

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF KHOREZM  
AND SURKHANDARYA REGIONS (BASED ON MATERIALS FROM STONE AGE  
SETTLEMENTS)**

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**Abstract:** The article analyzes the history of archaeological study of Stone Age settlements in the Lower Amu Darya and Surkhan oases.

**Key words:** Tolstov S.P., Okladnikov A.P., Vorobyeva M.G., Rapoport Yu.A., Vinogradov A.V., Kabirov Zh., Sadullaev A., Rajabov A.Yu., Khorezm, Surkhandarya, Boysun, Jonbas-4,5, Teshikqala 1,2, Machay 2, Qorongudara.

**Introduction:** As a result of geological development, the Khorezm region, located in the northwestern part of Turan, lies between the Karakum and Kyzylkum deserts and the Aral Sea in the north, and the Karakum desert in the south. The Surkhan oasis, one of the most favorable regions for agricultural culture in our country, is separated by the Boysun mountains and has unique geographical features distinct from Khorezm.

In this article, the goal is to study the historical roots of the economic and ethno-cultural relations between the populations of two regions that share the same geological base but differ in geographic landscapes, water resources, and mountainous conditions, being located far apart from each other (about 1 km of differing geographic width).

Literature Review: In the 1930s–1940s, archaeological research in the Lower Amu Darya region was initiated by the Khorezm expedition, while in Surkhandarya region, an archaeological expedition led by A.P. Okladnikov began investigations.

Under the leadership of S.P. Tolstov, the Khorezm archaeological expedition carried out excavations at the Yonbosh-4 site near the Yonboshqala heights in the Turtkul and Beruni districts. The settlement had a topographic area of 24×17 m (290 sq. m). The dwelling's upper structure was made from local vegetation: wooden posts in triangular shapes, side walls of branches, an upper circular layer of clay and reeds. Artifacts from the upper cultural layer date back to the 4th–3rd millennia BC [1, pp. 59–61].

A.Yu. Yakubovsky conducted excavations at the Teshiktosh cave site in Boysun district, Surkhandarya, uncovering evidence from the Middle Paleolithic (Mousterian) period of hunter activities, which had not been previously described in sources [2, pp. 5–18; 3, pp. 25–31].

In 1940, the Khorezm expedition continued excavations at Jonbas-4, obtaining new materials [4, pp. 90–91]. By 1940, 18 Neolithic settlements were registered, and by 1945 this number had increased to 30, including Jonbas-5, 11, 12, 14, and 18, where partial excavations were conducted [5, p. 70].

Between 1954–1956 and 1958–1961, the Khorezm expedition carried out archaeological research in the Turtkul and Beruni districts, excavating the Kunak-1, Jingeldi, and Kaundi sites, obtaining new Neolithic materials [6, pp. 106–111; 7, p. 34; 8, pp. 63–81].

A.V. Vinogradov reflected the results of his archaeological research at Neolithic settlements on the right bank of the Amu Darya in a special monograph [9, p. 177].

At the Machay cave site, the archaeological team of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, led by U.I. Islamov, revealed a cave 20 m wide, 11 m deep, and 5 m high. Finds included stone and bone tools (15 bone-made awls, needles, and chisels) and 870 stone implements. Remains of a human skull, teeth, and jaw were also found in the cultural layer—these were the first anthropological finds after Teshiktosh [9, pp. 60–61].

In the years of independence, young local researchers obtained Neolithic materials from excavations in Teshiktosh-2, Machay-2, and Qorongudara cave sites, left by descendants of Teshiktosh and Machay hunters and gatherers [10, p. 24].

#### Research Methodology

- Scientific objectivity
- Historical analysis
- Theoretical-comparative interpretation
- Generalization
- Discussion and logical conclusion

Analysis and Results: The Surkhandarya and Khorezm regions—formed through geological processes and linked by the dynamics of the Amu Darya since the Neogene period—share a common geological base but differ in geographic coordinates.

An analysis of published historical data shows that:

- The settlement of Khorezm and Surkhan oases by humans did not occur during the same historical period.
- Differences existed in their geographical position, geomorphology, and water supply systems.

Results: Paleogeographic and archaeological studies reveal that in the Surkhan oasis, humans settled during the Middle Paleolithic (Mousterian) period, while in Khorezm, human occupation began in the Late Stone Age. Despite this chronological difference, in both regions people adapted to their natural resources and organized similar daily activities.

The emergence and development of connections between these two regions were closely related to the dynamics of the Amu Darya river.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

### Conclusions:

- Due to repeated geological processes, Khorezm's plains and Surkhandarya's mixed mountain-plain geography each developed unique features despite sharing the same geological origin.
- Archaeological research shows that in Surkhan oasis, settlement began in the Middle Paleolithic (Mousterian) period, whereas in Khorezm it began in the Late Stone Age. In both regions, communities utilized natural resources similarly in daily life.
- The stages of interregional connections were influenced by the changing course of the Amu Darya.

Recommendations:

1. To study the geomorphological characteristics of Khorezm and Surkhandarya, noting that human settlement in these regions did not occur at the same historical time.
2. To explain the differing roles of the Sultan Uvays and Boysun mountains in serving human needs, while always shaping the natural-geographical image of their respective regions.
3. To link settlement patterns, ethnic relations, and economic-ethno-cultural interactions between the two regions to present-day dynamics.

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