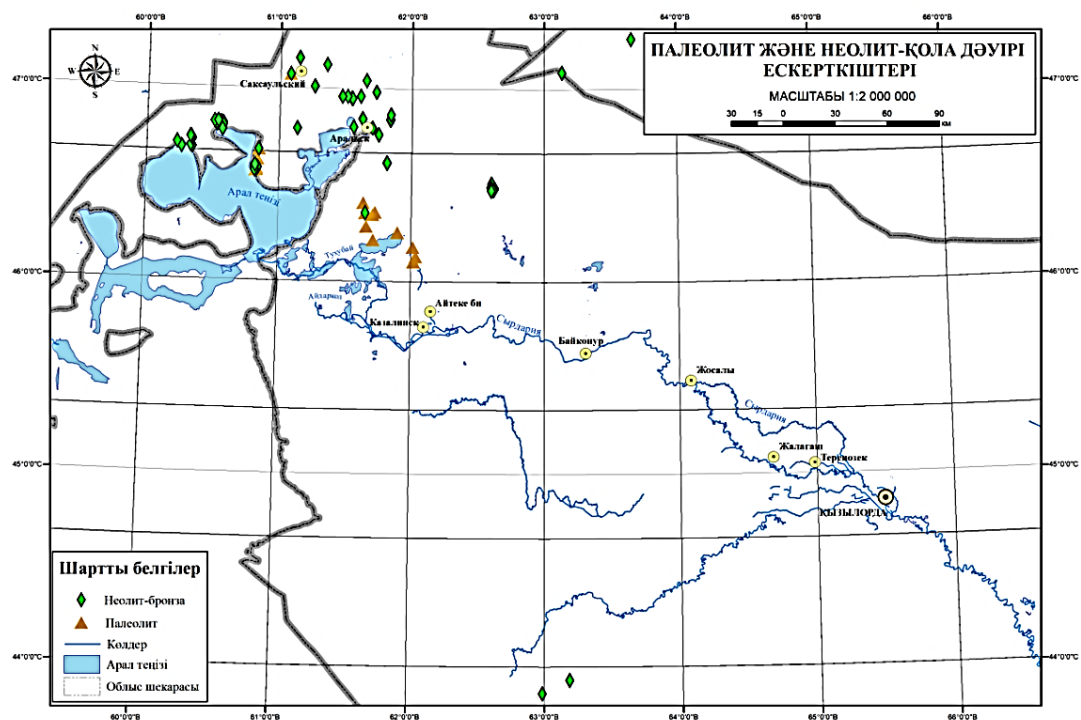


Figure 1- North-Eastern Aral Sea GIS map of the location of monuments of the Stone and Bronze Age in 2022 (compiled by Kurmaniyazov Y.S.)

Рисунок 1- ГИС-карта северо-восточного Приаралья с расположением памятников каменного и бронзового веков в 2022 году (составлена Курманиязовым Ю.С.)

The first sites of primitive people were discovered by geologists, geographers and biologists who conducted their research in the Aral Sea region in the post-war period. In 1944, A. L. Yanshin, 8 km north from the Saksaulstation, in the upper reaches of the gully enveloping the Termenbes mountain, found a large camp, which received the same name “Saksaul” [1]. Later A.A. Formozov analyzed the collected materials and published several articles on this monument [2;3;4].

Materials and research methods

In his opinion, the Saksaul site was dated to the end of the III - at the beginning of the II millennium of BC and belonged to the late Kelteminar culture. A significant shift in the archeology of South-West Kazakhstan took place with the discovery of monuments of the Kelteminar culture in the Northern Aral Sea region, under the leadership of A.A. Formozov. His works were also reflected in the "Archaeological Map of Kazakhstan", which was published in 1960 in Almaty [5,93-95].

A large-scale study of this region for several decades was carried out by the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition of the Institute of Ethnography named after N.N. Miklouho-Maclay of the AS USSR (S.P. Tolstov, A.V. Vinogradov, B.V. Andrianov) [6;7;8].

In 1955 A.V. Vinogradov carried out comprehensive archaeological exploration in the territory of the Aral region and discovered numerous Neolithic sites. The surroundings of the city of Aral were thoroughly examined within a radius of up to 20-30 km up to the Kontu station. As a result, material was collected from twenty sites of the Neolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze periods. The following groups of sites were also discovered and surveyed as: Saksaul I, II, Kontu, Zhalgyz-agym I, II, III, Shulkum, Tampi and others [9,76-81;10,90-94;11].

Literature review

In 1960-1964 years, palaeontologist L.S. Glikman repeatedly collected archaeological materials in the area of sand ridges in the south-west of site Saksaul. The findings were found mainly on the remains of the Saksaul retinues. The root outlets were exposed wherever, there were fragments of ceramics, silicon and quartzite flakes and tools of the Eneolithic and Bronze times. The remains of Bronze Age site were discovered from 8 km to the south of the site Saksaul, at one kilometer to the west of the road leading to the city of Aral, near a modern abandoned well. At the bottom of the blowing basin, on the discovery of dense bedrock sand with an area of about 50-60 m, a significant amount of ceramics were concentrated (over 1000 fragments have been collected). Near the side of the basin was apparently a collapsed hearth - an accumulation of lumps of porous calcined clay. Among the cluster and around it was a dense scattering of pottery fragments and charred animal bones [12,56-59]. Thus, the pottery from the Barkhannaya site reveals a significant closeness to the utensils of the Tazabagyab culture and there was undoubted similarity with the Alakul-type complexes of the Ural sites.

In 1973, A.V. Vinogradov, E.E. Kuzymina, V.M. Smirin published an article "New primitive monuments in the North-Eastern Aral Sea region". The article dealt with the Aral Sea region of Karakum, where more than ten new monuments were discovered, including: Tapa, Shakenkazgan, Shulkum, Maimak, Baskuduk and others [13,85-103].

A complete analogy to the complex of finds under consideration is provided by materials from random collections in the Aral Sea region published by A. A. Formozov, ceramics and stone tools found by A.V. Vinogradov at the sites Aral 1, 2, 4, 7-10, Kontu I, Shelgi-Zagem-1 (Zhalgyz-agym) and 3 (late group), as well as ceramics discovered by L.S. Glikman at the Barkhannaya site of Saksaul.

Apparently, the same picture was observed both in the Aral region and in the Caspian region. With the transition to a manufacturing economy, the geographic environment determined a different direction of economic development: whether in the

Southern Aral Sea region the intensification of the economy followed the path of developed irrigation agriculture, then in the Northern Aral Sea region and the Caspian Sea only the form of cattle breeding was effective. In the conditions of the location of camps far from water sources based on wells, it is impossible not only to engage in irrigation agriculture, but also to maintain a settled cattle-breeding economy. This led to the development of forms of distant pasture and nomadic cattle breeding already in the Bronze Age. Osteological material from the sites confirms this conclusion. The same process of transition to nomadic pastoralism was traced in the semi-desert regions of the Northern Caspian and Volga regions, where the emergence of this form of economy began as early as the III millennium BC.

Between 1954 and 1958 studies of the small site of Esen-tyube and the group of sites of Zhalpak were found by A.V. Vinogradov and later published. Research in 1963 and 1973 was discovered by another group of small, scattered sites (Kosmola 1-6, Talas-1, Aimora-1). These scattered monuments, poor in finds, stretched out in chains and gravitating towards the basins of blowing. The Kosmola group presented ceramics and quartzite-silicon industry, but with a small amount of inventory. Ceramic complexes were attributed to the Late Neolithic time by analogy with the Zhalpak group and cluster 2 from the Saksaul. The materials of archaeological studies of the coastlines of the sea and the terraces of the Aral Sea were widely used by geologists, geomorphologists and geographers to date the ancient stages of the historical development of the water area. A harmonious picture was created in the light of the prevailing ideas about the Holocene age of the Aral reservoir.

This picture did not fit in any way the Palaeolithic items found in the North-eastern Aral Sea region by the employees of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR B. Zh. Aubekerov in the area of Aral in 1979, Zh. M. Kulumbaev was in the sands of Malye Barsuki in the same year. And D.P. Pozdnysheva, A.A. Slovar, O.A. Artyukhova were in the area of the city of Aral, near Akespe, the Akkyr Upland and others in 1979. Later there were reports of finds of “flakes and tools of the Upper Palaeolithic appearance” on the western coast of the Aral Sea [14,32-38] (Artyukhova O.A., 2001). Data on the new geological history of the Aral Sea were accumulated. Large-scale exploration work was carried out by the Russian-Kazakh-Kyrgyz-Uzbek joint archaeological expedition to study the Stone Age monuments of Central Asia under the leadership of RAS of A.P. Derevyanko from the Russian side and from the Kazakh side Professor Zh.K. Taimagambetov proved the wide distribution of Palaeolithic sites in the Northern Aral Sea region in 1998-1999 [15,45-49;16;17, 74-80;18,63-72;19,60-80;20,242-245;21,114-119;22,9-13; 23]. A significant impetus to changes in views on the development of the Aral Sea was given by the international project INTAS 2002-2005. Holocene climate variability and evolution of human settlement in the Aral Sea Basin [24,721-734;25,236-254].

In 2004-2011, during exploration work in the North-eastern Aral Sea region, the Chirikrabat archaeological expedition (head of the expedition Zh. Kurmankulov) issued a “Collection of monuments of the Kyzylorda region” in Russian and Kazakh languages, in which the locations of the monuments were clarified [26,5-10]

In 2006, a separate reconnaissance detachment of the Chirikrabat archaeological expedition of the Institute of Archeology named after A.Kh. Margulan under the leadership of A.A. Tazhekeyev, the site of Yerimbet-zhaga was revealed dating from the Bronze Age. The monument was located in the Eastern Aral Sea region, on the

north-eastern shore of Lake Zhaksy-Kylysh, which often dries up in summer. During the flooding period, there was a bay here, which on the western side was bordered by the Zhaksy-Kylysh ridge, and on the north-eastern side the lake was bounded by the sands of the Aral Karakum Desert [27,438-440;28,167-170;].

The vessels of the Yerimbet-zhaga site were moulded, made of clay with an admixture of grit. The surface of the pots was smoothed and decorated with carved and stamped geometric patterns that cover the upper two-thirds of the vessel. The ornament in the form of a vertical fur-tree on an oblique mesh was made with a toothed stamp. The pots have rounded shoulders and a sharply bent rim, reminiscent of the vessels of the Tazabagyab culture and the Fedorov type of the Andronovo culture.

In November 2013, staff of the Research Center “Archaeology and Ethnography” of KSU named after Korkyt Ata, together with scientists of the Branch of the Institute of Archeology named after A.Kh. Margulan in Astana conducted reconnaissance work on the territory of the Kyzylorda region, in order to identify and record new archaeological sites in the named region.

As a result of the work, there were identified a number of archaeological sites dating back to the Bronze Age, which were mainly localized in the vicinity of the Tapa village of the Kazaly district of the Kyzylorda region, which was 80 km north of the Aiteke bi village.

Results and discussion

During the reconnaissance of the Tapa area, many wells and artesian wells were recorded by us, which are now actively used for watering livestock by local livestock breeders. At the same time, intersand fallings serve as an excellent shelter from strong winds and storms not only for livestock, but also for humans. All this makes it possible to carry out year-round cattle grazing in the Aral Karakum desert without damage to the livestock, despite the harsh climate conditions. And it is quite possible that this form of farming is successive and originates from ancient times [29].

In November 2018, staff of the research center “Archaeology and Ethnography” of the Kyzylorda University named after Korkyt Ata conducted reconnaissance work on the territory of the Kyzylorda region under the project “Traditional methods of water supply in arid zones of Kazakhstan: ethnological and geoarchaeological approaches” project leader T.E. Kartaeva. The purpose of the study was to identify and analyse objects of traditional methods of water supply, drainage, water use and new archaeological sites.

One of the significant research objects is the Urgen settlement, identified in 2018. There were carried out lifting charges, and the cultural chronological outline was determined.

An expressive set of artifacts from the rubble and fragments of pottery, stone tools and blanks were assembled at the Urgen site in 2018. Since these were the first collections of a new discovered monument, the work was not carried out totally, but selectively, in order to fix the objects and make the necessary documentary procedures to prepare the monument for subsequent excavations [30,178-190].

Conclusion

In the field season of 2019, staff of the research center “Archaeology and Ethnography” KSU named after Korkyt Ata, conducted archaeological exploration in the Kyzylorda region. As a result of exploration work, the following locations were discovered such as: Aymen, Aymen-2, Akirek, Zhantles, Rai, Saryshoky.

During the exploration work of 2019, an impressive array of stone tools and blanks were collected from all the discovered locations. Since these were the first collections from new sites, the seizure of artifacts was carried out selectively in order to fix the objects and make the necessary documentary procedures to prepare the sites for further clarifying archaeological work. Archaeological work, aimed to identify traces of the primitive development of the ancient delta of the Syr Darya by ancient man, showed that the cultures of the primitive era have not been studied sufficiently.

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