

## NEWS

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#### THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON STONE AGE SITES IN MANGYSTAU

**Abstract.** The Mangistau Peninsula is important for addressing the evolutionary challenges of humanity in Eurasia. The first discovery of a stone tool on the peninsula was made in 1862. Since then, many archaeological expeditions and individual researchers have worked on the peninsula. The works of the Paleolithic detachment (led by A.G. Medoev) of the Mangyshlak complex expedition of the Institute of Geological Sciences named after K.I. Satpayev of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR in 1966-1969 proved to be especially effective. However, paleolithic materials of researches and A.G. Medoev, A.N. Melentyev, L.L. Galkin has not yet been put into scientific circulation. Works of the Institute of Archaeology named after A.Kh. Margulan in the scope of the grant theme "Paleolithic Mangistau (introduction to the scientific circulation of the collections of A.G. Medoev and their modern interpretation)", planned for 2018-2020 are intended to partially fill this gap.

**Keywords:** Mangistau Peninsula, Caspian Sea, Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Eneolithic, flint tools.

**Introduction.** The Mangystau Peninsula is located at the crossroads of migrations of ancient human ancestors and is important for solving the problems of human evolution in Eurasia. The Caspian Sea, washing the peninsula from three sides, in the era of regressions ceased to be an insurmountable barrier on the way of ancient people from the Middle East and Transcaucasia to the expanses of Asia. The peninsula is composed of Cretaceous rocks containing strata, lenses and nodules of flint and siliceous rocks - ideal raw materials for manufacture of stone tools. The peninsula was intensively populated in different eras of the Stone Age. Nevertheless the comprehension of its pre-historic remains very weak.

Despite the large number of multidisciplinary studies of the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic region, their results received only preliminary coverage in the scientific literature. To close this gap in the study of the ancient history of Kazakhstan, since 2018, the Institute of Archeology named after A.Kh. Margulan of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan is conducting scientific work under the grant program "Paleolithic Mangystau (introduction to the scientific circulation of the collections of A.G. Medoev and their modern interpretation)." A necessary part of these works is a generalization of information on the history of studies of the Stone Age Mangystau.

#### Methods

The work was carried out by summarizing all available published scientific and popular science publications, as well as the study of archival materials stored mainly in the Archives of the Institute of Archaeology named after A.Kh. Margulan.

#### Results

The history of studies of the Stone Age of Mangystau begins earlier than in other regions of Kazakhstan - in the XIX century. So, H.A. Alpysbaev in a brief summary of the first research of the Stone Age on the territory of Kazakhstan mentioned the find in the fort of Alexandrovsky (now the Aktau city, Mangystau region) in 1862, a knife-shaped blade; in the early twentieth century, stone artifacts were discovered at the Sarytash bay by the famous geologist V.N. Andrusov [1, p. 223, 229].

However, a targeted search for Stone Age sites in the region began in 1966 and is associated with the activities of the Mangyshlak integrated expedition led by A.G. Medoev. As a result of these large-scale studies the paleolithic sites of a wide chronological range were discovered - from the oldest stage of

settlement of the peninsula by archaic man (according to the researcher, the Late Pliocene) to the Late Paleolithic. The studied complexes of the stone industry were located on a relatively small area on the shores of Sarytash Bay (north of the Mangystau Peninsula) and are localized on a plateau, sea terraces of different ages and on dry valley terraces of Shahbagata and Kumakape. In the mountainous part of Mangystau, the expedition discovered sites near the springs of Tuschibek, Ondy, Shair, and others, which resulted in collection of thousands stone artifacts from the Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages [2].

At the same time the Caspian detachment of the Astrakhan expedition of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Archeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences under the direction of A.N. Melentiev was working in the West Kazakhstan. The main area of work was the Northern Caspian, but it was proposed to expand the area of exploration in the eastern and southeast directions. In 1968, the detachment identified 4 locations (Baynau 1-4) with flint material and ceramics in the vicinity of Sam Sands and 15 locations from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages on sand dunes and lumpy sands east of the Sam village [3, p. 11-12; 4, p. 8-10].

In 1969, A.N. Melentyev conducted surveys of Ustyurt and the Mangystau Peninsula, with the aim to identifying the earliest sites (Paleolithic-Mesolithic) on the one hand, and "elucidating the appearance of Neolithic sites in the territories adjacent to the areas of the Kelteminar culture and the Kara-Bogazin Neolithic complex on the other" [5, p. 2]. The researcher came to the conclusion that the dry valleys of Ustyurt and Mangystau did not flood even with the maximum rise in the level of the Caspian Sea during the period of the Lower Khvalyn transgression. On the Mangystau Peninsula, he examined two siliceous regions, one extending from Buzachi Peninsula to Sarytash Bay, and the second near the western Ustyurt Chink to the north-east of the Ak-molla well [5, p. 3]. Neolithic dune and spring sites were discovered and re-examined in the vicinity of Senec, Tuschibek, Kulanshi, Tuluz, Udyuk, Ushkan and others. One of the significant results of the detachment's work was the discovery of the Senec paleolithic site at the southern edge of Tuesu sands 2 km east of the village of the same name. In the ridges of sand on an area of 110 square meters, an accumulation of patinized flint inventory was discovered, including nuclei, scrapers, incisors, punctures, retouched blades, etc. The site was tentatively dated to the final Paleolithic [5, p. 11; 6, p. 194-197].

In 1970, the Pre-Caspian detachment continued the study of the North Pre-Caspian and Mangystau, where the Mousterian age site was discovered on the Tupkaragan Peninsula and identified as "Denticulede Mousterian". The site is located on the edge of the main plateau, bordering the southwestern part of the depression of Sarytash Bay, where flakes with secondary processing, scrapers, retouched blades, and others were collected on an area of 90x25 m [7, p. 2, 22]. Perhaps these are the same sites that were discovered earlier by A.G. Medoev in the valley Kopam. In addition, Amanbulak site was discovered near the Tuschibek village, and re-inspected site at the well of Chile, near the Senec village et al. [7, p. 21, 24].

In the final year of the Caspian detachment of the Astrakhan expedition, in 1972, the locations and sites in the tracts of Uali, Begesh, Zhanasor, Azhi and others in Western Ustyurt were discovered [8, p. 33-34].

The next stage in the study of the territory of the Mangystau region is connected with the work of the Volga-Ural expedition of the Institute of Archeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences together with the Geographical Department of Moscow State University under the leadership of L.L. Galkin. They were planned to work for 5 years. The main goal of the work was to date the sites by linking them to the absolute elevation of the area against the backdrop of a change in "... the level of the Caspian Sea and the flooding of deep areas in the Holocene" [9, p. 10]. In the first year of 1978, work was carried out on the settlement of Sherkala, a barrow group near the northern coast of Mangystau near the village of Sarytash (Kochak Bay), a fishing village of the 17-18 centuries and Neolithic site on the Ustyurt plateau. The latter is located on a small hill on the southern shore of Sora, 6 km southeast of Kzylasker station. On an area of 150x50 m, whole and fragmented knife-like blades, scrapers, chips, and the arrowhead of the "Kelteminar" shape made of light gray flint were collected [9, p. 27]. Also in the sands of Sam, 11 km south of the Sam village among the sand blowings, were picked materials of the Stone and Bronze epochs [9, p. 28].

In 1981, a detachment led by L.L.Galkin, in addition to foot reconnaissance, also conducted air reconnaissance, with the help of which a Neolithic site was discovered with a flint to accumulation on an area of 80x30 m. The site is located 1.5 km north-northeast of the Kamyr well in a vast valley that cuts

through the western chink of Ustyurt. The locations of the lithic tools were also found in the area of the shelter-keep on the outlier in the Kulandy Valley, 32 km east-southeast of the Senek village. [10, p. 2]. Single finds were made by the researcher in the airport area and on the southeastern outskirts of the Oporny village. [10, p. 22].

In 1982, work in the Mangistau region under the leadership of L.L. Galkin were continued. The site at the Kamyr well was additionally investigated. Were laid an exploring shaft and excavation on the site, which showed the absence of a cultural layer. A large number of flakes, with rare mix of tools, and the lack of a cultural layer allowed the researcher to come to the conclusion about the temporary region of the site [11, p. 2].

Approximate to the Senek village, in the sands of Tuyesu, were discovered the dune sites of the Neolithic period [11, p. 3]. Approximate to the Kyzylsu village along the coast of a stream with a salt source revealed a site with flint industry, including knife-shaped blades, scrapers, a double-sided biface fragment, attributed by the author to the Late Paleolithic. A sample for radiocarbon dating was selected from a coastal site with preserved peat to determine the age of the reservoir [11, p. 3-4]. The author notes the effectiveness of combining aerial reconnaissance with ground reconnaissance in identifying sites from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages in this little-studied region of Mangystau [11, p. 19].

In 1983, the Volga-Ural expedition conducted more detailed studies of the Stone Age site near the Kyzylsu village, the vicinity of the Senek village, Shebir village and Shakpakaty area. In the Kyzylsu site on an area of 200x80 m, stone artifacts (scrapers, knife-like blades, geometric microlites, pencil-shaped nuclei has been discovered) were collected. The cultural layer on the monument is destroyed, the material as a whole was dated to the Neolithic age, although some archaic-looking materials with patinization are presumably attributed to the Late Paleolithic [12, p. 10]. In the area of the Senek village in the sand massifs of Bostankum, flint products of the Stone Age were revealed (knife-shaped blades with one retouched extremity at one end, scrapers, pencil-shaped nuclei) [12, p. fourteen].

In the area of the Shakpakata Mausoleum L.L. Galkin investigated Paleolithic locations, discovered a site of the Paleolithic era 150 meters northwest of the mausoleum, which is an accumulation of flakes, nucleus and scrapers [12, p. 13, 19]. Apparently, this is a collection point of stone artifacts "1b" according to the field documentation of A.G. Medoev.

Sand blowings was investigated near the Koshkar-ata basin, 5 km southeast of the Akshukur village, where a Stone Age site was determent; on the southern coast of the Mertvy Kultuk a 50x20 m site with flint microlithic to industry was discovered [12, p. 15]. Isolated findings were made in sand blowings in the area of the villages Shebir, Ak-Kuduk, at the Tushchykuduk well, at the Mausoleum of Mankaza, at the Akkurt winter camp and others [12, p. 11-13].

L.L. Galkin noted the small number of Paleolithic sites and the prospects of their study in the Shakpakata and Kyzylsu regions. In the first case, he speaks about the possibility of detecting stratified objects. In contrast to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic is represented en masse on the paleolithic shores of dried reservoirs and channels. Their wide distribution indicates that during these periods the zone of the northeast Caspian littoral abounded with fish, game, large ungulates, which were abundant in food in hot, but well-flooded areas of this region " [12, p. 36]. Monuments of the Eneolithic era are relatively fewer, due, according to the researcher, the deterioration of the environmental situation in the region, the drying up of reservoirs and channels. "The topography of findings of this time is confined to the coastal slopes of dried reservoirs, from which it could be assumed that the population of that time located their dwellings near existing watering holes for their herds" [12, p. 36-37].

In 1984, the work was concentrated in the sands of Bostankum near the Senek village. During this expedition a dispersed site, with flint industry (knife-like blades, end scrapers, nucleus, flakes without secondary processing has been discovered). The prospects of studying the interior of the Bostankum sands for detecting sites of the Stone and Bronze Age, possibly with a preserved layer, were noted [13, p. 22-23].

In the middle of the 80s of the last century, J.K. Taymagambetov conducted research on Mangistau, where he located a range of paleolithic sites Onezhek 1-7, close to the industry camps of Shakpakata. The stone collection of the camps belongs to different epochs, Onezhek 5 to the Moustier, Onezhek 1 to the Late Paleolithic [14, pp. 28-29, 34]. Flint was used as a favorite raw material. Nuclei, scrapers, bifaces, dart tips and a large number of flakes are distinguished among the stone products. The collection is

represented by large Levallois flakes. Among the nuclei there are billets intended for removal of the Levallois blade technologie. Onezhek industry is characterized by the presence of nuclei with a platform, symmetrical blades of various morphology shapes (triangular, rectangular) and a small number of well-manufactured tools.

Also, Zh.K. Taymagambetov re-examined the locations of Shakhbagata 1. Paleolithic artifacts lay on the surface of the abrasion terrace in an undisturbed state, as evidenced by the *in situ* occurrence of prismatic nuclei and adjacent knapped knife-like blades. Among the Neolithic sites there are such sites as Besbulak, Tulkuli 1-2, Sultanepe 1 and 2, with a large number of chalcedony and flint artifacts. [15, pp. 581; 16, pp. 3-5].

Geologist B.Zh. Aubekeroev has collected a vast and typologically representative to collection of material in Mangistau. B.Zh. Aubekeroev gives a substantiation of the geological age of the open-type sites studied by A.G. Medoev. He also confirms, in general, the correctness of the culture periodization of the Stone Age in Kazakhstan, developed by A.G. Medoev. According to him, "...multi-temporal camps occupy different geomorphological positions - plumes of removal cones, ridge tops, terraces of dry valleys or spring banks.

The Protolevallois-Ach and Arystandy cultures - the Pliocene is the first half of the Lower Pleistocene, the Asheulian, Mousterian and Late Paleolithic cultures do not go beyond the boundaries of the Middle and Upper Pleistocene, the Epipaleolithic culture is dated to the early Holocene or the very end of the postglacial period, the Carasorian culture and the culture of microlite industries are attributed to the Holocene. The age of the some sites requires further study" [17 p. 47; 18, p. 10-14].

In the late 80s - until the mid-90s, as part of the Western Kazakhstan archeological expedition under the leadership of Z. Samashev worked groups to study the Stone Age Mangistau and Ustyurt. So, in 1989 A.E. Astafiev as a member of the Mangyshlak detachment gathered lifting material in the areas of open sands near the villages of Akshukur, Tushikuduk and Shebir, of the eastern and north-eastern sands of Buzachi Peninsula. He carried studies of Senek 5, 6, Koshkar-ata 2/1 [19 pp. 135-137, 145-146]. In 1992, the work carried out in the sands of Sam, Tuyesu, Sauyskan and Kyzylkum. He discovered 16 sites of the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Eneolithic periods and collected a large sample of lifting material. For some sites, he determined the cultural and chronological belonging, in particular, the sites of Senek 1, 4 and 8 were correlated with the Oyuklin Early Neolithic culture [20, pp. 27-40]. The site of Shebir 8 with the Khvalyn Eneolithic culture [20, p. 67], the sites of Sarsha 1 and Shebir 6 were attributed to the late Mesolithic [20, pp. 24-27, 50-67], etc. In 1991, L.L. Galkin during the identification and inventory process of monumets discovered in Mangistau region 2 sites of the Stone Age. This is a site in Besbulak tract, 900 sq. m. in area and a site of 30 sq. m. in area of 3.1 km to the south-west of Sisem-Ata cemetery [21, p. 123]. In 1992, he discovered Neolithic sites 4 km southwest of Aiguroshkhan Hill in Mangistau region 4 km north-west of the village of Tauchik (scattered sites of Tauchik 1-2, etc.) [22, p. 118, 147-149].

From the end of the 80s to the present, A.E. Astafiev has been studying the Stone Age, in particular its late stages (Mesolithic-Eneolithic). He obtained lithic materials characterizing the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Eneolithic periods of the Mangyshlak Peninsula (Kyzylsu 1, Senek 10, Ushtagan 1 and others) [22]. A.E. Astafiev distinguished two cultures attributed to Neolithic period of the Mangistau region. It means the Oyuklinsky and Tuluzsky cultures. They are formation took place on the local Mesolithic culture, studied on the materials of the site Kyzylsu 1. Quantitatively, the Oyuklins type sites found on the Buzachi Peninsula (Shebir 7) and in the Sands of Tuyesu (Senek 1, 4, 5, 8). The Tuluzsky culture is represented by the Ushtagan 1, Senek 10 sites located in the sands of Sauskan and Tuyesu in the Central Mangystau. The Tuluzsky and Oyuklinsky cultures have much in common. This hypothesis suggests the genetic relationship of these complexes. A.E. Astafiev also examined the site of Koskuduk I, which became the first supporting Eneolithic site on the Mangistau Peninsula [23]. According to the author, in the Eneolithic period, cultures formed under the influence of three components coexisted on the territory of Mangistau: local component, Central Asian component and Lower Volga component [24].

The Paleolithic of the region was studied in 1998-1999 by joint Russian-Kazakhstan archaeological expedition led by A.P. Derevyanko and J.K. Taymagambetov. In 1998, during the exploration work, 6 Paleolithic sites with a surface occurrence of artifacts were discovered. All sites are confined to the outcrops of siliceous rocks. In 1999, the western ledges of the Ustyurt plateau, the sands of Bostankum, the Kulanda ledge, and the territory near Lake Karashek have been examined. 11 new locations dating



back to the Paleolithic period have been discovered. The point site 13 was highlighted as the most promising, because the archaeological materials are distinguished by increased concentration, diversity, and great typological severity. Here, along with the well-presented primary splitting of the stone, there is a large number of tool types. The location has been defined as a workshop with elements of a settlement complex [25, p. 44]. According to the degree of surface preservation, the material is divided into series from the Early to Late Paleolithic period [26, p. 17-24].

In 2018, the works of the authors on the grant theme “Paleolithic Mangystau (introduction to the scientific circulation of the collections of A.G. Medoev and their modern interpretation)” began. The main purpose of the work was the introduction into the scientific circulation of archaeological complexes discovered in 1966-1969 by the expedition of A.G. Medoev. The program began with the localization of collection points of the Paleolithic collections of A.G. Medoev in the Shakpakata valley according to archival materials and their correlations with the collected materials stored in the funds of KazNU named after al-Farabi. It was possible to identify all points of collection of stone artifacts in the tract Shakpakata, to determine their coordinates in the global positioning system. Because of the dating changes of the transgressions of the Caspian Sea and, consequently, of the sea terraces, where the Paleolithic sites were situated, the periodization scheme of stone industries created by A.G. Medoev, will undergo some changes too.

As for the large Holocene sites, such as Shair, Ondy, Tuschibek 1, etc., from which numerous collections of archaeological material have been obtained, They are attached to watery springs. Over the past 50 years, large villages have grown on the site of parking, monuments are almost completely destroyed. From these large sites there were only collections kept by archaeologists of various organizations. Now, they are stored in museums of different countries.

Another group of Holocene sites, such as Kosbulak, Akmysh, Zhaksytamdy, Zhamantamdy are also situated in a zone of springs. These archaeological sites are less susceptible to anthropogenic impact, but there are not reach in lithic artifacts. [27, p. 5-60].

### **Discussion**

Despite the considerable number of archaeological expeditions exploring the region, a significant number of identified sites of the Stone Age, they are practically not put into scientific circulation. With the exception of A.E. Astafyev's monograph on the most significant Holocene monuments and cultures, the remaining sites and locations are known only from archival materials and preliminary publications.

The archaeological work of A.G. Medoev and other researchers was carried out at a rather high methodological level at that time. The collection of stone material from sites with a surface cultural horizon was carried out quite fully. This was showed by our field observations. Therefore, the unique collections of stone industries collected in the last century acquire special significance - this is an irreplaceable source for studying the country's ancient past.

### **Conclusion**

The study of the Stone Age of Mangystau is of great importance for understanding the processes of settlement of Kazakhstan and neighboring territories. The peninsula, due to its geographical location, served as a transit point on the migration routes of ancient hominids and people from south to north, from west to east and back. In the era of transgressions, the Caspian Sea made populations of hominids isolated; in the era of regressions, on the contrary, it facilitated their dispersal in different directions.

The history of Stone Age research of Mangystau partly reflects the main scientific ideas about the evolution of Stone Age cultures in the region. Unfortunately, most of the open sites of the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic Mangystau are not put into scientific circulation. Most of the monuments had a superficial, open character. The expedition staff of A.G. Medoev carried out full, continuous gatherings, so that on the surface of the former sites of artifacts there were practically no left. The only source of data for the study of the Paleolithic, for example, the Shakpakat tract, are collections collected in 1966-1969.

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### МАҢҒЫСТАУДАҒЫ ТАС ДӘУІРІ ЕСКЕРТКІШТЕРІН ЗЕРТТЕУ ТАРИХЫ

**Аннотация.** Маңғыстау түбегі Еуразиядағы адамзат эволюциясы мәселелерін шешуде маңызды орын алады. Түбекте алғашқы тастан жасалған құрал сонау 1862 жылы табылған болатын. Содан бері Маңғыстау түбегінде көптеген археологиялық экспедициялар мен жеке зерттеушілер жұмыс жүргізді. Әсіресе 1966-1969 жж. Қазақ КСР Ғылым академиясының Қ.И.Сәтбаев атындағы Геологиялық ғылымдар институтының Маңғыстау кешенді экспедициясының палеолиттік отрядының (А.Г.Медоев жетекшілігіндегі) жұмыстары нәтижелі болды. Алайда А.Г.Медоевтың, А.Н.Мелентьевтің, Л.Л.Галкиннің зерттеулерінің палеолиттік материалдары әлі күнге дейін ғылыми айналымға енгізілмеген. Ө.Х.Марғұлан атындағы Археология институтының 2018-2020 жылдарға арналған «Маңғыстау палеолиті (А.Г.Медоев коллекцияларының ғылыми айналымға енгізілуі және олардың қазіргі заманғы интерпретациясы)» гранттық тақырыбы аясындағы жұмысының мақсаты – осы олқылықты жартылай орнын толтыру.

**Түйін сөздер:** Маңғыстау түбегі, Каспий теңізі, палеолит, мезолит, неолит, энеолит, шақпақтас құралдары.

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### ИСТОРИЯ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ ПАМЯТНИКОВ КАМЕННОГО ВЕКА В МАНГИСТАУ

**Аннотация.** Полуостров Мангыстау имеет важное значение для решения проблем эволюции человечества в Евразии. Первая находка каменного орудия на полуострове была сделана еще в 1862 г. С тех пор на полуострове работали немало археологических экспедиций и отдельных исследователей. Особенно результативными оказались работы Палеолитического отряда (под руководством А.Г.Медоева) Мангышлакской комплексной экспедиции Института геологических наук им. К.И.Сатпаева АН Каз.ССР в 1966-1969 гг. Однако палеолитические материалы исследований и А.Г.Медоева, А.Н.Мелентьева, Л.Л.Галкина до сих пор не введены в научный оборот. Работы Института археологии им. А.Х.Маргулана в рамках грантовой темы «Палеолит Мангыстау (введение в научный оборот коллекций А.Г. Медоева и их современная интерпретация)», рассчитанный на 2018-2020 гг., имеют целью отчасти заполнить этот пробел.

**Ключевые слова:** полуостров Мангыстау, Каспийское море, палеолит, мезолит, неолит, энеолит, кремневые орудия.

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