

THE HISTORY OF STUDYING PALEOLITHIC SITES IN THE QIZILQUM REGION

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Qizilqum hududidan topilgan paleolit davri yodgorliklaridan biri bolgan Ko'kayoz yodgorligining topilishi va undagi arxeologik topilmalar haqida so'z yuritiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Qizilqum, nukleus, uchirindi, bifas, qirg'ich, kvarsit, kremniy, levallua, Selet madaniyati, Markaziy Yevropa , A.V. Vinogradov , Yesen 2.

Abstract: This article discusses the discovery of the Kokayoz monument, one of the Paleolithic monuments found in the Kyzylkum region, and the archaeological findings in it.

Keywords: Kyzylkum, nucleus, uchirindi, biface, kergich, quartzite, silicon, levallois, Selet culture, Central Europe, A.V. Vinogradov, Yesen 2.

In the autumn of 1999, the Uzbek-French geographical-archaeological international expedition conducted research in the Kokayoz depression, located in the northeastern part of the Central Kyzylkum. As a participant in this expedition, M.M. Khojanazarov, a senior scientific staff member at the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, collected nearly 100 stone artifacts from three points along the northern shores of the Kokayoz depression. The Kokayoz 1 site, discovered in 1999, is located on the northwestern shore of the depression, 1.5 kilometers west of the Kokayoz village. Materials gradually decrease as one moves uphill along the cliff, eventually disappearing altogether. The upper layer of the site is covered by sands up to 50 cm deep. The large part of the hill is disrupted by ravines, making it partially eroded. Among the stone artifacts collected from this site, 20 were identified, including nuclei, flakes, one bifacial point, and a scraper.

The Kokayoz 1 collection contains three nuclei, one of which is a multi-strike type, one is a Levallois core intended for flake production, and one is a bi-face nucleus with two strike platforms. Among the other items, there are 15 flakes, of which 7 are complete (2 large, 4 medium-sized, and 1 small flake), 2 Levallois-type flakes, and 6 proximal fragments.

The stone tools from the Kokayoz 1 complex include one bifacial tool and scrapers. The bifacial tool measures 143x39x18 mm, made of gray quartzite, with edge retouching and bilateral retouching along its sides. The second stone tool, a large flake, measures 109x106x26 mm. Its striking platform is flat and tilted 125° towards the back. The scraper, also made of gray quartzite, features a prominent left lateral edge that was initially flaked and thinned, then further retouched with notched retouching. The angle of the working edge relative to the support is 68°. The working surface of the scraper is raised, and the edge is irregular.

The second site, Kokayoz 2, was discovered in 1999 on the northern shore of the depression, 15 km east of the Kokayoz village. A total of 67 artifacts were collected from this site, including nuclei, flakes, blades, bifaces, a grinding stone, and stone fragments. The collection contains only 4 nuclei, which include multi-strike and spiral-shaped cores.

At the Kokayoz 2 site, the nuclei were struck in an unipolar, less frequently bipolar, and radial-central fashion. Occasionally, radial striking evolved into the Levallois technique. The dorsal characteristics of the flakes fully correspond to the types of nuclei found. The stone tools from the Kokayoz 2 complex consist of two bifacial flakes and one bifacial tool with a handle, all made of gray quartzite. According to the published materials and images, the bifacial flakes from Kokayoz 2 were correctly identified by the authors, with the bifacial tools being characteristic of the Paleolithic period.

Moreover, the discovery of bifacial tool series in the Kokayoz collection marks the second occurrence of such finds in Central Asian Paleolithic studies, after the Yesen 2 site, and, as A.V. Vinogradov emphasized, these are bifacial points typical of the Paleolithic.¹

The Yesen 2 site, located on the southern borders of the Borsa-Kelmes lowland shores in the Ustyurt Plateau, was discovered in 1977 by Ye.B. Bijanov² and A.V. Vinogradov. This site yielded rich archaeological material.³

The Kokayoz 3 site is located on the northern shore of the depression, 5 km east of the second point. The collection from this site contains 15 artifacts, one of which is

¹ Виноградов А.В. Древние охотники и рыболовы среднеазиатского междуречья. М., 1981.-С. 56-57.

² 4. Бижанов Е. Находки памятников палеолита на юго-восточном Устюрте // Вестник КФАН Узб.ССР, № 72. Ташкент, 1979

³ 6. Виноградов А.В., Бижанов Е.Б. Первые палеолитические находки с Юго-Восточного Устюрта // АО, 1977. М., 1978.

made of brown flint, while the others are made of gray quartzite. Among the collected materials are nuclei, blades, flakes, and fragments of bifacial tools.

The Kokayoz 3 industry includes 6 blades, of which 3 are flakes and 3 are blades. These correspond to the nuclei found at the site. One of the blades was struck from the upper part of a nucleus, with a faceted striking platform and unipolar negatives on its dorsal side. The second blade has a unipolar dorsal character and a flat striking platform. The third blade is a proximal fragment with parallel-unipolar dorsal marks and a linear striking platform. A small notch is found on the left lateral edge of this blade. Among the flakes from Kokayoz 3, two have faceted striking platforms, and one has a flat striking platform. Two of these flakes are centripetal, and one has an orthogonal appearance.

At the Yesen 2 workshop, most of the 15 completed stone tools are large and thinned almond-shaped bifacial tools (projectile points). The majority of them are bifacial tool fragments, which characterizes the site as a workshop. The only complete bifacial tool found in the 1977 collection allows us to infer the shape and size of these tools.

Regarding the raw material used to produce the stone tools, both the Kokayoz sites and Yesen 2 primarily used lake quartzite, not silicified limestone, as previously assumed. Lake quartzites are formed from the accumulation of sand along calm water bodies. It is evident that both sites utilized quartzite rocks found along the shores of the depressions.

The Selet culture, known for working lake quartzites in its workshops, presents a challenge when dating these sites, as many unfinished bifacial tools are found, complicating the chronological determination. This description also applies to the Kokayoz sites. The Selet culture, divided into three phases, has its lower phase dating back to around 41,700–37,700 years ago, corresponding to the interglacial period. The later development of this culture in the Buky Mountains is marked by the emergence of late Paleolithic elements in their stone tools.

In Selet Thus, industries with bifacial tools and scrapers made from quartzite, similar to those found in ancient lake shore sites like Kokayoz, are common in Central Europe. Examples from Selet culture, such as the Boxunich and Bobinich sites, support this comparison. Researchers suggest that the Selet culture, which emerged at the end of the Middle Paleolithic, gradually transitioned to the Late Paleolithic stage under external influences while maintaining local traditions, such as bifacial tool

production. In Central Europe, open-air sites with quartzite bifacial tools, like those at Kokayoz, have been recognized as workshops where these bifacial tools were produced.

culture industries, the flake production index is very low (8.3-10.3%), which is also characteristic of the Kokayoz sites. Despite the presence of nuclei intended for flake production, the percentage of flakes is low, and no properly edged blade-like flakes are found.

The presence of stone tools at various stages of processing at Kokayoz complicates the task of determining their chronological typology. The collection includes tools that range from rough, unmodified pieces to highly refined ones, demonstrating a wide spectrum of technological skill. The monotony of their external patina indicates that they belong to the same period.

The genesis of the Kokayoz industries is even more complex than the origin of the Selet culture industries. This is because similar industries are not found in other regions of Central Asia. Therefore, the issue remains open for future investigation. Nonetheless, the discovery of Kokayoz industries signifies that another remarkable culture thrived in Central Asia during the Late Paleolithic.

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