3. Palæolithic Sites in Trans-Baikal

A. P. OKLADNIKOV

Translated and edited by CHESTER S. CHARD

The following sites with finds of Palæolithic type are known at present in the extreme south of the Buriat-Mongol A.S.S.R. and in adjacent portions of the Mongolian People's Republic (Fig. 1):

1. Altan-Bulak I (Fig. 2). In extensive sandy blowouts on the right bank of Kiakhta Creek, west of Altan-Bulak settlement, Mongolian People’s Republic. P. S. Mikhno collected here 47 cores, 96 core-scrapers, 7 skreblo-like† implements, 45 scrapers, 3 knives made on blades with retouched edge, 17 blades and 35 lamelles. (Abramova 1953: 272)

2. Altan-Bulak II (Fig. 3). V. P. Lisovskii collected here 15 cores, 27 core-scrapers, 9 scrapers, 2 skreblo, 3 retouched blades, 2 blades without retouch, 7 spalls from cores, 1 flake, 1 perforator, and one chisel-like implement. (Ibid: 272-75)

3. Desert beyond Lake Dzarguchcheevskoe (Fig. 4). Finds include cores, core-scrapers, scrapers on flakes and prismatic blades. (Ibid: 275)

4. On the right bank of Kiakhta Creek in blowouts near the bridge (Fig. 5). 27 objects were found here in 1925: cores, scrapers, a fragment of a big skreblo, a bifacially-worked blade for a knife or point with a broken base.

5. Botoiskaia Pit (Fig. 6). 18 km. from Kiakhta in the western part of the Burgutuiskii Range. 26 stone artifacts were found, including 3 cores, 8 core-scrapers, a skreblo, a bifacial spear point or knife of leaf-shaped form. In sand at the same place but not associated with the artifacts were found bones of mammoth, woolly rhinoceros and bovids. (Ibid: 268)

6. Kapcheranka Gorge (Fig. 7). 12 km. northeast of Kiakhta. Here were found 6 core-scrapers, a skreblo, a quartzite knife, 2 miniature scrapers and 6 lamelles. (Ibid: 268)

7. Kiakhta Precipice. On the left bank of the Kiakhta River at a depth of 3·5 to 4 m. from the surface in sand in a sandy deposit with peaty strata were found Palæolithic artifacts: skreblo, cores, blades. These were mixed with Neolithic objects and even with iron articles of the first century A.D.

8. In the valley of the Sava River (a right-bank tributary of the Selenga) localities with Palæolithic cultural remains are also known. The first collections

* Further details will be found in the works cited. The illustrations from Abramova 1953 and 1959, and Okladnikov 1959, are reproduced here to supplement those accompanying the MS. Ed.
† A skreblo is best defined as a 'large scraper'. Ed.
LOCATION OF PALAEO-LITHIC SITES OF TRANS-BAIKAL

(Compiled by Z.A. Abramova)

1-63 Sites (See Text)

Areas of special development of sandy alluvium (based on V.A. Obruchev)

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 KM.

Fig. 1.
here were made as long ago as 1887 by A. P. Mostits. He found cores, core-scrapers, scrapers and blades. Similar artifacts were collected on the Sava River by P. S. Mikhno. In 1925 S. A. Makar'ev found cores, core-scrapers, scrapers of different forms, flakes and flaked pebbles on the left bank of the Sava.

A greater number of Palaeolithic localities are known in the valley of the Selenga River.

8a. On an elevation at Naushki settlement on the right bank of the Selenga, during excavation of slab graves in 1947 by BMAE,* flaked pebbles of Palaeolithic appearance were found at a depth of 25 to 40 cm. in a stratum of clay soil.

9. Ust'-Kiakhta, Locality 1 (Fig. 8). Above the landing place in the face of the second terrace (8 to 10 m. high), in the upper layer of loess-like sand-clay soil at a depth of 10 to 20 cm. from the surface, BMAE found in 1947 a concentration of worked stone (75 specimens). This comprised flakes, blades, chips, a core-scraper and a pebble-flaker.

10. Ust'-Kiakhta, Locality 2 (Fig. 8). Near the landing place, in the face of the same terrace at a depth of 30 to 40 cm. in loess-like sand-clay soil. In 1947 BMAE found here prismatic and conical cores of regular form and blanks for the same, lamelles of narrow and regular form, a core-scraper, 2 end scrapers on wide and rather short blades, and one scraper of oval form. 286 lamelles were found, two of them with fine retouch along the edge: they probably served as side blades for daggers or spear points.

11. Ust'-Kiakhta, Locality 3. Below the landing place, on the bank of the Selenga. In an eroded area of the second terrace BMAE discovered in 1947 and 1949, in addition to flakes and blades, two characteristic big massive skreblo-like artifacts—one in the form of a disc, the other in the form of an oval with one slightly pointed constricted end. There was also a massive core of crudely prismatic type. In the same place, at a depth of 50 to 60 cm., were fragments of the bones of Pleistocene animals together with flakes.

12. Ust'-Kiakhta, Locality 4. Near the Neftesnab (oil) base. In 1949 on an elevation of the original bank (around 40 m. above the level of the Selenga) BMAE found numerous flakes, one pebble flaker, scrapers, skreblo, fragments of cores and spalls from cores.

13. Kharankhoi I. 12 to 15 km. above Ust'-Kiakhta on the right bank of the Selenga. Many stone artifacts were collected here by A. P. Mostits in 1887, by workers from the Kiakhta Museum in 1926, by G. P. Sosnovskii in 1928 and by P. S. Mikhno and N. P. Mikhno in 1935. These things were found in blowouts on the high terrace (up to 40 m. above the level of the Selenga). Finds included cores (including miniature ones), core-scrapers, scrapers on massive blades with steep working edge, trapezoidal in outline, and rather large lamelles. There is also a skreblo-like implement made of a flat pebble, a big core-blank, and a semilunar skreblo. In the sand of blowout depressions P. S. Mikhno found in 1926 bones of

* Buriat-Mongol Archeological Expedition.
rhinoceros, horse, and wild ass; there were also stone tools in the same places. However, their inter-relationships were not established.

14. Kharankhoi II. On the slope of the elevation BMAE found stone artifacts including cores, core-scrapers and blades.

15. Khereksurin-uri. Three km. below Kharankhoi on the left bank of the Selenga, on the high (25 m.) terrace near an ancient cemetery, BMAE discovered 16 stone artifacts: a miniature prismatic core, 5 lamelles of regular outline, 2 wide blades, and also flakes.

16. In blowouts on the left bank of the Selenga, 1 km. north of Krizhevskii post, BMAE collected in 1947 flakes, a skreblo with convex lateral cutting edge, blades and spalls from cores. In one place at a depth of 1.4 m. in a stratum of compact loess-like sand-clay soil under a layer of aeolian sand were bones of a rodent, the scapula of an animal, flakes and a core-scraper of the type usual for the late Palaeolithic.

17. Three-quarter km. downstream from the preceding on the left bank, beyond the railroad bridge on the sloping side of a small valley between two typical crescent-shaped sandy hillocks, BMAE discovered in 1947 a crudely prismatic core, a skreblo with a lateral convex cutting edge, blanks and blades.

18. At Ivashka, 3 km. above Ust'-Kiakhta on the left bank of the Selenga, A. P. Mostits found traces of the Palaeolithic in 1887: 6 cores, including conical ones and core-scrapers, and also 8 lamelles of regular form.

19. Diurben settlement on the left bank of the Selenga, opposite Ust'-Kiakhta. Here in 1887 A. P. Mostits found 6 cores (including a conical one), a core-scraper, a very well-made bifacial dart point of elongated almond-shaped outline (not a knife, judging from its massive proportions), a fragment of a similar point, and 22 lamelles (one with retouch along the edge).

20. Zarubino. 10 km. below Ust'-Kiakhta on the left bank of the Selenga A. P. Mostits found a site in the 1890's; it was later investigated by P. S. Mikhno and G. P. Sosnovskii in 1926. In sandy blowouts in a basin 4 km. above Zarubino settlement the latter collected bones of wild ass, large deer, mountain sheep, hare, shells of ostrich eggs, and also stone implements: 4 conical cores, many flakes, 17 skreblo, core-scrapers and core-like artifacts.


23. On the right bank of the Selenga opposite Durinsk military post, BMAE in 1947 collected in blowouts on a sandy eminence at least 60 m. above the river a core, an end scraper on a blade, and flakes.

24. Nian’gi (Fig. 9). One km. below Nian’gi station (196 km. from Ulan-Ude) on the left bank of the Selenga on the ancient terrace (which is 12–20 m. high) BMAE in 1947 and 1949 collected a large amount of material—around 400 specimens. Among them are 5 pebble-blanks, 30 cores (prismatic—including
microcores, pyramidal, one disc-shaped), 9 spalls from cores, 28 big blades, 23 *skreblo*, 61 scrapers, 11 core-scrapers, 10 peculiar adze-like implements and wedges, and a bifacially-worked point reminiscent of Mousterian.

25. Ara-Tszokui Gorge, some distance from the Selenga. Traces of the Palæolithic were found in sandy hollows by P. S. Mikhno and S. A. Uspenskii in 1926. G. P. Sosnovskii collected here in 1928. Cores, *skreblo*, scrapers, lamelles and ostrich egg-shell have been found.

26. Twelve km. southeast of the foregoing in sandy blowouts at the villages of Kalinishnaia and Sofronovo, P. S. Mikhno and N. P. Smirnov collected in 1922, 1931 and 1935, 24 cores (including microcores and conical ones), 19 core-scrapers, 33 end scrapers, 4 *skreblo*, knives on wide retouched blades, one point, prismatic blades and 19 fragments of ostrich egg shell.

27. On the left bank of the Selenga at flag stop No. 187 on the railroad; Locality 1, opposite the flag stop. From sandy blowouts here BMAE collected in 1947 25 stone artifacts: 2 pebble cores, core-like implements, a *skreblo*, an end scraper, blades struck from prismatic cores, and flakes.

28. Locality 2 at the same place. 27 stone artifacts were collected: flakers, cores (including 3 core-type adze-like implements), *skreblo*, scrapers, points, blades and flakes. One of the blades is of interest, having a retouched edge and end, and evidently having served as a side blade.

29. Sosnovaia Gorge (Ukhaan-Eber), on the left bank of the Selenga at a distance from the river, 12 km. by the Dzhidinsk highway from Selenduma. BMAE collected Palæolithic artifacts here in 1949 in a dry hollow: cores, core-scrapers, massive *skreblo* with oval convex cutting edge, small end scrapers, blades and flakes. Part of the objects were discovered during excavations under the following stratigraphic conditions: a. humus layer, 20 to 25 cm.; b. light-gray sand-clay soil with concentrations of small pebbles near the top (10 to 15 cm.); c. pale-yellow sand-clay, 20 cm.; the cultural remains were in the second layer.

30–31. Nomokhonovo, 25 km. above Selenginsk on the right bank of the Selenga. A. P. Mostits found stone artifacts here in 1895. Collecting was resumed in 1926 by P. S. Mikhno and S. A. Uspenskii, who found ostrich egg-shell and 27 artifacts; these included cores, core-scrapers, scrapers and blades. G. P. Sosnovskii worked in 1928 2 km. southwest of Nomokhonovo village. In 1947 BMAE made surface collections at two places, Localities 1 and 2.

At Locality 1, 42 artifacts were recovered: 2 prismatic cores, 4 core-like implements, *skreblo*, scrapers, and 29 lamelles (2 retouched). 7 fragments of ostrich egg-shell were also found.

At Locality 2, above the village, 6 artifacts were found: an end scraper, 4 lamelles and a fragment of a core.

32–37. Selenginsk. Along the left bank of the Selenga below the meteorological station BMAE recorded 3 localities with Palæolithic finds in 1947.
Locality 1. By the station. Here were found a core-type artifact with chisel-like retouched ends, a core-type artifact reminiscent of a skreblo, and a perforator on a flake.

Locality 2. On a terrace in the settlement. Finds comprised a core, a flaked pebble, a core-type implement and a fragment of a retouched blade.

Locality 3. At the foot of a rocky promontory on the slope of the mountain. Here were found skreblo-like implements, core-type artifacts and a blade.

Locality 4. In the second ravine beyond Bestuzheva Farm (2 to 3 km. below the landing place) in an eroded place in the river terrace at a height of 3 to 4 metres, in the upper part of a proluvial stratum at a depth of 30 to 40 cm. from the surface were found a scraper, a core-scraper and flakes.

Locality 5. On the opposite bank of the same ravine under similar conditions, were found blanks for prismatic cores, a core-type implement, a spall from a core and a blade.

Locality 6. A short distance downstream on the left bank an end scraper, blades and flakes were found.

38. Zui settlement. On the high bank of the Selenga below Zui, near a cave, BMAE in 1949 found 4 core-type artifacts, and 2 crude points on wide blades—one triangular, the other of leaf-shaped form.

39. Suslova Mountain, 1½ to 2 km. below Zui on the right bank of the Selenga. In 1947 BMAE found here on the first terrace spalls from pebbles, and flakes.

40. Half km. below Suslova Mountain and 1 km. above Kuibyshev Collective Farm, on the summit of a saddle-shaped mountain, BMAE found in 1947 a core-type artifact, a massive skreblo and a massive blade.

41. One km. above Karavanovo village on the right bank of the Selenga. BMAE found in 1947 flaked pebbles and flakes, some with retouch.

42. Half km. above Karavanovo, also on the right bank, were found flakes (some showing retouch), split pebbles and a retouched blade.

43. 300 m. below Karavanovo were found a core-type artifact, a scraper on a flake of sub-rectangular outline and lamelles.

44. Nizhni Zhirim. On the right bank of the Selenga 3 km. above Ganzurino railroad station BMAE found in blowouts in 1947, 39 stone implements. These included 2 flakers, 5 cores, a core-scraper with a chisel-like end, 3 pebble tools of skreblo type with straight cutting edge, 5 blades, 13 flakes, 8 flaked pebbles, flakes and spalls.

45. Oshurkovo—a stratified Upper Palaeolithic settlement.

The Oshurkovo site is located near the village of the same name, 14 km. northwest of Ulan-Ude. In this locality a series of river terraces with subdued relief can be identified. The first of these terraces is the flood-plain, with a height of 1·5 m. above the Selenga. The second terrace is about 1 m. above the flood plain. According to the account of N. A. Florensov, finds of remains of Palaeolithic culture were confined to the rear part of the succeeding rather narrow and low left-bank terrace
of the Selenga (6 to 8 m. above the level of the river at low water), directly adjoining
the valley wall. This terrace, bearing on its top remains of the Palæolithic, represents
basically a diluvial formation, or more precisely, the inner part of the terrace of
the Selenga formed of deposits of mixed origin. Its outer, strictly alluvial edge at
this place has been destroyed by the river in the contemporary stage of the latest
erosion cycle. In the upper part of the cross-section there are yellow calcareous,
partly loess-like, diluvial sand-clay soils (slope wash?) containing an admixture of
fine granitic gravel and also of a dark organic substance which is distributed some­
times in separate lenses and at other times in the form of two or three horizons of
fossil soil. Associated with these are three cultural strata. Below begin to occur thin,
clearly isolated layers of greenish-gray viscous clay, attesting the existence of
swampy lowlands (swales) in the period of accumulation of the sediments of the
terrace. At the base of the section, hypsometrically corresponding to the level of
the modern height of the Selenga flood-plain, occurs a river sand with grains of
different sizes, in places with slightly sloping layers, with pebbles of crystalline
rocks typical for western Trans-Baikal.

In the cultural strata of the Oshurkovo site, along with typically Palæolithic
artifacts (Fig. 10), were discovered bones of hare, Bison priscus, cervus elaphus,
reindeer, moose, and wild boar.

46. (Fig. 11). Above Mostovoi RR siding at 1·5 km. on the left bank of the
Selenga, 29 km. north of Ulan-Ude, in the left face of a ravine, BMAE in 1948
discovered 28 artifacts on the border between a yellowish sand-clay (about 20 to 30
cm. thick) and a light-yellow sand-clay: 3 cores of prismatic type, a core-like im­
plement with a grooved cutting edge on both ends, core-like tools, 5 pebble skreblo,
flakers, 3 blades. (Abramova 1959: 26–27, 98)

47. (Fig. 12). Two km. below the RR bridge on the right bank of the Selenga on
a sandy terrace about 30 m. high, BMAE in 1948 discovered a blank for a typically
Palæolithic skreblo. (Ibid: 27, 99)

48. (Fig. 13). One km. above the railroad bridge on the left bank of the Selenga,
in the terrace-like right wall of a small ravine, BMAE in 1948 collected 22 artifacts:
a prismatic microcore, a pebble pressure-flaking tool, 13 lamelles, and flakes. (Ibid:
27, 99)

49. Ostrog Village (Fig. 14). 3 km. from the village of Ostrog, on the right bank
of the Selenga, at a height of about 10 to 15 m. above the river, in the face edge of
a sandy terrace, BMAE discovered a hearth in 1948. Nearby were found 2 core-like
implements, a core-type tool with ends retouched like an adze, a pebble skreblo and

50. (Fig. 15). 5 or 6 km. above Fofanovo village on the right bank of the Selenga
on the high ancient terrace at a depth of 1·5 m. was found a fragment of a point of
'Mousterian' appearance and flakes. (Ibid: 28, 99)

51. Fofanovo, Locality I (Fig. 16). At Fofanovo village in the exposure of the
terrace deposits above the sand-clay soil, at a height of about 15 to 20 m., discoveries
were made by A. P. Okladnikov in 1926, and subsequently by M. M. Gerasimov in
1936, and by BMAE in 1948 and 1950. These comprised prismatic cores, flakers, core-like tools (spoke-shaves), flaked pebbles, a blade, a disc-shaped core, skreblos, prismatic blades from cores. (Ibid: 28–30, 100–101)

52. Fofanovo, Locality 2 (Fig. 17). On the summit of an elevation, above the Neolithic cemetery, on the wind-eroded sandy surface BMAE collected in 1948 19 stone artifacts: a large prismatic core, a skreblo, a micro-scraper, a core-like tool of spoke-shave type, flaked pebbles, blades and flakes. (Ibid: 30, 102)

53. Fofanovo, Locality 3 (Fig. 18). West of the foregoing. Finds comprised a scraper, flakes, lamelles, and a prismatic blade from a core. (Ibid: 30, 102)

54. (Fig. 19). At km. 86 north along the railroad from Ulan-Ude, in an exposure on a cape-like projection of the sandy 20 to 25 m. terrace, BMAE found in 1948 119 stone artifacts. These comprised: 2 fragments of cores (lateral facets), 3 big blades from a prismatic core, 9 irregular blades, 2 narrow prismatic blades and debris from worked pebbles. All these artifacts occurred under a gray soil stratum on the boundary with the underlying brown stratum of sand-clay. Deeper were found bedded sand, and under this, granite. The whole complex of finds evidently belongs to an ancient workshop where stone was roughed out. (Ibid: 30–32, 99)

55. In the valley of the Uda, Palæolithic cultural remains were discovered at the mouth of the Ona River, a tributary of the Uda, at the foot of the painted cliff of Khotogoi-Khabsagai, where there are many petroglyphs of the Late Bronze Age. On the slope of the elevation were collected 89 stone artifacts: 1 core of pyramidal form, scrapers, a fragment of a point, 42 blades (15 retouched), flakes, and prismatic blades from cores.

56. In the valley of the Uda is a remarkable site of the Trans-Baikal Palæolithic, the settlement of Sannyi Mys on Tapkhar Mountain (Fig. 20). Only a small part of the settlement is preserved—that adjoining the granite cliff. On top occurs a dark sand-clay with Neolithic finds: pottery, flakes, the blade of a bifacially-retouched knife (Fig. 20b: 1). Deeper there is a layer of yellow sand-clay (evidently of aeolian origin) up to one metre thick. In it were found the tooth of a wild horse and other bones, 'Siberian' skreblos of late Palæolithic type (Fig. 20b: 2–8). The sand-clay is underlain by a stratum composed of lumps of granite decayed by weathering. With this stratum is associated a dark cultural deposit in which was found the tooth of a rhinoceros (Fig. 20c: 1, 2). Still deeper lay a bedded sand-clay; the bedding is horizontal. In this level were again discovered fragments of animal bone and thin narrow lamelles (Fig. 20c: 3–10). Thus, on Sannyi Mys there are four cultural horizons—three of them Palæolithic (Okladnikov 1958).

In the valley of the Chikoi River:

57. Durény, on the left bank of the Chikoi, 25 km. east of Kiakhta. From 1890 to 1923, P. S. Mikhno collected more than 200 stone implements from blowouts. These include cores of prismatic form, core-scrappers, skreblo, end scrapers, micro-scrappers, knives on wide retouched blades, and a bifacial spear point.

58. Khara-Busun. On the right bank of the Chikoi, 4 or 5 km. from Polkanovaia village along the highway and 3 km. from Khara-Busun ulus (settlement). P. S.

59. Beregovaia Village. In 1896 A. P. Mostits collected in blowouts 3 core-scrapers, 4 end scrapers, a retouched blade with a burin facet, and a lateral prismatic blade from a core.

60. Evdai Settlement, 10 to 12 km. from Beregovaia village, on the right bank of Tapka Creek. In 1896 A. P. Mostits found here 8 cores, 14 end scrapers, 1 scraper on a pebble and 24 lamelles.

61. Myl’nikovo Village, on the right bank of the Chikoi. 4 km. below the village A. P. Mostits found in 1896 blades and lamelles, and also a bifacial point of leaf-shaped form.

62. Povorot Village, between the Selenga and Chikoi Rivers. 6 cores, 4 end scrapers and 11 narrow lamelles were found here. At the mouth of the Chikoi, on the left bank, BMAE in 1949 collected in blowouts 20 stone artifacts and one fragment of ostrich egg-shell. Among the stone implements are massive skreblo, scrapers approaching end-scaper forms, prismatic blades from cores, split pebbles, flakes and blades.

63. In the Khilok valley, between Tsolginsk and Podlopatka settlement, in an extensive blowout hollow were discovered fragments of ostrich egg-shell and five stone artifacts: a blank for a core, a flaker, a scraper, and flakes.

[Ed. Note: for a discussion of the Palaeolithic period in Trans-Baikal by the same author, see American Antiquity, 26(4), 1961].

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABRAMOVA, Z. A.

OKLADNIKOV, A. P.
Fig. 2. Altan-Bulak I (after Abramova 1953).
Fig. 3. Altan-Bulak II (after Abramova 1953).
FIG. 4. Site No. 3 (after Abramova 1953).

FIG. 5. Kiakhta Creek (after Abramova 1953).

FIG. 6. Botoiskaia Pit (after Abramova 1953).
Fig. 8. Ust'-Kiakhta, Localities 1 and 2 (after Okladnikov 1959).
Fig. 9a. Nian'gi (after Okladnikov 1959).

Fig. 9b. Nian'gi (after Okladnikov 1959).
Fig. 9c. Nian’gi (after Okladnikov 1959).

Fig. 9d. Nian’gi (after Okladnikov 1959).
Fig. 9e. Nian’gi (after Okladnikov 1959).
Fig. 102. Oshurkovo (after Okladnikov 1959).

Fig. 105. Oshurkovo.
FIG. 10c. Oshurkovo.
Fig. 11. Mostovoi Railroad Siding (after Abramova 1959).
FIG. 12
Site No. 47 (after Abramova 1959).

FIG. 13
Site No. 48 (after Abramova 1959).


FIG. 15. Site No. 50 (after Abramova 1959).
Fig. 16. Fofanovo, Locality 1 (after Abramova 1959).
Fig. 17. Fofanovo, Locality 2 (after Abramova 1959).

Fig. 18. Fofanovo, Locality 3 (after Abramova 1959).

Fig. 19. Site No. 54 (after Abramova 1959).
Fig. 20a. Sannyi Mys. Material from surface collections.
Fig. 20b. Sannyi Mys. No. 1 from first horizon; Nos. 2–8 from second.
FIG. 20c. Sannyi Mys. Nos. 1–2 from third horizon; Nos. 3–10 from fourth.