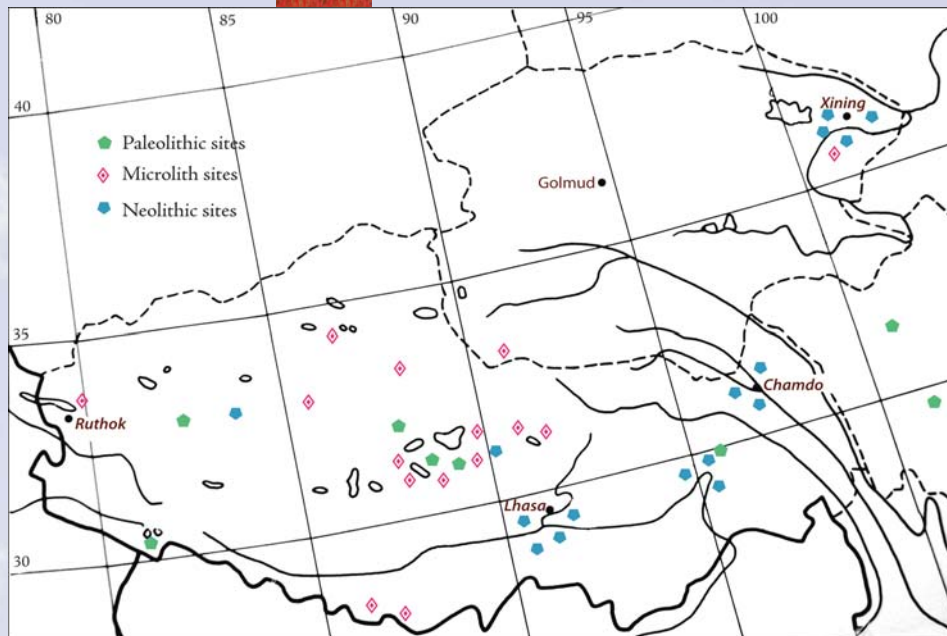


The First Steps

Archeology of Tibet



Map of archeological sites in Tibet

Archeological study of the Tibetan plateau is a relatively new discipline. Though explorers such as Tucci, Hedin, Richardson or Roerich did the first archeological surveys at the beginning of the 20th century, their studies remained superficial.

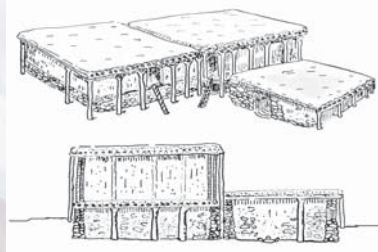
The scenario has changed during the past 2 or 3 decades with more scientific studies being conducted by Tibetan, Western and Chinese archeologists. Their research dwells not only upon Western Tibet, rich in 'pre-Buddhist' vestiges, but also on other parts of the plateau, like Amdo and Kham.



Black pottery (mid Neolithic/Chamdo)



Wild ungulate thokchas (copper alloy talismans)

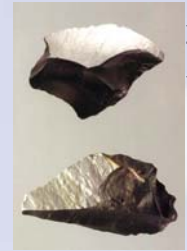


Plan of a semi-buried house in Kharo near Chamdo, probably 4000 years old

The latest archeological discoveries open new perspectives on the history of the plateau, particularly regarding the Zhangzhung kingdom. Some archeologists believed that a climate change altered the balance of power a few millennia ago. Due to drought and the subsequent increased salinity in the areas around the large lakes of Northern Tibet, the political center may have progressively shifted to warmer and moister regions like Yarlung.



Pre-Buddhist pillar, probably at a burial site (near Lake Dangra)



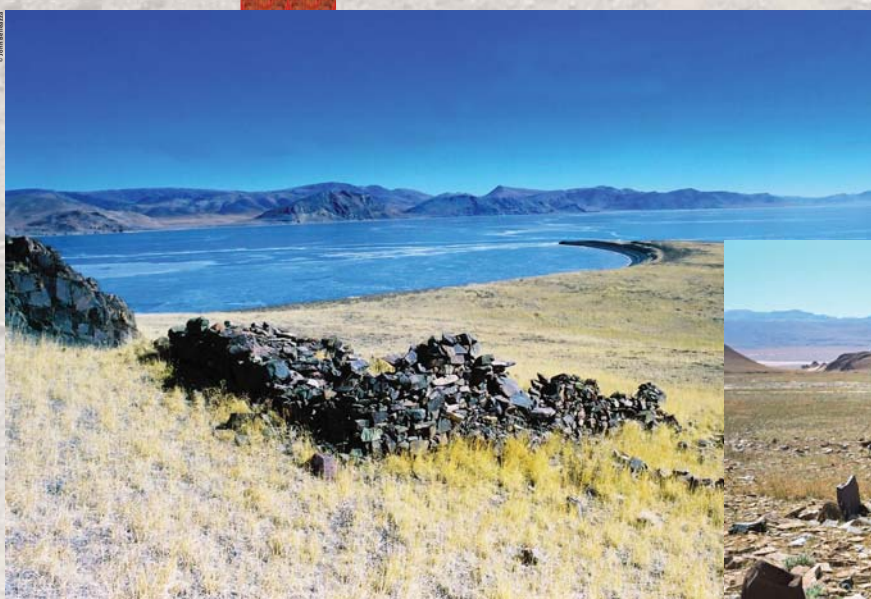
Cutting tools (later Paleolithic)



Two pronged stone hoe found in Chamdo



Stone chisel (mid Stone Age)



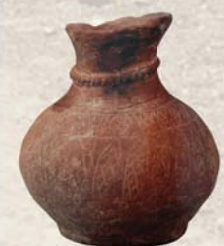
Stone corbelled residence of a Zhangzhung sage (on Lake Darok island)



Pillars probably in a pre-Buddhist cemetery (Rokhung)



Pottery with handles (early Metal Age/Chamdo)



Long necked pottery (mid Neolithic/ Chamdo)